

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
**Colorado River Authority of Utah**  
**June 17, 2025 -- 1:00 p.m. MDT**

**1. Call to Order – Gene Shawcroft, Chair**

Mr. Shawcroft called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm stating there was a quorum. In person attendees each introduced themselves and a list of virtual Attendee names was read aloud by Betsy Coleman. A list of all attendees is included in Attachment I.

**2. Approval of the May 22, 2025 Minutes – Gene Shawcroft**

Mr. Humphrey motioned to approve the minutes of the May 2025 meeting. Mr. Renstrom seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

**3. Public Comment Pursuant to the Public Comment Policy of the Authority (limit of 2 minutes per person) – Gene Shawcroft**

There were no public comments.

**4. Report of the Chair – Gene Shawcroft**

Mr. Shawcroft explained there are two simultaneous processes going on, the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and the Basin States negotiation, which are separate but on parallel paths. Mr. Shawcroft stated the timeline to release the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is still anticipated for late 2025 and the final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) is still set for August 2026, and explained those deadlines are not changing due to the expiration of the 2007 guidelines. Mr. Shawcroft discussed the Natural Flow Alternative and explained the Basin States are working to provide information to the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) by the end of June to ensure significant involvement in the draft EIS. Mr. Shawcroft explained the concept aims for the Lower and Upper Basin States to manage their water independently without interconnections and also provides an opportunity for all seven states to be at risk during low hydrology, rather than primarily the Upper Basin States, as has happened in the past. Mr. Shawcroft discussed key issues being wrestled with, including the number of years for flow target, minimum and maximum releases, and the percentage of release from Lake Powell. Mr. Shawcroft explained the arrangements made under this alternative would be considered Colorado River Compact compliant, potentially setting aside complicated issues regarding tributaries for the agreement's length.

Mr. Shawcroft stated the seven Basin States met in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the end of May to discuss concepts for a natural flow alternative and a meeting for June 10, 2025 was foregone as Lower Division states chose to meet independently. Mr. Shawcroft explained the next meeting will be held the week following this meeting in Denver, Colorado, with all seven states, the Department of Interior, and Reclamation in attendance.

Mr. Shawcroft discussed Reclamation's June 24-Month Study Hydrology Briefing that will be publicly released the day of this meeting and indicates "not good" conditions with snowpack at 92% of normal but runoff at only 54% of normal. Mr. Shawcroft explained the runoff forecast has decreased by one million acre-feet since April. Mr. Shawcroft discussed

Lake Powell management trigger points, highlighting that the current most probable forecast for Lake Powell crosses the 3,525 feet elevation line in March-April 2026, which would trigger the initiation of drought response operation agreement (DROA) plan development. Mr. Shawcroft explained the first part of the plan involves modified operations at Lake Powell and if elevation cannot be maintained above 3,525 feet, it could trigger potential releases from initial units such as Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa, and Navajo reservoirs.

Mr. Shawcroft announced the White House has nominated Ted Cook (Theodore Cook) from Arizona, who is the former general manager of the Central Arizona Project, to be the Commissioner of Reclamation, which he explained is very concerning for Utah for a variety of reasons. Mr. Shawcroft announced the next Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC) Regular Meeting is scheduled for June 26, 2025, at the Utah State Capitol Building from 9 am-1 pm, and the public is welcome to attend.

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

Ms. Haas described the accountable budget process the Authority is undertaking with legislative staff, and explained that she and her team appeared before the Natural Resources and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee the morning of this meeting. Ms. Haas explained the process, which is administered by the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, provides legislators with a thorough view of fiscal year budget line items to assess purposes, outcomes, and spending. Ms. Haas explained the Authority was one of about 20% of agencies selected for this process for 2025 and that valuable feedback has been received, particularly that the Authority's programming of funding according to the Management Plan and Annual Work Plans is a sound way to ensure financial controls. Ms. Haas discussed a recommendation from Representative Chew was for staff to evaluate whether future payments under a demand management pilot program should be based on water delivered to the intended reservoirs, as opposed to acre-fee enrolled, and explained the Authority is already exploring this option with plans to require change applications for participation in the 2026 program cycle and using a provisional accounting process.

Ms. Haas discussed Glen Canyon Dam Experiments which are under the 2016 Long-Term Experimental Management Plan (LTEMP) and a subsequent supplemental EIS. Ms. Haas explained that the experiments are designed to improve resource conditions below Glen Canyon Dam; for instance, high-flow experiments (HFE's) aim to rebuild sandbars by moving accumulated sediment to higher elevations. Ms. Haas explained the Fall 2024 HFE discussions last year led to a recommendation to not proceed and a similar recommendation was made to not conduct a Spring 2025 HFE due to concerns about disturbing vegetation around a recently reconstructed channel that was formerly a backwater habitat where smallmouth bass have been found to propagate. Ms. Haas indicated that another HFE will likely be considered this fall. Ms. Haas also discussed the Smallmouth Bass Experiment, or the Cool Mix Flow Experiment, and explained that last week the seven Basin States recommended to the Secretary of Interior to pursue this experiment pursuant to the 2024 SEIS and ROD. Ms. Haas explained the goal is to decrease spawning and recruitment of smallmouth bass below Glen Canyon Dam by sending cool water flows when average daily temperature exceeds 15.5 degrees Celsius.

Ms. Haas stated the Bureau of Reclamation has announced a \$50 million investment in water supply and use measurement, continuing a commitment from the previous

administration, and Utah has been a significant beneficiary. Ms. Haas explained that 10 of 31 awarded stream gages have been installed in Utah, which are funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and an additional 9 IIJA-funded gages are anticipated for installation in Utah in fiscal year (FY) 2026, totaling about \$2.6 million in federal funds for Utah. Ms. Haas explained IIJA funds are supporting Airborne Snow Observatory (ASO) Programs in two sister Upper Division states, complementing Utah's ASO project in the Uinta Mountains, which began in 2023.

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

Ms. Bosworth stated drought conditions ranging from moderate to extreme persist across the Colorado River Basin, particularly in the Upper Basin, and the temperature forecast is well above average through August across Utah and the Upper Basin. Ms. Bosworth explained the precipitation outlook is below normal in the northern Upper Colorado River Basin and the Lower Basin has a slightly positive forecast, however cumulative precipitation for the year is solidly below normal and likely to remain so. Ms. Bosworth explained the Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) is in the lower range of what was forecast in mid-March, indicating spring did not turn out as hoped or forecasted.

Ms. Bosworth discussed Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc. (ASO) work and explained ASO flights provide snow depth and snow water equivalent data, and that peaks in SWE for the ASO study area differed in timing from the overall Upper Basin, and a gap between precipitation and runoff is widening due to climate change impacts. Ms. Bosworth explained that ASO data is being used to improve runoff forecasts for specific basins including those not forecasted by the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC), and to compare against existing data.

Ms. Bosworth highlighted two recent publications. Ms. Bosworth explained an article in the *Journal of Hydrology* establishes the first-ever continental-scale modeling of stream temperature, which is a potential tool for understanding runoff and transit losses. Ms. Bosworth also discussed an article in *Nature Communications*, “*Groundwater dominates snowmelt runoff and controls streamflow efficiency in the Western US*”, and explained this research suggests that average stream water throughout runoff is about 5.7 years old, meaning surface runoff melts into a groundwater system and pushes out older water, which implies that drought response needs to consider streamflow and runoff efficiency trends over the last decade, not just current-year snow water availability.

Ms. Morgan provided an overview of Upper Basin reservoir storage as of June 15, 2025. Ms. Morgan discussed Lake Powell and Lake Mead elevations since 2020, explaining that Lake Powell and Lake Mead elevations follow a similar pattern, but Lake Mead's peak is delayed compared to Powell's. Ms. Morgan also noted that Powell has held a relatively stable elevation since the above-average inflow of Water Year 2023, but a dismal inflow this year makes a similar boost unlikely. Ms. Morgan discussed the June Water Year 2025 unregulated inflow forecast for Lake Powell and explained the most probable inflow is 5.22 million acre-feet (MAF) with a min to max probable range of 53-57% of average. Ms. Morgan explained all forecasts are well below average and fall into the lower historic range, confirming a very dry year ahead. Ms. Morgan explained the Upper Basin reservoirs all have well below average inflow forecasts with significant decreases from May forecasts, and that Navajo is the worst off at 43% of average and Fontenelle is the best off

at 75% of average. Ms. Morgan provided the Lake Powell and Lake Mead projections from the Colorado River Mid-term Modeling System (CRMMS) and 24-Month Study model from May, noting that the projections were already presented at the May Board Meeting and that June results were not yet publicly released. Ms. Morgan noted that the May 24-Month Study minimum probable projection shows Lake Powell staying above 3,525 feet in 2026, but the June forecast shows the minimum probable elevation dropping below 3,525 feet in 2026 due to the dry hydrology.

#### **7. Request Approval of Proposed FY 2026 Work Plan – Marc Stilson, Principal Engineer**

Mr. Stilson introduced the Fiscal Year 2026 Work Plan and announced staff who will present on each topic.

Mr. Anderson provided a budget breakdown and stated the total proposed budget is \$10,675,100 which encompasses all in-kind and federal funds. Mr. Anderson provided a budget breakdown for interstate and intrastate activities including personnel and travel, advisory councils, measurement, hydrology and operations, and drought mitigation.

Ms. Haas explained that interstate negotiation is the focal point of Authority work and all intrastate activities feed into these larger interstate priorities which take up a significant amount of the budget.

Mr. Cody Stewart provided an update on the Advisory Councils and explained the Authority now has five Advisory Councils which have provided significant input and engagement. Mr. Stewart explained councils want to be more outward-focused, sharing information with their communities to address misunderstandings, and Advisory Council members are seen as ambassadors for the Authority's work. Mr. Stewart explained most councils emphasized the need for storage and conservation and are aware of the Demand Management Pilot Program and are involved in discussions to make it work for farmers, communities, and cities. Mr. Stewart explained that an Advisory Council Member's testimony about participation in the Demand Management Pilot Program in Price provided valuable credibility to other agricultural producers.

Mr. Stilson discussed provisional accounting which he explained is based on a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Bureau of Reclamation for 2025 and 2026 and has the objective to verify and account for volumes of water from Upper Division States delivered to an Upper Colorado River Basin Reservoir. Mr. Stilson discussed the project types which include Conservation Projects, that are actual reduction in consumptive use, and Demonstration Projects, which are a reduction in demand. Mr. Stilson discussed accounting methodology which he explained uses direct measurement and river modeling to determine transit losses. Mr. Stilson explained participants are required to measure releases and the Authority will track them down the system to Lake Powell. Mr. Stilson discussed proposal submission and explained the Authority submitted its proposal to the UCRC on May 30<sup>th</sup> along with Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico, and that Utah's proposal for Demand Management Pilot Program projects was considered the most comprehensive, building on previous System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) participants. Mr. Stilson explained the next step is for UCRC and the Upper Division states to select projects and submit them to Reclamation and that examples included demand management water released into the Price River and tracked with temporary stream gages.

Ms. Morgan discussed Streamflow and Diversion Measurement work which she explained is funded by the \$50 M IIJA funding awarded to the Upper Division States through the UCRC for data gathering and studies supporting the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan. Ms. Morgan discussed USGS stream gages and the IIJA Diversion Measurement and Telemetry Program, and explained that coordination with regional water rights offices occurred to identify areas where the Authority could add additional value with targeted outreach and not impede efforts already underway. Additional and ongoing coordination with the Department of Natural Resources is underway, and all data collected through the Program will be made available on the Division of Water Rights' website, avoiding duplicate database creation.

Ms. Morgan discussed the Utah Colorado River Accounting and Forecasting Decision Support Tool (UCRAF-DST) and planned continuation of efforts under a new contract with Precision Water Resources Engineering that includes tasks for maintenance on existing models to ensure they represent the best available data and evolving drought mitigation concepts. Ms. Morgan mentioned that the new contract will also include development of the Diversion Runoff Calculator for areas not covered by a full UCRAF-DST system and development of a full UCRAF-DST model for the Brush Creek and Ashley Creek systems, which she explained provides adequate decision support capabilities for areas not already encompassed by a full UCRAF-DST. Ms. Morgan explained that a fourth contract task will include development of a Colorado River System RiverWare Model which will simulate the conveyance of conserved water from different sources to Lake Powell, serving as a planning tool.

Ms. Bosworth discussed the Airborne Snow Observatories (ASO) Pilot Project which she explained is part of the Hydrology and Operations priority area of the Management Plan, with a 3-year budget of \$2 million from the Authority, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, Division of Water Resources, and Reclamation's WaterSMART program. Ms. Bosworth explained the project process and timeline and explained data has been successfully input into the Strawberry Aquaduct Collection System (SACS) model although season totals are not yet available for this year.

Ms. Bosworth discussed the Demand Management Pilot Program (DMPP) and explained Senate Bill 144 from early 2023 authorized the State Engineer to shepherd conserved water to a reservoir under an approved change application. Ms. Bosworth discussed Jacobs Engineering Group support of the program under with four subtasks including program development, program administration, project design, and program implementation. Ms. Bosworth explained there are four current projects approved this spring and looking ahead to the 2026 fiscal year, there will be a continuation of Cycle One projects if they have approved change applications.

Mr. Renstrom initiated a discussion on monitoring Colorado River policies and projects in other Basin States and expressed concerns about Utah being heavily monitored by other Basin States, specifically California, Arizona, and Nevada, without reciprocal monitoring by the Authority due to limited staff bandwidth. Ms. Haas indicated that if the Board prioritizes reciprocal monitoring, resources could be directed to it, potentially by bringing on an additional assistant attorney general part-time. It was noted that the current work plan, while detailed, might not fully address the strategic monitoring need.

There was discussion on the DMPP and change applications and Mr. Humphrey noted there were personality conflicts among water users and some dissatisfaction with an applicant's actions in Carbon County, but explained he felt that with a few changes it would be okay and suggested streamlining the change application process. The Board acknowledged that as a pilot program, feedback is invaluable to improve the program going forward.

Mr. Ferry emphasized the critical need for close coordination with other agencies, particularly the State Engineer's office, to avoid duplication of effort and ensure cohesive, informed decision-making.

A small edit was requested by Director Hasenyager to the FY26 Work Plan, which was to add the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) to the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum as a participating organization. With that addition Director Hasenyager motioned to approve the Work Plan, which was seconded by Mr. Larsen and unanimously approved by the Board.

8. **Quarterly Budget Update, Logan Anderson, Manager of Finance & Administration**  
Mr. Anderson provided a quarterly budget report which was informational and did not require approval.
9. **Request Approval of Proposed FY 26 Budget**  
Mr. Anderson presented the FY26 budget for approval and explained the proposed total use of funds is \$9.68 million with \$285,000 for lease/building expenses, \$838,00 for operations, \$1.5 million for personnel, \$6.8 million for technical/professional services, and \$375,000 for legal expenses. Mr. Anderson explained this budget solely focuses on funds paid out by the Authority and does not include in-kind contributions or federal funding.  
Mr. Humphrey motioned to approve the FY26 budget, which was seconded by Mr. Ferry and unanimously agreed to by the Board.
10. **Remarks from the Board**  
Ms. Hasenyager explained that Southeast Utah has been fairly dry, with total precipitation at about 73% of normal from October through June. Ms. Hasenyager explained that Utah recently hosted the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum and the Western States Water Council.  
Mr. Ferry expressed appreciation for the work done, acknowledging the difficulty posed by hydrology and the strain on the system to deliver water.
11. **Other Business**  
There was no other business.
12. **Next Meeting:** August 19, 2025 1:00pm World Trade Center 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, 60 E South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
13. **Closed Session as needed 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 (UCA 52-4-205(2)e.**

A motion was made by Mr. Renstrom to close the meeting pursuant to Utah Code section 52-4-205 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. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hasenyager. Ms. Coleman took a roll call vote from each Board Member; the motion to enter a Closed Session passed unanimously.

14. **Adjourn**

A motion was made by Mr. Humphrey and seconded by Ms. Hasenyager and the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 pm.



**June 17, 2025**  
**Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting**

**Board Member Attendees:**

Gene Shawcroft, Chair  
Joel Ferry, Vice Chair  
Candice Hasenberger  
Dan Larsen  
Jay Mark Humphrey  
Zach Renstrom

**Attendees:**

Amy Haas  
Betsy Coleman  
Holly McCall  
Wendy Crowther  
Marc Stilson  
Logan Anderson  
Cody Stewart  
Betsy Morgan  
Lily Bosworth  
Jordan Nielson, Trout Unlimited  
Bart Leeflang, CUWCD  
Ed Mueller, DNR  
Dex Winterton, MLWUA  
Cody Allred, Pacificorp  
Scott McGettigan, DWR  
Richard Salas, DWR

**Virtual Attendees:**

Mark Stratford  
Evan Curtis  
Sarah Shechter  
Teresa Wilhelmsen  
Brandon Castro  
M. Nash  
T. Mindrum  
Tom Bruton  
Megan Nelson  
Brooke Strahm  
Bart Jensen  
Eric Major