

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Colorado River Authority of Utah
August 19, 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 not yet a quorum. A list of all attendees is included in Attachment I. Initially, a quorum was not present, delaying the approval of the minutes. A quorum was achieved with the arrival of Mr. Larsen (virtual), Mr. Ferry and Ms. Hasenyager.

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

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of the June 17, 2025, Minutes – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Renstrom motioned to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2025, meeting. Mr. Humphrey seconded the motion, and the minutes were unanimously approved by the Board.

4. Report of the Chair – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Shawcroft provided a Post-2026 negotiations update where he explained negotiations remain very difficult with an apparent focus on self-preservation rather than collaborative solutions. Mr. Shawcroft explained two parallel processes are occurring, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and the negotiation process, and that negotiators and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are meeting at least every other week. Mr. Shawcroft stated Utah hosted the seven states and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation last Friday, August 15, 2025, however, concepts from these meetings did not advance.

Mr. Shawcroft explained that the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC) held its regular meeting on June 26, 2025, in Utah at the Utah State Capitol where Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron attended virtually and reiterated that U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum is prepared to act if the states cannot reach an agreement.

Mr. Shawcroft explained that formal, one-on-one consultation has been initiated between the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the 30 Tribes of the Colorado River Basin, noting that unlike the prior federal administration's group consultations, details of these conversations are not privy to Utah.

Mr. Shawcroft discussed federal funding and stated the Acting U.S. Assistant Secretary of Water and Science Scott Cameron suggested there might be federal funding available to support the states' commitment to a Post-2026 deal, however no specifics were provided.

Mr. Shawcroft provided a hydrology update explaining the summer has produced almost no precipitation and that runoff into Lake Powell in July was 12% of normal. Mr. Shawcroft stated a critical phenomenon is the continued divergence between snowpack and percent

runoff (or inflow into Lake Powell) and this year saw 92% snowpack but only 50% runoff, which he explained is expected to drop further.

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

Ms. Haas provided an update on the accountable budget process which she explained has been undertaken by the Legislative Fiscal Analyst (LFA) during the interim session since April 2025. Ms. Haas explained this process aims to align the Authority's budget line items with spending and priorities and involved meetings, interviews, field tours, questionnaires, and surveys, particularly focusing on the Utah Demand Management Pilot Program (DMPP). Ms. Haas discussed LFA Recommendations to develop a report/recommendations for alternative funding sources for DMPP so the state is not the exclusive funder, compensate participants based on the amount of water delivered (to Lake Powell) versus the amount of water enrolled, and consolidate the Authority within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to ensure missions align.

Ms. Haas discussed the Authority's response and Board discussion, noting that for DMPP projects in 2026 projects the Board has required an approved change application, which, combined with measurement activities, will help investigate the feasibility of program improvements. Ms. Haas explained five potential alternative funding sources have been identified, and emphasized that compliance with the 1922 Colorado River Compact is Utah's legal obligation, and the state should always play a role in funding a demand management program. Ms. Haas explained that subcommittee members, including Representative Chew, Representative Albrecht, and Senator Winterton, expressed strong support for maintaining the Authority's independence and were against consolidation with DNR. Ms. Haas explained they stated Utah is in a better position today largely because the Authority can adapt to changing river conditions more expediently as an independent entity.

A Board Member inquired about the role of water users, noting they pay the price in the event of curtailment. It was agreed that water users should absolutely participate and could contribute to a demand management program, however, if they funded activities they would expect a return on investment, namely, water savings credit assigned to them, a sentiment heard basin-wide.

Ms. Haas explained the next steps are for the subcommittee to vote on the LFA recommendations at their October interim session.

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

Ms. Bosworth provided a comprehensive update on hydrology and system operations and explained that across the Upper Basin soil moisture was below normal in July, and that stream flow is much below normal across most of the Upper Basin. Ms. Bosworth explained this year had a near-normal snow year (92% of median peak snow water equivalent in the Upper Basin) and that summer precipitation almost flatlined at 81% of median for the total water year due to a very dry summer. Ms. Bosworth explained the forecast for the next three months was for below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures. Ms. Bosworth explained that according to recently published research,

increasing heat is driving drought more than a lack of precipitation, impacting soil moisture and evaporative demand.

Ms. Bosworth highlighted two major fires, Deer Creek and Beulah, in Utah's Upper Colorado River Basin are active, and the 2024 Yellow Lake fire area's snowpack melted out more quickly in 2025 than 2024 and the surrounding unburned area due to ash on snow, affecting runoff timing, according to data from Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc.

Ms. Bosworth explained the entire Colorado River Basin is experiencing moderate to severe drought with the Upper Basin drying out significantly since June.

Ms. Bosworth discussed the Upper Basin reservoir storage where the total system contents (Powell and Mead) are 31% full and total other reservoirs are 38% full, which is down from 44% last year.

Ms. Bosworth discussed Lake Powell inflow where she explained Lake Powell elevations peaked on June 18, 2025, and the water year unregulated inflow for Lake Powell is projected at 4.84 million acre-feet for August, making it the fifth driest year since Glen Canyon Dam was constructed in 1964.

Ms. Bosworth discussed the 2026 Water Year Lake Powell Inflow Forecast and explained a 7.8 million acre-foot year is forecasted for Lake Powell which is 82% of average, and noted the trend that forecasts often decrease from their starting point, suggesting 2026 will also likely be a dry year.

Ms. Bosworth discussed the August 24-Month Study which she explained is the last 24-month study under the 2004 Interim Guidelines. Ms. Bosworth explained Lake Powell has a projected elevation of 3532 feet, leading to a mid-elevation release tier of 7.48 million acre-feet for 2026. Ms. Bosworth explained Lake Mead has a projected elevation of 1055 feet, resulting in a Level 1 Shortage for calendar year 2026 in the Lower Basin. Ms. Bosworth noted Lower Basin shortages will be approximately 613,000 acre-feet for the Lower Basin States and Mexico. Ms. Bosworth explained that Lower Basin States are heavily reliant on groundwater and underground storage, and the presence of agriculture provides flexibility in dry years, as fields can be fallowed, unlike residential water use, and this situation poses a challenge regarding whether cuts are temporary or permanent for farmers.

7. Report on the potential for a Drought Response Operation under the 2019 Drought Response Operations Agreement (“DROA”) – Val Deppe, Projects, Operations and Modeling Division Manager, Upper Colorado Region, Bureau of Reclamation

Ms. Deppe provided an update on DROA explaining that declining forecasts have resulted in hitting DROA triggers. Ms. Deppe explained the enhanced monitoring trigger was hit on June 24, 2025, when the minimum probable Lake Powell elevation in a 24-month study went below 3525 feet elevation and that proactive monitoring had begun in March, 2025. Ms. Deppe explained the planning trigger was met in the July 24-month study as the most probable Lake Powell elevation was projected to be below 3525 feet elevation by April 2026 and the August 24-month study moved this timeframe up to February or March 2026. Ms. Deppe stated DROA parties and Upper Basin tribes have begun meeting to plan and prepare to initiate actions if needed and explained there were operational adjustments in

monthly volumes at Glen Canyon Dam, the last being from December 2022 to March 2023 adjusting by 523,000 acre-feet, and that drastic forecast changes are not expected until January next year, 2026.

Ms. Deppe discussed interplay with Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and explained the August 24-month study's minimum probable forecast shows the potential for Lake Powell to decline below 3500 feet elevation in September 2026 under the SEIS. Ms. Deppe explained that if this trigger occurs within a 12-month period, consultation with the seven Basin States and Tribes will begin and that SEIS allows releases from Lake Powell to go as low as 6 million acre-feet if needed, and all available tools will be evaluated. Ms. Deppe explained that while DROA and SEIS are separate processes with different considerations and triggers, tools such as availability of upstream units to assist in maintaining elevations above 3500 feet could be considered if the SEIS consultation begins. Ms. Deppe explained that DROA is a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) requirement, and it is possible there will be only one year of DROA before the next guidelines, unless DCPs are extended through the Post-2026 process.

8. **Advisory Council Update – Cody Stewart, Director of Strategic Engagement**
Mr. Stewart stated the second annual Advisory Councils river trip out of Moab was successful, fostering deepened relationships and increased understanding among attendees, including Washington, D.C. staffers for Utah, State of Utah legislators, and local officials. Mr. Stewart explained Advisory Council members, who are not water experts, are observing increased public concern and misinformation and they plan to conduct outward-facing community engagement discussions in the coming months to educate and address rumors.

Mr. Stewart stated the Southeast and Southwest Councils have now officially split into two distinct groups. Mr. Stewart announced that Chris Robinson, Chair of the Northern Advisory Council, has invited all Council and Board members to his Hiner Canyon Ranch in Echo Canyon on September 23, 2025 for a barbecue and fishing event.
9. **Division of Water Rights Measurement & Telemetry Dashboard – Aaron Hunt, Automation Program Manager, Division of Water Rights**
Mr. Hunt presented a new dashboard developed by Utah Division of Water Rights that is available on waterrights.utah.gov under the "Distribution and Regulation" section which displays the whole state, color-coded site statuses, and can be filtered by funding source such as UCRC. Mr. Hunt explained users can zoom in to see specific sites, their status, timelines, and obtain more information, including links to records, and stated the dashboard is fluid and continuously updated. Mr. Hunt explained the dashboard is intended to be used in conjunction with the Authority's diversion and streamflow measurement efforts to avoid any overlap. Mr. Hunt provided a Fox Lake measurement update and explained an approved permit was received the day before from the U.S. Forest Service for Fox Lake, Crescent Chain, and Atwood reservoirs, allowing for telemetry and automation work this fall.
10. **IIJA Measurement & Telemetry Grant Funding Kickoff Update – Marc Stilson, Principal Engineer**
Mr. Stilson explained Utah received \$2.9M in federal funding from the Bureau of Reclamation to upgrade measurement sites identified in the 2023 gap analysis. Mr. Stilson

explained the new Division of Water Rights dashboard will greatly assist in coordinating efforts between the Authority's contractor and Water Rights, preventing duplication of effort, and that grant recipients will be required to report data to the Division of Water Right, necessitating close coordination to ensure data meets their standards.

Mr. Stilson discussed Pilot Projects and explained funds will be used to fill measurement gaps, especially for demand management pilot projects in areas like the Price River Basin, where there are often small, unmeasured diversions in drainages crucial to validating demand management water deliveries. Mr. Stilson explained that by March 1, 2026, demand management participants must meet with their Division of Water Rights regional office and distribution engineer to discuss how water will be delivered downstream and ensure measurement devices are in place. Mr. Stilson stated the Authority's grant program can help fund the installation of necessary gauges, and installation may be performed by various entities (water conservancy districts, producers, contractors) coordinated by Jones Mille

Mr. Stilson provided an update on provisional accounting for the current water year and explained a preliminary review with the Bureau of Reclamation occurred on August 5th followed by a UCRC Engineering Committee review on August 13th. Mr. Stilson explained the UCRC will hold a special meeting on September 4th to review proposals, and the UCRC Tech Group will meet on September 17th to discuss transit losses. Mr. Stilson discussed Utah's Demand Management Pilot Program (DMPP) and explained that due to this year's hydrology and early shutoff, only about 900 acre-feet were captured from the expected 4,500 acre-feet from each of two Central Utah points of diversions and explained this water is currently held in Starvation reservoir for post-irrigation season delivery. Mr. Stilson discussed future DMPP and explained that approximately \$940,000 remains in the pilot program for 2026, and applicants are currently being sought and are available from September 2nd to October 10th with recommendations by mid-December for 2026.

11. Remarks from the Board

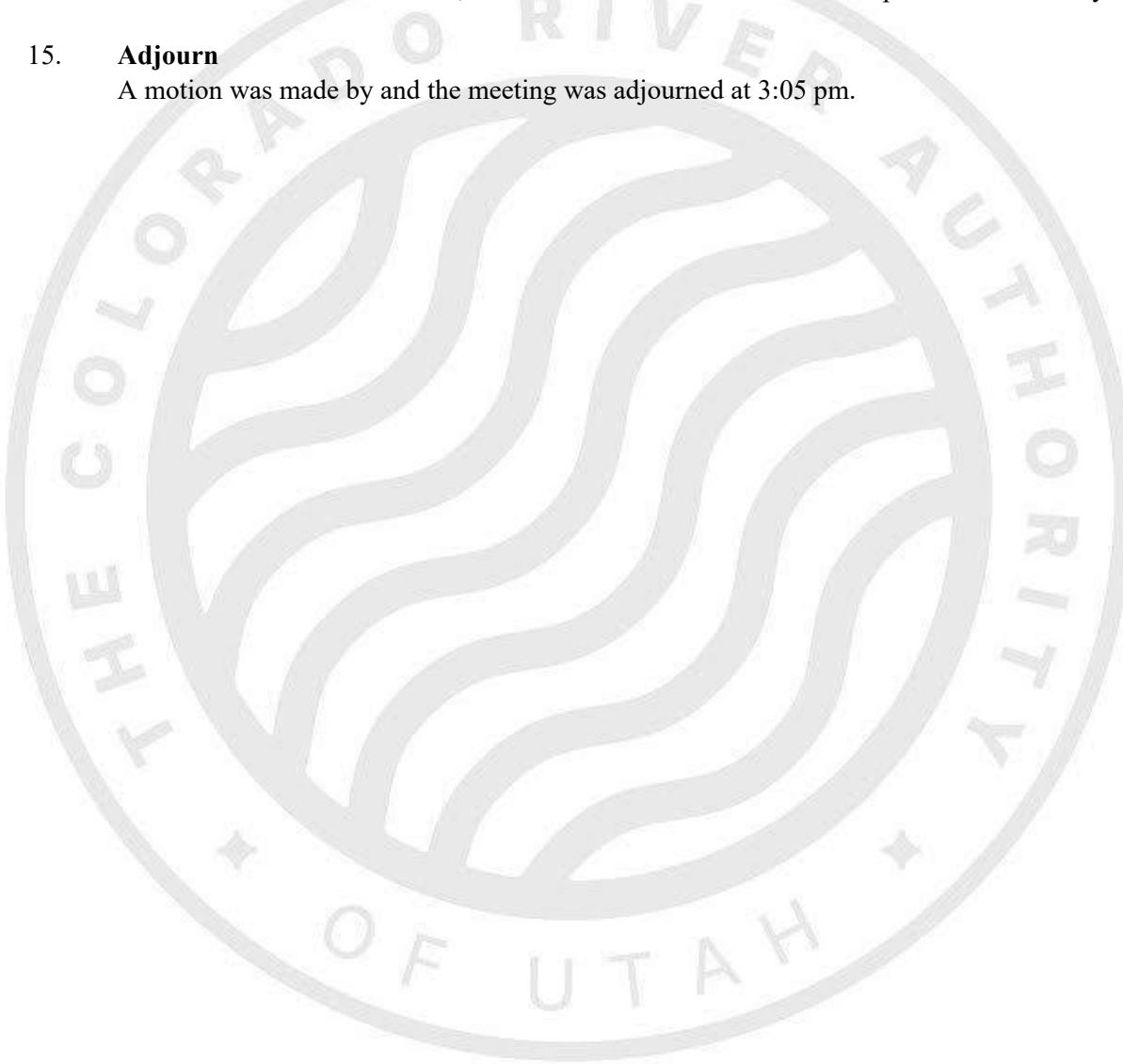
Ms. Hasenyager praised the Advisory Council river trip and Mr. Stewart's organization and noted the Authority hosted a technical tour with Utah Division of Water Resources on August 15, 2025. Ms. Hasenyager announced upcoming meetings: Salinity Control Work Group September 3-5, 2025, in Pinedale, Wyoming, Salinity Control Forum October 27-28, 2025, in Pasadena, California, and the Central Arizona Project tour in Utah September 22-25, 2025.

Mr. Larsen highlighted the very dismal runoff in his basin, less than 30% of normal, despite a normal snowpack, and explained natural flow was restricted to senior priority water rights all season except for about two weeks in the spring. Mr. Larsen explained the stream flow is very low, impacting irrigation and leading to many cow herds leaving the basin and calves being sold early due to lack of feed. Mr. Larsen expressed concern about next year if insufficient rainfall or winter snow occurs and noted current high cattle prices and low hay prices.

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. **Next Meeting:** October 21, 2025 1:00pm World Trade Center 1st Floor Conference Room, 60 E South Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84111
14. **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.
15. **Adjourn**
A motion was made by and the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.



August 19, 2025
Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting

Board Member Attendees:

Gene Shawcroft, Chair
Joel Ferry, Vice Chair
Candice Hasenyager
Dan Larsen (virtual)
Jay Mark Humphrey (virtual)
Zach Renstrom

Attendees:

Amy Haas
Betsy Coleman
Holly McCall
Wendy Crowther
Marc Stilson
Logan Anderson
Cody Stewart
Lily Bosworth
Bart Leeflang, CUWCD
Ed Mueller, DNR
Scott McGettigan, DWRe
Richard Salas, DWRe

Virtual Attendees:

Megan Nelson, The Nature Conservancy
Rachel Anderson, AE2S
Sarah Shechter, Utah AG's Office
Teresa Wilhelmsen, Utah Division of Water Rights
Evan Curtis
Val Deppe, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Aaron Hunt, Utah Division of Water Rights