



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
125 South State Street, Room 8100
Salt Lake City, UT 84138-1102



IN REPLY REFER TO:

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Memorandum

To: Chief of Staff
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science

From: Wayne G. Pullan
Chair, Glen Canyon Leadership Team
Secretary's Designee to the Adaptive Management Work Group (acting)

WAYNE
PULLAN

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WAYNE PULLAN
Date: 2021.02.05
13:05:09 -0700

Subject: Notification of Decision to Approve Spring Disturbance Flow Releases at Glen Canyon Dam, March 15 to March 26, 2021

On January 29, 2021, the Glen Canyon Planning/Implementation Team (Team) recommended conducting spring disturbance flow releases at Glen Canyon Dam from March 15 to March 26, 2021 (Attachment - *Final Recommendation to Implement a Spring Disturbance Flow at Glen Canyon Dam in March 2021*). The spring disturbance flow was developed and evaluated within the adaptive management framework and provisions of the 2016 *Record of Decision for the Glen Canyon Dam Long Term Experimental and Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (LTEMP ROD)*.

The LTEMP ROD specifies the representation requirements for planning experiments at Glen Canyon Dam and is based on past successful planning and implementation of flow-based experiments. The Team includes technical representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC), Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), the seven Colorado River Basin States (States), and the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC). The Glen Canyon Leadership Team (Leadership Team) is made up of decision makers from these same agencies.

On January 12, 2021, notification of the possible spring disturbance flow and offer for consultation was emailed to the Tribes and Parties to the LTEMP National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (LTEMP PA). Further, Reclamation determined that the spring disturbance flow may have an effect, but is not likely to have an adverse effect, on a National Register-eligible traditional cultural property (the Colorado River through Grand Canyon). In accordance with Stipulation I.A.2 (c) in the LTEMP PA, notification of the determination was

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emailed to Tribes and interested parties to the LTEMP PA on January 22, 2021. To date, no requests for consultation have been received by Reclamation.

The Leadership Team has also reviewed and considered the Team's recommendation, including the assessment of key resources that may be impacted or affected by the spring disturbance flow and the proposed monitoring plan. The Leadership Team met via webinar on February 2, 2021 and members voiced their support for proceeding with the recommended spring disturbance flow. Based on support from the Leadership Team and on the Planning/Implementation Team recommendation, I have decided to approve the recommendation to conduct a spring disturbance flow starting on March 15 and running until March 26, 2021.

The approved spring disturbance flow will consist of steady low flows at 4,000 cfs for 5 days followed by a gradual increase to relatively high flows at 20,150 cfs to be held steady for 82 hours (>3 days). The low flows allow for the safe completion of necessary maintenance on the apron immediately downstream of Glen Canyon Dam. The combination of low flows and high flows in this spring disturbance flow is expected to benefit natural resources in Glen and Grand canyons by triggering higher algae and insect production. It will also enhance the Department of the Interior's (Department) knowledge of spring flows. The spring disturbance flow is consistent with applicable laws concerning the operation of Glen Canyon Dam and will satisfy the Department's goal to ensure effective and coordinated implementation of important research that the Department is undertaking as part of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program.

This is the fourth full year of implementing the process for annual experimental planning under the LTEMP ROD, which requires the Department to "schedule implementation / planning meetings or calls with Interior bureaus (USGS, NPS, FWS, BIA, and Reclamation), WAPA, AZGFD, and one liaison from each Basin State and from the UCRC, as needed or requested by the participants." At the conclusion of the spring disturbance flow, the Team will review the planning process, implementation, and monitoring activities and develop a list of "lessons learned" to inform potential future experiments and experimental planning. In accordance with the LTEMP, the Department may make the decision to conduct future flow-based experiments (e.g., High Flow Experiments, Bug Flows, Trout Management Flows, and Low Summer Flows) at Glen Canyon Dam if it is determined that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on other resource conditions. For future experimental planning, the Department welcomes input from each Leadership Team member as to whether this or another process should be used to satisfy the coordination and communication process of the LTEMP ROD.

The evolving COVID-19 Pandemic and response may affect GCMRC's ability to monitor the spring disturbance flow. The safety of our Federal employees remains the Department's top priority and any decisions regarding field work, including monitoring, will be carefully considered in the context of the most current guidance from the acting Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and relevant State and local authorities.

I am grateful to both the Leadership and the Planning/Implementation Teams for their dedication and continued work that has resulted in this recommendation. The individual efforts of the team members are greatly appreciated. Coordination among team members has been instrumental in

making this process a success and has allowed the Department to continue its commitment to protect and improve the irreplaceable resources at and below Glen Canyon Dam.

For the hearing impaired please call the Federal Relay System at (800) 877-8339 (TTY).

Attachment - Final Recommendation to Implement a Spring Disturbance Flow at Glen Canyon Dam in March 2021

cc: Camille Calimlim Touton, Senior Advisor to the Secretary