

Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement Update

Bureau of Reclamation

March 2002

Report on Summer Low Flow



The Bureau of Reclamation conducted a Summer Low Flow Test on the San Juan River from Navajo Dam to Farmington, New Mexico. Dam releases were lowered from 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) to approximately 250 cfs.

The test ran from July 9 to July 15, 2001 and allowed specialists the opportunity to evaluate the effects that low summer flows would have on various resources. The information gathered is being used to prepare the environmental impact statement (EIS) on

operating Navajo Reservoir as described in the 1999 report, Flow Recommendations for the San Juan River. The flows would benefit downstream endangered fish while enabling future water development.

Reclamation collected the following information during the test:



water temperatures at numerous locations, flow and river stage data from stations along the river, impacts to trout and trout fishing, visual assessment of flows, habitat conditions, and impacts to water diversion structures and recreation.

The Summer Low Flow Test Report will be released in April. It will also be available on our web site or by filling in the appropriate information on page 3 and returning it to us.



Summer Low Flow Impacts

Water shortages during the Test appeared to be the result of inadequate diversion facilities not water supply.

Most water quality parameters didn't

could have an adverse effect on the trout fishery. Wade fishing appeared to increase, and fewer people used dory boats due to exposed rocks, gravel,



GROUP OF ANGLERS ON THE RIVER

exceed State standards. However, long-term flows of 250 cfs during the irrigation season could result in exceedance of some State water quality standards between Navajo Dam and the Animas River confluence.

Fish habitat was reduced, forcing fish to use the deeper runs and pools for resting and cover; this could result in future crowding and possible stress of fish over an extended time. Long term low flows could cause habitat reduction and water quality changes that

and sand bars.

Commercial rafting trips in the Bluff area continued even though Navajo releases were low, because the Animas River contributed flows to the San Juan River which helped maintain raftable flows.

Low flows at the hydropower plant at Navajo Dam created slight erosion to turbine blades and increased noise associated with operation of the plant. It is anticipated that further damage and noise would occur with long-term flows less than 350 cfs.

The Draft Navajo Reservoir Operations Environmental Impact Statement will be available

EIS Time Line

October 1999
Notice of Intent

November 1999
Scoping meetings

Nov. 99-Feb. 2002
Data Collection and analysis; Draft EIS preparation

Late Spring 2002
Release draft EIS; 60 day public comment period begins and public hearings

Who to Contact

If you have questions, need additional information, or want to be added to our mailing list, contact:

Ken Beck
Phone: 970-385-6558
Fax: 970-385-6539
E-mail: kbeck@uc.usbr.gov

Bureau of Reclamation
835 East Second Ave., Suite 300
Durango, CO 81301

Information is also available at Reclamation's web site at: www.uc.usbr.gov

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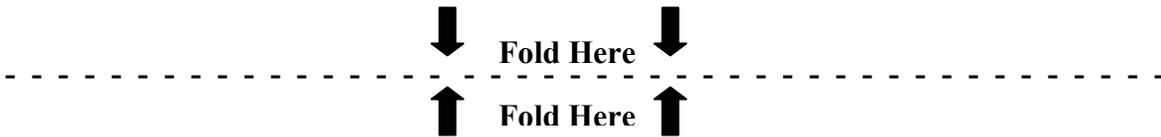
The Summer Low Flow Test Report will be available this spring. You may request this report by including your name and mailing address below. Then re-fold this page so the Bureau of Reclamation's Durango address is on the outside, stamp with first class postage, and return.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS BY APRIL 16, 2002.



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**Ken Beck
Bureau of Reclamation
835 East Second Avenue, Suite 300
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Hearings & Meetings

Navajo DEIS

Public Hearings*

Once the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is released, three public hearings will be held. The hearings give the public an opportunity to comment on the alternatives and voice their concerns about the preferred alternative in the DEIS.

The hearings will be held in **Farmington, New Mexico; Durango, Colorado; and Bluff,**

Utah. Specific dates and times will be announced later.

*Navajo Unit Operations Meeting**

Interested public are invited to the next Navajo Unit Operations meeting on April 18, 2002 at 1 p.m. at the Farmington Civic Center. The topics to be discussed include a review of 2001 fall and winter operations of the dam, and a look at the

upcoming spring and summer operations. For more information contact Pat Page at (970) 385-6560.

*Reclamation will make every effort to make these hearings or meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. Please call the hearing or meeting contact with any special needs or requests at least 1 week prior to the scheduled event.

Bureau of Reclamation
Western Colorado Area Office
2764 Compass Drive, Suite 106
Grand Junction, CO 81506