

Peer Review Plan

McKay Reservoir Operations Pilot Study, McKay Reservoir, Oregon

Date: September 18, 2023

Originating office: Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region, Regional Office, 1150 N Curtis Rd., Boise, ID, 83706

Reclamation roles:

Director or delegated manager: Jennifer Carrington, Regional Director, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Reclamation

Peer Review Lead: Peter Cooper, Civil Engineer, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Reclamation

Subject and Purpose: A high flow event during 2019 in the McKay Reservoir basin in northeast Oregon prompted the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to develop this Reservoir Operations Pilot Study (Study) to explore potential modifications to the water supply forecast (WSF) and space reservation diagram (SRD) that help inform operations of McKay Reservoir. The intent of the Study is to explore whether these modifications can provide water managers additional useful tools to help manage future high flow events while also maintaining a balance of the authorized purposes of the reservoir. The dam was originally constructed for the purpose of irrigation water supply, and a full reservoir (hydrology permitting) is critical to the water users in the basin. However, flood control (now termed flood risk management (FRM)) became an authorized purpose in 1976 through legislation and has also become an important purpose in the basin with continued development along McKay Creek downstream of the dam.

Impact of Dissemination: This Study was selected to contribute to the Bureau of Reclamation's 2021 Reservoir Operations Pilot initiative. This initiative is part of the WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Basin Study Program and uses modeling and forecasting tools to identify ways to increase flexibility in reservoir operations to support optimal water management. Since pilot studies are desktop examinations of operations through modeling exercises and no actual changes to operations were tested or recommended, this analysis meets the definition of "Discretionary Peer Review" as defined by Office of Management and Budget Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review (70 FR 2664-2677) and Reclamation Manual Peer Review of Scientific Information and Assessments Policy (CMP P14), and will use Internal Peer Input.

Peer Review Scope: The scope of this peer review is the assumptions, approach, and conclusions reached by the study. Peer reviewers are asked to provide responses to the following questions:

1. Is the evaluation approach sufficiently and clearly explained in the documentation?
2. Are the conclusions supported by information provided in the documentation?

The scope of this analysis does not include the development and calibration of the Lower Umatilla River RiverWare model, as this was reviewed following the review process documented in the Peer Review Plan for Columbia Pacific Northwest Baseline Hydrologic Models (2021).

Timing of Review: The review period is expected to be September 18-October 6, 2023. No time deferrals from the Peer Review requirements are requested.

Methodology of Review: Review will be conducted by individuals. The identities of the reviewers will be disclosed in the final Peer Review Summary. Review findings/comments will be attributed to the individual reviewer. The peer review process will not provide opportunities for public participation.

Number of Peer Reviewers: It is anticipated that three peer reviewers will be utilized.

Reviewer Selection Process: Because of the “Discretionary Peer Review” classification, internal Reclamation staff will conduct the peer review. Reclamation will select internal peer reviewers that have education and/or professional experience in reservoir operations and hydrologic or river-reservoir modeling. Reclamation will ensure that peer reviewers do not have a conflict of interest. The public will not be asked to nominate reviewers.

Delivery of findings: The peer reviewers will provide an Excel comment tracker along with a summary paragraph highlighting any major concerns or verifying there were no major concerns.

Response to Peer Review: At the conclusion of receiving peer review comments, the Peer Review Lead will review comments and respond to comments as well as give reasons on how to mitigate for concerns or recommendations made by the peer reviewers.

Federal Register Notice: Federal Register notices will not be provided announcing the formation of a peer review team and completion of the final report.

Applicability of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA): This peer review is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because reviewers are being asked to provide individual reviews on the subject matter. Reclamation is not seeking consensus advice from the reviewers as a group.

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