

**COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
Minutes of Meeting  
**June 3, 2025**  
**Snowbird, UT and Virtual**

Advisory Council Beginning Time: Wednesday June 3, 2025, 1:30 p.m. (MDT)

Designated Federal Officer:  
Presiding:

**Katrina Grantz**  
**Chairman Bill Hasencamp**

**I. Welcome, Introductions** **Hasencamp**

Chairman Bill Hasencamp called the Advisory Council meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Hasencamp commenced the meeting expressing appreciation to the federal employees for their good work. Hasencamp asked for anyone who was not in attendance at the morning Forum meeting to identify themselves. Appendix A contains a list of those who attended the Advisory Council meeting, either in person or virtually. Hasencamp also recognized Dave “D.K.” Kanzer who had been a long-standing representative from Colorado on the TAG and Work Group, who was participating in the meetings.

**II. Opening Comments** **Wayne Pullan**

Wayne Pullan, Upper Colorado Regional Director then addressed the Council. Pullan welcomed the group by indicating that the meeting was being held near where he was raised. He indicated that the salinity control program has always appealed to him over the years. He indicated that the Program makes sense because it seeks to reduce salinity for the least cost and is science-based, which gives the Program its credibility. He indicated that he has a reputation for asking hard questions, but that helps things stand up to scrutiny. He indicated that he thinks of the Program in three phases: 1) the initial Program with large, centralized projects; 2) the Program after the 1995 creation of the Basinwide Program; and 3) the future, when people are looking at what the Program should look like in the next phase. He indicated that he supports the Forum’s efforts to look to the future with a big vision. Pullan stated that the Program has an unending list of issues like deteriorating infrastructure, changing hydrology, different future operating plans, and a new administration and that given the nexus of changes, it is important to think about what phase 3 should look like, and when it should occur.

Pullan expressed appreciation to everyone who was involved in fixing the LCRBDF accrual issues. He indicated that it was something that wasn’t going to get better without a change and that the group should see the fix as a big success.

He then turned to the Paradox Valley Unit. He indicated that he came into the Regional Director’s office not long after the earthquake and went through the process of getting the injection well back in operations in a test mode. It operated, and continues to operate, successfully through a series of test periods without significant trouble in terms of earthquakes or issues with operation of the infrastructure. He indicated that he had asked

for a risk analysis. The results were incomplete. They have not taken a deeper look at the risk analysis for some time but are willing to do so.

Pullan announced that Reclamation's proposed President's FY2026 budget was released the day before and showed a reduction from \$6 million to \$4.5 million. He indicated that on those occasions when Reclamation comes to him with additional budget, he will always include salinity in the request. Pullan also gave an update on the current reductions in staffing. He indicated that the priorities which had the greatest sway were energy, public safety, national security, cyber security, and maintenance and operation of infrastructure. He indicated that as one considers advocacy for the salinity program, it would be helpful to see how it fits into these priorities. He indicated that his region is down about 21% in staffing, but more significantly, he indicated, is the willingness of the staff to step up. He then paid tribute to Melynda Roberts for her significant service as well as Clarence Fullard. Pullan indicated that he has asked Kathy Callister to, at least temporarily, fill in as the salinity control program manager. He indicated that there will be a time when they are allowed to hire staff. He further indicated that Alex Walker, who is knowledgeable about salinity and Tara Ashby, will also assist with the program. He stated that Reclamation has two advisory councils, salinity and the adaptive management and that Tara has experience already with the adaptive management efforts.

Pullan's final comments were related to a request to advise Reclamation on Minute 323. He indicated that the Forum was not part of that request because when the idea was floated the scope was sufficiently narrow so that there would not be any impacts on the salinity control program. He offered his assurance that if there is mission creep on this matter then there would be additional discussion. Chair Hasencamp expressed appreciation to Pullan for his words and echoed the Advisory Council's appreciation for the work of Roberts and Fullard.

### **III. Review and Approval of Agenda** **Hasencamp**

Hasencamp then called for a review of the proposed agenda, noting that the Designated Federal Officer in the room was Katrina Grantz, not Kathy Callister as was shown on the agenda. With that change a motion to adopt the agenda was approved (see Appendix B).

### **IV. Minutes of the 2024 Fall Advisory Council Meeting** **Grantz**

Grantz noted for the group that a change in FACA requirements now requires that the Council's minutes be approved within 90 days of a public meeting. Hence, consistent with this requirement, the minutes of the prior meeting were already circulated to the Council Members, and without any expressions of concern, they were approved by the Chair. Hasencamp indicated that this will be the process moving forward as well.

### **V. FACA Updates** **Grantz**

Grantz indicated that Kathy Callister will be the Designated Federal Official (DFO) for this

committee moving forward until there has been a new hire for the position. Grantz reported that there has not been any specific new guidance on the administration of advisory committees from Washington but the need for getting Federal Register notices out in a timely manner has increased. She strongly requested that the date and location of the fall meeting be locked down as soon as possible as well as suggested that the spring meeting also be set soon.

Grantz noted that the Advisory Council's charter expires at the end of August 2026 and indicated that Reclamation will begin the renewal process in late 2025 after they have gained experience with the process through the AMWG's renewal. She reported that the new charter will need to tie the purpose of the Council to the Administration's priorities (energy, public safety, national security, cyber security, and maintenance and operation of infrastructure) and indicated that she was sure that there would be good ways tie the purposes of the Council to those priorities. In response to a question, Grantz replied that when charter renewals are submitted, they come with a justification of why the Administration would like to receive input from the Council.

Hasencamp indicated that the Council will move to get the fall 2025 and spring 2026 meetings set as soon as possible.

## **VI. Election of Officers**

**Hasencamp**

Hasencamp then turned the to the subject of election of officers. Dave Robbins made a motion for Bill Hasencamp and Becky Mitchell to serve as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Upon vote, the motion passed.

## **VII. 2024 Advisory Council Report Responses**

**Hasencamp/Grantz**

Hasencamp then turned to the agencies for a brief response to the 2024 Advisory Council Report.

*Reclamation* – Grantz reported for Reclamation. She expressed appreciation for the report indicating that Reclamation has prepared written responses. She indicated Reclamation's commitment to continue to seek additional funding for the Program both in over-target and year-end funding requests. She reported that Reclamation will continue to operate Paradox as best they can within the constraints of seismicity and that they will follow-up on whether the injection rate can be increase.

*NRCS* – Stacey Youngren responded for NRCS. She expressed appreciation for the report and indicated that a written response would be forthcoming.

*USGS* – Tom Marston thanked the Council for the many complementary comments found in the report relative to USGS's program support through innovated science. He indicated that USGS will continue to move forward supporting the 20-gage network, studies at Paradox, and studies which look at the long-term trends in salinity. On the latter matter he recognized that their report may have raised more questions than answers but that they will

seek to address this matter and gain answers to the identified questions. In response to a question on the Spanish Valley study, Marston indicated that with a recent change in personnel in administration of the Matheson Wetlands, the groundwater drilling effort approved under the SIR was beginning to move forward again. He also indicated that given the likely low flow regime in the Colorado River for the coming fall, it was probable that the synoptic efforts to identify salt input would occur then.

*BLM* – Paula Cutillo reported for BLM. She expressed appreciation for the Council’s feedback on BLM’s program and recognition of BLM’s progress in identifying and prioritizing the most effective projects. She indicated that a written response to the report had been prepared and was being routed through BLM for signature. She indicated that the report recommended that BLM funding be increased from \$2 million to \$2.5 million moving forward and that they will look for funding as it is available and fits within staffing ability. For now, she asked the Council to note that the President’s budget proposed to reduce funding to the Aquatic Resources Program by 53% and if it is adopted by Reclamation there would probably be a similar reduction to salinity efforts.

*U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service* – Kurt Broderdorp expressed appreciation for the report. In response to his question, the Council indicated that they did not need training on how the FWS accounts for wildlife habitat values. Broderdorp indicated that a written report would be forthcoming.

*EPA* – Peter Ismert indicated that this will be his last meeting as EPA’s representative to the Council. He indicated that EPA has a response letter which was being routed for signature. He indicated that EPA would work with the states on the implementation of the plan of implementation under the standard. He further indicated that EPA would continue to work with and report on the tribal NPDES permits that are issued. He also indicated that a new representative to the Council, probably still within Region 8, would be named soon.

## **VIII. Considerations from the Forum**

**Vice-Chair Rebecca Mitchell**

Mitchell indicated that there were no items for consideration from the Forum.

## **IX. Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund Update**

**Jolaine Saxton**

Jolaine Saxton reported remotely to the Council. She provided an update on the status of the salinity portion of the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund (LCRBDF) (see Appendix C). She reported on a beginning fund balance of approximately \$1.9 million and an income of \$4.9 million. She reported on the process for income to the salinity fund. She then reported on the best- and worst-case scenarios for salinity income with the median forecast of around \$7 million. She discussed the modeled releases with intended conservation. She then reported back to the Forum on recently discovered issues with Hoover power production from some of the turbines if the reservoir elevation dropped below an elevation of 1035 (12 of the 17 turbines would suffer cavitation below this elevation and would need to be shut down which would lead to a 70% reduction in power generation). Because the estimated chances of reaching this elevation was just 5%, it was not included in the funding forecasts referred to above. Hasencamp expressed appreciation

for the modeling done by Reclamation which showed a range in projections. In response to a question, Saxton indicated that the funding to repair the cavitation issue would not come from LCRBDF and that they were exploring possible funding sources. She indicated that the cost for replacing the turbine runners was in the \$130-\$150 million range.

**X. Basinwide Program**

**Tara Ashby**

Grantz reported that Reclamation does not intend to release the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the salinity control program in 2025 but did intend to release it in early 2026. Due to a question, Reclamation indicated that NOFOs are generally released every two to three years.

Ashby provided an update on the Basinwide Program (see Appendix D). She cited the Salinity Control Act and indicated that because of that language, Reclamation sends proposals for funding to the Commissioner for review. She reviewed open Basinwide projects and their funding and completion status. She then reviewed the projected distribution of funding but noted that her spreadsheet showed \$6 million per year in appropriation but that it had been reported earlier in the meeting that the then just released President's FY2026 Budget was only for \$4.5 million. Ashby also passed out a more detailed spreadsheet of Basinwide Program income and expenses (also included in Appendix D).

**XI. Basin States Program (BSP)**

**Ashby**

Ashby then reported on the status of the Basin States Program (see Appendix E). She indicated that the BSP allowed the funding of more types of salinity efforts. She discussed the contracts with the state ag agencies and the need to confirm the expenditure of the remaining funds under the contracts. She also reported on the open irrigation entity agreements under the BSP. A discussion among the group confirmed that the Interstate Irrigation agreement had been extended for one year and that it was then out to bid. She then reported on the status of Study, Investigation, and Research (SIR) contracts followed by a summary report on the projected future fund income and expenditures (a detailed summary was also handed out). Ashby provided a table showing the present and projected accrual balance in the LCRBDF.

Lastly, Ashby provided the anticipated timeline for the 2026 NOFO and Walker indicated that he and Ashby had not previously participated in a NOFO but that they had invested significant time in getting up to speed on the process and were ready to move it forward. Due to a question regarding the relatively large carryover balance in the Basin States Program, Don Barnett reminded the group that in the 2023 NOFO, all of the awarded projects received funding under the Basinwide Program and so the dollars accumulated up to that point in the Basin States Program had been carried over, unspent, into the current fiscal year. He reminded the group that because the Basin States Program dollars are non-appropriated dollars ("X funds") they can carryover from year to year. Jessica Neuwerth commented that the carryover appeared relatively high and that as such, there would be sufficient funds to carry out studies or projects that the Forum and Council might recommend.

## **XII. Technical Advisory Group (TAG)/ BSP Funding Recommendations**

**Tom Marston/Aaron Mead**

Aaron Mead, TAG Chair, introduced this agenda item. He indicated that the TAG had been working with USGS on identifying potential studies to support the salinity control efforts. He asked Marston to provide a report on the status of current studies (see Appendix F). Marston reminded the Council of the identified four quadrants of science support and then showed how the existing studies fit within these areas. He then reported on individual efforts starting with efforts to improve the efficacy of the data collected under the 20-Station Network. He indicated that the SLOAD regressions equations had been updated and provide to Reclamation. He also reported that the Interactive Salinity Map was live and could be used by anyone. He indicated that the plan moving forward was for USGS to continually receive input on the site and what data or functionality could be added. Marston reported that the high flow salt loading report, which had received additional funding from BLM for additional sites, was ongoing with an anticipated initial report to the Work Group in the fall of 2025. He indicated that the hydrosalinity efficacy study was just getting underway. It had been coincidentally helped with Demand Management funding in the Price San Rafael area from the State of Utah. Marston indicated that lessons learned in that area would then be taken to the Grand Valley and Lower Gunnison areas of Colorado.

Marston then moved to the reservoir salinity parameterization study which was just getting underway. The idea was hatched off a study which suggested that there was calcite precipitation in Lake Powell which was affecting salinity levels. The new study would use a statistical approach to tease out of reservoir data throughout the western U.S. the relationship between reservoir parameters and salinity sequestration. Marston reported that the funding holdups with the Paradox regional groundwater study had been resolved and that field work would begin in the summer and that the diffuse groundwater seepage and mass loading study of the Colorado River in Castle and Spanish Valleys would occur in the fall. In response to a question on the timing of this study, Marston reminded the group that the study was divided into two potential phases with the field work occurring in the fall of 2025 and a report of the findings occurring in the spring of 2026. He then reported on ongoing efforts to review and update the Paradox regression equations indicating that the effort was moving forward but was not yet quite ready for release.

Finally, Marston moved to the Green River study. He reminded the group that this effort was to review and revalidate findings of a prior study and see the effects of a new large area of irrigation. This study was paused because the new lands were fallowed in 2023 and 2024 but were again under irrigation. Marston indicated that additional funding was needed to reinitiate the study due to the inefficiencies from having to pause the study.

Mead then reported that the TAG had met and reviewed the request for additional funding to complete the Green River study. In response to several questions, Marston indicated that two years of data would be sufficient and that it was not foreseen that the lands would be fallowed again during the study period. Based on a recommendation from the TAG, a motion passed to send a recommendation from the Advisory Council to Reclamation that the study be funded (see Appendix G).

**XIII. AC Recommendations to Secretaries/Administrator**

**Hasencamp**

There were no items identified for the Council to bring to the attention of the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of EPA at that time.

**XIV. Coordination with the Forum**

**Mitchell**

Mitchell indicated that there was a recommendation that the Council coordinate with the Forum and schedule upcoming meetings.

**XV. Public Comment**

**Hasencamp**

There were no public comments.

**XVI. Other Business/Action**

**Hasencamp**

Hasencamp indicated that the next meeting would be held in California during the week of October 27, 2025.

Advisory Council Adjournment Time: 3:00 p.m.