

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Colorado River Authority of Utah
May 21, 2024 --1:00 p.m. MT

1. Call to Order – Gene Shawcroft, Chair

Mr. Shawcroft called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm stating there was a quorum. Each attendee briefly introduced themselves. A list of attendees is included in Attachment I.

2. Approval of the Minutes of April 23, 2024, Colorado River Authority of Utah Meeting – Joel Ferry

There being no comments on the April 23, 2024 minutes a motion was made by Mr. Ferry and seconded by Mr. Humphrey to approve the minutes. The motion was unanimously approved by the Board.

3. Public Comment Pursuant to the Public Comment Policy of the Authority (limit of 2 minutes per person) – Joel Ferry, Vice Chair

There were no public comments.

4. Report of the Chair – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Shawcroft discussed the Upper Basin Tribes/ Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was signed on April 22, 2024 in Chama, New Mexico and explained it was very productive and monumental to sign the MOU. Mr. Shawcroft provided a summary of the “38 Sovereigns” meeting held on May 9, 2024 in Phoenix that included 30 tribes, 7 states, and 1 federal group. Mr. Shawcroft provided a high-level update on the May 14, 2024 Basin States Discussion with the seven principals in Vegas which he explained was very productive and more united than recent meetings. Mr. Shawcroft stated the last two days involved a UCRC Post-2026 Workshop held at the UCRC office in Salt Lake City, with the technical advisors, legal advisors, and Principals from the Upper Division States present to review concepts and negotiations put forth by the Lower Division States.

Mr. Shawcroft explained a new “Colorado River Collaborative” of news media organizations has been established, similar to the Great Salt Lake Collaborative, and the new group has been actively producing press on the Colorado River. Mr. Ferry explained the Colorado River Collaborative should bring more clarity and depth to the reporting on the very complex Colorado River and will ultimately be more beneficial and accurate.

5. Report of the Executive Director – Amy Haas, Executive Director

Ms. Haas discussed the Record of Decision (ROD) for Near Term Operations which is one of the “big three” National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes on the Colorado River. Ms. Haas explained this ROD and the current Supplemental EIS (SEIS) will supplement the 2007 Interim Guidelines to adjust operations through the preparation of the 2026 Annual Operation Plan (AOP) (December 31, 2025). Ms. Haas explained this NEPA process was finalized on May 6, 2024 when the Secretary of the Interior signed a Record of Decision implementing the SEIS. Ms. Haas explained the ROD includes Lower Basin conservation of 3 million acre-feet (maf) through 2026, with a minimum of 1.5 maf physically conserved by the end of 2024, and of the 3 maf conserved, 2.3 maf will be compensated through the federal Inflation Reduction Act. Ms. Haas stated the 3 maf is in addition to cuts the Lower Basin is already obliged to take under the 2007 Interim Guidelines and the 2019 Drought Contingency Plans. Ms. Haas explained that Lake

Powell releases could be reduced to 6 maf to the extent the reservoir is projected to drop below 3,500 feet elevation under the minimum probable forecast in the following 12 months. Ms. Haas stated that whenever Lake Mead is projected to drop below 1025 feet elevation based on a minimum probable April forecast, the Lower Division States, under this SEIS, have 45 days to propose a plan to Reclamation, after consulting with the Upper Division States, to protect Lake Mead from dropping to 1,000 feet elevation. Ms. Haas explained that Mexico has recently agreed to contribute an additional 400 thousand acre-feet (kaf) in parallel with the Lower Basin's 3 maf through 2026.

Ms. Haas discussed the status of the Post-2026 NEPA process, including Bureau of Reclamation and Basin States modeling activities, stating there has been a core group of Upper Basin and Bureau of Reclamation technical staff meeting to discuss assumptions in our alternative and the Bureau of Reclamation has represented that it will be modeling all the major alternatives during the month of June.

Ms. Haas discussed the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) SEIS which is the third NEPA process underway on the Colorado River. Ms. Haas explained the LTEMP provides a framework for adaptively managing Glen Canyon Dam operations consistent with the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Ms. Haas explained the LTEMP was initially approved and implemented in 2016 and is being updated now because juvenile smallmouth bass, a nonnative invasive fish and predator of the threatened humpback Chub, were detected in summer 2022 which gave rise to a NEPA process. Ms. Haas explained staff has been very engaged in this NEPA and a final supplemental EIS with a ROD is expected in the next couple of months.

Ms. Haas provided a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding update and explained the Authority, working through the UCRC, has leveraged over \$1.4 million in federal BIL funds under the first installment of these funds for the installation and operation of ten new USGS stream gages within the Colorado River system in Utah. Ms. Haas explained that in addition to operating and maintaining the new gages for five years, BIL funds will also support the continued operation of two critical existing gages on the Colorado River and Green River in Utah through September 2029. Ms. Haas explained the Authority is currently in the process of securing BIL funds for an additional one and “one-half” eddy covariance stations to add to the network of six stations the Authority purchased as part of its participation in the Utah Geological Survey’s Utah Flux Network. Ms. Haas stated these activities all tie back to the Measurement priority area of the Authority’s five-year Management Plan. Ms. Haas explained that more generally, the second installment of \$30 million BIL funds specifically earmarked for the Upper Basin has been made available to UCRC and the four Upper Basin states will soon be planning and prioritizing the expenditure of the funds.

Ms. Haas announced the creation of a new Authority advisory council, the Agriculture Advisory Council, which met for the first time on May 9, 2024 in Duchesne and is comprised of 13 agricultural producers. Ms. Haas stated the group selected Steve Hanberg to be the co-chair of the council and agreed that the first order of business for council members was to become better educated about Colorado River history, development, and current events.

6. Hydrology and System Status Update – Betsy Morgan, Staff Engineer & Lily Bosworth, Staff Engineer

Ms. Bosworth provided a hydrology update for the Upper Colorado River Basin for May 2024. Ms. Bosworth began by presenting data suggesting subsurface hydrologic conditions are dry in

head water regions and indicate long-term drought impacts remain. Ms. Bosworth explained May streamflow is normal to below normal and runoff is forecast to be normal to below normal. Ms. Bosworth stated the current snowpack was normal to below normal and explained that across the snow season below normal total snow-water equivalent (SWE) progressed to normal SWE across the Upper Basin. Ms. Bosworth presented the precipitation and temperature outlooks, explaining there were equal chances of above or below normal precipitation, and moderate chances of above normal temperatures in June. Ms. Bosworth discussed the U.S. Drought Monitor and explained drought conditions persist in the Colorado River Basin.

Ms. Morgan provided an update on system storage for May 2024 showing Flaming Gorge 87% full; Fontenelle 43% full; Morrow Point 100% full; Blue Mesa 65% full, Navajo 69% full; and Lake Powell 34% full. Ms. Morgan discussed Powell, Mead, and System Storage, which is 24.536 maf or 42% full, and explained this was more than last year where storage was only 21.688 maf or 37% full. Ms. Morgan discussed Lake Powell Unregulated Inflow for the water year 2024 forecast and stated the May most probable forecast indicated about 7.79 maf (81%) of inflow for 2024. Ms. Morgan discussed the Bureau of Reclamation Colorado River Mid-Term Modeling System (CRMMS) projections, explaining the most probable projection for the end of calendar year 2024 is for Lake Powell to be 37% full, and the most probable projection for the end of calendar year 2025 is for Lake Powell to be 41% full. April probabilistic projections show no traces below 3525 feet elevation in 2024 or 2025. Ms. Morgan discussed the Lake Mead end-of-month elevations, explaining the most probable projection for the end of calendar year 2024 is for Lake Mead to be 33% full and the most probable projection for the end of calendar year 2025 is for Lake Mead to be 32% full, resulting in level 1 shortage.

7. Management Plan Implementation and Preview of FY 2025 Work Plan – Betsy Morgan & Lily Bosworth

Ms. Morgan stated in April 2022 the Board approved the 5-Year Management Plan consisting of 3 priority areas: Measurement, Hydrology & Operations, and Drought Mitigation. Ms. Morgan stated Authority staff would be seeking Board approval of the fiscal year 2025 Work Plan (FY25 Work Plan) at the June 2024 Board meeting.

Ms. Bosworth shared the January 2024 recommendations from the Advisory Councils to the Board, which were considered in development of the FY25 Work Plan.

Ms. Morgan discussed the FY25 Work Plan themes which include continuing FY23 and FY24 Work Plan projects and leveraging Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) federal funds. Ms. Morgan and Ms. Bosworth then discussed established projects under each priority area including the Metering and Gaging Gap Analysis, USGS Streamgages, the Utah Flux Network, OpenET, Operations Modeling, Airborne Snow Observatories Uinta Mountains Pilot, Climate, Hydrology, & Consumptive Use Studies, Utah Colorado River Account and Forecasting Model (UCRAF), Agricultural Water Demonstration, Research, and Implementation Pilot Program (AG-DRIP), and System Conservation Pilot Program. Ms. Morgan and Ms. Bosworth highlighted new, FY25 efforts under each priority area including Diversion Measurement, and Metering, & Telemetry, Advection Impacts on Remote Sensing of Evapotranspiration, Flaming Gorge to Lake Powell Conveyance Loss Study, Mainstem Accounting Model, Farm to Flow Agricultural Resilience & Demand Management Pilot Program, Pelican Lake Subsurface Drip Irrigation Pilot Project, and Emery County Irrigation Conversion History Study. Ms. Morgan explained the FY25 Work Plan would be sent to the Board in early June for review, feedback, and final edits before

the June 18, 2024 Board Meeting.

8. Update on ASO Uinta Basin Snow Water Supply Forecasting – Lily Bosworth & Rachel Musil, P.E., Central Utah Water Conservancy District

Ms. Bosworth and Ms. Musil presented on the pilot project “Flakes, Flights, and Forecasts: Snowpack Measurement Enhancements in the Uinta Mountain Headwaters” which is co-funded by the Authority, Central Utah Water Conservancy District (Central), Utah Division of Water Resources, and a grant from Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSMART program. Ms. Bosworth explained the project falls within the Management Plan and FY24 Work Plan. Ms. Bosworth explained conventional snow monitoring with Snow Telemetry (SNOWTEL) stations miss important snow dynamics and improved data is needed to support decision making. Ms. Bosworth discussed the project objectives which include optimized flood control operations of federal facilities, short-and long-term water management decisions, environmental protection, drought mitigation and resilience, and dissemination of results to other watersheds throughout Utah. Ms. Bosworth stated Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc. is the consultant on this project and explained the technology used to take snow measurements and produce models that represent the snowpack and forecast runoff. Ms. Bosworth presented results from the first two airborne snow surveys of project, showing SWE over the study area in the Uinta Mountains and SWE with respect to elevation and aspect.

Ms. Musil discussed applications of the project data and modeled forecasts. Ms. Musil explained this project has given Central runoff forecasts in watersheds where no other forecast is available and increased certainty in operating reservoirs based on potential snowmelt. Ms. Musil discussed preliminary comparisons of the project forecasts with the conventional Colorado Basin River Forecast Center forecasts, with results varying by watershed. Ms. Musil noted Central is working to make their Strawberry Aqueduct Collection System model compatible with the project forecasts for further testing of the applications of the new dataset.

The Board remarked on the relevance of the data and discussed potential options for expanding the timeline or area of the project.

9. Remarks from the Board

Mr. Ferry thanked everyone for their efforts and stated he was looking forward to reviewing the Work Plan.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Next Meeting: June 18, 2024, 1:00 pm World Trade Center 1st Floor Conference Room, 60 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

12. Closed Session

Mr. Shawcroft requested a closed session and Mr. Ferry made a motion to close the meeting stating “Move to close the meeting pursuant to Utah Code section 52-4-205(2)(f) to discuss interstate claims to the use of water from the Colorado River system and to protect classified records, legal strategy, or the ability of the State to carry out negotiations.” Ms. Coleman took a roll call individually of all board members and the result was unanimous for a closed session.

13. Adjourn – Ms. Hasenyager motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Larsen and unanimously approved by the Board. The Board Meeting was adjourned at 3:12pm.

May 21, 2024
Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting

Board Member Attendees:

Gene Shawcroft, Chair

Joel Ferry, Vice-Chair

Candice Hasenyager

Jay Mark Humphrey

Zach Renstrom, Virtual

Dan Larsen, Virtual

In-Person Attendees:

Amy Haas, CRAU

Betsy Coleman, CRAU

Betsy Morgan, CRAU

Lily Bosworth, CRAU

Holly McCall, CRAU

Cadi Sande, CRAU

Scott McGettigan, Division of Water Rights

Bart Leeflang, Central Utah Water Conservancy District

Rachel Musil, Central Utah Water Conservancy District

Wendy Crowther, Utah Assistant Attorney General

Gordon Rowe, Utah Assistant Attorney General

Joshua Ward, Bowen Collins & Associates

Rachel Anderson, Advanced Engineering & Environmental Services (AE2S)

Virtual Attendees:

Adam Jones

Cody Allred - Pacificorp

Cash Stallings - Utah Division of Water Rights

Cam Walker - HDR Engineering

Dex Winterton

Michael Drake, Division of Water Rights