

Aspinall Unit Operations Meeting
August 19, 1993

The subject meeting was held in Grand Junction, Colorado. An attendance list is attached. The purpose of the meeting was to review updated inflow forecasts, and adjust Aspinall Unit operation plans with input from all for the August-December 1993, period.

Brad Vickers reviewed operations during the 1993, spring runoff. The runoff was considered a '2 in 10' year event. Spills at Crystal Reservoir resulted primarily from side inflow to Morrow Point and Crystal, rather than from plans to cause a high peak flow downstream. Peak flows in the Black Canyon were approximately 5,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) on May 22, 1993. Preliminary data shows peaks reached 19,000 and 21,000 cfs at Delta and Whitewater, respectively. Preliminary 1993 data is enclosed.

Agencies and organizations commented on the spring operation:

! The Bureau of Land Management was not present, but previously reported a good spring with no major problems.

! The Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), using United States Geological Survey (USGS) gauge data, expressed concern with daily fluctuations and that rainbow and brown trout reproduction may be very poor as a result of the fluctuations. Graphs of this information are attached. There was a discussion on whether fluctuations actually occurred to the extent shown on the graphs:

-Randy Seaholm will assist Steve McCall in drafting a request to the USGS for additional information on the gauge data.

-Jeff Ackerman volunteered to assist Brad Vickers in evaluating USGS records against power generation records for Crystal powerplant.

-Keith Kepler will provide data on the South Canal as it relates to the effect that Gunnison Tunnel diversions have on flows below the tunnel.

-Brad Vickers will report on findings at, or prior to, the January meeting.

! The CDOW and the National Park Service also reported that large losses of kokanee salmon from Blue Mesa Reservoir were observed, beginning in June.

! The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) reported it is requesting \$600,000 to repair flood damage in western Colorado under the Emergency Watershed Protection program (see attachment). High

water concerns along the Gunnison River centered around bank erosion, protection of the sewer plant near Delta, and danger to bridges from the combination of river stage and debris.

! The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) reported that radio-tagged Colorado squawfish are being monitored in the Gunnison River this summer, and larval fish are being collected to determine if successful squawfish reproduction has occurred. A summary of habitat investigations during the runoff is attached.

! The National Park Service reported a good spring at the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, and requested as much advance notification as possible of flow changes so data in the canyon can be collected. At the Curecanti National Recreation Area, Blue Mesa filled. There were water elevation problems at Morrow Point for several days that disrupted the boat tour operations. Advance warning was requested in the future when reservoir levels vary from the norm.

! Western Area Power Administration reported a good generation year, and the Curecanti Field Office reported no problems.

! The State Engineers Office reported it was fortunate the runoff occurred gradually, and overall it was a good spring.

Brad Vickers and Coll Stanton reviewed preliminary contract water delivery computations (attached) and plans for the August-December operations. Flows through the Black Canyon should be around 1,000 cfs for this period. Research flows of 600 cfs will be provided September 27-30, October 5-8, and October 11-15. Errors noted in the Computation Handout were noted, and corrected copies of this handout are attached. A problem with the formula's use for the high runoff year was noted: the amount of water accounted for under the "National Park Service and Endangered Species" column exceeds the amounts allowed by the preliminary contract.

Suggestions for improving the accounting under the preliminary contract were discussed. In general, Reclamation needs to compile information on problems and potential adjustments that could be made to the formula for further discussion by concerned agencies.

Conclusions

-Reclamation will examine available records, and contact the USGS to better quantify daily fluctuations during the 1993, runoff period.
-In general, Gunnison River flows through the Black Canyon will be around 1,000 cfs between August and December, 1993. Research flows of 600 cfs will be provided during three periods in September and October.

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Attendance List
3. Preliminary Water Year Data (Daily Flows)
4. Graphs of Planned vs. Actual Operations
5. CDOW's Stage Discharge Graphs
6. CWCB Emergency Watershed Protection Fund Request
7. FWS Summary of Physical-Habitat Activities
8. Reclamation's Graphs/Tables from Colorado River Operation Plan
9. Computation of Delivery to the NPS