

Summary
Transition Work Group Meeting
November 21, 1996
Phoenix, Arizona

Stephen Magnussen, the Secretary's designee, was in attendance.

Bruce Moore, Manager, Resources Management Division, Bureau of Reclamation Upper Colorado Region, welcomed the group to the Transition Work Group meeting (see attachment 1 for list of participants). It was announced that Mr. Gordan Lind was retiring in January 1997 and that this was his last meeting he would attend as a Reclamation Employee. He was given praise for all his dedication and work to the group in the EIS process.

Bruce then turned the time over to Gordy Lind who introduced Dr. Kai N. Lee, Director of the Center for Environmental Studies, Williams College, MA. The following is a brief summary of Dr. Lee's presentation and discussion on Adaptive Management (see attachment 2):

Dr. Lee opened his presentation by remarking that the Operation of the Glen Canyon Dam EIS was one of the best and most interesting that he has ever seen, and he stated that what we are doing is not adaptive management, but that what we have is a good monitoring program. An adaptive management approach is an approach whose design includes the opportunity to learn from experience and adapt management regimes accordingly.

He stated that adaptive management is not monitoring, and that what makes it different from monitoring is that it tries to: 1) adjust to working without a Lab; 2) it has specific hypothesis to test (expectations of what will happen in the future); 3) observations are tested against measurement; 4) controls are under known conditions; and 5) there is replication to check for reliability.

Learning under adaptive management requires a lot of patience (sometimes for decades). It requires a great amount of record-keeping and system monitoring. Record-keeping is essential to adaptive management, or you fail to learn. Adaptive management must be economically sustainable, requiring that the agencies involved establish common objectives to increase efficiency and quality. Managers and politicians need to understand scientists special pleadings, but in the investment sense. Scientists today are in danger of being identified as another special interest group, and if science cannot deliver investment, then that is what they deserve.

There must be collaboration with resource users (which at times can be crippling), and the political conflict is ongoing. Adaptive management is rarely applied in "peaceful" areas, it usually comes out of "conflict" situations. Be aware that your results will pick your enemies for you! Often, stakeholders don't even understand their own interests; they need to see a common picture, a conceptual model, not so all can agree, but so someone can disagree.

In monitoring, you want efficiency -- the most information you can get for the least buck, but in adaptive management, all parties come to the table with different goals. As you go about this work, you need to create enough political consensus that whatever your findings are, they are trusted because it came from a political process. The "disturbance regime" is what will bring back a balanced environment? A scientist's view is to ask what collateral damage are we willing to live with? The question is can you teach a manager what a "disturbance regime" is (in the biological sense).

Adaptive management is a recipe for conflict -- it's a planning process that gets criticism all along the way! Things you thought easy become difficult, and there is a danger of prematurely looking onto a certain viewpoint that may later prove wrong, making it very difficult to redirect ideas and to persuade others. Adaptive management theology then turns into real life difficulty, but, it is through old ideas being challenged that theories are altered, processes change, and all parties learn.

Status of AMWG Charter - Steven Lloyd -- Steve handed out a copy of the changes made to the background and purpose section of the Charter (attachment 3). A paragraph was also added to the end of Section 11 related to conflict of interest. Questions arose about the language, "does not preclude consideration" which was added on. There was discomfort expressed concerning this wording by a few members of the group. Robert Lynch was concerned about the appointment of 5 year terms being longer than the two year Charter Renewal period. Every 2 years the secretary will be faced with rechartering and reappointing. Steve explained that their membership is terminated automatically if the Charter is not renewed. The intent in this duration was to retain members for an extended period but also allow members in the environmental, power, and recreational interests to rotate membership. The question was asked if this was in violation to FACA regulations. Bruce Moore stated that this is just a technical point that is easily solvable, and that the issue will be readdressed with Department of Interior solicitors.

Some members of the group expressed fear that if this document is put out it will create apprehension with the public. Other concerns were discussed, and the comment was made that the charter has already been sent to the Secretary, so why are we even discussing these things. Steve Magnussen stated that it is valuable to have these discussions just to better understand them, and he said that critical changes could still be made.

An opinion was expressed that we are still in a "conflict box" on funding issues and the scope of work required by the GCPA. Bruce said we needed to draw the line (financially); it is something which needs to be done, otherwise there are no bounds to the program. Steve explained that the last sentence talks about funding, but a comment was made that the last sentence is meaningless since it doesn't state where the distinction is, and, as written, this kind of language is clearly outside the intent of the act. The issue is what the charter allows the group to do, and there is no common agreement presently. The Grand Canyon Protection Act is the basis for the Charter, but within there are questions. Bruce Moore suggested Steve Magnussen take the input from the group and incorporate comments as appropriate.

Status of Record of Decision (ROD) - Bruce Moore -- Bruce passed out the "Operating Criteria for Glen Canyon Dam" for this year which reflected the ROD preferred alternative criteria (attachment 4). He thanked all for the good comments, and said that 90-95% of comments sent in were included. The section "Review of Documents" was added. He said he believes we now have a document we can send to the Secretary. The criteria and operating plan have been sent to the solicitor for review. Gordy Lind explained water release levels. There was some confusion about habitat maintenance flows.

Bruce said we're shooting for 1 December for the Secretary to sign both documents and send them out. He explained that this document was separate from AOP requirements. There will be 2 packages and 2 letters, but they will go out at the same time. So, this process lags the AOP because you have to first understand the AOP before coming up with the Glen Canyon Dam operating criteria.

The question was asked, "does the criteria need to be reviewed every year?" Bruce explained that the criteria does not change each year, but a decision is made whether or not to implement changes. It was suggested that every three years would be better, changing just the preferred alternative criteria as the adaptive management process identifies those changes. The question was raised about entities listed -- why were the tribes not listed? Bruce Moore said that was a good point and a change would be made to recognize the tribes. Comments were made that this document needs to be written in such a way, that it wouldn't need changed because of adaptive management processes changing. Reclamation has attempted to make the documents flexible to incorporate most changes in the future.

Temperature Control -Dave Trueman -- In October, Dave sent out a letter summarizing Reclamation's scoping of the potential impacts of temperature controls at Glen Canyon Dam. The letter noted that representatives of the cooperating agencies and researchers had scoped and discussed the potential impacts in a series of meetings and workshops held since 1992. Dave received only a few comments on the list, and noted that it now appears to be fairly complete. Reclamation will use this list to begin its environmental assessment (EA). This work is scheduled to begin in FY98. (See attachment 5).

The question was asked why do an EA at all, why not just go directly to an EIS? Based on the recommendations of the FWS and commitments made in the Glen Canyon EIS, Reclamation is preparing an assessment of the feasibility of temperature controls at the dam. At this point in time, Reclamation has only committed to studying the feasibility of temperature controls. After this study is completed, Reclamation may choose to look at other options including an EIS.

Dave was asked if Reclamation would be considering different design alternatives. Reclamation's Denver office will be preparing a feasibility cost estimate for the project. They will be considering various design options in their cost analysis. This would be a cost estimate for the feasibility study and would not be detailed enough for bid specifications. More work would be necessary if Reclamation were to proceed with construction.

The question was asked if there would be opportunities to debate the merits of the temperature control structure and alternatives? Reclamation has completed its scoping (identification) of the impacts and resources to be studied in the environmental assessment. The first opportunity to have a meaningful debate on the issues and impacts will occur when Reclamation releases its study results in a draft environmental assessment on the project. A second opportunity for debate would occur in the appropriation process.

Dave suggested holding a workshop to continue these discussions. January 9, 1997, at 10:00 a.m. at the LaQuinta was decided upon for a temperature control workshop for those who wish to participate and discuss Reclamation's plans.

ESA Update - Christine Karas -- Sufficient progress is being made on implementation of the Biological Opinion.

Christine presented an overview of the key elements of the Biological Opinion. (Please see attachment 6 for a detailed description and progress review of each element.)

Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center - Dr. Dave Garrett --

Center Organization: (See attachment 7.)

Dr. Garrett stated that the TWG is a critical component of the Center structure. He suggested the current level of involvement and intense interaction with the TWG is necessary for the success of the Center. Dr. Garrett passed out copies of the overheads he presented, discussing FY 1996 month-by-month accomplishments for the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (Center), and the targets for FY 1997.

The question was asked if the TWG needed to have the approval of the secretary in order to proceed with the Center's work. Bruce Moore talked about the sensitivity of FACA and explained that during the transition period Reclamation is the body that sends comments to the Secretary, with this group being the body for this input, not as a formal entity, but as a necessary group. The Long Term Monitoring Plan will go to the National Research Council for a second level review. We will continue to collect comments and then do another revision.

Dr. Garrett then presented slides on the Transition plan from Glen Canyon Environmental Studies to the Center. He stated the primary elements would be completed in June. An assessment of Glen Canyon Dam Operations impacts on Lake Powell was presented; potential upstream impacts (physical, chemical, social, economic, cultural, and biological resources) were proposed for inclusion using a descriptive comparative analysis, and then assessment by a science group. Recommendations were given to constrain the program to water quality.

The question was asked why this program was being funded when monitoring on Lake Powell is going to shut down. Dr. Garrett stated there are significant questions regarding impacts to Lake Powell, but with over six years of data collected, there had never been a synthesis of the Lake Powell data, and that it was better to light a candle, than to continue to curse the darkness. The comment was made that the study may produce data that is of use to resource managers outside the bounds of the Grand Canyon Protection Act, and that those beneficiaries should provide funds. Then power revenues could be used on required GCPA work. The comment was made that actions effect impacts upstream.

Dave Garrett commented that he and Bruce made a management decision to perform the assessment in order to release the knowledge gained by collection of the data.

A comment was made that the money proposed for the assessment is already allocated for Lake Powell monitoring, and if good information comes out of the monitoring, then it is worth the dollars spent. Dr. Garrett stated he would rewrite the proposal and release to the TWG. The study would begin in January.

Subgroup Reports

Long-Term Monitoring Plan - David Garrett -- Dr. Garrett passed out copies of an overview of the Long-Term Monitoring and Research Strategic Plan (attachment 8). This plan covers a 5-yr. period (FY 1998 - 2000), and is based on a lot of interaction between all stakeholders. The plan will be reviewed by the TWG and the AMWG before implementation. The budget for this 5-yr. strategic plan is anticipated at approximately 7 Million/yr.

Dr. Garrett made the comment that in all research programs there are priorities, restraining laws, and guiding lights to pay attention to. The biological opinion and programmatic agreement are but two.

He then introduced the new employees, Ruth Lambert, Cultural Programs Project Manager, and Barry Gold, Project Manager for the Biological Program.

Cultural Resources - Janet Balsam -- A second draft of the Historic Preservation Plan will be circulated to PA signatories in December for a 30 day review period.

A symposium on the Glen Canyon Dam Operations cultural resources program will be presented at the George Wright Society meeting in Albuquerque in March 1997. Papers from the symposium will be published in the society proceedings.

Wrap-up - Bruce Moore -- The next meeting will be held Monday and Tuesday, February 3-4 at the LaQuinta Inn, Greenway road in Phoenix. The meeting will begin at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, reconvening Tuesday morning, and ending about 3:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

