

**DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Colorado River Authority of Utah
January 20, 2026 -- 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. A list of all attendees is included in Attachment I. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the Minutes of November 18, 2025, Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting and the December 8, 2025 Virtual Special Meeting – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Humphrey motioned to approve the minutes, Mr. Larsen seconded the motion and the minutes from both meetings were unanimously approved.

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

There was no public comment.

4. Report of the Chair – Gene Shawcroft

Mr. Shawcroft explained the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) Conference was held in Las Vegas in December and the major topic of conversation was the 7-States agreement, or lack thereof. Mr. Shawcroft explained the Authority hosted the Basin States here at the World Trade Center last week for a 4-day meeting which he stated was too long as everyone got tired of each other. Mr. Shawcroft explained all 7 states remain committed to meeting the February 14th deadline set by the Department of Interior for a Basin States Agreement, and that Utah and the Other Upper Division States are focused on a supply-focused solution and support and agreement for a near-term and 20-year period. Mr. Shawcroft explained that some of the major issues we are dealing with are a supply-focused solution and establishing guidelines that will maintain releases from Lake Powell to Lake Mead as well as Lower Basin reductions. Mr. Shawcroft explained that Lake Mead operations include how conservation programs impact those operations. Mr. Shawcroft explained the Upper Basin continues to work on a program that would provide some water to the system but want to make sure that water is used in a way that it benefits our obligation to Lake Powell and doesn't simply reduce the shortages in the Lower Basin. Mr. Shawcroft also explained the Basin states agreement is to set aside potential conflicts and legal claims for the term of the agreement. Mr. Shawcroft explained the dry hydrology and the risks of Lake Powell and Lake Mead declining below critical elevations as early as this year makes the focus on supply-focused solutions even more important. Mr. Shawcroft explained the Upper Basin is committed to a solution based on supply, not demand.

Mr. Shawcroft stated that last Friday the Bureau of Reclamation formally released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which Amy will summarize.

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

Ms. Haas explained on January 16th the Bureau of Reclamation formally published in the Federal Register its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Post 2026 Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Ms. Haas explained there is a 45-day comment period with a deadline of March 2nd. Ms. Haas explained the document is very large and that the Authority team is just beginning to review the document due to the Basin States meeting held last week. Ms. Haas discussed the five alternatives reclamation has provided in the DEIS and stated that neither the Upper Division States alternative nor the Lower Division States alternative was provided as an

option. Ms. Haas explained the five alternatives, which include 1. No action, which assumes operations under pre-2007 Interim Guidelines operating guidance and reverts back to a minimum object release. Ms. Haas explained this is not a viable alternative as it does not meet the Purpose and Need for the NEPA process.

Ms. Haas discussed the first action alternative, Basic Coordination, which she explained can be implemented without any new agreements between and among the Upper and Lower Basins and Reclamation. Ms. Haas explained Lake Powell releases would primarily be 8.23 MAF with a minimum release of 7 MAF and a max of 9.5 MAF. Ms. Haas explained Lower Basin shortages would be up to 1.48 MAF based on Lake Mead elevations and the priority system. Ms. Haas explained that up stream initial units would make releases within their respective environmental compliance to protect critical infrastructure at Lake Powell.

Ms. Haas discussed Enhanced Coordination which she explained is an amalgam of concepts from Basin Tribes and federal agencies. Ms. Haas explained with this alternative Lake Powell releases would be based on a combination of Lake Powell and Lake Mead elevation, and 10 year running average hydrology and Lower Basin deliveries. Ms. Haas explained Lake Powell releases would range from 10.8 MAF to 4.7 MAF and Lower Basin shortages would start at 1.3 MAF up to a maximum of 3 MAF based on combined Lake Powell and Lake Mead elevations and would be administered pro rate and not based on priority. Ms. Haas further explained that a conservation pool would be set up in Lake Mead to store up to 5 MA and a 2 MAF pool at Lake Powell. Ms. Haas explained the Upper Basin would be expected to conserve based on hydro conditions up to 200 KAFA for the first 5 years, and up to 275 KAFA for the next 5 years and up to 350 KAF starting in year 11. Ms. Haas explained these are pretty steep conservations that could total up to 5.8 BAF over the 20 year term of the agreement.

Ms. Haas discussed Maximum Operations Flexibility which she explained was originally a concept pitched by a group of NGOs. Ms. Haas explained that with this alternative Lake Powell releases would range between 11 and 5 MAF based on total Upper Basin system storage (UIUs); and would revert to run of the river when Lake Powell is at or below 3510'. Ms. Haas explained that Lower Basin shortages would be based on all 7 reservoirs storage and would be maxed out at 4 MAF and be administered based on priority. Ms. Haas explained this alternative proposes a single 8 MAF conservation pool in either Lake Powell or Lake Mead and allows for interstate and interbasin transactions. Ms. Haas explained that it also requires an average of 200 KAFA of Upper Basin conservation be generated based on hydrologic condition.

Ms. Haas discussed the final alternative, Supply Driven Alternative, which she explained should sound familiar given the 7 states spent much of the spring and early summer evaluation it. Ms. Haas explained that in this alternative annual Lake Powell releases are based on 65% average natural flow at Lees Ferry with a range of 12 to 4.7 MAF. Ms. Haas explained the upstream initial units would be used to increase Lake Powell elevations to protect Glenn Canyon Dam infrastructure. Ms. Haas explained that Lower Basin shortage would be up to 2.1 MAF based on Lake Mead elevation and analyzed based on both priority reductions and pro rata use. Ms. Haas explained there would be two conservation pools, one at Lake Mead with 8 MAF capacity and one at Lake Powell with 3 MAF capacity. Ms. Haas explained this alternative would also allow for undefined interstate exchanges and contemplates releases from the Upstream Initial Units at Flaming Gorge of up to 500 KAFA to protect Glen Canyon Dam. Ms. Haas explained that up to 200 KAF Upper Basin conservation would be generated based on hydrology and contributed to the Lake Powell conservation pools. Ms. Haas explained that in years when Lake Powell cannot

meet its release due to low initial conditions, “gap water” would be introduced into the system for release in future years.

Ms. Haas explained that none of these alternatives are especially attractive to either Basin and stated that is by design in order to motivate us to continue negotiating a Basin States alternative for analysis in the FEIS.

Ms. Haas explained that none of the 5 alternatives can provide what for Utah is the central consideration for the deal and that is a waiver of all Compact litigation over the course of the agreement provided both Basins are meeting their commitments.

6. Advisory Council Presentation to the Board

- Central Advisory Council (CAC) – William Merkley, Co-Chair

Mr. Merkley thanked the Authority for all their efforts with the negotiations and explained the CAC recommendations are focused on compact compliance and accurate water measurements. Mr. Merkley stated the CAC supports real conservation efforts from all seven states, not just Utah, including the demand management pilot programs, and protects Utah’s right to develop our full allocation down the road. Mr. Merkley explained the CAC would like to ensure that Flaming Gorge and other CRSP units are not casually sacrificed to meet the demands of the Lower Basin States and would like to guarantee that Utah’s conservation efforts are fully recognized and not blended into regional accounting concepts that minimize the sacrifices of Utah water users. Mr. Merkley explained you can’t manage what you can’t measure and stated that accurate water measurement is necessary. Mr. Merkley explained the CAC would like the Board to continue to encourage our state policymakers to keep investing in the best measurement technology available.

- Southwest Advisory Council (SWAC) – Adam Snow, Co-Chair

Mr. Snow explained the SWAC understands the high-stakes, complexity, and critical nature of the Colorado River negotiations and would like to use this time to share the core concerns and values of the council that focus on growth, innovation, and local economic protection. Mr. Snow explained the 3 main concerns for the Authority, which are to Continue the successful water storage and development projects led throughout Washington County and continue to prioritize sustainable use as the county grows; Collaborate with universities across Utah to utilize innovative and advanced technologies; and to Protect the multifaceted local economies of Southwestern Utah. Mr. Snow expressed his appreciation and gratitude to those participating in negotiations for the continued commitment and determination to try to come to a fair agreement.

- Southeast Advisory Council (SEAC) – Simone Griffin, Co-Chair

Ms. Griffin presented the Southeast Advisory Council recommendations which included defending Utah’s rights while meeting compact obligations by protecting Utah’s ability to develop remaining portions of its allocation and avoiding placing disproportionate reduction on Utah and the Upper Basin. Ms. Griffin discussed protecting Lake Powell and Local Economies and explained the SEAC urges the River Commission to advocate for a minimum operational elevation of 3550’ in the post-2026 operating plan while still maintaining sufficient recreational flows in the Green, Colorado, and San Juan rivers. Ms. Griffin explained the SEAC would like Utah to lead on conservation and responsible future development and strive to be a conservation leader in the West. Ms. Griffin explained accurate measurement, consistent reporting, and efficient water use across all sectors will strengthen our negotiating position and help sustain both human and natural ecosystems.

- Northern Advisory Council (NAC) – Chris Robinson, Co-Chair

Mr. Robinson shared the Northern Advisory Council recommendations which he explained includes securing an agreement that protects Utah's allocation, ensures proportional Lower Basin reductions, and advances system resilience. Mr. Robinson explained that Utah must defend its quantified allocation under the Upper Basin apportionment while continuing to advocate for Lower Basin reductions calibrated to actual hydrologic conditions. Mr. Robinson also explained it was recommended to establish a viable Upper Basin Storage and Accounting Framework and also to anchor Utah's positions in Transparent Hydrologic Modeling and Advance Practical Conservation initiatives.

- Agricultural Advisory Council (AAC) – Steve Hanberg, Co-Chair

Mr. Hanberg explained the Agriculture Advisory Council's core concerns are compact call risk, inequitable burden sharing, protection of senior water rights, voluntary vs. mandatory conservation and loss of developing rights. Mr. Hanberg discussed the recommendations to the board that include doing no harm, demanding Lower Basin accountability, securing state funding for voluntary conservation, maintaining communication with agricultural stakeholders, preserving future development rights, and preparing for all outcomes. Mr. Hanberg stated the council recommends negotiating wisely and fairly, and if a fair deal cannot be reached, stand with us in whatever comes next.

7. Update on the Utah Demand Management Pilot Program – Marc Stilson, Principal Engineer

Mr. Stilson explained the 2026 contracting period has begun for the Demand Management Pilot Program where there are currently 9 applicants. Mr. Stilson explained there is still a lot of interest in the program and he is working on the provisional accounting report and proposal which he will provide an update on in the future. Ms. Haas stated the governor's budget has a one-time funding of \$5M for the Demand Management Pilot Program for 2027.

8. Hydrology and System Status Update – Betsy Morgan, Staff Engineer

Ms. Morgan discussed precipitation and water year month to date which she explained have both been below average. Ms. Morgan explained precipitation accumulation is near normal across the Upper Colorado River Region. Ms. Morgan explained Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) is below normal across the region at about 66% of median. Ms. Morgan explained the National Climate Report has stated this is the 4th warmest year on record in the U.S. and THE warmest year on record in Utah. Ms. Morgan discussed the drought status and explained that 100% of the Upper Colorado River Basin is experiencing some level of drought. Ms. Morgan discussed the 8-14 day outlook as well as the seasonal outlook, which are not very optimistic. Ms. Morgan discussed the Upper Basin storage percentages as well as Lake Powell and Lake Mead system storage where she explained the total system content is 42% full. Ms. Morgan discussed the Lake Powell Water Year unregulated inflow where she explained the most probable is 6.5 maf which is 68%. Ms. Morgan discussed the Lake Powell end-of-month elevations where she explained the most probable is 3513', and Lake Mead end-of-month elevations where she explained the most probable was 1060'.

9. Potential for releases from Upstream Initial Units (Flaming Gorge) in 2026 to protect critical Lake Powell elevations – Wayne Pullan, Regional Director, Upper Colorado River Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Mr. Pullan explained that we are in a place where the change in hydrology and the change in what we can expect is requiring a great deal from our institutions and is a test of whether we can adapt our infrastructure to this new reality. Mr. Pullan explained the creation of the Colorado River

Authority of Utah is a move that everyone involved with should be very proud of, and complimented the Authority on the development of infrastructure, measurement, and the demand management pilot program. Mr. Pullan provided some history and explained that before the internal guidelines, we were delivering 8.32 maf which the river won't sustain any longer. Mr. Pullan explained the interim guidelines were developed, which are now expiring, and stated that now we realize the 2007 guidelines are not sustainable. Mr. Pullan explained that the 2019 Drought contingency plan acknowledged that we had the responsibility to operate Glen Canyon dam and gave us the tools to perform conservation type activities. Mr. Pullan explained that a couple years ago it was decided we had to cut use to be sustainable so the Supplemental EIS was created to reduce released from Glen Canyon Dam from 7.48 down to as low as 6 maf Mr. Pullan explained that because things are as dire as they are, we are likely going to need to do some type of DROA release in 2026, however, we won't know until April what kind of year it's going to be so the decision on Flaming Gorge releases for May will be made in April and could be up to 500,000 af. Mr. Pullan explained this may the type of year that we may need to consider cutting back that release to the Lower Basin and we may need to consider an adjustment of probably of at least 4-8 kaf.

10. Remarks from the Board

Mr. Humphrey commented it was very dry in Emery County and it's a tough year. Mr. Larsen agreed and explained we are exactly where we don't want to be. Mr. Renstrom explained his reservoir levels were very high, but snow is non-existent and it is not good.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Next Meeting: March 24, 2026 1:00 pm World Trade Center 1st Floor Conference Room, 60 East 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. Humphrey 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 Mr. Larsen. Ms. Coleman took a roll call vote from each Board Member; the motion to enter a Closed Session passed unanimously.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

January 20, 2026
Colorado River Authority of Utah Board Meeting

Board Member Attendees:

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

Attendees:

Amy Haas
Betsy Coleman
Emma Epperson
Wendy Crowther
Marc Stilson
Logan Anderson
Betsy Morgan
Cody Stewart
Bart Leeflang, CUWCD
Dex Winterton, MLWUA/CAC
Amanda Daniels
William Markley, CAC
Val Deppe, BOR
Steve Hanberg, Ag Advisory Council
Simone Griffin, SE Advisory Council
Chris Robinson, Northern Advisory Council,
Scott McGettigan, Wre
Mike Drake, DWR
Teresa Wilhelmsen, State Engineer

Virtual Attendees:

Brooke Larsen
Bryan Dixon
Gordon Rowe
John Berggren
Adam Snow
Mark Stratford – Utah Water Rights
Mark Stratford – Utah Water Rights
Calah Worthen – Jacobs Engineering
Duana Houston
Sarah Shechter
Fox 13 News
Cody Allred
Gary Brimley
W. Lefevre
Clyde Watkins
Lily Bosworth
Gary Brimley