

Opening Remarks from the AMWG Chair and Secretary's Designee
August AMWG Meeting
August 17, 2022

- **Drought Outlook**

- The backdrop for our conversations this week consists of ongoing drought and historically low water levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead.
- We have taken positive action over the last few years with the 161 kaf DROA releases from Flaming Gorge and Aspinall in the summer of 2021. We successfully implemented a 2022 Plan releasing 500 kaf additional water from Flaming Gorge Reservoir and the Glen Canyon Operational Adjustment reducing the 2022 water year release 480 kaf to 7.0 maf. Taken together these actions have benefitted Lake Powell elevations by almost 20 feet. We stand better today than when we last met in February of this year.
- The River Forecast Center issued its latest runoff forecast last week, and there was not much good news to be had in the Colorado River Basin.
- The August most probable forecast for the water year 2023 is 8.3 maf (86% of average) and represents continued arid soil moisture and arid conditions.
- Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell will operate under the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier for the first time.
- In 2023, consistent with the DROA objectives and with the LTEMP Record of Decision, Interior will explore and implement further operational flexibilities in monthly releases from Glen Canyon Dam through limiting balancing releases from Glen Canyon Dam to 7.0 maf when Lake Powell elevation is below 3,525 feet in a continued effort to protect critical elevation thresholds.
- The minimum probable and drier hydrologic forecasts continue to show the probability of falling below 3,490 feet or minimum power pool in 2023 and through the next five years.
- Meanwhile, Lake Mead has entered its first-ever Level 2 Shortage Condition, requiring further reductions in use by Arizona, Nevada, and Mexico.
- We are facing troubling conditions with the detection of juvenile smallmouth bass downstream of Glen Canyon Dam in the Lees Ferry reach. Much of the conversations over the next two days will focus on this issue and the best scientific knowledge to rapidly respond to this emerging threat to the native aquatic species.
- We ask that the AMWG help us to make the most of this opportunity to reduce negative impacts to downstream resources.

- **Adaptive Management**

- The need for this federal advisory committee and for the participation of each of its 25 members remains clear. The Department of the Interior looks to you for technical expertise; personal and professional experience; traditional knowledge; and your collective capacity for problem solving.
- We come together to provide vital recommendations for the treasured resources in the Grand Canyon. We bring diversity of experience and perspective that makes the process stronger. The goal of the AMWG is to provide a consensus recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior on actions that benefit the Canyon. We ask that each and every AMWG member strive to reach consensus and engage in positive dialogue. This program thrives and produces the best results when a consensus can be reached.
- To facilitate opportunities to reach consensus recommendations, our meeting today devotes additional time for productive discussion. We hope you use this time judiciously over the next few days as we engage in difficult discussions about vitally important issues affecting the Grand Canyon and its resources.
- To further facilitate robust discussion, we have reached out to many of you prior to meeting today and have engaged in activities that are tangential to, but ultimately provide benefit for, the AMWG process. These include the LTEMP Programmatic Agreement discussions, nonnative fish management planning, individual tribal engagement and the stakeholder river trip, to name a few. We will be hearing the results of these activities throughout the next few days.
- Our first agenda item today will be an instructional AMWG 101 presentation. We will be opening time in the foreseeable future to review various aspects of the goals of the AMWG as a refresher for those who have been with us and an introduction and welcome to the new members in the group. Please provide feedback on future discussions you would like to address during the AMWG 101 presentations in the coming meetings.

- **Wrap-up**

- I am confident in the capabilities of this committee, and I look forward to working with you on these current challenges, as well as those that lie ahead.