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Colorado River Storage Project 50th Anniversary
Glen Canyon Dam, Page, Arizona
October 19, 2006

- I can't think of a better place to be today than with you, sharing in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Colorado River Storage Project Act.
- I am representing our new Commissioner, Bob Johnson.
- Of course most of you have known Bob as the Regional Director of the Lower Colorado Region.
- With all of the issues facing us on the Colorado River system, we are pleased to have a commissioner with such a personal understanding and involvement in the Colorado River.
- As many of you know, Bob was appointed by the President to be Reclamation's Commissioner's. Earlier this month he was confirmed by the Senate and just two days ago he was sworn in.
- As a result of that, Bob wasn't able to get to Page in time for today's celebration. He does send his best wishes.
- While the act is 50 years old, the realization that such a project was necessary extended back to the years of development of the 1922 Colorado River Compact.
- A plan for the CRSP, including a series of dams and reservoirs to provide storage capacity in combination with power development, was presented in a Bureau of Reclamation report in 1950, subsequently printed as House Document 364, of the 2nd session of the 83rd Congress.
- The report was formulated in cooperation with other Federal agencies and with the Upper Colorado River Commission.
- As a result, the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956 was a visionary gift to the entire basin.
- The act, when combined with all the elements of the "Law of the River," makes this extremely complex river system work for the benefit of many millions of people.
- The storage units of the Colorado River Storage Project serve not only as the drought insurance policy for the Upper Basin, but --- as one of our managers (Randy Peterson) has pointed out --- also serve as a giant exchange agreement that allows the Upper Basin states to consume Colorado River water while making Compact-required deliveries to the Lower Basin.

- You will be hearing more of that in a few minutes from Assistant Secretary Mark Limbaugh.
- In a way, my comments are stage-setters for Mark, who will look at the critical importance and historical significance of the CRSP.
- Congressional acts that authorize specific projects, like the Colorado River Storage Project, are somewhat unique to the Bureau of Reclamation.
- Unlike other agencies within the Department of the Interior, Reclamation does not have a single “organic” statute. Such an organic statute would, in addition to creating the agency, include general authorities and objectives for Reclamation and would be the foundation upon which all activities are authorized.
- While we do have the historic 1902 Reclamation Act which created the Reclamation Service and started things moving in the west, it really isn’t an organic act as such.
- Consequently, we depend upon specific authorities that exist in various acts of Congress.
- Common to our projects and the acts that create them, the law generally also says that Reclamation will comply with state water law; project water rights will be appropriated under state law; and that projects are subject to state adjudication and administration.
- So, that’s why a broad-based, Upper Basin-wide act such as the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956 is important.
- It not only authorized the Project, but it also enabled the 1948 Compact between the Upper Basin States to function by ratifying that compact.
- As a result, the Upper Basin States now have the good fortune of foresight to make their Compact allocations on the basis of a percentage of available water supplies in the Upper Colorado River Basin, as opposed to establishing fixed allocation amounts for each state.
- The Upper Basin is further well served by having in place the Upper Colorado River Commission to oversee and coordinate matters among the Upper Basin States.
- These state actions, coupled with the CRSP Act of 1956, enabled the Upper Basin to avoid many of the issues the Lower Basin faces, including the need for the Secretary of the Interior to serve as the Water Master of the Upper Basin, as he does in the Lower Basin.
- The states also maintain their traditional roles of controlling the allocation and administration of water rights on the Colorado River and its tributaries in the Upper Basin.
- As a result, the Colorado River Storage Project has proved to be resilient and adaptable.

- Added to the management mix are several other “benchmark” items including: Colorado River Basin Projects Act of 1968, which forms the rules by which the Colorado River reservoir system is operated; the creation of the Criteria for Coordinated Long-Range Operations of Colorado River Reservoirs in 1970; and the development of Annual Operating Plans prepared each year by Reclamation with involvement by the States and the interested public.
- In addition to the 1956 act being good policy and visionary, I believe that the construction of the four initial units of the CRSP will also go down in history as “good deals.”
- The 1956 Act authorized to be appropriated funds not to exceed \$760 million.
- I can assure you that the costs to replicate this project today would be beyond staggering.
- When we talk about seeking funding to build such a project today, we also need to consider the equally disturbing thought of trying to operate the Upper Basin without the project in place.
- It’s also appropriate at this point to mention an aspect unique to the Colorado River Storage Project Act --- the participating projects.
- Assistant Secretary Limbaugh will be speaking to the participating projects too, so I don’t want to detract from his comments other than to again mention the wisdom of the Congress in spreading the benefits of this act across the Upper Basin of the Colorado River.
- The collective infrastructure between the Colorado River Storage Project, the participating projects, and the older Reclamation projects that preceded the CRSP Act is amazing.
- Now, 50 years after the act and the start of construction, we face the challenge of updating and maintaining the project. Major power operation and maintenance activities include the replacement of the turbine runners here at Glen Canyon and at the Flaming Gorge powerplants along with the replacement of the generator voltage regulators at Glen Canyon.
- The turbine runner work at Glen Canyon will run through the year 2013, while Flaming Gorge will be completed next year.
- At both facilities our work will result in significant increases in efficiencies that will translate into increased hydropower generation.
- At Flaming Gorge, we expect a 6.5 percent increase in efficiency, while at Glen Canyon we expect a 3 to 5 percent increase.

- Reclamation, in partnership with its customers, including the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association, is proud of how the project operates.
- We have a long tradition of careful operations and maintenance; we have been cost effective; we are adapting the management at all four CRSP initial units to comply with all appropriate environmental laws and objectives; and we have involved the basin states, our project customers and partners, and the public in critical decision making.

Mark Limbaugh Introduction:

- Now I am pleased to turn my attention to introducing to you our keynote speaker for today.
- Mark Limbaugh joined the Bush Administration as Reclamation's Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs in 2002.
- He since has served as the Deputy Commissioner of Reclamation prior to becoming the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science in July of 2005.
- Mark's understanding of Western water issues comes both professionally and as a family farmer in Idaho.
- Prior to entering federal service, he served as the President of the Family Farm Alliance and as the Watermaster of Idaho's Payette River Basin.
- He is a Director for the U.S. Committee on Irrigation and Drainage.
- He is a native of Idaho and a graduate of the University of Idaho.
- Please welcome Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Mark Limbaugh: