

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ASPINALL UNIT OPERATIONS

**ASPINALL UNIT—COLORADO RIVER STORAGE PROJECT,
GUNNISON RIVER, COLORADO**



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation**



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Review Comments

- **General support for preferred alternative and PBO.**
- **Some suggestions for selection of more aggressive or less aggressive alternative.**
- **Clarify operations under Black Canyon water right and operations to benefit endangered fish.**
- **Recognition that there are minor to moderate impacts to some resources: fisheries, hydropower, recreation.**
- **Various suggestions on how to describe “water yield” from the Unit and future water uses.**

Process

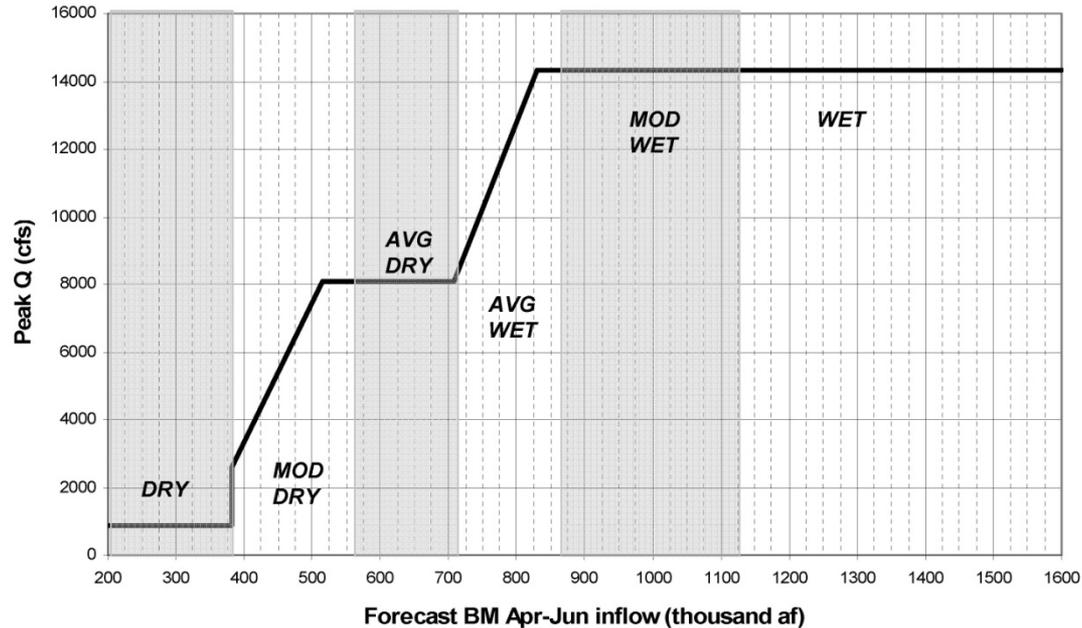
- **Final EIS being prepared**
- **Cooperating Agency Review**
- **Programmatic Biological Opinion completed in December**
- **Record of Decision**

Final EIS

- Preferred alternative calls for higher spring flows and moderate base flows
- Peak flow target at Whitewater – target varies with forecasted inflow

Peak Flow Recommendations

Peak Flow Target at Whitewater



PBO

- **ESA compliance for new Aspinall operations, existing depletions, limited new depletions**
- **Concludes existing depletions/selenium levels adversely affecting endangered fish**
- **Includes 2 significant commitments: reoperation of Aspinall Unit and implementation of a Selenium Management Program (SMP).**
- **SMP is cooperative effort to reduce Se loading to Gunnison river**

who cares?

- Provides ESA compliance/take coverage existing-new water uses
- Continues Upper Gunnison Subordination; new augmentation contracts
- Assists in Recovery-which supports water uses
- Improves irrigation systems/crop production
- May reduce O&M
- Conserves water
- Facilitates ESA compliance for new permits/
- Completes ESA compliance Dallas Creek & Dolores
- Improves water quality for many uses

RECLAMATION

Black Canyon Reserved Right

- Reclamation will operate the Aspinall Unit with the intent of meeting the water right, the flow recommendations, and authorized Unit purposes every year. The reserved right will be considered equally along with flow recommendations and authorized purposes of the Unit.
- Releases will be made from the Aspinall Unit using the necessary combination of available powerplants, bypasses and spillways, while attempting to reach the Black Canyon peak flow target
- Monthly updates to NPS on status of meeting right

What Next

- **Cooperator Review**
- **Selenium Management Plan**
- **Record of Decision**
- **Operations changing for endangered fish and Black Canyon reserved water right**