

**COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
Minutes of Meeting  
**June 6, 2023**

**Jackson, WY and Virtual**

Advisory Council Beginning Time: Tuesday June 6, 2023, 2:00 p.m. (MDT)

Designated Federal Officer  
Presiding: **Melynda Roberts**  
**Chairman Bill Hasencamp**

**I. Welcome, Introductions Hasencamp**

Chairman Bill Hasencamp called the Advisory Council meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. (MDT) and welcomed those participating. He noted that Melynda Roberts was sitting at the table as the Designated Federal Officer along with Clarence Fullard, Reclamations new Water Quality Group Chief. An attendance roster of those who participated in the meeting is included as Appendix A.

**II. Opening Comments Roberts**

Melynda Roberts opened for Reclamation by reviewing the role of the Advisory Council and position of the Designated Federal Officer (DFO). A copy of Roberts' presentation is included as Appendix B). Roberts is currently serving as the DFO. She reviewed the different responsibilities of the DFO including overseeing the meetings, keeping records and assuring compliance with federal regulations. and the role Advisory Council Chair which include presiding at and conducting the meetings. She also reviewed the role of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). She indicated that the TAG members are appointed by each state with the TAG Chair being appointed by the Advisory Council Chair and that the TAG makes recommendations to the Advisory Council.

Roberts recognized that Justin Bern was designated to serve as an alternate to Erin Jordan (AZ), but Jordan was able to attend the meeting virtually. Charlie Ferrantelli attended as an alternate for Jeff Cowley.

**III. Approval of Agenda Hasencamp**

Hasencamp then asked for a review and motion to adopt the proposed agenda. There was a motion to amend the agenda to add an item IV.C. Election of Officers. The amended agenda was adopted by motion and is included, as amended, as Appendix C.

**IV. Draft Minutes of 2022 Fall Advisory Council Meeting – Lake Tahoe Roberts**

The draft minutes of the October 25, 2022 Advisory Council meeting held in Lake Tahoe, CA were then presented. There were no proposed changes to the minutes, and they were adopted by the Council.

There was then a discussion on the election of Advisory Council officers. A motion was made to maintain Bill Hasencamp as Chair and Becky Mitchell as Vice Chair of the Council. The motion passed.

**V. Items from Forum**

**Mitchell**

Vice Chair Becky Mitchell indicated that there were no items to be brought to the Council from the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum.

**VI. Basinwide and Basin States Program**

**Roberts**

**A. Quality of Water Progress Report #27**

**Radtke**

Roberts then turned the time over to Robert Radtke to provide an update on the Quality of Water Progress Report #27. Radtke indicated that Progress Report #27 had been surnamed and was final. The pdf is currently receiving a 508 Compliance review and should shortly be posted to Reclamation's website. It uses salinity values from the Forum's 2020 Review and agency values from the 2022 FAR. Progress Report #28 will use the Forum's 2023 Review values.

**B. Budget**

**Roberts**

Roberts then provided the Council with a Basinwide Program and Basin States Program update (see Appendix D). She provided a list of active projects under the two programs, including information on the projects' tons of salt removed, their costs and construction elements.

**C. NOFO Overview**

**Roberts**

Roberts then reported on the new Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) including its timeline. Roberts indicated that the release of the NOFO occurred on the prior Friday. She discussed a planned question and answer meeting and the deadlines for submittal of salt load reduction requests. The NOFO submission deadline is on September 27, 2023. Due to a question later in the meeting, Roberts indicated that there was a form created for this NOFO which includes the priority dates of the water rights being held by the applicants. She indicated that inclusion of this form was based on prior recommendations. There was a suggestion that applicants could submit some type of letter which discusses the relative priorities and the probability of receiving a full water supply. Don Barnett indicated that at the last Forum meeting there was a concern expressed that, given the shortage of water supply in the Basin, Reclamation could find that it awards NOFO projects to canals that may not receive water in the future and so in response to that concern the Work Group created a subcommittee to review the matter and recommended to Reclamation that it include in the NOFO information relative to water right priorities. The goal was to decrease the risk of funding a project which may not regularly have water. The form is also included in Appendix D of these minutes.

Roberts then provided the Council with a list showing the funding status of the active projects. She recognized that, due to the smallness of the print, that some of the information was difficult to read and asked Council members for input on information desired. There was a request that the detailed information be emailed out prior to each

meeting with a summary slide presented at future meetings. Roberts discussed the total expenditures (\$8.5M in the current year) and the projected carry-over amounts. She also discussed the Basin States program contracts, including the SIR (Studies, Investigations and Research) projects. There was a discussion on who could apply for SIR funding. Most studies are conducted by the USGS, but other participating federal agencies can participate with the funding. Generally, the projects are identified and scoped out by the Science Team and recommended to the TAG for review and recommendation to the Advisory Council. There was a question relative to a list of priorities which have been identified for study. Tom Marston indicated that there is such a list, and he will include it in his presentation.

D. Updates on LC Salinity Projects

Scott

Carrie Scott, LC Salinity Coordinator, provided an update on Title I activities which focus on meeting the Minute 242 commitments below Imperial Dam. She discussed the relationship between improved water quality at Imperial and the difficulty in meeting the treaty commitments. She also indicated that during this incredible water year there were Gila River flows which entered the Colorado River below Imperial Dam but above Morales Dam which required added measurement and administration, but that it looked like the U.S. will be okay with its differential delivery commitments. Due to several questions, Scott indicated that the U.S. was unsure on the whether the Gila River would make it easier or harder to meet the treaty commitments to Mexico. She indicated that unlike prior years, the Gila River flows were of better quality than the drain flows and at a certain level the flows helped meet the water quantity commitments, though there were still excess deliveries to Mexico.

Scott also fielded a question relative to the inactive Yuma desalting plant and the moneys being expended each year just to maintain the facility. She indicated that over the past several years Reclamation has ramped back on any capital improvement projects which would be required to operate the plant. She indicated that the plant is in ready reserve but that it would take more than an hundred million dollars and several years of project construction to bring the plant up to being able to operate at one-third capacity. She indicated that there are not any moneys budgeted for these projects. There was a question about using IRA funds for the plant. Scott indicated that she believed that there was a prohibition on the use of these funds for the plant but there was a wonder by some if “Bucket 2” moneys could be used.

E. Lower Basin Forecasting Update

Saxton

Jolaine Saxton introduced herself to the group. She indicated that she will take Stacy Wade’s role in representing the LC to the Council. Saxton provided a presentation to the group on the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund (LCRBDF, see Appendix E). She discussed the timing of salinity funding coming into the fund and provided a current year, monthly funding report. She also discussed the revenue forecasting tools and update which was discussed in the last meeting. Though the updated tool shows higher projected income than shown six months ago, the models do not include release schedules presently being discussed nor does it include future drought potential. Saxton indicated that she will take input back to the modelers and that an update will be provided every six months at the Council meetings.

**VII. Expenditures of Basin Funds**

A. SIR Updates of open studies Roberts

Roberts provided to the group an update on the active SIR projects (see Appendix F). She discussed the status of the efforts. There was a discussion that the Lower Basin trends study is now nearly completed and that the additional funding from BLM is for the Upper Basin trends study.

B. Recommendations from TAG Marston

Tom Marston then reported on proposed new SIR studies (also included in Appendix F). Marston indicated that after a review by the Science Team and the Work Group, the TAG ultimately reviewed three potential proposals for study. The first proposal was for the creation of an interactive map showing salinity data, the second proposal was for additional funding for the on-going long-term water quality trends study in the Upper Basin and BLM has decided to provide this funding, and the third was a proposed add on to the trends study the ability to model the relationship between salinity and reservoirs (the original proposal also included the modeling of municipal salt contributions). In addition to the three proposals which seek Basin States Program dollar funding, there are two proposed studies at PVU which will use project O&M dollars. The first is high resolution of the brine wedge along the Dolores River and the second is a statistical analysis to optimize the timing of pumping the brine production wells. Marston indicated that it appears that these two proposals will both be funded with PVU O&M dollars. Marston also indicated that the Upper Colorado River NGWOS efforts is also working on two studies on the Dolores River which will help in better understanding of this system. The first is looking at better understanding the relationship between brine pumping and the brine/freshwater interface which will improve the groundwater modeling data as well as the funding of thermal mapping with drone flights along the Dolores River.

C. Action by Advisory Council Hasencamp

Roberts then led the Council in a discussion on funding recommendations for the first three proposed studies. After discussion there was a motion to accept the TAG recommendation that the first study (interactive mapping) be funded and that the Council endorse BLM’s funding of the second study (additional moneys for the Upper Basin trends study), but that the third study (modeling of reservoirs’ impacts to salinity) not be recommended at this time. The motion passed.

**VIII. Public Comment Hasencamp**

There were no public comments.

**IX. Direction to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Hasencamp/Roberts**

There was no direction to the TAG.

**X. Other Business/Actions Hasencamp**

There was no other business brought forward to the Council.

**XI. Reclamation Follow-up**

**Pullan**

Wayne Pullan then addressed the Council. He discussed the reorganization of the UC Region. He indicated that with all that is occurring in the Colorado River Basin they decided to establish the Upper Colorado Operations Office (UCOO) and made Katrina Grantz, the Deputy Regional Engineer, responsible for the UCOO. Under UCOO Reclamation created two divisions: 1) the Modeling, Operations and Project Management Division and 2) the Adaptive Management and Water Quality Division. This division includes both FACA groups (see Appendix G). He announced that Clarence Fullard will head up the Water Quality Group within the second division. He also noted the tremendous job done by Melynda Roberts in carrying the program through all of the changes. Pullan turned the time over to Fullard to introduce himself. Fullard indicated that he has worked for Reclamation since 2016, initially with the Technical Services Center in Denver and then in 2020 he moved to the UC office as the Deputy Program Manager for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program where he met many of those involved in salinity control. He has experience in working with advisory committees and believes working with the salinity control program is a good fit.

Pullan expressed appreciation for all of the efforts to respond to the concerns with the LCRBDF accrual issue. He also discussed the assumption in the 2023 Review relative to the operations at Paradox. He indicated that Reclamation does not have any significant indications that the Paradox injection well will fail anytime in the near future and that Reclamation intends to operate the project as long as the hardware will hold up. The project appears to be operating well at the 65% level.

**XII. Next Meeting**

**Hasencamp**

Chairman Hasencamp indicated that the next Advisory Council meeting will be held in the fall in conjunction with the Forum meeting and that the date and location will be determine later. The meeting then adjourned.

**Adjourn Meeting:**

**Approximately 4:00 pm (MDT)**