

**Public Consultation Process**  
**Methods to Replace or Recover the Bypass Flow including the YDP**  
**Public Meeting Phoenix, AZ**  
**October 5, 2005, 6-8 PM**

**Comments from the Public**

- In addition to Reclamation's presentation regarding the public consultation process for soliciting methods to replace or recover the bypass flow, Messrs. Sid Wilson and Peter Culp jointly delivered a presentation on the work of the YDP/Cienega Workgroup.
  - First, recognize the accomplishment of bringing disparate interests together to this Workgroup.
  - The Workgroup considered a wide range of criteria such as: minimizing complexity, cost effectiveness, ability to obtain funding, timing (short term / long term), water supply adequacy.
  - All the Workgroup's recommendations need to be taken together as an integrated whole. "Don't pick and choose or the solution will quickly come apart." (Sid Wilson).
  - The whole solution will take time.
  - The Workgroup's recommendations introduce flexibility into the system and avoid a zero-sum situation.
  - The bypass flow as a draw on system storage is only important during times of shortage.
  - The idea of a shortage fund is that money should be put aside during surplus times to fund actions that replace the bypass flow during shortage.
  - Adaptive management in the Cienega can help save water and improve this resource at the same time. (Peter Culp)
  - CAP is interested in protecting its rights, but supports the results of the Workgroup. Reclamation should support the Workgroup process and fully consider the alternatives developed by the group in the Public Process.
  - The Workgroup's report is available on the Internet in English and Spanish at CAP's website.
  
- Request was made to place Reclamation's presentation, as well as the presentation made by Messrs. Wilson and Culp, on the Internet.

- Reclamation was urged to develop cost estimates for all alternatives. The reason that operating the YDP looks unattractive based on cost is in large part because most of the other alternatives don't have a price tag attached.
- A lawyer representing water districts that use the CAP urged Reclamation to give high regard and consideration to the Work Group recommendations.
- A representative from the Colorado River Board of California wants Reclamation to consider all possible sources of funding. Also, if a non-federal agency shared in the cost, would there be consideration of that agency also sharing in the benefits?
- Process needs to complement the Secretary of the Interior's development of shortage criteria.
- A representative of Fish & Wildlife Service stated that there is interest among many parties to quantify all system losses on the Colorado River because some want to capture these losses and redirect them.
- A representative of Fish & Wildlife Service stated that consultation with Mexico and non-governmental organizations should be an important part of the public consultation process as it moves forward.
- A representative of Arizona Department of water Resources stated that replacement of the bypass flow is a Federal responsibility.

### **Questions asked by the Public**

- Q.** Did the Workgroup consider the management challenges of a multiple-track approach?
- A. Answered by Mr. Wilson: Yes, we are going to push for solutions at all levels: federal, state, and with NGO's.
- Q.** Why is this bypass flow consultation process separate from the shortage criteria process?
- A. The shortage criteria are a tough and overarching process. In Reclamation's experience, better progress is made on issues of local concern if they are addressed separately rather than grouping many individual and complex issues together.
- Q.** Could the solution of shortage impact the solution for bypass flow (or vice-versa)?
- A. We hope not.

- Q.** How big is the Cienega and how high is the salinity? How much is too much?
- A.** Answered by Peter Culp; The Cienega is 40,000 acres comprised of 26,000 acres of open water and 14,000 acres of vegetation. Salt tolerance has been debated. Salinity currently ranges from 2,600 ppm at the top (north) of the Cienega to 70,000 ppm where it mixes with the tides.
- Q.** Have you given thought to how funding will be provided?
- A.** No, because cost estimates for the bypass flow alternatives have not been developed yet.
- Q.** Would the parties that participate in the cost sharing also share in the benefits? If the Federal government pays, will the system water benefit everyone? If someone else pays, would they get the benefit of that water?
- A.** Good questions, but none of that has been worked out yet. At this point we're soliciting alternatives to be considered.
- Q.** How do you decide how much extra water you need to provide to replace the extra water that goes to Mexico?
- A.** Extra system water released equals the bypass flow. That averages 108,000 acre-feet a year.
- Q.** Who is losing the water?
- A.** The system is. Should a shortage occur, lowest priority water users would be impacted first.
- Q.** Where or to whom is the water being replaced?
- A.** In order to meet water delivery requirements, extra water has to be released from Lake Mead in the amount of the bypass flow. There are also system water losses in transit.
- Q.** What is the time line for developing a proposed action or plan?
- A.** No formal time line has been developed yet. There's much work to be done considering the alternatives that will be received. Also the forbearance pilot project may take two years. Time is of the essence and we do intend to make steady progress, but no specific time line has been built.
- Q.** Do you have a timeline yet for an EIS or EA?

- A. An EIS or EA requires a federal action or a proposed federal action. The bypass flow public consultation process is pre-decisional. No federal action has been taken or proposed.