

Green River Basin Advisory Group  
Meeting Record  
Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, WY  
July 8, 2003

**Welcome**

Facilitator Sherri Gregory welcomed the group and the meeting was called to order at 12:48 p.m. after a presentation/tour of the refuge by Carol Damburg and a Seedskaadee Experimental Farm presentation by Don Brosz. John Hill, Green River BAG member, supplied supplemental information about the project. All attendees introduced themselves, followed by a review of the overall meeting agenda. A sign-in sheet was passed around to record attendance. The next meeting is scheduled for November 4 in Pinedale.

**Water Development Commission Report**

Barry Lawrence updated the BAG on the status of the plans for the other basins. The Snake/Salt BAG will be meeting July 9 in Jackson, whereas the BAGS for the Wind/Bighorn, Powder/Tongue and Northeast Wyoming Basins will be meeting July 15 in Thermopolis, July 16 in Kaycee, and July 17 in Lusk. Open houses for the Platte River Basin were held June 2 – 4 in Saratoga, Douglas and Pine Bluffs. Barry discussed the status of all basin studies, and agendas for future meetings.

Barry introduced new planning team members Debra Cook, Water Resources Data System, University of Wyoming and Jodee Pring, State Engineer's Office.

**Green River Export Study**

Mike Besson, Water Development Commission, indicated there are shortages in the Green River on its tributaries, not the main stem, as it is on the Platte River. Due to new demands in the Platte River Basin, a potential pipeline project to either the North Platte or Sweetwater River is being explored at a reconnaissance level by an in-house study. A lengthy discussion followed.

Phil Ogle and Jodie Pavlica, WWDC, detailed the three alternatives being analyzed in the Green River Export Study. The various alternatives and related reaches include:

- Upper Basin, above Big Sandy Reservoir
- Middle Basin, Big Sandy and Fontenelle Reservoir
- Lower Basin, below Fontenelle Reservoir

It was indicated that the various alternatives would be evaluated for feasibility, followed with a report describing the findings of the analysis and project feasibility.

### **AML Statewide Coal Reclamation Project**

Harold Hutson, BRS Engineering, indicated the Abandoned Mine Lands Program was formed in 1977, with funding provided to the individual states by a coal severance tax. The purpose of the program was for the protection of the general public and to mitigate the adverse affects of past mining practices. The #1 priority of the program is hazard abatement, including mine fires, subsidence, portals, and vertical shafts. The #2 priority is environmental degradation, including slack and erosion. Harold discussed the 2 priorities with regard to the Kemmerer Area Coal Project, which has 22 primary mine sites, predominantly mined by the Kemmerer Coal Company and Union Pacific Coal Company. The sites are located along Willow Creek, Muddy Creek, and the Hams Fork River. He indicated the time frames for completion of the hazard mitigation is 2004/2005 and 2006 for completion of environmental reclamation.

### **State Engineer's Office**

Pat Tyrrell and John Shields provided an update on Colorado River programs and issues. These included:

- California's Colorado River Water Use Plan  
On January 1, 2003, the annual delivery of Colorado River water to California was reduced from 5.1 million acre-feet (MAF) to 4.4 MAF and the interim surplus guidelines were suspended due to the state's failure to execute the Quantification Settlement Agreement by December 31, 2002. However, the Imperial Irrigation District was granted its full allotment of Colorado River water by U.S. District Judge Thomas Whelan on March 18. On April 28, Metropolitan Water District and Cochella Valley Water District are advised that their 2003 water deliveries will be reduced to comply with the March 18 court ruling.

On July 3, after weeks of conference calls and meetings, the six Colorado River Basin states reached agreement on a letter to California Governor Davis supporting the Revised Quantification Settlement Agreement, and advising Governor Davis of concerns/issues with the current draft agreements; willing to work with California to resolve remaining issues (off-ramps, inadvertent overrun payback issues, certainty of measures).

The USBR issued the initial beneficial use determination of the amount of Colorado River water needed for the beneficial use needs of the Imperial Irrigation District for calendar year 2003 on July 3.

- Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program  
At its May 2003 meeting, the Salinity Control Forum was advised by Bureau of Land Management Director Kathleen Clarke of BLM's commitment to participating in the basin-wide salinity control effort. Heidi Hadley, who is based in Salt Lake City, has filled a permanent BLM Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Coordinator position. The Forum's

Selenium Committee will be exploring the pros and cons to exploring opportunities to reduce selenium loading in the basin while continuing salinity control.

- **Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program**  
There is a meeting July 31-August 1 of the Management Committee to develop the FY 04-05 biennial work plan. A meeting has been scheduled August 11 in Baggs, Wyoming on the Yampa River Management Plan and Programmatic Biological Opinion. A status report on the 2003 fish stocking plan with regard to species, numbers and sizes of fish in the Upper Colorado River was presented.
- **Upper Colorado River Commission**  
A meeting of the Upper Colorado River Commission was held June 17, 2003. It was announced that Ben Bracken had been appointed as an alternate commissioner. At the meeting, resolutions were adopted on the use and accounting of upper basin water supplied to the lower basin by New Mexico in the proposed Navajo-Gallup water supply project and by Utah in the proposed Lake Powell pipeline project. However, Wyoming officially supported the resolution with conditions, which included a non-precedent position, and future transfers of upper Colorado River basin water will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The next meeting is October 7-8, 2003 in St. George, Utah.
- **Rio Grande Silvery Minnow v Keys**  
On June 12, the U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ordered the USBR to reduce contract deliveries from the San Juan-Chama and Middle Rio Grande projects to supply water for the habitat requirements of the endangered silvery minnow.
- **Water Supply Update**  
It is anticipated that there will be 50% average inflows to Fontenelle and Flaming Gorge Reservoirs for April through July. Current storage levels as a percent of capacities are approximately 70 to 75 percent in both facilities.

The meeting was adjourned.