

COMMENT LETTER

RESPONSES

AUG-31-2000 16:49

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**Attachment
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Specific Comments By Page
Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Colorado River Interim Surplus Criteria, dated July 2000.**

Page 3.2-1, Section 3.2, paragraph 3

The southerly boundary is described as the Northerly International Boundary. It is not clear why this point on the river is used instead of the Southerly International Boundary at San Luis. If the international boundary along the river is generally the 1972 centerline alignment between the Northerly and Southerly International Boundaries, a significant amount of riparian vegetation, including vegetation providing habitat for the Southwestern willow flycatcher, occurring in the United States, may not have been included in the analysis.

2: The area of potential effect has been expanded for the FEIS to include consideration of the Colorado River 100-year floodplain to the Southerly International Boundary. Potential effects on special-status species have been included in the FEIS in Section 3.8.

Page 3.3-33, Map 3.3-1

"Bil Williams" should be Bill Williams.

3: This change has been made.

Page 3.3-35, Figures 3.3-18 a-d

The heading "Colorado River Seasonal Flows Downstream of Havasu NWR" is not consistent with the location shown on page 3.3-33, Map 3.3-1 for "3. Colorado River at Havasu NWR." The downstream end of Havasu NWR is in Lake Havasu itself. The location marked on Map 3.1 is about at the upstream end of Havasu NWR. The location for which the modeling was completed should be clarified.

4: The headings on Figures 3.3-18a to 3.3-18d are correct. The respective river location shown on Map 3.3-1 has been corrected.

Page 3.3-41, Section 3.3.4.5.3, paragraph 3

The description that

"The river location that was modeled for this reach is located immediately downstream of the Palo Verde Irrigation District."

is not consistent with the location shown on Map 3.3-1 which shows the point just below Palo Verde Diversion dam, at the upstream end of the District. Again, the location for which the modeling was completed should be clarified.

5: The subject river location modeled is immediately downstream of the Palo Verde Diversion Dam. The text has been revised to reflect this location.

Page 3.6-7, Section 3.6.1.3

An explanation should be included of what infrastructure of the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District has been damaged by historic flood flows on the Colorado River. Such infrastructure is more likely impacted by Gila River flood flows.

6: The description of the affected environment in the reach from Parker Dam to Laguna Dam has been corrected by deleting discussion of the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District facilities. These facilities are not subject to damage from flooding on the Colorado River.

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Page 3.7-1, Section 3.7.1

It is not clear why the analysis of impacts to aquatic resources is limited to:

"...potential effects to Lake Mead and Lake Powell aquatic species habitat and potential effects to sports fisheries on Lake Powell and Lake Mead."

when the geographic area is described on page 3.2-1:

"...the northern limit of the potentially affected area under consideration in this DEIS is the upper reaches of Lake Powell. The southern limit is the Northerly International Boundary (NIB) between the United States and Mexico."

Effects of the alternatives throughout the area described above should be analyzed and discussed. Without such analysis and discussion impacts to Arizona trust resources may not have been addressed.

Page 3.7-2, paragraph 4

"Upper Basin" should be Upper Basin.

Page 3.7-8, Section 3.7.3.3.2

The statement that:

"The primary sportfish in the Colorado River is rainbow trout."

is in error when the project area is the upper end of Lake Powell to the Northerly International Boundary. Clearly warm water species such as largemouth bass and catfish are found in significant numbers below Hoover Dam. Warm water species in that area are important to many anglers from Arizona, Nevada, and California.

Page 3.8-1, Section 3.8.1

It is not clear why

"...the section addresses only special status species associated with Lake Powell, Lake Mead, the Lower Grand Canyon along the Colorado River, and the lower Virgin River."

when the geographic area is described on page 3.2-1:

"...the northern limit of the potentially affected area under consideration in this DEIS is the upper reaches of Lake Powell. The southern limit is the Northerly International Boundary (NIB) between the United States and Mexico."

7: Although the area of potential effect of interim surplus criteria extends from Lake Powell to the SIB (NIB in DEIS), the resource analysis focuses on more limited areas within the area of potential effect to address specific issues identified as having the potential to be affected by interim surplus criteria. As discussed in response to Comment 38-1, an additional issue associated with sport fisheries and sport fishing has been included in the FEIS.

8: This correction has been made in the FEIS.

9: As discussed in Section 3.7.3 of the DEIS, the section addresses sport fisheries in Lake Powell and Lake Mead only. For the FEIS, additional information regarding sport fishing and the potential effects of interim surplus criteria on the temperature of water released from Hoover Dam and associated effects on sport fishing in the lower Colorado River between Hoover Dam and Lake Mohave has been added to Section 3.7.3. Reclamation has determined that fluctuations in flows below Hoover Dam to the SIB under the alternatives would be within the historical operating range of the river and would, therefore, not affect aquatic resources within this segment. Note also that the statement "the primary sport fish in the Colorado River is the rainbow trout" has been removed.

10: The analysis of effects to special-status species has been revised to include discussion for species that may occur in the potentially affected area from Lake Powell downstream to the SIB.

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Page 3.9-34, Section 3.9.5

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Affects to all fishing in the project area should be addressed not just reservoir fishing. This is a serious issue to the Department.

DIST-1

12

It is not clear what agency:

"AZ Department of Fish and Wildlife Service"

refers to. In Arizona, the state wildlife agency, as defined in statute, is the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

11: Reclamation has determined that recreation (including sport fishing) within the river corridor between Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Mead would continue to be addressed through the Adaptive Management Program and would, therefore, not be affected by interim surplus criteria (discussion of this Adaptive Management Program as it relates to sport fishing and recreation has been added to Sections 3.7.3 and 3.9.5 of the FEIS). As stated in Section 3.7.3, it is believed that minor changes in water temperature below Hoover Dam are not expected to adversely affect fish populations. Reclamation has determined that fluctuations in flows below Hoover Dam to the SIB under the alternatives would be within the historical operating range of the river and would, therefore, not affect sport fishing within these areas.

12: The Distribution List has been corrected to read "Arizona Game and Fish Department."

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