

Colorado River Citizens' Forum
Imperial, California
August 20, 2007
***Tentative Meeting Minutes**

Board Members in attendance:

Tom Davis	Mark Watson	Stella Mendoza
Brian McNeece	Nancy Wright	Bill Plummer
Kevin Eatherly	Wade Noble	Richard Ryan
Cary Meister	Francisco Zamora	

Board Members absent:

None

USIBWC Staff in attendance:

John Turner

MXIBWC Staff in attendance:

Francisco Bernal

❖ 19 Members of the public in attendance

Welcome and Introductions

Bill Plummer, Co-Chair, welcomed the attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

All American Canal (AAC) – Michael L. King, Water Department Manager, Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
Mr. King has overseen the project since 1994.

Fact Sheet:

- Constructed by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) in the 1930's
- New canal will conserve 67,7000 acre feet a year, enough water for 500,000 people
- Approximate cost \$250 million
- Project is being directed by the AAC Coordinating Committee

History:

- Congressional authorization signed into law by the President on November 17, 1988
- Approved the Record of Decision (ROD) on July 29, 1994
- Reclamation issued a Supplemental Information Report dated Jan 12, 2006
- Project funded by State of California and San Diego County Water Authority
- Quantification Settlement Agreement signed on October 10, 2003
- 2007, Legal Challenges resolved, Project is under construction

Project Element:

- Construct approximately 23 miles of lined canal adjacent to existing canal
- Design is complete and construction started June 2007
- Construction is expected to be completed in Spring 2010

AAC Coordinating Committee:

Made up with Mr. King, IID; Ken Steele, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA); Chairman Van Tenney and USBR

AAC Lining Project Operations Maintenance & Responsibilities Coordinating Committee:

Will be developed and will be made up of SDCWA, IID, San Luis Rey Indians (Voting members); USBR (non-voting member)

Project Challenges:

- Project team is working diligently on a fast-track basis
- Addressing design, construction, scheduling, and cost issues to minimize costs
- Optimizing the new canal facilities and the required environmental mitigation.

Environmental Program Objective:

- Compliance with Multiple Requirements
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Endangered Species
- Hazardous Materials/Solid Waste
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Vegetation
- Water Quality/Stormwater
- Wetlands
- Wildlife

Challenge of Public Access and Recreation During Construction:

- Coordinating Construction and Public Use Near Work Areas
- Interagency Coordination During Peak Use Periods
- Public Information Distribution is Essential
- Interagency Recreation and Transportation Management Plan

Construction Issues:

- No Interruption of Water Flow
- Remote Location
- Migratory Bird Nesting Constraints
- Weather (120° F)
- Limited Resources

Current Status:

- Design is complete and the project started construction in June 2007
- First major concrete pour completed on August 8, 2007 at the flume measuring structure.
- Current schedule indicates construction completion in Spring 2010
- Working 20 hours a day, two shifts.

Questions and Answers (Q&A):

Q: Are you using ice in concrete?

A: Trying not to. Trying to pour everything in the summer, if we get into a scheduling conflict then yes they will be using it.

Regulatory Storage Below Parker Dam – Cindy Hoeft, Resource Management Office, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma Area Office

The USBR Yuma Area responsibility starts at Davis Dam to the Southerly International Boundary, Coachella, Imperial area, Arizona, Wellton Mohawk Irrigation District

Key responsibilities:

- Deliver Colorado River water to irrigation districts

- Manage Yuma area groundwater table
- Comply with Treaty with Mexico
- Colorado River environmental mitigation

Drop 2 Storage Reservoir - Project Overview and Purpose:

- Plan, design and construct 8,000 acre-foot storage reservoir and 1,800 cfs conveyance system
- Provide available storage space for conserving a portion of “non-storable” flows currently not captured in the lower Colorado River system.
- Non-storable flows are a result of limited Colorado River system storage capacity below Parker Dam. Typically storm events or rejected water.
- Located north of the All American Canal on Interstate 8

On December 20, 2006, Congress passed Public Law No. 109-432 “Regulated Storage Water Facility”.

Principal Project Features:

- Turnout Structure “Bifurcation”
 - Modify existing Coachella Canal turnout at Drop 1
 - Modification will allow 1,800 cfs to Drop 2 inlet canal and 1,550 cfs to Coachella Canal.
 - Five existing radial gates
 - Common center gate
 - Allows filling 8,000 acre-foot Reservoir in 72 hours
- Inlet Canal
 - 6.65 Miles
 - 1,800 cfs; Flows Metered
 - 2H:1V Side Slopes; 3 ½ inches Concrete Lining
 - Around Section 36; Limit Canal Right of Way – Minimize Environmental Impact
 - 6 foot Security Fencing and 3 foot Flat Tailed Horned Lizard Fencing
- Imperial County Road Crossing
 - Preserves Access to County Road
 - Gates Access to canal maintenance road
 - Trapezoidal structure
 - Three axel truck loading
 - At Grade
- Reservoir Forebay/Afterbay system
 - Wasteway
 - Trashracks
 - Gate structure
 - Gates inlet/outlet and siphon structure
 - Gravity system: Fill and drain 8,000 AF in 72 hours, respectively
- Reservoir
 - Earthen Embankment; 485 acre Footprint
 - 3H:1V (Inside) 4H:1V (Outside) Side Slopes; 9 inches Soil Cement with 60 mil HDPE Liner
 - Capacity: 8,000 acre-foot, 2 each 4,000 acre-foot Cells
 - Water Depth: 20 to 21 feet; Freeboard: 4 feet
 - 6 foot Security Fencing and 3 foot Flat Tailed Horned Lizard Fencing
 - Brock Ranch Site
 - Adjacent to the Drop 2 Hydroelectric Power Structure on the All American Canal
 - Approximately 30 Miles East of El Centro, CA, and 25 Miles West of Yuma, AZ
- Outlet Crossings
 - Will cross Evan Hewes Highway
 - Will cross Interstate 8 Highway

- Twin 108 inch Pipelines (Steel with Welded Joints)
- Gravity System
- 1,800 cfs; Flows Metered
- Outlet Canal
 - 0.25 Miles
 - 2H:1V Side Slopes
 - 3 ½ inches Concrete Lining
 - Allows Draining 8,000 acre-foot Reservoir in 72 Hours
- Turn-in Structure “Confluence” into newly lined All American Canal downstream of Drop 2

Stakeholder and Partner Coordination:

- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Transportation
- Coachella Valley Water District
- Flat Tailed Horned Lizard Management Oversight Group
- Imperial County
- Imperial Irrigation District (IID)
- Indian Tribes, Including Quechan and Cocopah
- Private Land Owners
- Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)
- TransCanada North Baja System – IID Lateral
- US Customs and Border Protection
- Utility Providers Including IID, Imperial County
- Yuma Heritage Foundation

Voluntary Environmental Commitments:

- Uninterrupted Water Supply
- Flat Tailed Horned Lizard Management Strategy
- Limitrophe/Hunter’s Hole
- Aesthetics
 - Lighting
 - Views
- Air Quality
 - Combustive and Fugitive Dust (PM10) Abatement
 - Ozone (O3)
- Noise Abatement
- Erosion Control
- Migratory Bird Act Considerations
- Cultural Resources
- Hazardous Materials

Project Milestones:

- Value Planning Study
 - May 2004
- Appraisal/Storage Alternatives
 - February 2005
- Draft Environmental Assessment
 - November 2006
- DEC (Design, Estimating, and Construction) Review
 - December 2006
- Feasibility Design Report

- March 2007
- Final Environmental Assessment
 - June 2007
- Final Design Period
 - March 2007 through March 2008
- Project Management (Acquisition & Construction Management) Plan
 - September 2007
- Various Agreements
 - July 2007 - March 2008
- Environmental, Cultural and Lands Compliance and Permitting Period
 - March 2007 - March 2008
- Stakeholder Final Integration and Coordination Period
 - March 2007 - July 2008
- Acquisition Period
 - January 2008 - July 2008
- Construction Period
 - July 2008 - October 2010

Questions and Answers (Q&A):

Q: How many extra linear feet is that around the private property?

A: Don't have the answer at this time.

Q: That is cheaper than the right-of-way across the section?

A: Yes, because it would require condemnation because several private entities were unwilling to sell their land.

Q: Did you reach an agreement with Southern Nevada Water Authority if they are paying?

A: The agreement with Southern Nevada Water Authority is part of a bigger plan being developed between Reclamation and the Basin States. It is not completed and probably won't be until the end of the year.

Q: Will it be signed before construction starts?

A: Yes.

Q: What will they get in return?

A: Water -- a specific amount for a specific time frame. The details are still being worked out.

Q: Is the 3-foot lizard fence to keep the lizards in or out?

A: It's to keep them out of the reservoir.

Q: As an alternative, did anyone look into just lining the old section of the canal that is being abandoned and using it for storage?

A: There were 45 different alternatives in a study conducted in 2004 and that was one of them.

Q: What is going to happen to the old abandoned All American Canal section?

A: Part of it will be used by the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to make up for lost storage with the newly-lined canal and there are no current plans for the rest of it.

Q: Will there be a problem with vegetation management in the area?

A: There will be an Operations and Maintenance agreement with IID and they will take care of vegetation.

Q: Southern Nevada will be getting water in perpetuity?

A: No. It will not be in perpetuity. Those details have not been determined yet.

Elston Grubagh, IID Interim General Manager comments on Southern Nevada agreement: Southern Nevada has offered to pay for the reservoir in exchange for a certain amount of water in an 8-10 year period; it's based on a \$300 per acre-foot cost. For example if they would put \$90,000,000 in the reservoir they would get a certain amount of water based on \$300 per acre-foot with a cap in a specific time period, that is still in discussion. The cost per acre-foot and the specific time periods are still in discussions.

Q: Where is the water coming from, whose allocation?

A: It's Colorado River system water. It is water that will be saved because of the reservoir.

Q: Is the water subtracted from IID's allocation?

A: No, it is not.

Q: Do you have an amount of what is going into the mitigation of the restoration?

A: Recently we awarded a grant for some wells in the Hunter's Hole area.

Update on Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Mead - Cindy Hoeft, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma Area Office

Colorado River Basin Hydrology

- 16.5 million acre-feet (maf) allocated annually
- 13 to 14.5 maf of consumptive use annually
- 60 maf of storage
- 15.1 maf average annual "natural" inflow into Lake Powell over past 100 years
- Inflows are highly variable year-to-year

Drought Conditions

- 2000-2007 was the driest 8-year period in the 100-year historical record
- Not unusual to have a few years of above average inflow during longer-term droughts (e.g., the 1950's)
- Current 2007 April through July runoff forecast 51% of average

2007 Upper Colorado Projected Apr-Jul Inflow based on July 2007 mid-month inflow forecast:

Flaming Gorge -31%

Blue Mesa -68 %

Navajo -74 %

Lake Powell -51 %

Need for Additional Guidelines

- Eight years of unprecedented drought
- Increased water use
- Increased tension among the Basin States
- To date, there has never been a shortage in the Lower Basin and there are currently no shortage guidelines
- Operations between Lake Powell and Lake Mead are currently coordinated only at the higher reservoir levels ("equalization")

Secretary's Decision May 2005

- Did not adjust Lake Powell's release for Wyoming 2005
- Affirmed authority to adjust Lake Powell releases
- Tasked states to come up with a consensus plan
- Directed that guidelines be completed by December 2007

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process begun in September 2005

Key Considerations (Identified through Scoping Process)

- Importance of encouraging conservation of water
- Importance of considering reservoir operations at all operational levels
- Guidelines for an interim period (assumed to be 2008 through 2026)

Elements of Proposed Federal Action

- Shortage strategy for Lake Mead and the Lower Division states
- Coordinated operation of Lakes Powell and Mead
- Mechanism for the storage and delivery of conserved system and non-system water in Lake Mead
- Modification/extension of the existing Interim Surplus Guidelines

Geographic Scope

- Domestic Action
- River Corridor from Lake Powell to SIB
- Affected service areas of water users
 - Arizona –lower priority water users along river and Central Arizona Project (CAP) users
 - California – Metropolitan Water District (MWD) service area
 - Nevada –Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) service area

Alternatives Analyzed in Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

- No Action Alternative
- Basin States Alternative
- Conservation Before Shortage Alternative
- Water Supply Alternative
- Reservoir Storage Alternative

Comment on Draft EIS

- Received 77 comment letters and had two individuals provide oral comments during public hearings
 - Business 1
 - Indian Tribes 11
 - Federal agencies 6
 - Local Agency 18
 - Associations/ Special Interest 9
 - State Agency 9
 - Individual 23
 - Public Hearing Comments 2
 - Letters contained approximately 1,532 comments
- Sample of issues by subject
 - Hydrology
 - Climate change not addressed
 - Include 2005 hydrology in modeling
 - Inadequate analysis of effects on groundwater
 - Update modeling to reflect current reservoir storage and lower initial starting conditions
 - Water Deliveries
 - Shortages are not properly or fairly distributed
 - Mexico shortage sharing assumptions are not consistent with 1944 Mexico Treaty
 - Use updated Upper Basin depletion schedules in modeling
 - Electrical Power
 - Need to consider value of peaking power

- Need consider and mitigate affects
- Reclamation does not have authority to impose surcharges to cost of power produced
- Water Quality
 - Salinity analysis needs to include effects below Imperial Dam
 - Provide more detailed analysis of temperature and water quality impacts in Grand Canyon
- Biological
 - Include analysis of impacts within Northerly International Boundary (NIB) to Southerly International Boundary (SIB) Reach and Delta
 - Include analysis of impacts within Virgin and Muddy Rivers
- Socioeconomic
 - Socioeconomics and air quality impacts of shortages need more analysis
 - More thorough evaluation of effects of shortage on municipalities and tribes is needed
 - Evaluate effects of consecutive multi-year shortages
 - Consider the benefits of payments made to farmers under Voluntary Conservation (Conservation Before Shortage)
- Modeling
 - Consider/model SNWA 3rd intake will be operational by 2001
 - Consider/model Yuma Desalinization Plant in operation
- Alternatives
 - Basin States Alternatives does not meet purpose and need because it does not provide shortage guidelines at lower reservoir elevations
 - Preferred Alternative was not included and the public should have the opportunity to review and comment
 - No Action Alternative does not reflect current operating conditions and is inconsistent with Law of the River and 1944 Mexico Treaty
 - Conservation Before Shortage Alternative will require changes to the Law of the River
- Elements
 - Default operating criteria for Lake Powell and Lake Mead not adequately addressed
 - Need larger intentionally created surplus program and broader participation
 - Shortage guidelines should revert to criteria used in Interim Surplus Guidelines Final Environmental Impact Statement (ISG FEIS) (Dec. 2000) at conclusion of interim period
- Other/misc
 - Intentionally Created Surplus program requires Basin States' agreement to forebear
 - Record of Decision (ROD) should require Basin States by not later than 2020 to develop and implement new guidelines for post-interim period
 - ROD should include commitment to monitoring and adaptive management programs

Preferred Alternative

- Informed by public comments made on the Draft EIS
- Composed of the operational elements identified and analyzed in the Draft EIS
- Published on June 15th
- Key Elements:
 - A shortage strategy tied to Lake Mead elevations
 - Lower Basin shortages of 333 thousand acre-feet (kaf), 417 kaf, and 500 kaf at Lake Mead elevations of 1075, 1050, and 1025 feet respectively
 - Initiate efforts to develop additional guidelines for shortages if Lake Mead falls below elevation 1,025 (includes re-consultation with Basin States)
 - Release from Lake Powell determined by storage of Powell and Mead
 - Under high reservoir conditions, minimum objective release of 8.23 million acre-feet (maf) from Lake Powell unless storage equalization releases are required

- Under lower reservoir conditions, either reduce Lake Powell release or balance volumes depending upon elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Anticipated Project Schedule

- ✓ Summer 2005
 - Solicited public comments on proposed content, format, mechanisms and analysis
- ✓ Fall 2005
 - Announced intent to initiate NEPA process, solicited public comments on scope and alternatives development
- ✓ March 2006
 - Published Scoping Summary Report
- ✓ June 2006
 - Published the proposed alternatives
- ✓ February –April 2007
 - Published Draft EIS on February 28th
 - Public comment period through April 30th
- ✓ June 2007
 - Published the preferred alternative on June 15th
- ✓ September 2007
 - Publish Final EIS
- ✓ December 2007
 - Publish Record of Decision

The Two Project Managers on this project are:

Terry Fulp, Project Manager

Lower Colorado Region

and

Randy Peterson, Project Manager

Upper Colorado Region

Project website: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/programs/strategies.html>

Questions and Answer (Q&A):

Q: Are there recommendations that require any conservation from MWD or water users?

A: There are measures in place for conservation by the 7 basin states.

Q: There is no urban component?

A: No

Q: What is the timeframe for the binational consultations and Mexico's allotment?

John Turner, USIBWC, commented on this: U.S. and Mexico, through the IBWC, have begun consultations and information exchange regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's EIS on shortage criteria. The EIS states that modeling assumptions that relate to Mexico are not intended to constitute an interpretation or application of the 1944 Water Treaty or to represent current or future United States policy toward Mexico. Article 10 of the 1944 Water Treaty provides, "In the event of extraordinary droughts or serious accident to the irrigation system in the United States, thereby making it difficult for the United States to deliver the guaranteed quantity...the water allotted to Mexico....will be reduced in the same proportion as consumptive uses in the United States are reduced." Any reduction to Mexico's allotment would need to be consistent with the Treaty.

Proliferation of Utilities in the Yuma Area (roads, power lines, railroad) - Bill Plummer, Manager, Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District

This is a concern due to a number of entities either having made a proposal or will be making a proposal and not coordinating the projects together properly. The utilities would be crossing City of Yuma, Yuma Valley, Yuma Mesa and North/South Gila Valley.

The power line proposal is an issue due the location of the proposed power lines coming from the proposed power plant in San Luis Rio Colorado, Son. The lines would start north from the proposed power plant, up through the bombing range (Barry Goldwater) and through farmlands in order to reach the North Gila substation.

Arizona Public Service also has lines coming from San Luis going north ending at the Yuma Mesa.

Arizona Public Service has their expansion proposal of adding numerous additional power lines going through the Gila Valleys.

Pacific Union has a proposal to build a railroad from Mexico to Baja California and through the middle of the Yuma Valley. Will impact Yuma with limited road access, agricultural, education access and required transportation.

The Arizona Service Highway has a proposal for two expressways from the new port of entry east of San Luis to Interstate 8.

All these projects crisscross from each other and are not coordinating with each other. This will split up the Yuma area.

The Yuma Mesa Irrigation District has sent a letter with their proposal stating that a thorough corridor analysis is necessary. To date, no analysis has been done or the district has not heard of one being done by any of the proposal proponents. Comments from the letter have not been received.

The irrigation districts will be heavily impacted with their operations.

Question and Answers (Q&A):

Q: Doesn't the Arizona State Utility Commission have to coordinate these projects?

A: There is a committee that reviews it first, and then it will go to the Commission.

Q: Is the committee looking at each site separately?

A: Yes, each proposed project is coming in as a single project so they are looked at as a single project instead of a whole project.

The Marine Corps Air Station is also concerned with the plans to build the 160-200 feet towers and one of the corridors adjacent to the proposed highway will create flight hazards for the helicopters.

Board Discussion

Proposed dates for next meeting – November 26th or December 3rd.

Suggested Future Agenda Items

- Colorado River Salinity Control Forum's effort to control salinity/selenium in the Colorado River – Jack Barnett
- Giant Salvinia/aquatic nuisance update
- Overview of the Yuma Proving Ground activities that will impact the Colorado River – Colonel Bullington
- Border fencing project

If there are other issues/projects you would like to hear, please email the Yuma IBWC office at annamorales@ibwc.state.gov

Next meeting TBA in Yuma County.

Thank you to all the presenters for their presentations.

*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens' Forum Meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens' Forum Meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.