

**Transition Work Group
Meeting Summary
August 30, 1995
Phoenix, Arizona**

Rick Gold, Reclamation's Deputy Regional Director, Upper Colorado Region, welcomed the group; and participants introduced themselves (attendee list enclosed). The agenda was reviewed, and an update of the status of non-use values was added.

Followup from July 13 meeting with environmental organizations (Rick Gold) - The discussion paper distributed at the July 13 meeting describing the rationale for modifying the Final EIS preferred alternative is being expanded and will be distributed to TWG members.

Research Center - Selection of the Research Center Director is proceeding, with selection and staffing decisions being made at the Department of Interior Assistant Secretary level.

Status of GAO Audit (Steven Lloyd) - The GAO is reviewing their audit plan and will update Reclamation when the plan is finalized. After review by Congressional staffs, the revised plan will be released to the public. A timeframe has not been developed. The auditors have indicated that the EIS team, cooperating agencies, and others have done an excellent job in preparing the EIS; and the GAO does not anticipate any "glaring" flaws. The auditors are trying to obtain Congressional support for removing the requirement for a GAO audit from the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Meanwhile, they are proceeding with interviews with those involved in the EIS process. The Washington GAO staff met with Reclamation on July 28 to discuss economics regarding the EIS and the proprietary data Stone and Webster received from CREDA. Kurt Dongoski, Hopi Tribe, asked at what point we stop developing the Adaptive Management Program; i.e., research center, if the audit is not completed in a timely manner and the Record of Decision is not signed. Rick responded that the Secretary has the legal authority to establish the research center without a signed ROD.

Subgroup Reports

Transition Monitoring (Dave Wegner) - After receiving approximately 20 proposals from interested parties, a strategy document has been developed which lists essential elements to be included in the transition monitoring. This list is being reviewed to determine which elements can be consolidated, integrated with other studies, or more appropriately covered under long-term monitoring; and agencies may be asked to submit joint proposals. The final proposals will be prioritized and reviewed by independent "peers." Contracts will be issued for 1 year with the option for an additional year in the event that the research center and long-term monitoring are not in place by FY-1997. Letters of intent will be issued by the end of September 1995. Larry Riley asked about the purpose of consolidation/joint proposals. Dave responded that this will facilitate the linking of scientific elements, improve the quality of data collection, and save money.

Management Objectives (Bruce Moore) - Management objectives have been received from some of the organizations, others are contained in the Final EIS. This subgroup will meet on September 20 at Reclamation's Central Arizona Projects office in Phoenix.

Non-use Value Update (Dave Harpman) - The draft final report was peer reviewed on August 11, 1995, at the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) building in Washington D.C. The GCES Non-use Value Committee met in Phoenix on August 29 to discuss the comments and suggestions made by the peer reviewers. Several additional analyses were also discussed. The NAS recommended removal of the recreation and power comparisons. Responding to a request from CREDA, it was determined that the final will be submitted to Reclamation (around September 8), and Reclamation will then distribute it. Responding to a question from Larry Riley, Dave Harpman said that it would be ideal if the integrated economics report could be submitted with the ROD. However, if the timing of the ROD, vis a vis completion of the integrated report, is unfavorable, a brief paper describing the integrated economic results could be provided to the secretary. (Dave Wegner noted that an integrated economics report is to be included in the GCES for FY-96, but it can be given higher priority, if needed, prior to the scheduled completion date).

FY-96 Annual Operating Plan and Beach Habitat Building Flow (Randy Peterson) - Predictions are that the 1996 Lake Powell peak elevation is expected to be the same as this year (3692 feet). With probable maximum conditions, Lake Powell may fill; with probable minimum conditions, the lake may be 16 feet below (the experimental beach habitat building flows are included in each of these scenarios). Probable maximum inflow would cause flood releases from Lake Mead. Equalization flows from Lake Powell for 1995 are being delayed until January 1996 to preserve the sediment resources for next year's experimental flow. The AOP is expected to be submitted to the Interior Secretary by October 1. The AOP workgroup attempted to include the language of all parties in the research flow section of the AOP, and Rick thanked the participants for their cooperation in this effort. Cliff Barrett, CREDA, asked about NEPA compliance for the research flows. Rick responded that NEPA compliance is included in the Final EIS; but if the ROD has not been signed, then additional NEPA will be required, including ESA compliance. Kurt reminded the group that the spike flow may have a detrimental affect on cultural resources, and these need to be assessed. Jan Balsom noted that the Programmatic Agreement includes mitigation for the experimental flow. Bob Lynch indicated the need for a contingency plan if the experimental flow needs to be stopped for such things as damage to resources, heavy rains, etc. A plan will be developed as part of the experimental flow.

Reclamation's Plan for Implementation of Final Biological Opinion (Bruce Moore/Dave Wegner) - Dave reviewed the Glen Canyon Dam Biological Opinion Plan/Schedule for Implementation (attachment 2) and requested that the completion dates be given serious review and that participants submit comments to Christine Karas by September 15. After review, the plan will be finalized, distributed to the TWG, and Reclamation will begin implementation. The biological opinion is tied to the Final EIS and Reclamation is moving forward aggressively.

FY-96 Program and Funding (Bruce Moore) - Bruce noted that the 1996 budget is substantially reduced from previous years. The source of funding is power revenues and appropriated funds (CRSP Section 8 for the selective withdrawal structure and Reclamation's Native American Affairs Program). He reviewed some of the issues involved, noting that priority will be given to funding portions that are required by Law, the research (spike) flow (included in the \$6.5 million allocated for FY-96), and PL 93-638--Federal funding of Native Americans to perform appropriate research. The 1997 proposed budget expenditures will be drafted by July 1, 1996, for review by the TWG. He also noted that there will be more competition for the work to be performed in the future.

GCES Report Completion (Dave Wegner) - During the summer, research continued on the Kanab ambersnail, completion of individual research programs in the Canyon, integration of data into the Geographic Information System, and the annual 4-day 5,000 cfs flow. He noted that releases from the dam have been fairly steady at 18,000 cfs, and thus researchers have been able to study the concept of steady flows. One result of the current flow regime has been the filling in of backwaters. GCES reports are being finalized (all reports are due by September 30) and are being extensively peer reviewed. Cooperative agreements are being closed out on September 30. Data associated with these reports are being integrated into the GCES Geographic Information System. All reports are being summarized and this summary will be readily available.

There is a great deal of sand in the system, and 1996 should be a good year for the experimental flow. Duncan Patten and Dave will be asking subgroup members to begin preparing research requirements for the experimental flow in October. (Although Duncan recently retired from ASU, he will continue to be involved in the GCES program.) Larry Riley requested that the group be provided with the estimated funding available for the experimental flow and transition monitoring--with the first priority of funding designated for the experimental flow (possibly there may be carryover funds available from FY-95). Larry Riley expressed concern that the preparation for the experimental flow; i.e., legal issues, NEPA compliance, research plan, endangered species compliance, etc., be completed in a timely manner.

Status of ROD - An internal Reclamation draft has been prepared.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 30.

Attachment 1: Attendee List

Attachment 2: Glen Canyon Dam Biological Opinion Plan/Schedule for Implementation