

Colorado River Storage Project

Fontenelle Working Group

Meeting Minutes

August 19, 2026

Participation

This meeting was held Wednesday, August 19, 2026, starting at 10 am MT, at Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, WY and virtually via Microsoft Teams. Attendees are listed on the last page.

Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of these working group meetings is to inform the public and other interested parties on Reclamation's current and future operational plans and to gather input from the public and interested parties regarding resources associated with the dam [Fontenelle].

Introductions – Mike Callahan (Bureau of Reclamation)

The Fontenelle Gorge Working Group meeting is an important step in developing operations plans for the fall and winter season. Reclamation takes the input provided as part of this process very seriously and appreciates the comments and questions provided through the Working Group.

Current and Forecasted Hydrology – Cal Rockey (Colorado Basin River Forecast Center)

The antecedent soil conditions, from fall 2025, can be an indicator of runoff efficiency in the spring. The Green was below normal this fall, with conditions in the 70-90% range for most of the basin. Fall soil moisture conditions were similar to last year.

Water year (WY) 2026 precipitation above Fontenelle has been near average this year (98% of average), but January through March were especially warm and dry.

Temperatures have been above normal. The NRCS has recorded periods of record warm daily average temperatures in the Upper Green, with new record highs in December and March. The entire southwest United States experienced its warmest March on record (since 1895), causing rapid early melt of an already poor snowpack. Snowpack peaked much earlier than normal and much below normal. Warm temperature in late March caused significant early melt and snowpack reached record lows in March and April.

The April through July observed inflow for Fontenelle was 318 thousand acre-feet (kaf), which is the 5th driest since 1991 and 43% of average. Forecasts of this period started in January and already predicted below average conditions due to poor fall soil moisture and below average precipitation. Monthly forecasts continued to drop as temperatures were above normal and snowpack remained much below normal. By April, the minimum probable (90% exceedance) forecast was below the minimum record.

This year's peak flow occurred in early June and was the 4th lowest on record at 3650 cfs.

Current conditions show that streamflow conditions at LaBarge, upstream of Fontenelle, are low, around the 25th percentile. Streamflows have been in this range since coming down from the March runoff. August has seen above average precipitation to date in the Green above Fontenelle.

There were no questions on this presentation.

Fontenelle Reservoir Operations – Mike Callahan (Bureau of Reclamation)

Reclamation covered the poor snowpack and decreasing water supply forecasts. Mike also showed the poor inflows that were observed.

Mike reviewed Fontenelle operations from May 2026 until the present. In the early spring, Fontenelle's pool elevation was higher than median due to conservative winter releases. Releases decreased to 700 cfs on May 28, 2026 and were held at that level. There was some previous discussion that there may be a need to further decrease releases to 600 cfs, but Reclamation is not currently seeing a need for the additional decrease. Despite low releases and a higher than normal pool elevation, the reservoir only filled to about 6500'.

Mike then reviewed modeled operations for 8/2026–4/2027. The modeling presented was from July using the most probable inflows from the CBRFC's forecast. With dry hydrology in the forecast, low releases are expected to continue. Releases are planned to hold 700 cfs through the summer, with a chance of seeing a small increase in the fall. Hydrology permitting, Reclamation intends to hold 800 cfs through the winter (usually mid-November until the ice breaks up in late March). Based on questions, it was clarified that this release is mostly for ice jams, but we appreciate that there are complimentary fisheries benefits to consistent flows. Also based on questions, Reclamation clarified that it intends to hold flows consistent but may need to change them. From the meeting attendees, support was voiced for winter releases being at least 800 cfs for fisheries concerns, including avoiding frazil ice.

Mike also noted that there will be a 3-day flow increase (to ~950 cfs) starting 8/21. This release is part of a project in partnership with Wyoming, where Wyoming is providing additional inflow to Fontenelle and Fontenelle is passing it. Another smaller release is expected. Based on questions, it was clarified that the second release timing and volume will be finalized as Wyoming completes accounting to confirm the volume of water that arrived in Fontenelle, but that this release will be made before winter flows are set.

Questions/Comments

No additional questions/comments were received.

Next Meeting

TBD – expected in April 2027.

Attendees

Alcorn, Brenda-CBRFC
Anderson, Cory-Reclamation
Becker, Amanda-Reclamation
Brown, Chris-WY
Callahan, Mike-Reclamation
Cowley, Jeff-WY SEO
Duncan, Joe-WY SEO
Fegler, Mel-WY SEO
Flagen, Ross-USFWS Seedskaadee
Hart, Howard-Unaffiliated
Hines, Brian-Reclamation
Horgen, Scott-Solvay
Luke, Ryan-Reclamation
Rockey, Cal-CBRFC
Seppie, Brian-GR/RS Sw Joint Powers Water Board
Thoman, Mary-Sweetwater County Commission
Todea, Nathaniel-Reclamation
Walrath, John-Unknown
Walrath, Nick-Trout Unlimited
Westenskow, Mark-City of Green River Public Works
Wild, Ron-PacifiCorp