

WCS-RSwickard  
PRJ-13.10

Subject: Navajo Unit Operations

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is a summary of our April 28, 2009, meeting to coordinate Reclamation's operation of the Navajo Unit. The meeting was held at the Farmington Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico.

Highlights of the meeting include:

—Chris Landry, Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies gave presentation on dust on snow and the affect it has on snowmelt.

—Based on the Mid-April Most Probable Inflow Forecast, this year's April through July inflow into Navajo Reservoir is forecasted to be 720,000 acre-feet or 93 percent of average.

— A 2-week spring peak release, as outlined in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJ RIP) Operating Rule Decision Tree, will begin with a roughly one-week ramp up on May 20<sup>th</sup> and conclude following a one-week ramp down on approximately June 18<sup>th</sup>. The approximate center of the hydrograph is designed to coincide with historical Animas River peak. The peak flow of 5,000 cfs is expected to occur for approximately 13 days. A required inspection on the auxiliary gate will occur after the spring peak release. The minimum release will be 500 cfs following the spring peak release. Releases will be adjusted based on the 7-day moving mean, using three of the four USGS gages in the critical habitat to achieve the target base flow of 500-1,000 cfs. Information regarding the spring hydrograph release schedule is available online at:  
[www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/notice/nav\\_rel.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/notice/nav_rel.html).

— The reservoir is now at a manageable elevation and there is adequate available storage to hold all anticipated inflows. No additional releases after the peak spring release are anticipated other than adjustments for the target base flows.

—With the current reservoir elevation and a near average snowpack, no shortage sharing is expected. Three of the ten parties have signed endorsements for the

Recommendations for San Juan River Administration and Operation for years 2009 through 2012.

—There will be three meetings in Durango, Colorado at the Strater Hotel hosted by the San Juan River Basin Implementation Program (SJRIP). The Biology Committee will meet on May 13<sup>th</sup>, followed by the Annual Meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>. At the Annual Meeting, Reclamation will discuss the results of last year's gate inspections. Finally, the Coordination Committee will meet on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Recommendations for San Juan River Administration and Operation for 2009-2012 will be discussed at this meeting. All of these meetings are open to the public.

The PowerPoint presentation from this meeting, as well as up-to-date information on Navajo Reservoir operations can be found at:

[www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/notice/nav\\_rel.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsvrs/notice/nav_rel.html).

If you have any ideas or suggestions which would improve these operation meetings, please let us know. The next operations meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at 1:00 in the Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street)**. If you have questions, please contact me at 970-385-6560 or email [ppage@usbr.gov](mailto:ppage@usbr.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Pat Page, Chief  
Southern Water Management Group  
Resource Management Division

Enclosure

bc: 86-68140

UC-400, UC-432, UC-430, UC-434, UC-700, UC-735 (ea w/encl)

WCG-CDeAngelis, WCG-EWarner, WCG-DCrabtree, WCG-SMcCall,  
WCG-BUilenberg, WCG-JHock (ea w/encl)

WCD-PPage, WCD-RSwickard, WCD-RChristianson, WCD-MChiarito,  
WCD-BDodd, WCD-MVelasquez (ea w/encl)

## NAVAJO UNIT OPERATIONS MEETING

April 28, 2009

**Participation:** This meeting was held in Farmington, New Mexico at the Civic Center.

**Purpose of Meeting:** The purpose of these meetings, held three times a year, is to gather input for determining upcoming operations for Navajo Reservoir. This input is used in Reclamation's development of an overall 24-month study for operation of Reclamation projects in the Upper Colorado River Basin, which includes plans for Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge, Aspinall Unit and Navajo. Input from individuals, organizations, and agencies along with other factors such as weather, water rights, endangered species requirements, flood control, hydro power, recreation, fish and wildlife management and reservoir levels, will be considered in the development of these reservoir operation plans. In addition, the meetings are used to coordinate activities and exchange information among agencies, water users, and other interested parties concerning the San Juan River and Navajo Reservoir.

### **Water Year 2009 Conditions**

A dry fall with below normal precipitation was followed by a very wet December that saw over 200% of average precipitation for the month. Then a return to a drier, below average weather pattern persisted in the months of January, February, and March. April is expected to be near average.

The San Juan Basin snowpack is currently at 88% of average, and has remained below average from the first of March. The snowpack was above average during the first months of winter. Inflow into Navajo Reservoir has been below average for all months in Water Year 2009 to date.

### **Water Year 2009 Forecasts**

The Mid-April Most Probable April – July Inflow Forecast is 720,000 acre-feet or 93 percent of average. This forecast has been steadily declining since the first forecast was issued in January, except for a slight increase from the April forecast.

This year, Navajo Reservoir is at a more manageable elevation and will not likely require additional releases greater than the maximum spring peak release, as

outlined in the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) Flow Recommendations. The base release will continue at 500 cfs until the spring peak release starts.

In compliance with the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) Flow Recommendations, a modified 2-week spring peak release is planned. This release, beginning on May 20<sup>th</sup> consists of approximately a one week ramp up, followed by a 13 day peak of 5,000 cfs, followed by approximately a one week ramp down. A base release of 500 cfs is expected to be reached by June 18<sup>th</sup>. This schedule may be adjusted as new forecasts are received. Additional updates on releases will be sent if changes occur. For information regarding the spring peak release it will be posted online at [www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsrvs/notice/nav\\_rel.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/water/rsrvs/notice/nav_rel.html).

Based on the most probable forecasts and a 2-week spring peak release, peak flows in the critical habitat area are anticipated to reach near 7000 cfs at the first of June this year, however, peak flows are subject to many factors and are difficult to predict.

After the spring peak, releases will be adjusted throughout the summer and fall as necessary in order to meet the SJRIP Flow Recommendations which call for a 7-day moving mean target base flow of between 500 cfs and 1,000 cfs in the critical habitat area (Farmington to Lake Powell).

### **Current Conditions**

Navajo Reservoir is currently at an elevation of 6057.76, which is 96% of the historical average. Storage is at 1,320,000 acre-feet, which is 78% of capacity. Inflows have increased throughout the month of April to a maximum of 2900 cfs on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Releases continue at 500 cfs where they have been since the beginning of the water year. NIIP began diverting water in March, with a maximum diversion of 580 cfs. The San Juan-Chama Diversion has been increasing up to 763 cfs on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Recommendations for San Juan River Operation and Administration**

Ten major New Mexico water users in the San Juan River Basin developed water sharing recommendations for the years of 2009 - 2012. Three of the ten parties have endorsed the recommendations. The Fish & Wildlife Service plan to discuss

the recommendations at the SJRIP Coordination Committee meeting in Durango on May 15, 2009. Based on the current forecast, a shortage is not anticipated this year.

### **Maintenance**

Routine maintenance is expected for this year. Gate inspections will continue after the peak release. Mucking out of the stilling basin is scheduled for late 2009 or 2010. Replacement of the penstock bolts is scheduled for 2010.

### **Agencies Comments**

NM Congressionals – Expression interest in the San Juan River issues.

Bureau of Reclamation – Public Law 111.11 extends period of construction capital projects to 2012. This increases the cost of SJRIP by \$12 mil for San Juan Project. The Navajo-Gallup Pipeline project still needs the environmental impact statement to be completed. Additional funding has been appropriated to assist on this project.

Navajo Nation Emergency Management – works with the Navajo Nation to assist homeowner near the San Juan River in preventing flooding.

NM State Engineer – gauging stations are up and running. Jewett Valley gage vandalized but since repaired.

City of Farmington – turbine inspection at power plant has been completed. Now ready for full capacity.

Soaring Eagle Lodge – government has appropriated money for rehabilitation for fish habitat projects.

Corp of Engineers – ready for weekly conference call from Bureau during spring peak release.

**Next Meeting - Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at 1:00 in the Civic Center, Farmington, New Mexico (200 West Arrington Street).**

## **Attendance List – April 28, 2009 Navajo Operations Meeting**

Andrews, Roy, San Juan Shrine, Fruitland NM  
Aralijo, Myron, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Albuquerque NM  
Bloomfield, Dave, Arizona Public Service, Fruitland NM  
Brinton, Scott, CO Division of Water Resources, Durango CO  
Cirley, Caz, NM Senator Tom Udall Representative, Albuquerque NM  
Chavez, Aaron, San Juan Water Commission, Farmington NM  
Christianson, Ryan, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango, CO  
Crawford, Carroll, Bloomfield Irrigation District, Bloomfield NM  
Dumont, Jim, US Senator Jeff Bingaman Representative, Farmington NM  
Fitzner, April, Corp of Engineers, Albuquerque NM  
Goen, Mike, PNM San Juan Generating Station, Waterflow NM  
Harms, Paul, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Santa Fe NM  
Henderson, Gerald, Navajo Nation Emergency Management, Shiprock NM  
Herrion, Rob, US Geological Survey, Farmington NM  
Hodges, Jimmy, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Horner, Gary, Citizen, Farmington NM  
Johnson, Larry, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM  
Johnston, Clayton, Citizen, Blanco NM  
Kimball, John, Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque NM  
Lane, Teresa, Hammond Conservancy District, Bloomfield NM  
LeFevre, Andrea, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Dulce NM  
Little, Tom, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix, AZ  
Lotts, Bob, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix, AZ  
McKinnon, Kristen, Wild River Expeditions, Bluff UT  
Miller, Richard, Farmington Electric Utility, Farmington NM  
Montia, Paul A., City of Farmington, Farmington NM  
Nez, Marvin, NAPI, Farmington NM  
Norlander, Ken, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix AZ  
Page, Pat, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Prdor, Sam, West Hammond Water Users, Bloomfield NM  
Richman, Linda, Bureau of Land Management, Bluff UT  
Renfro, Jim, Lee Acres Water Users, Farmington NM  
Santillan, Marisol, Arizona Public Service, Phoenix NM  
Sorrelhorse, Gerald, Navajo Nation Emergency Management, Shiprock NM  
Stone, Steve, Soaring Eagle Lodge, Navajo Dam NM  
Swickard, Ruth, Bureau of Reclamation, Durango CO  
Valencia, Pete, Congressman Ben R. Lujan Representative, Farmington NM  
Vigil, Warren, Jicarilla Nation, Dulce NM  
Whitehead, Bruce, Southwest Water Conservation District, Durango CO  
Williams, Shawn, NM State Engineer's Office, Aztec NM  
Wilmott, Marian, BHP Billiton, Farmington NM