

01/21/00

Salt Lake Tribune

State of the State

By Lisa Church

GRAND--The Glen Canyon Action Network, a recently formed organization that advocates the draining of Lake Powell, says it will open an office in a restored Moab ice-cream plant and parlor in the spring. The group says the controversial proposal to drain the lake where the Colorado River backs up behind Glen Canyon Dam in southern Utah would restore the river to its natural flow, preserving the river's watershed.

The Action Network is affiliated with environmental groups in several Western states, and a group in France, which are dedicated to the preservation of the world's rivers. The construction of Glen Canyon Dam in the 1950s and early 1960s, eventually inundated picturesque Glen Canyon.

To get acquainted with Moab residents, Action members are holding an ice-cream social free of charge on Monday at the Moab Arts and Recreation Center, 111 East 100 North at 7 p.m. The group plans to move into a restored creamery to be named Restoration Creamery at 21 N. Main in March. Members will make ice cream named after Colorado River features -- like Marble Canyon Fudge -- to help raise money for their efforts.

01/22/00

Arizona Daily Sun

New group plans drain-the-lake rally

By TODD GLASENAPP, Sun Correspondent

PAGE -- A new organization based in Moab, Utah, is planning a March rally near Glen Canyon Dam to stir up public sentiment for draining Lake Powell.

The three-week-old Glen Canyon Action Network will bring a few heavyweights in the river-restoration community to the March 14 event, said organizer Owen Lammers. Lammers, a 37-year-old Berkeley graduate and former director of the California-based International Rivers Network, has a commitment from 87-year-old David Brower, the father of the movement to drain Lake Powell.

Brower, the Sierra Club's executive director from 1952-69, wants to restore a free-flowing Colorado River through Glen Canyon near Page. Reaction to Lammers' announcement from defenders of the dam and lake was swift and predictable.

"The GCAN objectives to 'protect and restore' the Colorado River by removing such manmade improvements as Glen Canyon Dam and others is merely their way of making headlines in the near term," said Larry Tarp, president of Page-based Friends of Lake Powell.

The government is doing a good job of managing the Colorado, Tarp said. The dam provides flood control, water storage, electrical generation, environmental improvements and recreation.

Draining the lake could produce "an out-of-control flow of sand-laden water in some parts of the year" and "a trickle at the bottom of a dust-filled canyon for the rest of the time," Tarp said Thursday night.

When it formed on New Year's Day, Glen Canyon Action Network became the latest of several groups to organize on the side of Brower, the Sierra Club's first paid executive director.

Brower didn't like the idea of damming Glen Canyon when it was authorized more than 40 years ago.

He renewed his objections a few years ago, and the Sierra Club's board of directors voted in 1996 to recommend draining the 186-mile-long reservoir. Salt Lake City- and Flagstaff-based Glen Canyon Institute organized before the Sierra vote and has since taken the lake-drain lead.

Lammers came to Moab at the end of December to organize the Action Network along with Ken Sleight, an early Colorado River boatman and an old friend of late author Edward Abbey.

In "The Monkey Wrench Gang," Abbey described a fictional plot to blow up Glen Canyon Dam. Moab, an old haunt of Abbey's, is 268 miles northeast of Page. Moab straddles the Colorado in southeast Utah.

Lammers is billing the event at the Carl Hayden Visitor Center a "Restoration Celebration and Rendezvous." He said it will coincide with the Third Annual International Day of Action Against Dams and for Rivers Water and Life.

"Our purpose at Glen Canyon will be to help usher in the 'Century of River Restoration,'" he said by electronic mail Thursday. "People will be coming from throughout the West and across the country on their way to Glen Canyon."

Also expected are Berkeley's Robert Hass, former poet laureate and co-founder of River of Words, a national poetry and art project advocating river restoration.

Also committed to the rally is Katie Lee, an author, singer and former river-runner.

Lammers is working with the Bureau of Reclamation's regional office in Salt Lake City to obtain necessary federal permits. Spokesman Barry Wirth said the event would be the first of its kind in his 13-plus years at BOR.

Participants might make "a little bit of a march" across the bridge to the visitor center near the dam, Lammers said. Speakers and music also are planned.

"This is not some Earth First! initiative," he said in a telephone interview. "I come from a very sophisticated blend of activism. We're not out there just to make a show."

Lammers turned International Rivers Network from an all-volunteer organization into what he says is recognized as the world's leading river advocacy organization during 12 years there.

He said he helped organize and lead campaigns across the globe to halt construction of dams and helped lead efforts to reform the lending practices of financial institutions that fund "inappropriate infrastructure projects, such as dams."

Glen Canyon Dam was built by the federal government in the late 1950s and early 1960s to harness part of the Colorado for the arid Southwest. But its utility is ending, Lammers said.

"The Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies did an excellent job to develop our rivers, but we have learned a lot since then," he said. "We know we can live with less water, we can use less energy, and we know the power of nature to regenerate itself." Lammers' approach differs from that of other activists, who want to persuade Congress to order an environmental impact study of draining the lake.

"This is not a top-down approach, coming from Washington," he said, "but a bottom-up approach from the people ... it's a people's movement."

He's setting up an office in Moab in an old ice cream parlor and plans to establish field offices in Flagstaff and other locations. Lammers is also planning a "Hot Fudge Monday Feed and River Revival Night" to welcome his organization to Moab next Monday.

"The opposition to that dam has had its roots in this town for 40 years," Sleight said in a news release. "It's no surprise that folks in Moab are getting on with the task of leading the nation to get that reservoir drained."

Four-year-old Glen Canyon Institute has not joined the rally as a principal, though several of its board members helped establish the Action Network, Lammers said.

The Arizona Daily Sun ©1999, Pulitzer Community Newspapers, Inc.

01/29/00

Moab Times Independent

Group Opens Ice Cream Shop with Mission to Drain Lake Powell

Where just an ice cream parlor once stood, the headquarters for a nationwide effort to protect and restore the Colorado River is now evolving. The shop, located at 21 N. Main St., will soon house the headquarters for the Glen Canyon Action Network -- a grassroots group dedicated to the integrity of the Colorado River watershed.

Over the past two months, a group of Moabites have teamed-up with river restoration groups in Utah, Arizona, California, New Mexico and even France, to launch the organization. And Jan. 24, the group will hold its inaugural event at the Moab Arts and Recreation Center.

GCAN's immediate priority is building broad-based national and international support for the draining of Lake Powell.

"The restoration of Glen Canyon, more than any other initiative, encompasses all the issues that must be addressed if we are to sustainably manage this river for generations to come," said John Weisheit, GCAN's president.

"The opposition to that dam has had its roots in this town for 40 years; it's no surprise that folks in Moab are getting on with the task of leading the nation to get that reservoir drained," said Ken Sleight, one of GCAN founders.

Sleight and others will be hosting GCAN's inaugural event on Monday evening, January 24 at the MARC. There, Sleight will be discussing the history of opposition to the Glen Canyon Dam, and the role Moab residents have played in keeping the idea of a restored Glen Canyon alive since the reservoir began filling in 1963.

Susette Weisheit, GCAN campaign committee chair, will introduce GCAN's immediate plans, especially the rally to take place at Glen Canyon Dam March 14.

"Tens of thousands of people will be out in support of rivers all over the world on this third annual International Day of Action against dams. We here in Moab want to be right alongside them," Weisheit predicted.

Also in attendance will be Owen Lammers, who for the past 12 years led the development of International Rivers Network, now the world's leading river advocacy organization. Lammers, who recently relocated to Moab has since joined GCAN and will discuss the rapidly growing international movement to remove dams, and the leadership many activists around the world see coming from a restored Glen Canyon.

Admission is free and refreshments will be available.

"But don't forget the ice cream," says Weisheit. "Three days after our rally at Glen Canyon, GCAN will open Restoration Creamery, where every scoop of ice cream sold will help another gallon of water soon drain out of that reservoir."

02/08/00

Politics Only Hurdle to Draining Lake Powell, New Analysis Reveals

The Stanford Environmental Law Journal recently published an 88-page analysis of the Sierra Club's 1996 proposal to restore Glen Canyon on the Colorado River by draining Lake Powell reservoir.

The extensively researched analysis titled, "Undamming Glen Canyon: Lunacy, Rationality, or Prophecy" was written by Scott Miller, an attorney with the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior. The analysis is his own, however, and in no way represents any official government position on the future of Glen Canyon Dam.

Mr. Miller examined: existing laws pertaining to the management of the Colorado River; technical and economic issues pertaining to anticipated impacts on water storage and energy supply; and the variety of impacts associated with changes in the recreational uses within Glen Canyon. Some key findings are excerpted below.

LAW OF THE RIVER: If we take a close look at the [Sierra Club] proposal, we may find that there is flexibility still hidden in the rigid Law of the River. We may also find crucial benefits to making the Law of the River itself more flexible.

WATER: Practically speaking, the effects of draining Lake Powell on water availability are surprisingly minimal, though not altogether absent. Politically, speaking, however, effects on water use are the most difficult problem facing the Sierra Club's proposal.

POWER: Although Glen Canyon's raw generating capacity of 1,300 MW is impressive, it is not irreplaceable. ... Furthermore, there is currently significant surplus of power in the Colorado Plateau region, so there would be a significant amount of time to find alternative sources of raw power. By the time additional sources of power are needed the life-span of Glen Canyon Dam's powerplant may be considerably reduced; in a few hundred years, accumulated sediments will completely eliminate power production from Glen Canyon Dam.

RECREATION: Perhaps the most fundamental question concerning recreation, however, is how much recreation do we really want on Lake Powell and in the Grand Canyon? ... The two-and-a-half million visitors to Lake Powell leave an extraordinary

amount of trash on the beaches and on the lake. Along Lake Powell's 2,000 miles of coastline there are only forty-six restrooms. Fouled by human waste, beaches along the lake are periodically closed. Visitors consume about five million gallons of gas on their Lake Powell vacations each year. Perhaps present recreation should be limited in any case. Doing so might also limit any costs of draining Lake Powell."

ENVIRONMENT: In sum, environmental costs and benefits associated with draining Lake Powell are presently unclear. Here, perhaps more than any other issue, our current knowledge is severely insufficient to accurately evaluate the consequences. At the same time, the [Colorado] Plateau's native fishes, the Sea of Cortez's vaquita and totoaba, and the delta itself may not wait for decades of study.

CONCLUSIONS : This preliminary analysis of water, power, recreation, and the environment reveals that some of the common assumptions about the importance of Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell may not be accurate. Even so, analysis has its limitations. There are values involved that simply cannot be balanced with dollars or any other economic valuations. ... Just look to the Florida Everglades, where the federal and state governments have already spent \$3.5 billion and plan to dedicate nearly \$8 billion more to habitat restoration, or the Columbia River where \$3 billion already has been spent trying [to] save and restore the salmon and steelhead.

"Although preliminary, Miller's analysis represents the best compilation of facts to date concerning the proposal to drain Lake Powell. The barriers to a restored Glen Canyon are not so much technical or economic, as political. It was politics that inundated Glen Canyon, and it will be a people's movement that will bring about its restoration," said Owen Lammers, Executive Director of the Glen Canyon Action Network, the Colorado River advocacy group based in Moab, Utah.

"This analysis helps to further awaken the public to the potential of reviving the declining ecosystems in the Grand Canyon," said Lisa Force, of the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity, the nation's leading advocate on behalf of endangered species. "The more people who become aware that the Grand Canyon is itself endangered by Glen Canyon Dam, the sooner the dam's decommissioning will become a reality." This issue of the Stanford Environmental Law Journal also published a foreword by Dr. Richard Ingebretsen, President of the Glen Canyon Institute, based in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Copies of the analysis are available from GCAN at (435) 259-1063, or through the fulfillment office of the Stanford Environmental Law Journal (650) 725-0183. To obtain contact information for the author, Scott Miller, contact GCAN.

02/15/00

Draining exercise: Lake Powell study challenges common assumptions

By GARY GHIOTO, Sun Staff Reporter

Arizona Daily Sun

A report published this month in the prestigious Stanford Environmental Law Journal challenges commonly held notions about the significance of Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell for recreation, water storage and electric power production.

Acting on his own initiative, Interior Department attorney Scott Miller examined the Glen Canyon Institute's proposal, endorsed by the Sierra Club Board of Directors in 1996, to restore Glen Canyon on the Colorado River by draining the Lake Powell reservoir and decommissioning its mighty dam.

Miller found that the technical, economic and legal hurdles to drain the reservoir are not insurmountable, but the politics may be.

The Sierra Club plan -- ridiculed by Utah and Arizona federal lawmakers as "absolutely ridiculous" -- would restore the river to free-flowing condition by diverting water through two tunnels inside the massive structure.

In time, the gigantic reservoir would disappear, the defunct hydropower dam would stand as a concrete relic to the Bureau of Reclamation's macro engineering and Glen Canyon would emerge from a 40-year-old watery grave.

In a bow to the controversy to drain the lake, Miller calls his analysis: "Undamming Glen Canyon: Lunacy, Rationality or Prophecy?" Not surprisingly, the report has been praised by environmental groups such as the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity, a national advocate of endangered species.

"This analysis helps to further awaken the public to the potential of reviving the declining ecosystems in the Grand Canyon. The more people who become aware that the Grand Canyon is itself endangered by Glen Canyon Dam, the sooner the dam's decommissioning will become a reality," said Center spokesman Lisa Force.

But defenders of the dam, such as Larry Tarp of Page-based Friends of Lake Powell, say draining the lake would be an environmental and economic disaster.

The loss of pollution-free electric power from the dam, a multimillion-dollar recreation industry and a first-class trout fishery that generates \$2 million annually are among the dubious byproducts of draining the reservoir, he said.

Tarp also notes that the reservoir provides a reliable source of water for 22 million people and 3.5 million acres of agricultural land in Arizona, Nevada, California and Mexico.

Draining Lake Powell would mark the return of a river with "an out-of-control flow of sand-laden water in some parts of the year" and "a trickle at the bottom of a dust-filled canyon for the rest of the time."

Page real estate officials estimate that draining the lake would reduce the town's population from 9,000 to 3,000 and produce enormous drops in property values and tourist visits.

Miller's report comes as the newly formed Glen Canyon Action Network, a Colorado River advocacy group based in Utah, prepares to launch a national campaign to restore the river.

"Although preliminary, Miller's analysis represents the best compilation of facts to date concerning the proposal to drain Lake Powell. The barriers to a restored Glen Canyon are not so much technical or economic, as political," said Owen Lammers, executive director of Glen Canyon Action Network.

"It was politics that inundated Glen Canyon, and it will be a people's movement that will bring about its restoration," Lammers added.

"A Restoration Celebration and Rendezvous" sponsored by the Glen Canyon Action Network, will begin March 14 at noon at the dam's Carl Hayden Visitor Center. Invited speakers include prominent environmentalists, such as David Brower of Earth Island Institute, legendary Colorado River boatman Ken Sleight and Green Party presidential contender Ralph Nader.

On March 13, the restoration of Glen Canyon will be the focus of a discussion from noon to 5 p.m. at NAU's University Union Field House. At 7 p.m., a "Colorado River Revival Concert and Rally" will be held at NAU's Cline Library Auditorium.

Opponents plan to stage a competing rally in Page on March 14. The Glen Canyon Institute, a 500-member nonprofit group with offices in Flagstaff and Salt Lake City, is currently conducting a wide range of studies justifying the restoration of the canyon. The studies include gauging the impact on the economy caused by draining the reservoir and environmental effects on the Colorado River basin themes also explored in Miller's analysis.

MILLER'S THESIS

Though an employee of the government, Miller's analysis is his alone and does not represent "any official government position" on the issue of draining Lake Powell. Indeed, efforts to fund any study regarding the issue have been routinely plucked out of the Interior Department's appropriations bill by western lawmakers such as U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican. Hatch has also sponsored legislation to block attempts to decommission the dam.

Miller noted that evaluating the Sierra Club's proposal has been stymied by a lack of hard data and that critics have relied on that lack of knowledge to outline a host of gloomy scenarios. Miller examined existing laws pertaining to the management of the Colorado River, the impact on water storage, energy supply, recreation and the environment, citing voluminous government, private and academic sources.

He found that while it is "technically" feasible to decommission that dam, the political will to do so may be in short supply due to potent opposition from water and power utilities, the recreation industry and local stakeholders such as the Navajo Nation and the residents of Page.

The major difficulty revolves around decades of water supply contracts, federal policy and legal rulings that have created a "Law of the River" that makes removal of the reservoir difficult. But Miller writes: "If we take a close look at the proposal, we may find that there is flexibility still hidden in the rigid Law of the River. We may also find crucial benefits to making the Law of the River in itself more flexible."

Adding to the problems for the Sierra Club plan is a schism between "recreationists and environmentalists" over the issue.

"Recreation, both above and below the dam, would change dramatically, exchanging houseboaters for hikers, and trout fishermen for wilderness rafters," said Miller.

WATER ISSUES

Letting the Colorado River run free has "panicked" water users and administrators for "thirsty" southern California water utilities that see the reservoir as drought insurance, said Miller's analysis.

Miller said, however, Lake Powell's value as a storage facility is "probably negligible" because the Colorado River Basin would still retain significant storage with a free-flowing river. He also notes that evaporation from the reservoir is a significant factor: "The evaporative losses from a single Labor Day weekend could satisfy 17,000 homes for an entire year."

Sedimentation from the Colorado's muddy flow also diminishes the reservoir's worth too, he said.

The loss from draining the lake would amount to 1 million acre-feet of water per year. Evaporation estimates range from 550,000 to 1 million acre-feet per year, said Miller. But draining the lake would have consequences. Sediment from Lake Powell would flow to Lake Mead downstream, shortening the life span of the lake. There would also be a chance of flood damage downstream. But Miller noted that the Sierra Club's proposal is to retain the dam so it could be used as an emergency flood control device.

The draining of Lake Powell would end its potential use as a "diversion point" for the Navajo Nation.

The tribe wants to divert 50,000 acre-feet annually from the lake "to satisfy some of its reserved water rights to the Colorado River" Miller said.

LESS POWER

The Glen Canyon Dam produces 5,000 gigawatts of electricity a year, enough to supply 214,000 California users.

"This electricity, and the revenues it generates, would be lost," said Miller.

But Miller said the lost power from the dam could be "easily replaced" because there is a surplus of power in the Colorado Plateau region. The dam's capacity is "far exceeded" by the Navajo Generating Station in Page which actually produces "almost twice as much power". The value of Glen Canyon Dam's hydropower comes from its use by electric utilities to provide instantaneous power at peak times by simply spilling water through its generators. But its ability to produce instant power is hampered today by new operations rules that seeks to reduce the "havoc" downstream caused by the highly variable flows, said Miller.

In effect, Glen Canyon's capacity and load-filling capability have been reduced, and power revenues are estimated to have decreased by \$30 million annually.

The need for raw power to satisfy fluctuating demands for power can be satisfied by building a gas or oil-fired plant fitted with the latest technology to reduce air pollution, Miller said.

The costs of losing the dam's power and building other sources would have to be borne by consumers, and air pollution would result, concludes Miller.

RECREATION LOSSES

Lake Powell attracts 2 million overnight visitors per year who contribute more than \$400 million to the local economy. The area's five houseboat marinas, guides and local businesses depend on the crush of annual visitors.

The regulated flows from Glen Canyon have benefited downstream river-rafting companies relying on dependable and manageable flows. Meanwhile, the cool, clear

waters released from the dam have "created one of the finest trout fisheries in the Southwest" that generates about \$2 million annually.

Miller acknowledges that the current value of "Glen and Grand Canyon recreation is immense." But the loss of houseboat and ski boat vacationers, plus trout fishing enthusiasts, can be offset, Miller said.

The revival of river trips through Glen Canyon would generate "tens of millions of dollars" and the restoration of Glen Canyon would "likely draw more recreationists to the area than it could possible accommodate."

Miller acknowledges criticism that draining the reservoir will leave muddy sediment and trash as well as an enormous bathtub ring caused by the tons of leaching sediment from rock formations.

But citing studies from Glen Canyon Institute, he said the sediments can be flushed away and the bathtub ring effect removed with five to 10 years through natural processes.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Miller noted that in the late 1950s, when the dam was being proposed, no environmental impact studies were conducted or required. Since then, the impact of surging, silt-free water flows on the Colorado River basin and its Sea of Cortez delta have revealed a plethora of depressing data.

Disappearing sand bars and beaches have endangered fish, birds and mammals along the river corridor to Mexico, Miller writes. Severe declines in the river's eight native fish species have been linked to the construction of the Glen and Hoover dams, introduction of exotic fish species and "the destruction of habitat and the alteration of the Colorado's water quality, quantity and temperature."

Far downstream in Mexico, the reduce flows of the river have been linked to the decimation of Sea of Cortez fish species such as the vaquita and totoaba that depend on brackish estuary habitat. Restoring river flows in Maine, Vermont and California by tearing down dams have yielded impressive results.

"Habitat, and fish populations with it, have dramatically and rapidly improved following removal of the dams," he writes.

Meanwhile, the recreation industry on Lake Powell leaves an annual legacy of shameful pollution and hydro-carbon excesses, he added. "The two-and-a-half million visitors to Lake Powell leave and extraordinary amount of trash on the beaches and on the lake. Along Lake Powell's 2,000 miles of coastline there are only 46 restrooms. Fouled by human waste, beaches along the lake are periodically closed. Visitors consume about five million gallons of gas on their Lake Powell vacations each year ...," Miller reported.

On a positive note, Miller said that the existence of Lake Powell's massive reservoir and dam blunted the push for more dam development and water storage projects elsewhere in the West and contributed to the restoration and preservation of the Platte River and Mono Lake and Owens Valley.

But because there has been a lack of studies to evaluate the environmental benefits and negatives, it's hard to draw iron-clad conclusions, he said.

"In sum, the environmental costs and benefits associated with draining Lake Powell are presently unclear. Here, perhaps more than any other issue, our current knowledge is severely insufficient to accurately evaluate the consequences. At the same time ... the (Colorado) Plateau's native fishes and the Sea of Cortez's vaquita and totoaba, and the delta itself may not wait for decades of study." Miller concludes his analysis with an open invitation to the public and decision-makers to fully explore the Sierra Club proposal that has "sparked the imagination of many Americans."

"Draining Lake Powell may or may not be in our best interests or even in the best interests of our grandchildren. But we should have the integrity and sensibility to reexamine decisions that we have made in the past ... We owe it to ourselves, future generations, and the lands of the Colorado River to finally evaluate the costs and benefits objectively."

Reporter Gary Ghioto can be reached at gghioto@azdailysun.com or 556-2251.

The Arizona Daily Sun © 1999, Pulitzer Community Newspapers, Inc.

02/15/00

**Activists to rally at Glen Canyon
Celebration to focus on draining Lake Powell**

By BRIAN HANSEN, Staff Writer

Colorado Daily

Just drain it.

That will be the rallying cry heard along the banks of the once-wild Colorado River next month, as representatives of more than 50 groups will gather at the massive Glen Canyon

Dam to call for the draining of Lake Powell. The March 14 event, dubbed the "Colorado River Restoration Celebration and Rendezvous," will include appearances by noted environmental activists, artists and legendary river-runners, said Owen Lammers, executive director of the Moab, Utah-based Glen Canyon Action Network.

"We're going to reinforce to the public that we are entering a new era of river management, which is focused on restoration and sustainable management of the entire Colorado River Basin," Lammers said.

The event, which will be held at Lake Powell's official visitor center, will likely culminate with the signing of a declaration calling for the decommissioning of the Glen Canyon Dam and the implementation of a full-scale recovery plan for the area "innundated" by the waters of the 186-mile-long reservoir, Lammers said.

A Sierra Club-backed proposal to drain Lake Powell was rejected by a Congressional subcommittee in 1997. But the notion of decommissioning the Glen Canyon Dam has never really gone away, and according to Lammers, a new report by the U.S. Interior Department shows that the technical, economic and legal hurdles to draining Lake Powell would not be insurmountable.

"One of the issues that (the report) reinforces is that there's plenty of electricity within the region to provide substitute generating capacity to compensate for the potential losses that would accompany the decommissioning of the dam," Lammers said. "This is completely independent of potential conservation measures that could also be implemented within the basin."

The report notes that the dam's capability to produce power will eventually be eliminated anyway, as sediments carried along in the Colorado River fill up the relatively stagnant reservoir.

Given that scientific certainty, there's no reason not to take action now, Lammers said. "The Glen Canyon Dam is going to have to be decommissioned within the next 100 to 150 years anyway, because (Lake Powell) will be sufficiently full of sediment that (the power plant) will no longer be able to be operated," Lammers said. "Recognizing that, what value are we going to derive from Glen Canyon over the next period of time?" Lammers noted that in addition to the inevitable demise of the dam's power-generating abilities, the other principal service provided by the reservoir -- recreation -- will also soon have to be curtailed.

"There will have to be limits imposed anyway because of overuse and pollution," Lammers said. "These issues are going to have to be addressed anyway, even when the sediment ultimately makes it impossible to have a reservoir."

The March 14 event at the Glen Canyon Dam will feature noted environmentalist David Brower, former poet laureate Robert Hass, and folk singer Katie Lee. For more information, see the Glen Canyon Action Network's Web site at www.drainit.org.

02/22/00

Draining Lake Powell A Foregone Conclusion, Study Says

By Robinson Shaw

Environmental Network News

Glen Canyon Dam, which blocks the Colorado River two miles northwest of Page, Arizona, was constructed from 1957 to 1964. An 88-page analysis of the Sierra Club's 1996 proposal to restore Glen Canyon recommends that the federal government consider draining Lake Powell.

The study, published in the Stanford Environmental Law Journal, does not draw any conclusions but makes a case for further exploration of the Sierra Club's push to restore Glen Canyon to its natural state.

"The report is a good summary of a lot of the information out there," said Owen Lammers, director of the Glen Canyon Action Network. "It documents that draining the lake isn't just something of pure fantasy but something that can be done, something that ultimately has to be done."

The report, "Undamming Glen Canyon: Lunacy, Rationality, or Prophecy," is the independent work of Scott Miller, an attorney with the U.S. Department of the Interior. Miller's analysis does not represent the department's position on Glen Canyon or Lake Powell.

Glen Canyon Dam was initiated through the Colorado River Storage Project and authorized by a slim congressional majority vote on March 1, 1956. Construction began a year later without any environmental analysis. The dam submerged the unique geologic rock formations of Glen Canyon and created Lake Powell to the north.

Lake Powell, named after American geologist and ethnologist John Wesley Powell, was created when Glen Canyon Dam was built on the Colorado River. In his study, Miller examined laws governing Colorado River management; technical and economic issues pertaining to water storage and energy supply; and the impact of recreational activities within the Glen Canyon area.

All parties agree that draining Lake Powell is feasible, according to the report. At issue are the costs and benefits associated with decommissioning the dam.

"Decommissioning Glen Canyon dam would significantly impact regulation of Colorado River water and would affect water availability throughout the Colorado River Basin," the report states. "It would completely eliminate the substantial power that is produced at the dam and distributed across the Southwest. Recreation, both above and below the

dam, would change dramatically, exchanging houseboaters for hikers and trout fishermen for wilderness rafters. Just as dramatic and probably farther reaching would be the changes in the environment, including changes of stagnant water to natural flows, stable mud to volatile toxic sediment and desert flats to delta estuaries.

Water

"One of the biggest hurdles is getting water users to recognize that they can indeed survive without an insurance policy, which is the lake behind Glen Canyon dam," said Lammers.

Water use and administration are topics of heated debate, according to the report. The sandstone banks of Lake Powell absorb an estimated one million acre feet of water each year. While most of the water in the Colorado River is utilized, about one million acre feet of water are absorbed each year by the sandstone banks of Lake Powell. Another 550,000 acre feet simply evaporate into the dry desert air.

Water allocation and flood protection are sources of contention between upper-basin states (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) and lower-basin states (Arizona, California and Nevada).

Power

"Although Glen Canyon's raw generating capacity ... is impressive, it is not irreplaceable," the report notes. The dam produces about 3 percent of the electricity in the region. The lost power could be replaced by gas or oil-fired power plants, but both are sources of air pollution.

"There is currently significant surplus of power in the Colorado Plateau region, so there would be a significant amount of time to find alternative sources of raw power. By the time additional sources of power are needed, the life span of Glen Canyon Dam's power plant may be considerably reduced; in a few hundred years, accumulated sediments will completely eliminate power production from Glen Canyon Dam," the report notes. Before Glen Canyon Dam was built, the Colorado River on a typical June day carried through the Grand Canyon enough sediment to fill the Rose Bowl to the rim, according to the report.

"It's not a matter of if and when (the lake is drained and the dam decommissioned). It's a matter of if people choose to intervene in the natural process that's going to happen anyway," said Lammers. "That's the case with all dams — eventually they all have to be decommissioned, especially when you're dealing with significant amounts of sediment."

Recreation

Lake Powell annually attracts two million visitors who contribute more than \$400 million to the local economy and consume about five million gallons of gas on holidays. Loss of revenue from recreation is another source of debate.

Before Glen Canyon Dam was built, visitors to the area could explore the canyon on foot and commune with spectacular geologic formations.

Environment

Glen Canyon Dam has significantly altered the ecology above and below it. The Colorado River was once a warm river with variable flow. Today it runs clear, cold and steady. Five of the river's eight native fish species are extinct or endangered because of cold temperatures and loss of native habitat.

"It is possible that nothing short of draining Lake Powell will save the endangered fish, birds and mammals of the Colorado River, its delta and the Sea of Cortez," the report notes.

"(Glen Canyon Dam) certainly wouldn't have been built now and it certainly wouldn't have been built 20 years ago," said Lammers. "We now have a lot more information on the social, environmental and economic impact associated with river development and the technical constraints which are causing us to rethink how we manage rivers."

Copies of Miller's report are available through Living Rivers at (435)259-1063 or the Stanford Environmental Law Journal at (650) 725-0183. Copyright 2000, Environmental News Network All Rights Reserved

ENN is a registered trademark of the Environmental News Network Inc. Copyright © 2001 Environmental News Network Inc.

03/09/00

Activists to Rally to Restore Glen Canyon

Restoration Celebration and Rendezvous Ushers in the Century of River Restoration
Contact: Owen Lammers (520) 890-0055 (cell) (435) 719-6504 (cell)

Carl Hayden Visitor Center, Glen Canyon Dam, near Page, Arizona 12:00 Noon - 2:00 PM, Tuesday, March 14, 2000.

[Click here](#) to download the booklet for the Teach-In and Rally

On March 14, 2000, people from across the country will join more than 50 organizations and businesses at Glen Canyon Dam to celebrate a new era in river management, the "Century of River Restoration." Led by long-time Colorado River advocate and environmental leader David Brower, the event will include a signing ceremony of the "Glen Canyon Declaration," calling for the restoration of the Colorado River and Glen Canyon.

Over the past century, the Colorado River has undergone extensive transformation. The construction of dams throughout the basin has resulted in diversion of the entire river's flow, such that the river no longer reaches its estuary at the Gulf of California. Populations of native fish in the world renowned Grand and Glen Canyons have been decimated.

"We're thrilled by the outpouring of support we're seeing from all across the country for restoring Glen Canyon," said Owen Lammers, Executive Director of Glen Canyon Action Network, the Colorado River advocacy group based in Moab, Utah. "We are on our way to Glen Canyon, building a movement to restore the world's most beautiful canyons and a world-class river."

"The people are coming to celebrate all that this river has brought," said Sage Douglas Remington, Executive Director of the Native Environmental Justice Advocacy Fund. "The Indian people of the Colorado Plateau have long had an important relationship with the waters of the Colorado River. We join together today and commit to employing the same spirit, vision and ingenuity which developed and subsequently damaged this watershed, to heal its wounds, restore its integrity, and ensure its ability to sustain the people and ecosystems that depend on it."

Similar events will be taking place at dams and along rivers around the world on this, the Third Annual International Day of Action Against Dams, and for Rivers, Water and Life. "There is a rapidly growing global movement for 'Living Rivers'," said Juliette Majot, Executive Director of the California-based International Rivers Network. "We're excited to be part of the leadership for restoration. The Colorado, long a symbol of the development of rivers, is now becoming a symbol of society's growing commitment to heal them."

This is a significant step for Glen Canyon, the Colorado River and rivers throughout the world. A people's movement is now forming to embark on a restoration journey unparalleled in the history of river management. Starting with Glen Canyon and working up and down the watershed this effort will promote water, energy, agriculture and restoration policies that will ensure the long-term health and integrity of the Colorado River.

The ceremony will commence with an invocation by Thomas Morris, President of the Dine [Navajo] Medicine Men's Association, followed by a blessing by Reverend Yusen Yamato, a Zen Buddhist Monk representing Global Peace Walk 2000. In addition to Mr. Brower, Ms. Majot, Mr. Remington, and Mr. Lammers, other speakers include: Dr. Robert Hass, Poet Laureate of the United States 1995-97; Anna Frazier, representing the Navajo environmental organization Dine CARE; Katie Lee, folksinger and longtime advocate for Glen Canyon who will be visiting the dam for the first time; Ken Sleight, outfitter and Colorado River advocate; Lisa Ramirez, dam removal advocate with Friends of the Earth; and Lisa Force, dam removal advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity.

On Monday, March 13, Colorado River advocates will be gathering for a Teach-In on Glen Canyon issues in the Kaibab Room at Northern Arizona University's Student Union

Fieldhouse, from 12:00 Noon - 5:00 PM. An evening concert and Glen Canyon slide presentation featuring folksingers Ms. Lee, Peg Millett, and Bill Oliver will be held at NAU's Cline Library Assembly Hall from 7:00 until 9:00 PM.

[Click here](#) to download the booklet for the Teach-In and Rally

03/14/00

The Arizona Republic

Glen Canyon Dam: Keep it or raze it?

By Judd Slivka

Marjorie Doland became part of Page in 1957, six years before Glen Canyon Dam. The town was a temporary building holding five stores, plus five rows of workers' barracks with frontier plumbing.

Doland spent the early years straining her tap water through stockings and waiting for the weekly grocery truck.

She remembers - not fondly - Page before the dam created Lake Powell.

"There was nothing here," she said. "Not a blade of grass. Not a tree. Just . . . sand."

Now there's Page, a town of 10,000 people. But now there also are those who want the dam torn out to help restore the Colorado River to a more natural state.

Both sides will be out at the dam at midday today proclaiming their points of view. As unlikely as undamming may sound, the issue is moving closer to critical mass - and reflects a broad clash between what the West once was, what now is and visions of what some people want it to be.

Town officials note that Page survives because of the lake. It gets its power, its water and the majority of its revenue from the lake.

But environmentalists note that the Colorado has been severely affected by the dam, and that water releases have changed vital parts of the river's ecosystem.

A recent law journal article, written by a federal official in his personal capacity, called for federal consideration of decommissioning the 38-year-old dam. Two groups - one of which is rallying today - exist for the sole purpose of restoring Glen Canyon to its natural state.

This is not a popular idea in Page.

So a rival group, Friends of Lake Powell, will rally on the other side of the dam. And Page merchants have been asked to close for an hour today, to simulate the ghost town dam boosters say Page will become if Lake Powell is drained away.

Glen Canyon Dam remains former Sierra Club President David Brower's greatest regret. Given a choice of building a dam there or in Dinosaur National Monument, Brower recommended Glen Canyon, site unseen - and says he's still haunted by the decision.

In his twilight years, the late Sen. Barry Goldwater professed that if there were one vote he could do over, it would have been his vote to dam Glen Canyon.

Noland, a former City Council member and mayor, isn't sure she'll attend today's rallies.

"I can see both sides of it," she said, "and I just don't know. I'm thinking about going, but I'm not sure."

To which one?

"Oh - Friends of Lake Powell, of course."

That would be anathema to David Orr's ears. Orr, a longtime proponent of restoring the Colorado, is field director of the Utah-based Glen Canyon Action Network, a group recently founded to work for the decommissioning of Glen Canyon Dam.

In addition to today's noon rally, the group has planned a teach-in today and assembly tonight at Northern Arizona University.

"We want the Bureau of Reclamation to become known as the Bureau of Restoration," Orr said. "We would like to see the premier dam-building agency in the federal government to become the premier river-restoration agency."

Orr added: "What is being done here is being watched by environmental groups around the country and around the world."

Which does not thrill Mayor Robert Bowling who, along with the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce, has promoted Friends of Lake Powell.

"Although tourism is the major economic force, power, water and light manufacturing are also factors," Bowling said.

"The bottom line is, without water all things in addition to tourism go."

Reach the reporter at Judd.Slivka@ArizonaRepublic.com or (602) 444-8097.

© 2000, The Arizona Republic.

03/14/00

Glen Canyon Declaration Signed. [Click here](#) to read the declaration.

Today people from across the country joined more than 50 organizations and businesses to celebrate and inaugurate "The Century of River Restoration" at Carl Hayden Visitors Center at Glen Canyon Dam, Arizona. Led by longtime Colorado River advocate and environmental leader David Brower, the event was highlighted by a signing ceremony of the "Glen Canyon Declaration," calling for restoration of the Colorado River and Glen Canyon.

David Brower, who has led the fight to save Glen Canyon for 40 years, addressed the festive crowd with his concerns about dam safety, water evaporation, seepage, and sustainable economics. He described Glen Canyon as a rich and beautiful landscape that should have become a national park as early as the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.

Brower was joined by Thomas Morris, president of the Diné Medicine Men's Association, whose organization unanimously voted to drain "Lake" Powell on Saturday, March 11th, and who gave the invocation at the river rendezvous and celebration. Morris said, "'Lake' Powell Reservoir has submerged our sacred sites and destroyed our ability to communicate with sacred gods. These sites must be restored for our children and grandchildren."

Yvon Chouinard, owner of Patagonia, Inc., the world's leading manufacturer of quality outdoor clothing, stated in a letter read at the celebration, "The construction of Glen Canyon Dam more than any other dam in the United States represented the most blatant disrespect for the planet's sacred landscape -- all for a facility that we know was not needed."

Significant parts of the declaration--presented by John Weisheit of the Moab-based Glen Canyon Action Network, primary sponsor of the celebration, and Phil Williams of International Rivers Network--include:

- The Bureau of Reclamation should begin the process of developing and then implementing a decommissioning plan for Glen Canyon Dam.
- The Bureau of Reclamation should establish a federal laboratory to serve as the nation's primary research facility for river and riverine habitat restoration, and give strong consideration to locating this facility in the town of Page, Arizona.
- All new management plans affecting the Colorado River watershed should undergo rigorous analysis of basinwide impacts.
- No new dams within the Colorado River watershed should be constructed, nor should existing dams be reconstructed in the event of their failure.
- Operating licenses should be required for all federal dams, as has long been the case with all non-federal dams. Federal dams must be subject to periodic relicensing reviews to ensure compliance with all environmental laws and safety standards.

- The Bureau of Reclamation should provide funding to support scientific research on the biological and habitat requirements of the endangered native fish of the Colorado River.
- The National Park Service should implement a program to quantify, monitor, and evaluate the presence of a wide range of pollutants including toxic and radioactive metals, petroleum compounds, bacteria, and other contaminants in Lake Powell Reservoir.

"We're thrilled by the outpouring of support we're seeing from all across the country for restoring Glen Canyon," said John Weisheit, President of Glen Canyon Action Network. "We are on our way to Glen Canyon, a movement of people seeking to restore the world's most beautiful canyons and a world-class river."

The celebration was one of 65 actions taking place in twenty other countries today on this, the Third Annual International Day of Action Against Dams, and For Rivers, Water and Life. "There is a rapidly growing global movement for 'Living Rivers,'" said Juliette Majot, Executive Director of the California-based International Rivers Network. "We're excited to be part of the leadership for restoration. The Colorado, long a symbol of the development of rivers, is now becoming a symbol of society's growing commitment to heal them."

Among the organizations and businesses endorsing the declaration are: Alaska Action Center, American Lands Alliance, Arizona Green Party, Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project, Blue Water Network, Californians For Utah Wilderness, Center for Biological Diversity, Coast Range Association, Colorado Plateau River Guides, Columbia Gorge Audubon Society, Committee for Idaho's High Desert, Diné Medicine Men's Association, Earth First! Journal, Earth Island Institute, Environmental Law Society (Univ. of AZ), Environmental Resource Center (Evergreen Coll.), Escalante Wilderness Project, European Rivers Network, Eyak Preservation Council, Flagstaff Activist Network, Forest Conservation Council, Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, Free The Planet! (N.A.U.), Friends of the Earth, Friends of the Eel River, Friends of the River, Grassroots Environmental Effectiveness Network, Great Basin Mine Watch, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, GreenAction, Green Party Of Utah, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, International Rivers Network, John Muir Project, Living Arts Center For Ecology, National Forest Protection Alliance, Native Environmental Justice Advocacy Fund, Oregon Wildlife Federation, Oregonians for Utah Wilderness, Round River Conservation Studies, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Sky Island Watch, Solar Energy International, Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, Terra Firma (Univ. of UT), Utah Environmental Congress, Virginians for Wilderness, Western Land Exchange Project, Wetlands Action Network, Wild Angels, Canyon Voyages & Adventure Company, Back of Beyond Books, Moab Man Construction, Knave of Hearts Bakery, Fry Canyon Lodge, Tag-A-Long Expeditions, The Rio Colorado Restaurant, Wildland Scapes, and North American River Expeditions/O.A.R.S.

[Click here](#) to read the declaration.

03/15/00

Rally Pits Advocates for Draining Lake Powell Against Those Who Support Glen Canyon Dam

BY MARK HAVNES for The Salt Lake Tribune

GLEN CANYON DAM, Ariz. -- Posters on the east side of Glen Canyon Dam proclaimed "Save Lake Powell," while placards on the west side pleaded "Drain It."

Those two views clashed Tuesday as hundreds gathered for dueling rallies staged near the Arizona dam just south of Utah's border.

Commissioned in 1963, Glen Canyon Dam formed Lake Powell and brought northern Arizona and southern Utah an economic boom driven by waves of recreationists, more than 2 million a year.

Friends of Lake Powell is proud of the dam and fighting to save it. The group points out the lake is the lifeline of nearby Page, Ariz., pumping \$100 million a year into the city's economy.

The Glen Canyon Action Network takes the opposite view. It argues that restoring the Colorado River to its natural flow would be more beneficial to downstream users because less water would be lost to evaporation and the porous sandstone that molds the lake.

Lake Powell backer Denny Judd said when he first heard talk of draining the reservoir he laughed, but not anymore as the movement to return Glen Canyon to its rugged form picks up steam.

The Kanab native attended the Friends of Lake Powell rally with a contingent from Kanab, 70 miles west of the dam in southern Utah. All sported bright red T-shirts broadcasting their support of the lake.

Judd, a shop owner and rancher, said he and other residents have learned from past experience with government officials and environmentalists not to discount any proposal that could threaten their way of life.

"We've seen the writing on the wall from the past, and are going to let folks know the majority don't want getting rid of the lake to happen," Judd said.

He is not alone.

Val Gleave, Friends chairman, said the notion of draining the lake seemed so preposterous at first that no one took it seriously. But as the idea gained momentum, business owners in Page along with the Chamber of Commerce formed Friends of Lake Powell to push their cause.

"One of our board members, who is a scientist, attends regular meetings on water usage, and he says other scientists are receiving a lot of peer pressure to consider a study of draining the lake," she says.

Gleave, whose group planned Tuesday's rally in response to the Glen Canyon Action Network's protest, also is concerned about the growing movement to drain other reservoirs with smaller dams.

"When the governor of Oregon favors taking two dams down for the salmon, that kind of trend concerns us," Gleave said.

In addition to hydroelectric power, storage capacity for a mushrooming Southwest and abundant recreation opportunities, Lake Powell supplies water for the nearby Navajo Generating Station. The Navajo Reservation hugs the southern shore.

About 700 people attended the Friends rally, with many businesspeople closing their stores for an hour in an attempt to dramatize how Page -- a resort city of 10,000 -- would become a "ghost town" without the lake.

On the dam's west side, the rally pushing to pull the plug on Lake Powell drew about 250.

They heard Steve Hannon -- a water attorney from Loveland, Colo., environmental author and member of the Moab-based Glen Canyon Action Network -- sum up the debate in three words: "politics, money and power, and not the wattage kind."

Hannon believes the issue will be resolved by pressure from Southern California water users, who will grow tired of losing 100 million gallons a year to seepage and evaporation.

Besides, Hannon argued, draining the lake actually would boost Page's economy. He said tourists from around the world would be drawn to the largest restoration project ever. And a new Glen Canyon would produce numerous natural beaches for camping and a Colorado River so tame that the most cowardly river runner could raft it.

"You could go down it on your rubber ducky," Hannon said.

Activists say the dam could be lowered gradually. Once the Colorado is flowing through the canyon, Hannon says an instant garden would spring up because of the accumulated silt.

David Orr, the Glen Canyon Action Network's director of field studies, said conventional ways of generating power are becoming obsolete and should be replaced with more sustainable and controllable sources, including solar energy.

© 2000, The Salt Lake Tribune All material found on Utah OnLine is copyrighted The Salt Lake Tribune and associated news services. No material may be reproduced or reused without explicit permission from The Salt Lake Tribune.

03/17/00

"Drain Lake Powell" Ice Cream Shop Opens

Contact: Owen Lammers (435) 259-1063

Today on the eve of the Moab Half-Marathon, Mayor Karla Hancock of Moab, Utah, will cut the ribbon to open Restoration Creamery--a non-profit ice cream shop dedicated to the restoration of the Colorado River and its watershed.

Located in the heart of downtown Moab, Restoration Creamery will educate each customer on the potential for, and benefits of, restoring the Colorado River watershed. With more than a million tourists from across the country and around the world traveling through Moab annually, the Creamery's restoration message is expected to travel far and wide in a very short period of time.

"This is activism-driven business," says Owen Lammers, a founder of the Creamery and of the recently-formed Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN). "It's time for activists to bring thier message from the backroom offices right onto Main Street, to interact with and educate the public every day, while raising money at the same time."

Lammers and other GCAN supporters from Moab just returned from their first major event, the Restoration Celebration and Rendezvous, held in Flagstaff, Arizona, and at Glen Canyon Dam, March 13-14. Activists, musicians, writers, indigenous leaders and river enthusiasts from as far away as Maine and Alaska were on hand to usher in the "Century of River Restoration." The events culminated in a signing ceremony of the Glen Canyon Declaration at Glen Canyon Dam. Nearly 200 people followed environmental leader David Brower, and Navajo Medicine Men's Association President Thomas Morris in signing their names to a declaration calling for decommissioning Glen Canyon Dam.

Ice cream lovers visiting Restoration Creamery may add their names to the declaration, while enjoying such delicious Glen Canyon favorites as: Music Temple Almond Fudge, Fern Canyon Mint Chocolate Chip, and Abbey's Rockey Road.

During its Grand Opening Weekend, Restoration Creamery will be sharing 25cents from every cone sold with Rim to Rim Restoration, a Moab-based non-profit organization building community partnerships for restoration projects, and with KZMU, Moab's community radio station, the first media source to give voice to GCAN's activities.

03/19/00

Forty years after Glen Canyon Dam was built, some want it taken down

By Mike Ritchey
The Denver Post

GLEN CANYON DAM, Ariz. - It's not just the Colorado River that they want to set free.

It's our thinking about how we interact with what's around us, with the environment.

That idea was powerful enough to draw some 250 people last Monday and Tuesday to the campus of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, and at the dam, two hours north, in Page.

During their sessions, participants from several Western states listened to stories, anecdotal and technical, and sang songs of protest and celebration.

Many support a proposal to drain Lake Powell by opening ducts at the bottom of Glen Canyon Dam and allowing the trapped Colorado River to run.

Yet they also seemed to agree that, though they would very much like to see Glen Canyon restored to its earlier grandeur, the point of their movement was aimed elsewhere.

"This movement is an effort to bring about a transformation in the way we think about our relationship to the land," said Owen Lammers, executive director of Glen Canyon Action Network, one of the environmental groups sponsoring the drive to not only turn the Colorado loose but to set free every river everywhere.

"Deep ecology is the study of how humans relate to the land and just what the sustainability of the land is. It is time for man to begin thinking like a river." As Lammers described it, no one should expect to one day see Glen Canyon the way it used to be, especially not anytime soon.

Other speakers elaborated. Bluff, Utah, geologist and river guide Gene Stevenson said that in the 40 years of the dam's existence, piles of silt - perhaps 100 feet or more - have settled on the canyon floor and in the side canyons and on the rocks, "and while we don't know how much, what we can be sure of is that we're talking decades, even centuries, before the canyon and the river will be fully brought back to life." In 1996, federal officials did try to undo some of the damage when one March morning Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt opened up four floodgates at the dam and unleashed a torrent that washed down silt and rebuilt some beaches.

Babbitt declared it "a new beginning for the Colorado River, a new beginning for the Grand Canyon ecosystem and a new beginning in dam management." But to those who got together here last week, that was just a drop in the bucket. They want the dam put out of business.

It seems to the layman too huge a project to be seriously considered.

Yet, there is precedent for so many believing in the movement's eventual success.

One speaker recalled that Barry Goldwater, the late U.S. Republican senator from Arizona who was a moving force in the building of the dam, eventually changed his mind.

Before he died, Goldwater said that out of the thousands of votes he had cast in the United States Senate, the one he regretted, the one he would change if granted celestial opportunity, was the one in support of building Glen Canyon Dam.

In Goldwater's absence, however, another senator, Orrin Hatch, Republican of Utah, whose recent presidential primary campaign was unsuccessful, knows his conservative constituents would miss their water if he were to let their Lake Powell run dry, and has introduced legislation to prevent efforts by environmentalists to decommission the dam.

Dam-building is a nonpartisan issue. Liberals, conservatives, those in-between - most are all for it. A dam can support development or agriculture. The Glen Canyon plant generates more than 1.3 million kilowatts of electricity. When all eight of its generators are revved, more than 15 million gallons of water a minute will pass through it. The power - as much as 345,000 volts once it goes through transformers - goes to various markets.

And dam-building means jobs. For a legislator to be against building dams, well, he might as well turn down a second military base in his district. The lake too, provides employment for stores, marinas, motels and other businesses, from beer to bait.

The job of those who would drain the reservoir, second in size only to Lake Meade, downstream from Glen Canyon at Hoover Dam, is to alter public opinion, then to bring that opinion to play in the halls of Congress.

"I was ecstatic when the Sierra Club three, four years ago came out in favor of restoring Glen Canyon," said Ken Sleight, an old river runner from Moab, who owns and Sabotage not seen as option DAM from Page 29A operates Pack Creek Ranch just outside that bustling slick rock town. "Then, when Dr. Richard Ingebretsen, the professor over at the University of Utah, and the Glen Canyon Institute all came out in favor of this at the same time, well, it was what I've been waiting for all these years." Sleight, a friendly, generous, and very tough man, made his comments at a teach-in last Monday at the NAU campus. That event was organized by the NAU chapter of Free the Planet, an environmental outfit favored by young people around the world. Student leader Jason Silke, with his pierced ears and nose, was there with Sleight and Kent Frost, men in their 60s and 70s. They in turn mingled with singer, writer and activist Katie Lee, who is every bit of 79, and finally with David Brower, 88, the godfather of the environmental movement. Optimism welcome Silke and his colleagues had put a substantial program together in just two weeks. The infusion of youth's optimism was a welcome addition to the information-laden afternoon. The young people appeared to harbor no doubts that the Will of the People can and will prevail.

But will it, really? Will their will carry the day? And is their will indeed the will of the majority? And when the health of our rivers and of the planet itself is concerned, should the preferences of the majority matter? Or should it even be put to a vote? No matter your leanings on the issue, the sincerity of the participants bordered on the inspirational.

A video, "The Cracking of Glen Canyon Dam," made in 1981 and starring the late Edward Abbey, whose spirit hovered over the twoday celebration, was shown on Monday. In it, Abbey encouraged a small group who gathered back then to drape a black cloth "crack" over the side of the dam, to first exhaust the political approach, and, he said, "if that doesn't work, then sabotage." No one on Monday or Tuesday advocated sabotage. In fact, a major selling point for draining the reservoir is the claim that the dam cannot hold. It was, said several speakers, built in a bad place - on weak sandstone; a sponge that is and has long been leaking. And in June of 1983, a big water year but not one of the biggest, the dam almost was lost - 29 million acrefeet of water blasting down the Colorado River toward Hoover Dam and Lake (Reservoir) Meade; two years of full flow, running free, wild and with no good intention.

So, sabotage is only a word and a thought that is beneath thinking. Although it might be mentioned that in this, the 25th anniversary of Abbey's death, a commemorative edition of his "The Monkey Wrench Gang," which did embrace sabotage, is set for a June publication. It's already back-ordered.

Can Glen Canyon Dam be decommissioned, Lake Powell drained?

No one at the gatherings appeared to harbor any unreal dreams of when the reservoir would be emptied. Not on Monday at NAU, not on Tuesday, the International Rivers Day of Action, at Glen Canyon, when a declaration was adopted swearing to fight for lifetimes to restore the canyon - and further to make sure no other dams are built. Sierra Club early supporter David Brower, standing tall but clearly weak, tired from a long trip from his home in Berkeley, Calif., near-sea level, to over 7,000 feet, acknowledged that the Sierra Club, of which he was then director, supported the plan in the late 1950s as Congress was considering the construction of Glen Canyon Dam.

"I even wanted to build it 50 feet higher," Brower said.

But he had never seen Glen Canyon. Few had.

The Sierra Club compromised, sacrificing the Glen to save Echo Park, in Dinosaur National Monument where the Bureau of Reclamation, the agency in charge of building and maintaining dams, wanted to build another one.

"When I saw the Glen, I realized our mistake," Brower said. "I began working, and we had the votes in Congress to kill it. But I neglected to bring along my (Sierra Club) board, and without the club's backing, Congress let it go ahead." Brower saw the place and, like Barry Goldwater, changed his mind. He has spent the last 40 years (the dam was built in 1963), trying to correct what he sees as an enormous mistake.

Brower noted that he will not live to see the Glen restored, but Ken Sleight, his old friend and a warrior who has fought right alongside, said Tuesday that he considers the drive to restore Glen Canyon "an ongoing battle, one we're in until we die."

E-mail Mike about this column: mritchey@denverpost.com

<http://www.denverpost.com/news/ranger0319.htm>

© 1999-2000 The Denver Post. All rights reserved.

03/20/00

Drain Lake Powell?

By Amie Rose

St. George, Color Country Spectrum

GLEN CANYON DAM -- Two groups of people gathered on opposite sides of Glen Canyon Dam Tuesday.

The crystal blue waters separated a gathering organized by the Glen Canyon Action Network from another gathering organized by the Friends of Lake Powell. And although both groups gathered to talk about the lake, one group wants to drain it while the other group wants to save it.

Friends of Lake Powell gathered on the east side of the lake, across the dam from the Carl Hayden Visitor Center, where the Glen Canyon Action Network gathered.

Although most people at the event stand firmly on one side of the issue, at least two Page residents wanted to hear both sides.

Katrina Reid said neither side swayed her and her husband one way or the other, although she said she was interested in the difference between the two gatherings. She said the Glen Canyon Action Network's event was intellectual while the Friends of Lake Powell event was emotional.

"It's interesting to see what both sides are," Reid said.

Her husband, Kyle, added that they're trying to create some harmony between the two sides.

Law enforcement, though, worked hard to keep the two sides apart.

Joe Richards, Coconino County sheriff, said his office, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the National Park Service, Page Police Department and the Bureau of Land Management have been working for more than a month to ensure a peaceful day for everyone.

He said between 70 and 80 officers worked as security along the dam and at both events.

"A strong law enforcement presence helped prevent problems," Richards said.

Officers aborted easy access from one event to the other by making each event accessible from only one direction. Neither group was allowed to protest at the other group's gathering.

When a bus, carrying members of the Global Peace Now, turned to go to the Friends of Lake Powell event, it was given a police escort out.

Mike Clough said he went to the Friends of Lake Powell gathering not only to save the lake, but his job. Clough works on houseboats at the lake.

"If I didn't come here I might not have a job," Clough said. "It's very important we keep the lake."

Several businesses in Page closed their doors from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. to demonstrate what Page would look like without Lake Powell.

Scott and Virginia Ashton, of Fredonia, Ariz., said they also went to support Lake Powell.

"Hopefully we'll make sure that the lake stays here," Scott Ashton said.

Clare Ramsay, a Garfield County commissioner, said he and fellow commissioner Louise Liston travelled to Page to support the dam, which provides electricity to their county.

"We're here to show our love for the lake," Liston said.

Ramsay added they also wanted to protest the idea of draining the lake.

"We wanted to let them know there is opposition to what those lunatics are trying to do," he said. "There's not a lot of people who're going to sit idly by."

People for the U.S.A. also joined with Friends of Lake Powell in the celebration.

Shauna Johnson, president of the Utah People for the U.S.A. chapter, said they had about 150 members go to the gathering.

She said the group supports Lake Powell because of the electricity the dam provides, the water storage, recreational use and economic benefit to the people in the area.

Johnson said she lived in Southern Utah before Lake Powell.

"When I was in high school, I kayaked in Glen Canyon," she said. "It wasn't accessible and Lake Powell is accessible. It's valuable to far more people than Glen Canyon was."

David Brower, the first executive of the Sierra Club, disagrees with Johnson. He said the Glen Canyon Dam was the greatest disaster of his life.

"The water hides the most beautiful scenery on earth," he said. Brower said he is partly responsible for the dam. He said if he'd kept the Sierra Club fully informed on the dam project, it wouldn't have been built.

"We had enough votes in the House of Representatives to stop it," he said.

Brower has spent years working to gain momentum in the movement to drain the lake.

"I'm glad I lived long enough to be here," he said.

Brower said the lake will have to be drained eventually, and the sooner it happens the safer everyone will be. He added that people don't realize the danger the dam poses.

"It could be a major disaster," he said. "In 1983 it almost collapsed. They were extremely lucky."

And, Brower said, the canyon can be restored at a fraction of the cost of not restoring it.

"We can revive it as a beautiful park," he said. "We can let the world know what it no longer needs to miss."

John Weisheit, president of the Glen Canyon Action Network, said the dam isn't worth the power and water storage it provides.

"(It) damaged the river and ecosystem," he said. "It was supposed to be a national park and we flooded it."

Weisheit said in the 1930s President Franklin D. Roosevelt decided four times not to make Glen Canyon a national monument because of political pressure.

"Rivers are forever and power plants and dams have a life span," Weisheit said.

He said the dam will eventually have to be decommissioned because it's filling with sediment and sand. The dirt will eventually compromise the safety of the dam because there won't be enough room for water. When it was built, he added, engineers said it would have a life span of 200 years.

Weisheit said people who do have a stake in the lake support draining it. He said people from the area, as well as people from neighboring states attended the event.

Copyright 1999 The Spectrum.

03/22/00

Beyond Crying for the Colorado Dam Shame

By James Ridgeway
Village Voice

The Colorado River is America's greatest natural treasure and a symbol of what the environmental movement ought to be fighting for. It begins in the high Rockies and drops 14,000 feet in a wild 1700-mile torrent to the Pacific Ocean. There is simply nothing else like it. To have been on this river is to have experienced a hallowed moment.

In 1956, horrendous judgment by the government led to the building of the Glen Canyon dam at the Colorado's upper end. The dam created a 300-foot-deep artificial reservoir called Lake Powell, covering the ancient riverbed lands of the Anasazi Indians and their descendants in the Navajo and Ute tribes. The water inundated canyons and tributary streams leading into the main river. So today, instead of the beautiful Glen Canyon, all you see are flotillas of stinking motorboats.

The dam and reservoir have led to the deterioration of the whole river. The reservoir--the second largest in the United States--and the downstream remnants of the Colorado are becoming a toxic sewer, transforming the river and its tributaries into a hazardous waste dump.

Since the dam went up, environmentalists have ranted against it. Edward Abbey dreamed of the day someone would blow it up. Wallace Stegner, the great western historian, fought it. Environmentalist David Brower at first fought the dam, then gave in as part of a deal to save other natural monuments. Now in his eighties and fighting cancer, he has returned to lead a last effort to dismantle it. Last December, a group of environmentalists, calling themselves the Glen Canyon Action Network (www.drainit.org), set up headquarters in Moab, Utah.

Their aim is to force the government to decommission the dam, drain Lake Powell, and restore the Colorado River. The group includes river rafters, small business owners, traditional Navajos, and a descendant of Brigham Young. In an era in which the federal government is having second thoughts about big dams--seriously discussing decommissioning three on the Snake River--Brower and his compatriots feel the time is right for a change in policy. For inspiration, there is Barry Goldwater. Shortly before he died, the right-wing Arizona senator was asked which vote he most regretted. "I wish I could take back the vote to put up the Glen Canyon dam," he replied, "and let that river run free."

David Brower's Last Chance: Taking Out Glen Canyon Dam

By Jeffrey St. Clair

The service station at Dangling Rope, one of the most remote in the United States, sells more gas than any other outlet in Utah. Oddly, the business is more than 50 miles from the nearest road, in one of the least populated landscapes of the lower-48 states.

Dangling Rope is a floating gas station, a marina drifting on the eerie, placid waters of Lake Powell. Three hundred feet below are the ruins of Glen Canyon, a natural Atlantis drowned in a man-made flood. The floating gas station, anchored in this surreal spot to refuel the flotillas of houseboats that prowl the reservoir, is a perfect symbol for the grim fate of one of the planet's natural wonders.

The reservoir, the second-largest in the United States, and the downstream remnants of the Colorado River are becoming inexorably toxified. Every four years the pollution discharged into the water from the thousands of motorboats and jet skis that ply the lake's stagnant waters is equal to the amount of crude oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez.

To top it off, more untreated human waste is dumped into the reservoir than any other body of water in the United States. Lake Powell is well on its way to becoming a hazardous waste site. It didn't have to be like this.

Perhaps more than any other single issue, Glen Canyon has haunted the conscience of the American environmental movement. At the center of the story is renowned environmentalist David Brower, whose trip down the canyon with Floyd Dominy, then head of the dam-building Bureau of Reclamation, was immortalized in John McPhee's book, *Encounters with the Archdruid*. It was Brower, the most creative and radical green of his generation, who signed off on the building of Glen Canyon dam in 1956, as part of a fateful deal to keep the Bureau of Reclamation from building the Echo Park dam on the Green River inside Dinosaur National Monument in northern Utah. That decision has weighed heavily on him ever since.

Now 87 years old and battling cancer, Brower has returned to the Four Corners region to inaugurate a new campaign aimed at decommissioning the dam, draining Lake Powell and restoring Glen Canyon. Brower's last charge represents a direct confrontation against one of the engines that has driven the development and destruction of canyonland country. He also sees it as a chance for a kind of personal redemption. "It's time to correct one of the most egregious errors of the last century," he says.

The Colorado River has been dubbed the American Nile. Both, of course, are desert rivers, coursing for much of their length through some of the world's most sun-scorched terrain. And each gave rise to great ancient civilizations, the empires of Egypt and the mysterious Anasazi, whose cliff-hugging communal dwellings still embroider the canyonland country. But beyond that it's not a particularly precise metaphor. For one

thing, the Nile is three times the size of the Colorado. For another, the Nile is a leisurely river, descending only about 6,000 feet in its 4,200-mile journey to the Mediterranean. The Colorado, born in the alpine snowpack of the Rocky Mountains, freefalls 14,000 feet in a headlong 1,500-mile rush to the Sea of Cortez. It is the compact power of the Colorado that sets it apart - the dramatic way it has slashed through the massive blocks of sandstone on the Colorado plateau, carving out the most bizarre and spectacular landscape on earth. It was a forbidding terrain that intimidated even the conquistadors, who stopped their pillaging forays at the first sight of its vast, seemingly impenetrable chasms.

The first whites to see Glen Canyon were almost certainly in the expedition of Major John Wesley Powell, the crusty one-armed Civil War veteran who floated down the Colorado in wooden dories in 1869. Powell's journal of that trip offers some of the finest nature writing of the 19th century and his detailed description of the canyon and the river remains one of the most precise and compelling. But Powell was no transcendentalist aesthete, no gritty Thoreau of the plateau. His mission wasn't merely to describe this uncharted territory, but to graph it out and discover a way to reclaim the parched land, making it suitable for habitation on a grand scale. The solution, arrived at over the next four decades, was to replumb the entire river system with a network of dams, ditches, canals, diversions, reservoirs and pipelines.

Powell went on to push for the creation of the Bureau of Reclamation in 1902. But the era of dam building had to wait for the competing parties to settle their differences over who would get what from the projects. The Colorado and its tributaries slice their way through seven states, and each one demanded a share of the action. Then there were the Indian tribes, Navajo and Ute, Apache and Havasupai, Hopi and Shoshone, whose rights to the water were undeniable if almost never recognized. The resolution of these claims and counterclaims to the waters of the Colorado resulted in a thick, convoluted and constantly evolving docket of regulations, contracts, court rulings and legislation, known collectively as the "Law of the River." Distilled, the Law of the River comes down to this: first in time, first in right. It's called the doctrine of prior appropriation and was an invitation to a feeding frenzy.

The big issue for the states was how the water would be divvied up. After years of squabbling, they came up with the Colorado River Compact of 1922, which divided the states into two groups, the Upper Basin (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico) and the Lower Basin (California, Arizona and Nevada). Each basin received rights to half of the Colorado's annual flow. The states in each group were left with the tricky choice of how to divide the water between themselves. By the time they were done, not even a freshet of the river would reach the sea. It has been sucked dry.

The first big dam to go up on the Colorado was Hoover in 1936, designed to funnel water to ever-expanding Los Angeles and the fields and ranches of the Imperial Valley. At the time, Hoover dam was the biggest structure ever built. Behind it, Lake Mead, the world's largest reservoir, held back two year's worth of the Colorado's annual flow. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt extolled the

project, touting it as the first move toward "altering the geography of the region." FDR's words were prophetic. The raising of that dam sanctified a certain mindset toward the arid lands, what the western historian Donald Worster has called "a world view of permanent subordination." Nature submerged is nature subordinated. Or as Dominy put it: "The Colorado unregulated isn't worth a damn."

The Hoover dam project also inaugurated another grand tradition of Western water schemes: corporate profiting from government pork. The Bureau of Reclamation didn't actually build dams: It planned them, lobbied for them, fudged numbers to make them seem more efficient and fended off attacks against them from Congress and conservationists. Dam building is big business and those billions of dollars were predestined to end up in the coffers of corporations. The lucrative contracts for Hoover dam alone transformed three relatively obscure firms (Kaiser, Bechtel and Morrison-Knudsen) into corporate Goliaths that have stomped around the globe causing ecological mayhem and human misery ever since.

Hoover was California's deal. Then the Upper Basin wanted its shot: Their scheme was grandiose, including dams at Flaming Gorge, Echo Park and Glen Canyon. But then in 1952 along came Brower, the newly hired executive director of the Sierra Club. Brower was outraged by the Bureau of Reclamation's plan to erect a dam at Echo Park inside the stunning canyons of Dinosaur National Monument. The proposal brought back bad memories from an earlier era, when John Muir, the Sierra Club's patron saint, fought a futile battle against the flooding of the beautiful Hetch-Hetchy valley in Yosemite National Park in 1913. After that travesty, the Club made a pact: no more dams inside national parks or monuments.

Brower was a master organizer, generating one of the first great national campaigns in the history of the environmental movement. But from the beginning, Brower's focus was riveted on keeping a dam out of Dinosaur National Monument. At all costs, he feared resetting the precedent of Hetch-Hetchy. So Brower proposed a compromise. In exchange for keeping a dam out of Dinosaur, the Sierra Club wouldn't oppose a dam at Glen Canyon. Indeed, Brower even supported a scheme to raise the height of Glen Canyon dam to accommodate more water storage.

As the dam began to be raised, Brower and photographer Eliot Porter took one last float down the river. They documented their trip in a stunning book, *The Place No One Knew*. It was a powerful, elegiac testimony to what had been lost, fully capturing the haunted beauty of the canyon. But the book's title was somewhat self-serving and deceptive. It is vital to understand that Glen Canyon was not a wilderness, per se. The Navajo and Ute tribes, and before them the Anasazi, had been living there for centuries. Many others knew and loved Glen Canyon, intimately and passionately, among them folksinger Katie Lee, river guide Ken Sleight, author Edward Abbey, historian Gregory Crampton and the thousands of people who had floated down the Colorado and San Juan rivers.

Another person who knew what would be lost with Glen Canyon dam was the writer Wallace Stegner, a close friend of Brower's who had floated through Glen Canyon twice.

Indeed, before the deal was finalized, Stegner told Brower that it was a mistake to trade Glen Canyon for Dinosaur National Monument. "Between us, Dave," Stegner said, "Dinosaur doesn't hold a candle to it."

Brower himself soon came to learn that Stegner was right. Looking back on it, he called the deal his "greatest mistake, greatest sin."

For two years the concrete poured nonstop into the towering pilings of the Glen Canyon dam, and the town of Page sprung up out of nothing nearby. It's now a city of more than 8,000 people. The floodgates on Glen Canyon dam closed on March 23, 1963. From the observation deck outside Page, a quarter-mile downstream from the dam, the 710-foot tall structure appears as a sleek blonde colossus sunk into the blood-red Navajo sandstone.

Admirers of Glen Canyon dam have compared the structure to the pyramids at Giza. It won't last nearly that long. One reason is that the reservoir is fast filling up with silt. The Colorado River deposits 65 million tons of sediment at its base every year. The mud is stacking up at the foot of the dam at the rate of between two and three feet a year. In a little more than 150 years, the silt will have reached the 425-foot level, where it will clog the penstocks that suck water into the power generating turbines. But the dam may breach well before then, as it almost did in 1983. That year heavy snows and a rapid snowmelt left the Colorado so flush with water that the dam nearly overtopped, becoming a 710-foot waterfall. At the same time, its spillways failed and the dam came close to a catastrophic breach. The flows of the river that year were high, but far from what the Colorado has reached in the past and will reach again sometime in the future. That hasn't been the only problem with the dam. For one thing, it leaks. The Navajo sandstone formation, the soft red rock that gives the canyon its Mars-like hues, is extremely porous; it sucks up water like a sponge. In fact, the entire base of the dam is waterlogged, shedding sheets of saturated sandstone. Internal memos from engineers at the Bureau of Reclamation suspected this would happen, but the reports were buried. At the same time, more than a million-acre feet of Lake Powell's water is lost to evaporation in the searing heat - that's enough water to meet the yearly needs of 34,000 homes.

But water was never the main issue at Glen Canyon. The big money at the dam comes from power generation. The huge turbines in the bowels of the dam generate 1,300 megawatts of power a year, enough power for 350,000 homes (though about 60 percent of it goes on the western power grid to industrial customers). But maddeningly, much of it is used to power engines that pump water from the reservoir on its way to Las Vegas, Phoenix and Flagstaff. In all, it provides less than 3 percent of the electricity for the region.

There was one final insult. Back in 1956, Brower had fought for and won protection for a side canyon harboring Rainbow Bridge, the glorious natural arch that is also one of the most revered sacred sites for the native peoples of the Southwest. But it soon became clear that the Bureau of Reclamation had ignored the deal and that the waters of Lake

Powell would creep up to the very base of Rainbow Bridge. An outraged Brower brought a lawsuit in federal court, but lost. The political nightmare unleashed by the Faustian bargain to save Dinosaur National Monument just kept getting worse.

In one way or another, Brower has spent the past 40 years trying to atone. Glen Canyon has become a testament to the perils of political deal-making when it comes to the environment. Brower repeatedly warns young environmentalists: "Never trade a place you know for one you don't."

The closing of the floodgates at Glen Canyon helped spark a new kind of militant environmental movement that rejects political deal-making and compromises. This new movement had a voice: Edward Abbey. Abbey didn't hold back; he raged against that dam and all it stood for, writing in 1968 that it must come down, one way or another. He envisioned the following scenario for the reservoir's dedication in *Desert Solitaire*:

Perhaps some unknown hero with a rucksack full of dynamite strapped to his back will descend into the bowels of the dam. There he will hide his high explosives where they'll do the most good, attach blasting caps to the official dam wiring system in such a way that when the time comes for the grand opening ceremony, when the President and the Secretary of the Interior and the governors of the Four-Corner states are all in full regalia assembled, the button which the President pushes will ignite the loveliest explosion ever seen by man, reducing the great dam to a heap of rubble in the path of the river. The splendid new rapids we will name Floyd E. Dominy Falls, in honor of the chief of the Reclamation Bureau.

In 1981, Earth First!, the group inspired by Abbey's musings about monkey-wrenching, marked its arrival on the scene by dropping 300-foot-long plastic strip down the face of the dam, simulating a giant crack.

But Glen Canyon dam doesn't have to end with a boom. It can go out with a whimper and a wild whoosh of water. And that's just what Brower has set his sights on doing. In December 1999, he and a group of some of the finest environmental activists in the country set up shop right in the belly of the beast: in an old ice-cream parlor in Moab, Utah. They call themselves the Glen Canyon Action Network (<http://www.drainit.org>), and their goal is straightforward: build an international movement to force the government to decommission the dam, drain Lake Powell and restore the Colorado River.

The group includes river rafters, small business owners and traditional Navajo. It is headed by Owen Lammers, former chief organizer at the International Rivers Network, where for more than a decade he fought dams around the globe, most notably China's gargantuan Three Gorges project. The developing world is experiencing a spasm of dam-building, which is annihilating rich ecosystems and indigenous cultures. Lammers says that the best way to reverse this ugly trend is to target one of the most famous dams in the world and put it out of business. "That's Glen Canyon, and it's a good thing its located in the United States, because we need to show other nations that we are

serious about cleaning up our own messes," he says. "When Glen Canyon comes down, others will fall like dominos."

Is it possible to drain the lake? Yes. Even Dominy, Brower's old nemesis, says so - though, typically, he disagrees on exactly how it could be done. Under most scenarios, the dam itself would remain standing, the Colorado pouring through its floodgates, an absurdist relic of a lamentable era.

"The barriers to a restored Glen Canyon are not so much technical or economic as political," Lammers says. "It was politics that inundated Glen Canyon. And it will take a peoples' movement to bring about its restoration." The political barriers are familiar ones, though perhaps not as conniving and powerful as the old days. The Western congressional delegation has already reacted with predictable hostility, pushing through a legislative rider that bars the Department of Interior from ever examining the feasibility of decommissioning the dam. At the same time, the federal government is now looking at pulling the plug on four dams on the Lower Snake River along the Idaho-Oregon border to aid dwindling runs of salmon. Those dams provide nearly three times more hydropower than Glen Canyon.

Things change, and even the most craven politician can come to his senses when faced with angry constituents. For others it can be a simple matter of conscience. A few months before he died, Barry Goldwater, the right-wing senator from Arizona, was asked which vote he most regretted in his long career of infamy. "I wish I could take back the vote to put up Glen Canyon dam," Goldwater said. "And let that river run free."

Brower hopes to see that day soon. "The decommissioning of that dam will give the restoration era its big break and bring a lot of joy to the 1,600 miles of Glen Canyon and its side canyons that are magnificent gestures of the earth - to use Ansel Adams' phrase - unmatched on earth or anywhere else," he says. "They are waiting eagerly to be born again. I know, I asked them all."

Jeffrey St. Clair is a contributing editor of In These Times.

05/08/00

Rally Seeks Support to Pull Plug on Lake Powell

By Lisa Church Special to the Tribune

MOAB -- Looking down into Lake Powell in southern Utah causes a strange sense of vertigo. The redrock rims visible below the water's surface are a beautiful, yet eerie, reminder that the houseboats and motorboats crowding the lake throughout the summer are floating above a canyon with sheer rock walls plunging hundreds of feet down into what was once the bed of the Colorado River.

Glen Canyon, the scenic sandstone chasm that was flooded to create Lake Powell, was the subject of a daylong workshop -- sponsored by the Colorado Plateau River Guides and the Glen Canyon Action Network, a group devoted to draining the lake -- in Moab on Sunday. About 80 people attended the event, which brought together several generations of river runners and environmental activists who presented lectures, slide shows, songs and film footage documenting the area before and after Glen Canyon Dam was built in the early 1960s. Since 1964, water backed up behind the dam has flooded more than 200 miles of canyon systems.

For some, it was an emotional journey back in time.

"What's under that reservoir was so incredibly beautiful. It was a crime and inhuman to do what they did to it," said folk singer Katie Lee, also an avid river runner who saw Glen Canyon for the first time in the 1950s. Prior to 1964, when the canyon was filled with water, Lee made almost 20 trips through the area, exploring, and she says naming, many of the endless side canyon spurs that made up the Glen Canyon network. At the time, the Arizona native was living in Hollywood, acting and singing in television and movies. By most measures, her career was on the fast track, but Lee says her experiences on the river, especially traveling through Glen Canyon, set her on a different path.

"It saved my life," Lee said. "It showed me the direction my talents would allow. I would have been a lousy famous person because I don't like people that much. But the river taught me I was going to be just fine with a small audience and my folk music. I'd have been struggling in Hollywood all that time if I hadn't sat down by the river and listened."

River Songs: The message she heard launched Lee on a career of writing, folk music and activism largely aimed at river restoration. She first expressed her love of the Colorado with her recording "Folk Songs of the Colorado River" in 1963. Those songs, written by Lee, and several new ones, have been recently recorded on compact disc in a collection entitled "Colorado River Songs." Lee has also written books on the subject, and frequently appears as a speaker and performer at events to "raise awareness" about how dams and other human activities can destroy natural waterways.

On Sunday, Lee, now 80 years old, showed slides of Glen Canyon before and after the dam, and talked about the cultural history lost when the canyon was flooded to create Lake Powell reservoir.

"A dam is like a blood clot in a human being's artery," Lee said in an interview before the event. "The rivers are the lifeblood of our planet and we've got to let them run. I'm hoping that if people see this beautiful place that was destroyed, they'll see the importance of draining the lake and restoring the river to its natural state."

Proponents of the proposal to drain the lake say the 710-foot high dam, which generates about 1,300 megawatts of hydroelectricity annually, will have to be decommissioned eventually, as erosion and silt put excess pressure on the structure, which proponents say was built on an unsafe foundation of sandstone that will give way over time. The proposal calls for opening the ducts at the bottom of Glen Canyon Dam

and allowing the Colorado River to once again run free. The dam itself would stand in place, a testament, they say, to human folly.

Owen Lammers, director of the Moab-based Glen Canyon Action Network, says draining the lake is the first sensible step in repairing the damage done to the riverways of the region.

Opponents to the plan say draining Lake Powell would destroy local economies in towns such as Page, Ariz., which depend on the reservoir for tourist income. But proponents argue that the tourist economy will survive -- a reservoir-based economy will simply be replaced by an economy devoted to river running.

"It's not about what is more beautiful, an artificial lake to recreate on or a restored river canyon, but that the entire health of the Colorado is in jeopardy because of that dam, particularly the Grand Canyon ecosystem," Lammers said. "The dam is going to have to be decommissioned anyway. The sooner we get started, the sooner we get started on reviving the entire Colorado River."

Vocal Supporter: Over the years, environmental activist David Brower, has been one of the most vocal supporters for draining the lake. Brower, who served 17 years as executive director of the Sierra Club, and remains a member of the board, supported the Glen Canyon Dam in the 1950s as an alternative to a then-proposed dam in the Grand Canyon. But he has spent the last two decades fighting to put the dam out of business.

Brower cites recent studies done by the Glen Canyon Institute, an Arizona-based group that advocates draining Lake Powell, which show that the dam is actually causing the massive loss of water each year through evaporation. That loss -- close to 1 million acre feet annually -- equals six percent of the Colorado River's average annual flow, and is nearly three times the amount of water granted to the state of Nevada through the federally-authorized Colorado River Compact of 1922.

But Brower says one of the best reasons for draining the lake now is to prevent a catastrophe in the future. "We should drain it while we can drain it under control," Brower said in an interview. "If the Glen Canyon dam broke -- and it almost did in 1983 -- most studies show that Lake Mead would go too. You'd have the equivalent of four years of Colorado River water going through in about two weeks. The result would be devastating."

05/19/00

Feed Magazine

DAM SHAME

For forty years, Arizona's Glen Canyon dam has siphoned the raging Colorado river and laid waste to surrounding territory. Today, it has become the centerpiece of the modern environmental movement. James Ridgeway and Jeffrey St. Clair report.

...Edward Abbey is dead, his books remaining as the inspiration for generations of grassroots environmentalists and a sort of American Western anarchism. The places Abbey loves aren't on any maps. There aren't any people around. They share there wilderness with the mountain lions and the wolves. His characters are loners, outlaws of computerized mass culture. When asked for identification, Abbey's Jack Burns says: "Don't have none. Don't need none. I already know who I am."

We whistled over Waterpocket Fold and across the Escalante canyons and around the Kaiporowits Plateau and there in front of us was Lake Powell and that Glen Canyon dam. Over yonder was the town of Page. We slowed down some and circled around for a minute. I could see Nehi was studying that big plug of cement where the Colorado River used to be. He gives me a hard look. "Garn," he says, "who did that?" "Not me, Mr. Nehi, no sir." He keeps on staring at me. "Honest. Wasn't me. I don't know who done it." He tightens the hammer lock another notch. "I think it was them Government people," I says. He kept on giving me that hard eye. "Them goddamn Government men," I explain. "The Colorado River is a sacred river," he says softly. "Yes, sir," I says. "Weren't none sacreder." Then he roared at me: "And we don't want anybody mucking around with it!" "No, sir." "Is that understood?" "Yes." He stares down at the dam and that long green reservoir behind it. "World's biggest silt trap," he grumbles. "World's biggest evaporation tank. And some day, before it all fills up with mud, it will be the world's biggest sewage lagoon. Let's get out of here." "What do you want us to do about that, Mr. Nehi?" "We will take care of that," he says, cool as a Christian with aces wired.

--Edward Abbey

EVER SINCE EDWARD ABBEY wrote this passage in *The Journey Home*, travelers approaching the Glen Canyon Dam bridge uncomfortably shift in their seats, tighten their belts, half expecting something terrible to happen. As they drive across, they peer down at the great dam and the green artificial lagoon with its armada of motorboats, or stinkpots, backed up waiting for gas, and then plunge on into the little town of Page, known to Abbey followers as "the shithead capital of Arizona."

Today the town of Moab, Abbey's old stomping ground, is the staging camp for a new effort to rip down the Glen Canyon Dam and, beyond that, for taking down a dozen other dams across America and blocking the construction of other big dam structures in other parts of the world. Moab is the headquarters of a movement called the Glen Canyon Action Network, which launched the beginnings of a long-term lobbying campaign aimed at persuading the government to take down Glen Canyon Dam. On March 15, 2000, the network released a declaration endorsed by dozens of green organizations and companies -- an elaborate entreaty for the Bureau of Recreation to

decommission the Glen Dam. This movement, which brings together what's left of the old Abbey gang along with David Brower, the environmental visionary who, more than anyone else, is at the heart of the new drive to save Glen Canyon.

For most of the last century, big dams like the one at Lake Powell were synonymous with progress in taming the frontier. On the Colorado, they meant a sure and cheap supply of water for cities as far away as Phoenix and Los Angeles. They provided recreation for hundreds of thousands of people, electricity that could be shot into the Western grid. Their very existence spelled wealth to the desert states where they were built. But they also brought trouble: Covering up ancient Native American civilization, creating undreamt of pollution in the middle of the desert, uprooting the river-valley population, killing off fish populations, and sounding the death knell for entire ecosystems.

The dam and the gigantic reservoir stretching out behind it for more than a hundred miles -- once referred to by Bureau of Reclamation head Floyd Dominy as a "marvel of mankind" -- have the makings of the world's largest toxic waste dump. Pollution from boats and jet skis equals the amount of oil dumped into Alaskan waters by the Exxon Valdez every ten years. To make matters worse, there is more untreated human shit and urine in Lake Powell than any other body of water in the United States.

SHOOTING OUT OF the Rocky Mountains' alpine snowpack, the Colorado River free-falls fourteen thousand feet in a headlong seventeen-hundred-mile rush to the Sea of Cortez, slashing through the massive sandstone blocks of the Colorado plateau to carve out the most bizarre and spectacular landscape on earth. The first whites (the native people had been living there for ten thousand years) to see Glen Canyon were part of the expedition of Major John Wesley Powell, the crusty one-armed Civil War veteran who floated down the Colorado in a wooden dory in 1869. His detailed description of the canyon and the river is among the most precise and compelling nature writing of the nineteenth century, and was a major influence on both Brower and Abbey. Years later, Abbey would remember his own passage through Glen Canyon as "a voyage like no other in my life, a continuous dream of marvels, wonders, splendors, that has haunted me ever since."

Powell's main purpose was utilitarian -- to map the vast uncharted territories west of the hundredth meridian. His dream was to transform the deserts of the West into agricultural oases where ranching and farming could prosper. Powell's exploration of the western canyons was the beginning of a long-term process aimed at turning the desert into a garden. His mapping provided the basis for a labyrinth of dams, reservoirs, ditches, canals, diversions, and pipelines. In the end, state and federal governments spent \$21.8 billion to siphon off every last drop of Colorado water for urban development and agriculture.

After his return to Washington, Powell pushed for the creation of the Bureau of Reclamation in 1902, the agency created as part of the government's newfound commitment to science. It would become the engine of the Colorado's destruction. But before the Bureau could begin, the competing parties had to settle their differences over

who would get what from divvying up the river. The Colorado and its tributaries slice their way through seven states, and each one demanded a share of the action. Then there were the Indian tribes -- Navajo and Ute, Apache and Havasupai, Hopi and Shoshone, in whose rights to the water are undeniable if almost never realized.

The resolution of these claims and counterclaims to the waters of the Colorado resulted in a thick, convoluted, and constantly evolving docket of regulations, contracts, court rulings, and legislation, known collectively as the "Law of the River." The law comes down to this: first in time, first in right. In other words, the first one to lay claim to water rights gets them. It's called the doctrine of prior appropriation, and it was an invitation to a feeding frenzy. There would be nothing left over. And, in fact, after the dams went up, not even a freshet of the Colorado River would reach the Sea of Cortez. The whole river has been siphoned off.

The first big dam to go up on the Colorado was Hoover in 1935, designed to funnel water to ever-expanding Los Angeles and the fields and ranches of the Imperial Valley. The Glen Canyon Dam came into being because the upper-basin states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico wanted to insure the portion of the Colorado River allotted to them under the compact wouldn't be siphoned off by others, and, since the government had misjudged the total annual rainfall, the best way to do that would be to create a reservoir. Environmentalists opposed the dam, but eventually gave in, hoping that in agreeing to a dam at Glen Canyon they could avert others going up in northern Utah. Brower played a key role in these deals, culminating, in 1962, in construction of the dam, which stands 710 feet tall, averages 560 feet deep, and floods Glen Canyon for 180 miles upstream, transforming into Lake Powell, the second-largest man-made reservoir in the Western Hemisphere.

THE DAM NEVER SEEMS to have accomplished what it set out to do. "Some very good clear-thinking people have concluded that Glen Canyon Dam was built in a wrong and dangerous place," says Brower. Today, eighty-seven and battling cancer, Brower has returned to the Colorado to lead a movement aimed at dismantling the Glen Canyon dam. "The law of diminishing returns was right, that it wastes water we cannot afford to lose, pollutes the river in ways we failed to consider, is extremely vulnerable to engineering and economic disaster, is not needed, and indeed defeats the purpose for which it was intended. Moreover, it has lost the world one of its most beautiful places, and can be restored at a fraction of the cost of not restoring it."

The dam was supposed to generate cheap electricity to power the West. Right now, the Glen Canyon Dam generates thirteen hundred megawatts of electricity, enough power for about thirty-five thousand homes, but there is currently a power surplus on the Colorado plateau with more units going into production than can be used. It was meant to store water. But the river itself, running free, can hold amounts equal to the twenty-seven million acre-feet that now sit in the reservoir behind the dam, and, if allowed to run free, the river would add one and a half million acre-feet now lost to evaporation and seeping into the Navajo sandstone that undergirds the reservoir.

Recreation, which was not the primary purpose in building the dam, is considered a major benefit, as the lake attracts two and a half million people annually. But at what cost? The sewage and petroleum pollution in Lake Powell trickles down into the Grand Canyon itself. Half the native fish population in the Grand Canyon has been destroyed, and declines continue as a result of the cooler water and lack of sediment brought on by the dam. The riparian habitat in the Grand Canyon has also changed dramatically, with invasive species taking over the native ecosystem.

The construction of a dam and its reservoir is also the story of the dislocation of people and history. "We were promised everything," says Thomas Morris, head of the Navajo's Medicine Men Association. "We were promised water, power, and money. It never came. We were promised that the dam wouldn't flood our sacred land at Rainbow Bridge. It did." Rainbow Bridge, the planet's largest natural bridge, was ostensibly protected by the bill that authorized construction of Glen Canyon Dam. But the Bureau of Reclamation violated the agreement, and the waters lapped to the very edge of the sandstone arch. The flooding of the Indian sites is viewed as an act of cultural genocide by traditionalists such as Morris. "All of Glen Canyon is a holy place," says Morris. "Many Dineh people may not know how to read English, but they know how to read the symbols on the walls of the canyon. They tell a story, a prayer, a healing ceremony. Now those stories are lost."

Page, Arizona, is a dusty eyesore of a city, splattered on the rim of Glen Canyon. The land that Page sits on was once part of the sprawling Navajo Reservation, the Big Rez. And before that, the canyonland country was the redoubt of the mysterious Anasazi, who lived in magnificent cliff-hugging palaces and left petroglyphs and pottery scattered across the region before they disappeared in the fifteenth century. When Glen Canyon Dam went up, thousands of Anasazi sites were flooded.

IN THE UNITED STATES ALONE, there are nearly 75,000 dams. That translates to the construction of one dam every day since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Those dams inundate 600,000 miles of river. Only a precious handful of rivers have escaped having some kind of a dam impede their flow. Worldwide, there are an estimated 850,000 small dams, forty thousand of them on what are considered to be large rivers. The rationale for many of these needs to be rethought. In China, the mammoth Three Gorges project, which will construct the world's largest dam on the Yangtze River, will require the removal of more than two million people and will flood cities the size of Portland, Oregon. Another potential fiasco, the dam project underway in Bolivia's new Medidi National Park, threatens to drown out one of the most dense and diverse ecosystems in the world.

The movement to remove big dams and restore rivers is picking up steam. It has a supporter in Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt, who led a "sledgehammer" tour in 1998 to several dams that he wanted to see brought down. "Usually my trips to rivers involve a canoe and paddle, or fly-fishing rod and reel," Babbitt said in a 1998 speech. "More recently, I arrive with sledgehammer in hand to celebrate the destruction of dams."

Babbitt is one of a few hundred people who have floated the Colorado through Glen Canyon. "I hiked and boated and camped beside the Colorado River before Glen Canyon dam was built in the 1960s," Babbitt said. "In those years, it was a wild, unpredictable, brown sediment-laden stream flooding into the early summer, then settling down in the winter. The gates of Glen Canyon were closed in 1963. Today, you see an ice-cold, Jell-O-green river, manipulated up and down, rising and falling on a daily scale, flushed with the regularity and predictability of a giant toilet." But Babbitt's rhetoric often outstrips his action. His has been a cautious, tentative tenure at Interior. Several smaller, decrepit dams have come down during the Clinton administration, and Babbitt has singled out a few other noncontroversial dams for decommissioning. Among the targets are two dams on the Elwah River inside of Olympic National Park, which annihilated one of the world's most productive salmon fisheries, abridging an 1855 treaty with the S'Klallam tribe that gave them salmon fishing rights "in perpetuity." The dams have long outlived their function, and an agreement was reached in 1992 to bring them down. But Congress has yet to fund their breaching.

On Glen Canyon, and the other big, contentious dams, Babbitt has stood mute, even as his own biologists have put their careers on the line in an effort to save rare fish species driven to near extinction by big dams. The real economic stakes are up in the Northwest, where four dams along the Idaho/Oregon border on the Snake River have been targeted for removal as salmon-killers by environmentalists and federal biologists. These four dams were built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1962 and 1975. Each is about 100 feet high and generates 1,230 megawatts of cheap hydropower, much of which is sucked up at below-market rates by the aluminum factories and pulp mills that line the Snake and Columbia Rivers. When the dams went up, salmon and steelhead (a sea-going trout) stocks crashed, declining by more than ninety percent. The alternative is fairly clear cut: either remove the dams or lose the fish. "It is painfully obvious that twenty years of technological fixes have not overcome the problems caused by the four lower Snake River dams," said Dr. Richard Behnke, a professor of fisheries at Colorado State University. "Either we change course now and restore the lower Snake to a semblance of a river, or we will likely lose forever a unique and precious genetic resource that can't be replaced."

But the subject of removing these dams is politically radioactive. George W. Bush wasted little time getting his position out. On his first swing through the Northwest in the summer of 1999, he pledged to get the dams in operation if elected. Gore has shied away from the subject, failing to back up both the EPA and the Fish and Wildlife Service, which have called for the removal of the dams. In fact, the White House has now said a decision on the fate of the dams will be delayed until after the election.

So far, only two prominent elected officials have called for the dams to come down, Oregon governor John Kitzhaber and New Mexico congressman Tom Udall, the son of Stewart Udall, former Secretary of the Interior. Udall wrote a strongly worded letter to President Clinton urging him to take action on the Snake River dams. "What is needed now is decisive action rather than further study," Udall wrote Clinton in a March 2, 2000, letter. "Our lack of action today will allow the salmon to move closer to extinction. While removing the dams is only one piece of a larger solution, it is the first step to effectively

restoring the salmon in the lower Snake River. It is an action that makes sense for the ecosystem, the economy and the nations and tribes with whom we have treaty obligations." However, Udall has remained quiet on Glen Canyon, the dam in his own backyard.

WHAT BROWER AND THE OTHERS gathered at Moab hope to do is to begin a long educational campaign aimed at convincing the public that taking the dam down is better than leaving it up. The process of tearing it down would be gradual, with the underwater Atlantis slowly reemerging. It seems likely that their steady conviction, along with mountains of supporting evidence, will get the job done over time, but you can't help but long for more sudden action -- something like what happened in 1983, when Glen Canyon Dam nearly overtopped and experienced a near catastrophic failure of its spillway tunnels.

While officials in Washington declared their confidence in the structure, a twinge of excitement raced through Abbey's river-rat community. The loners, a few outlaw park rangers, the Forest Service sentinels atop their fire stations, the former Vietnam pilots ferrying tourists through the canyons in small planes, Indochina medics working the rafts, the young girl guides -- the whole Monkey Wrench gang -- paused to recall the words of the prophet Nehi, and they began to look around themselves with renewed interest in the tiny side canyons off the Colorado into which they might scurry were the Glen to let go. There was a moment of silent exultation that those bastards in Washington just might get theirs.

An engineer atop the dam told a visiting reporter that if the water went another foot higher, he'd "run like hell." Off in the distance of the great desert, the coyotes howled and the turkey vultures circled. Down below, at the huge Hoover Dam there was a shudder among the second-string bureaucrats all dressed up in their neat little duds. If the Glen went, what would happen when that wall of water hit Hoover? "We came close to losing the dam in June 1983," Brower recalled tactfully. "A big water year, but by no means the biggest. Major damage was incurred when the dam exceeded its capacity. It will exceed its capacity more often, and waste more water, as the reservoir fills with sediment. The Bureau of Rec was initially concerned about the dam site, but built Glen Canyon there anyway. If Glen fails when full, Hoover will fail, too. If so, four years full flow of the Colorado River will head for the Sea of Cortez in a few hours. The only good news is that Tucson would no longer have to worry about the poor quality of its Colorado River water. And this could happen by accident, as it almost did in 1983. Or, as every thinking person must be aware, by intent."

Abbey's best known book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which plots the destruction of the Glen Canyon Dam by a group of environmental saboteurs, begins with a line from the poet Richard Shelton: "But oh my desert/ yours is the only death I cannot bear." For the river rat, those words are a call to arms. As Thoreau put it: "Now. Or never." Abbey himself had a more straightforward proposal: "Some unknown hero with a rucksack full of dynamite will descend into the bowels of the dam; there he will hide his high explosives where they'll do the most good, attach blasting caps to the lot and with

angelic ingenuity... ignite the loveliest explosion ever seen by man, reducing the great dam to a heap of rubble in the path of the river."

James Ridgeway and Jeffrey St.Clair are the authors of A Pocket Guide To Environmental Bad Guys and the editors of ecobadguys.com. Ridgeway is a longtime columnist for The Village Voice and author of 16 books. He lives in Washington, D.C. Jeffrey St.Clair's articles have appeared in numerous publications and he is co-editor of CounterPunch. He lives in Oregon City, Oregon.

Copywrite: 2000 Feed, Inc.

07/05/00

Important Opportunity To Promote Green River Restoration

Contacts: Owen Lammers or David Orr: (435) 259-1063

The US Bureau of Reclamation is seeking public comment on the operation of Flaming Gorge Dam (on Utah's Green River). A series of public meetings in mid-July provides important opportunities for citizens to participate in protecting and restoring our endangered native fish.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. ATTEND one or more of the public meetings
2. SPEAK OUT for river restoration
3. SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS by September 5

ATTEND:

Meetings will be held from 6-9 PM in the following locations: - Salt Lake City, UT (7/11, Wyndham Hotel--215 W. S. Temple) - Rock Springs, WY (7/12, Holiday Inn--1675 Sunset Dr, I-80 Exit 102) - Grand Junction, CO (7/13, AdamsMark Hotel--743 Horizon Dr, I-70 Exit 31) - Vernal, UT (7/18, Western Park Conv Ctr--300E 200S) - Fort Duchesne, UT (7/19, Ute Tribal Headquarters--988S 7500E)

SPEAK OUT:

Join the call for a comprehensive environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Colorado River watershed, including studies on decommissioning--breaching or removing--dams which harm endangered species. Background information is provided below.

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO:

Mr. Kerry Schwartz Environmental Protection Specialist Bureau of Reclamation 302 East 1860 South Provo, UT 84606-7317 Telephone (801) 379-1167 Fax (801) 379-1159 Email: Kschwartz@uc.usbr.gov

This is a rare and important opportunity for citizens to provide input on the operation of a major federal dam. Please write to the Bureau with your comments, especially if you are unable to attend any of the public meetings.

The Endangered Species Act requires the Bureau to change the operations of Flaming Gorge Dam to reduce the harm caused to endangered fish. Dams, including Flaming Gorge Dam, damage or eliminate the habitat conditions these fish require. Conservationists are asking the Bureau to study a dam decommissioning alternative, and to look not just at Flaming Gorge but at the entire Colorado River watershed to address the recovery needs for the endangered species.

Some key points you may wish to include in your letter are listed below, along with some background material. If you have questions, please contact:

Glen Canyon Action Network PO Box 466 Moab, UT 84532 Phone: 435-259-1063 Fax: 435-259-7612 Email: info@drainit.org

Please check back over the next two weeks for additional information which you can incorporate into your comments.

JOIN OTHER CITIZENS AND GROUPS IN ASKING FOR:

- * Conducting a programmatic EIS for endangered fish recovery throughout the Colorado River watershed, including the Green River and San Juan River basins;
- * Preparing a basinwide endangered fish recovery plan that considers alternatives to dams;
- * Evaluating one or more decommissioning alternatives in the EIS for Flaming Gorge and other dams including Navajo Dam on the San Juan River and Glen Canyon on the Colorado River;
- * Removing non-native fish which prey on endangered fish;
- * Limiting withdrawals of water from the river basin to ensure adequate streamflows for fish recovery throughout the basin; and
- * Protecting and restoring the Green River downstream of the dam, especially through historic Dinosaur National Monument.

BACKGROUND:

The government is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address Flaming Gorge Dam's impact on endangered species of native fish.

Four species of fish native to the Colorado River watershed (including the Green River) are protected by the federal Endangered Species Act. The humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, bonytail chub, and razorback sucker have lost much of their habitat and are now on the brink of extinction primarily as a result of the construction of dams and reservoirs throughout the Colorado River watershed.

Another factor in the decline of these species is the introduction of non-native "game" fish (including trout, catfish, and striped bass) which are known to prey on endangered fish. For years, the government has promoted sport fisheries at the expense of native fish. In the Green River, the government has fostered a trout fishery below Flaming Gorge Dam to the detriment of native fish.

A third factor known to harm native fish is the diversion of water from the river. This problem is especially acute in the lower Colorado River, where the entire river's flow is diverted, primarily for inefficient agricultural irrigation. Diversion is an issue in the Green River, where the Central Utah Project withdraws water for agriculture and industrial use in faraway western Utah.

The Green River flows through Dinosaur National Monument below Flaming Gorge Dam. Dam operations issues, including water outflow temperatures, sediment transport, and dam safety concerns, must be addressed to ensure protection of this unique and historic unit of America's national park system.

Flaming Gorge Dam and other dams on the Colorado River, Green River, and San Juan River, contribute to the decline and extirpation of native fish by causing loss of habitat in the areas inundated by the reservoirs, and by changes in downstream conditions including temperature, changes in turbidity, and other factors. Despite the government's knowledge of these facts, there has not been any consideration given to decommissioning dams as a rational approach to recovering the native fish. Instead, the government has chosen to look at each river segment and each isolated fish population separately as if the dams were permanent, immovable fixtures. By focusing on pieces of the system (e.g., a single dam) rather than the entire Colorado River basin, important issues and solutions are easily overlooked.

The current round of public meetings will identify issues important in addressing the recovery of endangered species for the EIS. To be scientifically credible and legally defensible, the EIS must address a range of alternatives that utilize the best available scientific information to achieve recovery.

A copy of the Federal Register notice and other published documents relating to this EIS may be found on the Bureau's website at: www.uc.usbr.gov. US Fish & Wildlife Service operates a website with information on the endangered species recovery plan at: www.r6.fws.gov/coloradriver/.

Thank you for your interest in restoring the Colorado River. We look forward to seeing you at the public meetings!

07/09/00

Study May Open the Floodgates Of Debate on Flaming Gorge Dam

BY BRENT ISRAELSEN for Salt Lake Tribune

By now it is no secret that some activists want to drain Lake Powell.

Expect a similar call this week for Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Beginning Tuesday, Flaming Gorge Dam will be the focus of renewed public debate as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation seeks public comment on dam operations.

The bureau is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to detail the effects of operating the dam in a way to benefit the razorback sucker, the Colorado pikeminnow, the humpback chub and the bonytail chub -- the four endangered fish of the Upper Colorado River Basin.

A handful of environmental groups will suggest a more dramatic alternative: Drain the reservoir and allow the Green River to flow freely again.

"It's well known that the endangered fish . . . are endangered in part by construction of dams and reservoirs. It seems a logical thing to consider decommissioning the dam," said David Orr, spokesman for the Glen Canyon Action Network. The Moab-based network's main goal is to drain Lake Powell, the reservoir behind Glen Canyon Dam at the Arizona-Utah border.

But just as the bureau is not considering draining Lake Powell, neither will it consider draining Flaming Gorge, said Kerry Schwartz, who is leading the Flaming Gorge EIS team.

"Decommissioning of [Flaming Gorge] dam is not within the scope of this project," said Schwartz.

The EIS project is to analyze only the environmental and social impacts of operating the dam to achieve flows recommended by the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The program is an effort by Utah, Colorado and Wyoming to boost fish numbers and improve fish habitat, with the ultimate goal of removing the fishes from the federal endangered species list.

The recommendations call for the dam to modify its releases so the flows in the river below the dam would more closely mimic the natural hydrologic conditions of the river, thus assisting the fish in their reproduction and growth.

Shwartz pointed out the EIS's purpose is not to explore ways to maximize all the river's natural resources.

Orr said that approach is shortsighted and symptomatic of the "piecemeal" way the government is managing the greater Colorado River Basin, where hundreds of dams and diversions have significantly altered ecosystems.

"We would like the Bureau of Reclamation to become the Bureau of Restoration," Orr said. "Put the engineers to work on a crash course to fix the problems that have been caused by a half century of water development in the basin."

In the case of Flaming Gorge Dam, it is a small miracle the bureau is doing even a narrowly focused EIS.

Jack Schmidt, a Utah State University researcher who has made a career of studying the impacts of Flaming Gorge Dam on downstream ecosystems, said there were some officials in the bureau who did not believe an EIS was necessary for the new flow

recommendations. Others feared an EIS would risk "opening up a Pandora's box they wished they would never had opened," Schmidt said.

"But the reality is it is a Pandora's box. It's an incredibly complex and serious issue," he said. "Now that it is open, they are not going to get it closed."

It is complex because of the numerous and competing interests on the river. While the dam has hurt native fish, it has created a world-class trout fishery in the 15-mile stretch of river below the dam. Though the dam's unnatural flows have altered the natural environment of Dinosaur National Monument, its flood-control capabilities have benefited farmers further downstream. And the dam's electrical generating output cannot be ignored either.

Still, Schmidt believes that if an environmental impact study were ever conducted throughout the Colorado River Basin, the justification for keeping Flaming Gorge Dam, which has affected the river's ecosystems as far south as the town of Green River, would be "weak."

(C) Copyright 2000, The Salt Lake Tribune

07/11/00

Scoping Comments on EIS for Flaming Gorge Dam

Mr. Kerry Schwartz
Environmental Protection Specialist
US Bureau of Reclamation
302 East 1860 South
Provo, UT 84606-7317

[Link to Biological Opinion of Flaming Gorge Dam](#)

RE: Scoping Comments on EIS for Flaming Gorge Dam

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

We appreciate this opportunity to submit the following scoping comments on the proposed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Flaming Gorge Dam. Our organizations collectively represent thousands of individuals from across the United States with an interest in the future of the endangered native fish species and ecological communities of the Colorado River basin, including the Green River.

We wish to thank the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) for recognizing the seriousness of the plight of the four endangered native fish of the Colorado River basin: the Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*), Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*), Bonytail (*Gila elegans*), and Humpback chub (*Gila cypha*).

There is wide agreement within the scientific community that dams in the Colorado River basin, including Flaming Gorge Dam on the Green River, contribute significantly to

the degradation of riverine habitat necessary for the survival and flourishing of these species. As builder and operator of many of these structures, the Bureau has a special responsibility to address issues related to the decline and potential extinction of these four federally-listed species.

We understand that the Bureau is undertaking this EIS in response to proposed flow criteria established by the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (UCREFRP) pursuant to consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Bureau is required to consider in an EIS, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a range of alternatives that reasonably and practically fulfill the purpose and need of the proposed government action.

In our comments below we address some of the considerations necessary for a comprehensive EIS, including:

- Issues pertaining to the current operation of Flaming Gorge Dam and Reservoir;
- Critical areas of analysis, including the need to incorporate decommissioning as a potential alternative; and
- Issues demonstrating the need for the Bureau to undertake a programmatic EIS for endangered species recovery for its activities throughout the Colorado River watershed.

I. FLAMING GORGE DAM OPERATIONAL ISSUES

A. Endangered Fish

The operation of Flaming Gorge Dam has been known for many years to cause harm to native fish. The introduction of a successful fishery for non-native trout in the dam's tailwaters is testament to the conditions existing downstream of the dam that make the river inhospitable for native species which require warmer water for successful spawning and survival. The reservoir traps vital sediments behind the dam, thereby preventing replenishment of the silt, sand and other material, which are gradually eroded and transported downstream. The dam, which has no fish passage structure, forms a reservoir which is used and managed for a recreational sport fishery for several non-native species known to prey on endangered natives. Conditions are marginal at best for endangered fish survival in the reservoir and downstream environments created by Flaming Gorge Dam.

B. Water Supply

Flaming Gorge Dam is operated as a water storage facility, part of the Colorado River Storage Project which includes Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River in Arizona, Navajo Dam on the San Juan River in New Mexico, the Aspinall Unit Dams on the Gunnison River in Colorado, and others. The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program goals, as stated, include providing for "future water development" (emphasis added). Presently Flaming Gorge Dam provides little if any water for consumptive use; it is designed and operated primarily as a storage dam to regulate

flows for downstream users. This regulatory function is not critical to the functioning of the region's water supply system. Evaporation can be significant, especially in warmer months, resulting in less water available for downstream uses. Furthermore, water conservation, not development, must become the Bureau's strategy for meeting future supply needs. Overall, we find Flaming Gorge Dam's role for water supply purposes not sufficiently significant relative to the facility's impacts on endangered species and the alternatives available to fulfill its water supply uses.

C. Hydroelectric Power Generation

Flaming Gorge Dam was designed to produce hydroelectricity incidental to the primary function of water storage and flow regulation. The maximum output of 150 megawatts is a small portion of the region's overall generating capacity. Moreover, given that the maximum output of Glen Canyon Dam was recently cut by approximately 500 megawatts—in effect eliminating more than three times the capacity of Flaming Gorge, its loss would be relatively insignificant and could be made up through implementation of energy conservation techniques and demand management.

D. Recreation and Flood Control Issues

The dam provides a locally important recreation industry centered primarily on sportfishing and motorboating. As noted in I.A. above and II.B. below, the introduction of non-native species to support sportfishing has impacted native endangered species. Motorboats, especially personal watercraft, contribute to water quality problems that also need to be taken into account.

The dam is not authorized to serve a flood control function, but can be operated in that capacity. However, the risk of significant damage from downstream flooding is minimal, and with implementation of floodplain management techniques, what little risk exists could be further reduced.

E. Flaming Gorge Dam and the Colorado River Basin

As noted in I.B. above, Flaming Gorge Dam is a unit of the Colorado River Storage Project. In addition to the CRSP dams in the upper basin, an extensive system of dams exists in the lower basin, including Hoover Dam on the Nevada-Arizona border, and several smaller yet important water supply dams on the river between California and Arizona. The river exits the United States (and indeed, the riverbed itself!) south of Yuma, Arizona, where the once-vibrant Colorado River delta ecosystem has been decimated, converted into an alkali flat polluted by agricultural pesticide and fertilizer runoff.

Water delivery contracts for the Upper Basin are structured pursuant to the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact. The compact has never been subjected to NEPA analysis.

Contracts for the lower basin are subject to allocation by the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to the terms of the Colorado River Compact (passed into law as the Boulder Canyon Project Act in 1928), which led to implementation of basinwide water planning

and allocation ever since. Thus the operations of Flaming Gorge Dam are integrally connected to the operations of the CRSP, the Upper Basin Compact, and the Colorado River Compact/Boulder Canyon Project Act. Therefore its impacts are also tied to this larger system, and as described in item III. below, must be appropriately addressed.

II. CRITICAL AREAS OF ANALYSIS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE EIS

A. Effects of Dam Operation on Dinosaur National Monument

The Bureau must consider the effects of Flaming Gorge Dam operations on Dinosaur National Monument downstream of the dam. The National Park Service is required by the National Park Service Organic Act to protect the Monument's natural features, ecological communities, streams, and native species, and to leave them unimpaired for future generations.

Flaming Gorge Dam has caused many documented negative effects on the Green River ecosystem downstream of the dam and in the Monument. For example, the dam's cold water releases have for years impaired the native fish stocks in Dinosaur. In addition, the absence of floods and sediment has negatively affected stream morphology characteristics important for native fishes.

Alternatives presented in the EIS must ensure compliance with National Park Service laws and regulations that provide for protecting the Green River ecosystem and its native fish. The Bureau should analyze each alternative in light of expected effects on Dinosaur's natural features and aquatic communities, especially on listed endangered species, sensitive species, and species of special concern. The EIS should explain in detail the impacts of the dam's past and present operations on Dinosaur, and show how future operations will impact park resources and natural regimes of sediment transport and distribution, depositional patterns, streamflow, temperature, riparian ecosystems, native plant communities, and native fish populations within the Monument. Finally, the EIS should explain in detail how Flaming Gorge Dam operations will be managed so as to ensure compliance with the nonimpairment provision of the Organic Act.

B. Removal of Non-Native Fish Which Prey on Endangered Fish

For years the state and federal governments have operated Flaming Gorge Dam and Reservoir and other dams in the Colorado River basin to promote and enhance sportfisheries and related recreation activities. In the reservoirs and downstream in the tailwaters, government policies have increased the numbers and habitat conditions suitable for non-native species such as trout which are known to prey in significant numbers on endangered native species. The Bureau must address the detrimental effects on endangered fish species, sensitive species, and species of special concern, caused by non-native species, and provide alternatives in the EIS that eliminates such predation, both in the reservoir and in the tailwaters.

C. Endangered Species Recovery Needs at the Species Level

The extensive system of dams and diversions throughout the Colorado River basin fragments and artificially isolates endangered fish populations. Historically, regulators

have responded to declining populations of these species by attempting to formulate management criteria that fail to question the fundamental circumstances contributing to the endangerment in the first place. The US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Bureau have chosen to address endangered fish recovery by first declaring isolated populations to be distinct, then proposing recovery plans which fail to address the factors causing the isolation in the first place.

Some or all of the endangered Colorado River fish species are known to be migratory. In addition, evidence exists that the interruption of fish migration by construction of dams in the basin has had a detrimental effect on fish recovery. Within the EIS, the Bureau must evaluate the potential effects, including genetic health and reproductive success, on recovery of fish, including listed endangered species, sensitive species, and species of special concern, that are no longer isolated between dams.

D. Water Quality and Recreational Impacts

In recent years, a rapid rise in recreational use of motorized watercraft including personal watercraft (PWC) has resulted in increases of petroleum effluent in reservoirs and streams. In particular, the proliferation of two-cycle PWCs has resulted in dramatic increases of oil and gasoline discharges into water bodies such as Flaming Gorge Reservoir. The EIS must quantify current and future trends in petroleum discharges from recreational watercraft, and address the potential impacts of these compounds (including MTBE) on native endangered fish species. The EIS should analyze one or more alternatives that consider the effects of declining water quality on listed endangered species, sensitive species, and species of special concern. Finally, the EIS should consider alternatives which implement greater restrictions or outright prohibitions on PWCs, other two-cycle motorized watercraft, and other polluting machinery.

E. Dam Decommissioning Alternative

The Bureau should incorporate into its EIS alternatives which evaluate the potential for decommissioning (e.g., breaching, removing, or disabling) Flaming Gorge Dam and allowing the Green River to flow freely once again. Decommissioning is the most ecologically effective and economically efficient alternative for addressing the purpose and need of the EIS, namely recovering endangered native fish species. Some negative impacts of dams cannot be adequately mitigated, e.g. loss of sediment deposition downstream of the dam, and reduction of frequency and intensity of flood events. And as attempts to do so become more costly, complicated and ineffective, agencies such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers are now turning to decommissioning as a preferred alternative for habitat restoration and species recovery. The Bureau should also consider decommissioning alternatives amongst its recovery options.

The Bureau is obliged to consider a decommissioning alternative even if the implementation of such an alternative would be beyond the scope of the agency's discretion, so long as it is reasonable and practical.

36 CFR 219.12(f)(5). Reasonable alternatives which may require a change in existing law or policy to implement shall be formulated if necessary to address a major public issue, management concern, or resource opportunity identified during the planning process.

40 CFR 1502.14(a-c). Alternatives including the proposed action. This section is the heart of the environmental impact statement. ... In this section agencies shall:

(a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated.

(b) Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits.

(c) Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency. ...

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) addresses this question in the following excerpt from its "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's NEPA Regulations, 23 March 1981":

Question 2a. Alternatives Outside the Capability of Applicant or Jurisdiction of Agency. If an EIS is prepared in connection with an application for a permit or other federal approval, must the EIS rigorously analyze and discuss alternatives that are outside the capability of the applicant or can it be limited to reasonable alternatives that can be carried out by the applicant?

Answer. Section 1502.14 requires the EIS to examine all reasonable alternatives to the proposal. In determining the scope of alternatives to be considered, the emphasis is on what is "reasonable" rather than on whether the proponent or applicant likes or is itself capable of carrying out a particular alternative. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant.

Question 2b. Must the EIS analyze alternatives outside the jurisdiction or capability of the agency or beyond what Congress has authorized?

Answer. An alternative that is outside the legal jurisdiction of the lead agency must still be analyzed in the EIS if it is reasonable. A potential conflict with local or federal law does not necessarily render an alternative unreasonable, although such conflicts must be considered. Section 1506.2(d). Alternatives that are outside the scope of what Congress has approved or funded must still be evaluated in the EIS if they are reasonable, because the EIS may serve as the basis for modifying the Congressional approval or funding in light of NEPA's goals and policies. Section 1500.1(a).

Given the increasing attention other federal and state agencies are not only paying to the examination of decommissioning alternatives, but selecting them as the preferred alternative, such an alternative in the case of Flaming Gorge does meet the definition of "reasonable" and "practical" under NEPA.

III. PERFORM A PROGRAMMATIC EIS ON COLORADO RIVER BASIN DAM OPERATIONS AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Problems facing Colorado River endangered fish on the Green River and elsewhere in the basin are not likely to be solved solely by addressing impacts associated with Flaming Gorge Dam. Federal policy has too often chosen to view isolated, remnant populations of endangered fish as if they were and always will be isolated, ignoring the purpose and goals of the ESA--to restore viable, healthy populations throughout the species' range. The problems that lead to fish endangerment are not easily resolved at the micro (individual dam) level and must also be addressed from a watershed perspective.

The Bureau is currently engaged in a number of projects, studies, and current and potential litigation that collectively have and will continue to have a significant cumulative impact on these endangered species, including:

1. Lower Colorado River Multiple Species Conservation Plan (LCRMSCP) for endangered fish and wildlife;
2. Adaptive Management Program for Glen Canyon Dam operations pursuant to the Grand Canyon Protection Act;
3. Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program for endangered fish;
4. Draft EIS for the Animas-La Plata project (San Juan River basin) in southwestern Colorado;
5. Draft EIS for Navajo Dam (San Juan River) operations;
6. Draft EIS for new Central Arizona Project water allocations;
7. Draft EIS/EIR for Salton Sea restoration in California;
8. Draft Programmatic EIS for the Rio Grande River (potential withdrawals of San Juan River water via San Juan-Chama Diversion project);
9. Draft EIS for Colorado River Interim "Surplus Criteria" for additional withdrawals;
10. Offstream storage of Colorado River water especially in the lower basin;
11. Continued and expanding depletions by transmountain diversions to the Front Range in Colorado from the headwaters of the Colorado River;
12. Current consultation on reoperation of the Aspinall Unit on the Gunnison River in Colorado that will lead to DEIS;
13. At least three proposals for new pipelines which would withdraw water from Navajo Reservoir and Lake Powell Reservoir;
14. Proposed settlement of Little Colorado River basin water rights in Arizona and New Mexico;

15. Price-Stubb Diversion Dam relicensing in Colorado;
16. Virgin River Resource Management & Recovery Program;
17. Current litigation against the Bureau for failing to address endangered species needs in the Colorado River delta and Gulf of California; and
18. Potential litigation by Indian tribes, seeking additional water rights or quantification of existing rights.

Council on Environmental Quality regulations require the Bureau to address those ongoing agency actions that relate to the proposed action. Since there are numerous NEPA actions underway within the Colorado River watershed which affect water use and allocation and endangered species management, the Bureau must therefore discuss and consider in the context of the Flaming Gorge Dam EIS these other actions. 40 CFR 1501.7(a)(5). Furthermore, even if the impacts of each of these actions are to be analyzed separately, they still must be tiered to a larger programmatic EIS. 40 CFR 1508.28, 1502.20.

It is unclear whether the Bureau can adequately address long-term needs of the fish throughout the basin in the context of these individual projects. It is also unclear how the Bureau will ensure that the cumulative impacts of all these efforts will work together to guarantee, and not impede, recovery.

In addition, there is a transbasin issue linking the Colorado River basin with the Rio Grande River basin. The San Juan-Chama project diverts water from the San Juan River (Colorado River basin) into the Chama River (Rio Grande River basin). Current proposals being voiced in New Mexico call for potential future increases in diversions of San Juan River water to supply Rio Grande municipal and agricultural water users as far away as Albuquerque and the middle Rio Grande irrigation project.

The Upper Colorado River Basin Compact has had a profound effect on the management, use, and allocation of water in the upper basin, including the Green River. The compact controls all river operations, facility operations, and contracts. In the context of this EIS, the Bureau must look at alternative ways to implement the compact in order to minimize effects on aquatic ecosystems, including endangered native fish species, sensitive species, and species of special concern, and to ensure compliance with water quality regulations under the Clean Water Act. Given the constraints of the compact, the Bureau must also consider modifications or changes to the compact that would contribute to the recovery of the affected endangered species, other sensitive species and species of concern, and achieve the purpose and need of the proposed action. As discussed in II.E. above, the Bureau is not constrained by existing laws or contracts in formulating and evaluating alternatives.

Given the extensive amount of federal activity within the Colorado River watershed, much of which directly addresses and/or affects endangered species, a comprehensive programmatic EIS covering the entire basin is not only warranted but also sorely needed. This approach is not unprecedented. The Bureau recently began scoping for a

programmatic EIS on Upper Rio Grande River operations to address impacts of water diversions on endangered species. A programmatic EIS for the Colorado River basin would provide for the multitude of issues affecting endangered species to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion, and would complement the effort now under way in the Rio Grande basin. And as outlined in II.E above, such an EIS must evaluate dam decommissioning as an alternative.

The Bureau's operations of its dam and water diversion systems on the Colorado River have had massive and far-reaching environmental impacts, yet have never been the subject of an EIS. Were such an EIS to exist, it would inform the Bureau, other federal agencies, states, tribes, and the public on all aspects of the Bureau's operations and its "off-river" impacts from the continuing urbanization in the basin states that is able to occur only because of the continued supply of water, or at least the expectation of a continued supply of water, from the Colorado River.

While the construction of the dam system predated the passage of NEPA, the operations and management of the river have changed dramatically since Flaming Gorge and other dams were built—substantial activity which can no longer be considered "grandfathered in" under NEPA. Such actions include the transfer of water from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to San Diego, the development of off-stream banking, major increases in water consumption, additional water diversions, and the uses of the water diversions and supplies. These changes have altered the character and impact of river management to the extent that now any Bureau activities must trigger a NEPA process. "[When] an ongoing project undergoes changes which themselves amount to "major federal actions, the operating agency must prepare an EIS." *Upper Snake River v. Hodel*, 921 F.2d 232, 235 (9th Cir. 1990); see *Andrus v. Sierra Club*, 442 US 347, 363 n.21 (1979).

As a result, the present NEPA analysis will need to be much more comprehensive in order to compensate for the lack of pre-existing NEPA analysis and baseline information. Note here that the environmental baseline of NEPA encompasses impacts to additional aspects of the human environment -- socioeconomic, environmental justice, recreation, cultural resources, wildlife and its habitat for non-sensitive species, air and water pollution -- not included in the ESA environmental baseline of impacts to endangered species and critical habitat. The action to be analyzed in the scoping notice, as well as the new actions mentioned above, would require changes in operations which have never been analyzed in the first place.

In conclusion, we find the Bureau's initiative to address endangered fish below Flaming Gorge Dam an important exercise. However, we fear that unless the Bureau approaches this undertaking in the full spirit contained within the ESA and NEPA, that such an effort will be unable to guarantee species recovery. We have outlined assessment methodologies above that we believe will avoid such an eventuality, and look forward to working with the Bureau and other relevant agencies to ensure their appropriate incorporation into the current EIS process for Flaming Gorge Dam.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and recommendations, and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely, John S. Weisheit President Glen Canyon Action Network

On behalf of the following organizations:

Access for All: Los Angeles, CA

Advocates for Instream Flow: Spokane, WA

American Lands Alliance: Washington, DC

American Wildlands: Bozeman, MT

Bluewater Network: San Francisco, CA

Bridgerland Audubon Society: Logan, UT

Canyon Creations: Grand Junction, CO

Christians Caring for Creation: Los Angeles, CA

Center for Biological Diversity: Tucson, AZ

Clearwater Biodiversity Project: Moscow, ID

Colorado Plateau River Guides: Moab, UT

Colorado Rivers Alliance: Fort Collins, CO

Committee for Idaho's High Desert: Boise, ID

Defenders of Wildlife: Washington, DC

Earth Island Institute: San Francisco, CA

Endangered Species Coalition: Washington, DC

[representing over 400 organizations]

Escalante Wilderness Project: Escalante, UT

Flagstaff Activist Network: Flagstaff, AZ

Forest Conservation Council: Santa Fe, NM

Forest Guardians: Santa Fe, NM

Four Corners School of Outdoor Education:

Monticello, UT

Friends of Pinto Creek: Glendale, AZ

Friends of the Earth: Washington, DC
Friends of the River: Sacramento, CA
Friends of Yosemite Valley: Yosemite, CA
Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn.: Flagstaff, AZ
Green Delaware: Port Penn, DE
Green Party of Tennessee: Nashville, TN
Green Party of Utah: Farmington, UT
Hetch Hetchy Action Network: Yosemite, CA
International Rivers Network: Berkeley, CA
John Muir Project: Pasadena, CA
Land & Water Fund of the Rockies:
Salt Lake City, UT Office
Native Forest Council: Eugene, OR
Predator Conservation Alliance: Bozeman, MT
Predator Education Fund: Salt Lake City, UT
Rim to Rim Restoration: Moab, UT
Seeds of Simplicity: Glendale, CA
Sheep Mountain Alliance: Telluride, CO
Spirit of the Sage Council: Pasadena, CA
Superior Wilderness Action Network: St. Paul, MN
Taxpayers for the Animas River: Durango, CO
Utah Environmental Congress: Salt Lake City, UT
Wasatch Mountain Club: Salt Lake City, UT
Wetlands Action Network: Malibu, CA
Wild Utah Forest Campaign: Salt Lake City, UT
Wild Utah Project: Salt Lake City, UT
Wild Wilderness: Bend, OR

Wildlife Damage Review: Tucson, AZ

Wise Use Movement: Seattle, WA

Wyoming Outdoors Council: Lander, WY

07/11/00

Coalition questions Colorado River dams and diversions

GLEN CANYON ACTION NETWORK MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday, July 11, 2000

CONTACTS: Owen Lammers or David Orr, GCAN (435)259-1063 (435)260-2591 (mobile)

Brian Dunkiel, Friends of the Earth (802)951-9094

Kara Gillon, Defenders of Wildlife (202)682-9400

David Hogan, Center for Biological Diversity (760)782-9244

Large coalition questions Colorado River dams and diversions:

Federal government asked to undertake comprehensive study of entire Colorado River watershed

SALT LAKE CITY -- Tonight at a public hearing to discuss the fate of 500-foot-high Flaming Gorge Dam located on the Green River in northeastern Utah, a coalition of 50 organizations will demand that the Bureau of Reclamation (the Bureau) vastly expand its piecemeal approach to environmental review for habitat restoration, and undertake a comprehensive study of all its activities in the Colorado River watershed.

The Bureau has been compelled to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on operations of Flaming Gorge Dam as a result of findings by the US Fish & Wildlife Service that the dam causes harm to endangered native fish species. The coalition will point out that since Flaming Gorge Dam is a component of a massive system that has impacted endangered species all the way to the Gulf of California, neither Flaming Gorge, nor the other dams in the system, can be looked at in isolation.

"The fish are becoming extinct because the Bureau has chopped the Colorado's habitat into tiny pieces," says John Weisheit, President of the Colorado River advocacy group Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN) which will represent the coalition at tonight's meeting. "The only way to ensure their recovery is to put some of these pieces back together so the natural processes and habitats are restored."

"The endangered Humpback chub, Bonytail, Razorback sucker, and Colorado pikeminnow below Flaming Gorge Dam once populated the Green and Colorado Rivers from the top of the Colorado Plateau all the way to the estuary of the Colorado River Delta," adds Kara Gillon, an attorney with Defenders of Wildlife in Washington, DC. "We need the Bureau to show some leadership to bring this habitat back."

The coalition is also demanding that the Bureau evaluate the possibility of decommissioning Flaming Gorge Dam. Flaming Gorge Reservoir does not directly serve any major populations; its storage capacity is used primarily to regulate flows for other reservoirs downstream. Its 150 megawatts (MW) of hydroelectric power generation capacity are relatively insignificant when compared to the 500 MW recently eliminated by the Bureau from Glen Canyon Dam's operations in an effort to address endangered species problems in the Grand Canyon.

Although tonight's meeting is billed as a "scoping" meeting for the Bureau to obtain public input on issues that should be addressed in its study, the Bureau has recently stated that it refuses to evaluate decommissioning Flaming Gorge Dam.

"The Bureau is violating the spirit of the scoping process and the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act," says Brian Dunkiel, staff attorney with Friends of the Earth in Burlington, Vermont. "Dam decommissioning is being supported by the Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and a number of state agencies as a means to recover endangered species. The Bureau has a legal obligation to consider this as a reasonable and scientifically defensible alternative for endangered fish recovery on the Green River and throughout the Colorado River basin."

Nor can the Bureau ignore calls for a comprehensive study. The agency is currently engaged in just such a process on the Rio Grande River in New Mexico. Moreover, while the Bureau is involved in 16 distinct projects and programs that address endangered species recovery in the Colorado River Basin, there is as yet no mechanism to demonstrate how these projects will work in cooperation or competition with one another.

"These efforts are all happening as if they are on different planets, yet they all affect species in the same watershed," says David Hogan, Desert Rivers Coordinator for the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson, Arizona. "The Bureau must stop spinning its wheels with plans and studies that individually will not solve the problem, and get on with the task of implementing an effective basinwide species recovery plan." Such an approach was recommended in the 1997 report of the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission, established by Congress in 1992.

"A basinwide review will also help to further demonstrate that under federal law, Indian water rights are senior to all other uses, and must be addressed first, not last as the Bureau and other agencies seem to have forgotten," says Thomas Morris of Window Rock, Arizona, President of the Dineh Medicine Men's Association. "With these rights we will work to ensure the preservation and restoration of the river and Mother Earth, not continue to engineer its destruction as the Bureau of Reclamation has."

Other issues the coalition is calling on the Bureau to address include:

* The need to eliminate non-native predatory fish species that have been introduced into the watershed; * The need to eliminate water quality impacts associated with motorboat and personal watercraft use on Flaming Gorge Reservoir; and * The need to eliminate impacts of Flaming Gorge Dam's operation on park resources in Dinosaur National Monument, and ensure compliance with the National Park Service Organic Act.

Copies of the coalition's submission will be made available at tonight's hearing. A copy will also be posted on GCAN's web site (www.drainit.org) after 7:00pm MDT today.

Coalition Endorsements for Flaming Gorge Dam EIS Scoping Comments

July 11, 2000

Access for All: Los Angeles, CA Advocates for Instream Flow: Spokane, WA American Lands Alliance: Washington, DC American Wildlands: Bozeman, MT Bluewater Network: San Francisco, CA Bridgerland Audubon Society: Logan, UT Canyon Creations: Grand Junction, CO Christians Caring for Creation: Los Angeles, CA Center for Biological Diversity: Tucson, AZ Clearwater Biodiversity Project: Moscow, ID Colorado Plateau River Guides: Moab, UT Colorado Rivers Alliance: Fort Collins, CO Committee for Idaho's High Desert: Boise, ID Defenders of Wildlife: Washington, DC Earth Island Institute: San Francisco, CA Endangered Species Coalition: Washington, DC [representing over 400 organizations] Escalante Wilderness Project: Escalante, UT Flagstaff Activist Network: Flagstaff, AZ Forest Conservation Council: Santa Fe, NM Forest Guardians: Santa Fe, NM Four Corners School of Outdoor Education: Monticello, UT Friends of Pinto Creek: Glendale, A Friends of the Earth: Washington, DC Friends of the River: Sacramento, CA Friends of Yosemite Valley: Yosemite, CA Grand Canyon Private Boaters Assn.: Flagstaff, AZ Green Delaware: Port Penn, DE Green Party of Tennessee: Nashville, TN Green Party of Utah: Farmington, UT Hetch Hetchy Action Network: Yosemite, CA International Rivers Network: Berkeley, CA John Muir Project: Pasadena, CA Land & Water Fund of the Rockies: Salt Lake City, UT Office Native Forest Council: Eugene, OR Predator Conservation Alliance: Bozeman, MT Predator Education Fund: Salt Lake City, UT Rim to Rim Restoration: Moab, UT Seeds of Simplicity: Glendale, CA Sheep Mountain Alliance: Telluride, CO Spirit of the Sage Council: Pasadena, CA Superior Wilderness Action Network: St. Paul, MN Taxpayers for the Animas River: Durango, CO Utah Environmental Congress: Salt Lake City, UT Wasatch Mountain Club: Salt Lake City, UT Wetlands Action Network: Malibu, CA Wild Utah Forest Campaign: Salt Lake City, UT Wild Utah Project: Salt Lake City, UT Wild Wilderness: Bend, OR Wildlife Damage Review: Tucson, AZ Wise Use Movement: Seattle, WA Wyoming Outdoors Council: Lander, WY

###

07/13/00

The fight to pull Lake Powell's plug

by Judd Slivka for Arizona Republic

There are people, many people, who love it. Who think the greatest thing that ever happened to way-north Coconino County was the creation of Lake Powell, average depth 568 feet.

And there are those who hate what the lake stands for, hate that it was formed when the federal government in 1963 stopped up the Colorado River with a giant concrete plug called Glen Canyon Dam. Those people want to see the lake drained, the dam breached and the Colorado restored to its former magnificence.

It has been a bitter fight over an improbable objective: How do you drain a body of water more than 180 miles long that supplies power, water and jobs to a region without much of any of those without creating a battle?

You don't.

Lately, the abstract, rather odd dispute over Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell behind it has gotten more serious because it involves two of the most important dams in the Colorado River Storage Project. Which means lots of water, lots of jobs, lots of money. In other words, the battle over the West's dams is beginning. And it looks to last a long time.

Members of the 50 groups that want to drain the lake, accompanied by a virtual Who's Who of the Western environmental movement, including the Sierra Club and the Glen Canyon Action Network, argued earlier this week at a Bureau of Reclamation hearing in Salt Lake City to also drain Flaming Gorge Reservoir, which was created by damming the Green River in Utah.

Their side has opened an ice cream store in Utah to raise funds. The pro-lake people, buoyed by donations from corporate backers such as SRP are waging an ad campaign with striking Valley billboards and other road signs and the solicitation of donations.

There have been vandalism, harsh words and allegations of illegal behavior, of signs being illegally put up and illegally pulled down, of local law enforcement being complicit. The environmental groups' concerns center on the river's changing ecosystem.

There are four endangered fish in the Upper Colorado River Basin that the dams have affected. The water below Glen Canyon is often too cold to support even trout, and flows from the dam have scoured away much of the Grand Canyon's natural streamside habitat.

But to the burghers of Page and other communities on the lake, this is a fight against out-of-town environmentalists, carpetbaggers who don't make their livings off everything the lake has brought to the otherwise-arid high desert.

"The whole idea of Page is it's here because of the lake," said Alice Robinson of the Page Chamber of Commerce, which shares a phone number with the group trying to keep the lake, Friends of Lake Powell. "If the lake should be drained, that would be the end for Page. "If you're going to try and turn it back to what it was before, well, all the habitat that was there is gone."

Which, in reverse, is exactly the lake-drainers' point. "This is a small battle in the bigger picture of trying to restore the Colorado River watershed," said Owen Lammers, director of the Glen Canyon Action Network, the loudest of the groups trying to drain the lake. "It's not about what is more beautiful but about the health of the river," he said. "It's not just about the survival of endangered species. It's about the survival of humans."

The Valley billboards feature pictorials of the lake's dark blue waters and the clear blue skies above them, the walls of what used to be Glen Canyon rising dramatically over it. "Don't let the Sierra Club drain Lake Powell." Then comes a toll-free number for people to voice their support. Some people obviously don't.

At least two billboards have been vandalized. The billboard on North 16th Street lasted about four days before "Free H2O" was spray-painted in cobalt across it, the same paint blotting out the "Don't let the Sierra Club" portion of the message, leaving just "drain Lake Powell." Another sign, on 19th Avenue, lasted about as long and got the same treatment. Both are clean now.

Another theater of guerrilla warfare: An e-mail has been circulating about the signs, a missive that originated from the Moab, Utah-based Glen Canyon Action Network. "Several billboards along major freeways have been rented in Phoenix," the e-mail reads. "Feel free to call the toll-free number 888.845.POWE(LL) posted on the billboards to let them know how quickly you want the reservoir drained. Call as often as you like - it's free!"

In March, both sides held rallies on the same day on opposite sides of the lake, which brought out more police officers than had been at the lake at one time since the threat of terrorism in conjunction with the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. "It wasn't until they came up to the dam to sing and dance about it that the companies (in Page) started taking them seriously," said Phoenix-area political consultant Jim Roush, a longtime lake lover who helped mount the ad campaign. "That's when we started getting corporate donations."

Donations are a bit tougher to come by for the lake-drainers. They've opened up an ice cream store in Moab, the Restoration Creamery, which contributes 66 cents for every \$1 sold toward restoration efforts. It earns money selling ice cream flavors with names that allude to Glen Canyon: Music Temple Almond Fudge, Fern Canyon Mint Chocolate Chip and Abbey's Rocky Road. The most popular flavor? Brower's Bear Claw, named for a former Sierra Club director who didn't fight to save Glen Canyon.

David Brower later called it the biggest mistake of his life.

07/14/00

BLM takes requests to drain Flaming Gorge reservoir

By RACHEL SAUER for Grand Junction Sentinel

Note: The Paper's reference to BLM is inaccurate. It should be the Bureau of Reclamation.

Calls to decommission the Flaming Gorge Dam and drain the reservoir or to leave things how they are will become part of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's environmental impact statement currently being prepared on the operation of Flaming Gorge Dam.

At a public scoping meeting Thursday night, one of five being held in the next week by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, a representative of the Glen Canyon Action Network asked the Bureau of Land Management representatives present to consider decommissioning the dam as an alternative for Flaming Gorge.

David Orr, director of field programs for the network, said the groups represented in the network have concerns about whether the environmental impact statement is unnecessarily constrained and avoids the purpose of the National Environmental Policy Act.

"We want to initiate a (Colorado) Basin-wide study if we're going to recover species of endangered fish," he said. "What we see is the government trying to piecemeal this together."

The purpose of the environmental impact statement is to determine the effects of current and future operations of the dam on the downstream environment, particularly the existing populations and designated critical habitat of four Colorado River endangered fish: the razorback sucker, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub and bonytail found in the Green and Colorado river basins.

According to the BLM, the environmental impact statement will describe the effects of operating Flaming Gorge Dam to achieve the flows recommended by the Recovery Implementation Program for Endangered Fish Species in the Upper Colorado River Basin of the Endangered Species Act. Part of the data-gathering process is seeking public input on the fate of Flaming Gorge.

"I think it's important that we recognize the wisdom of nature," said Tonya Domurath of Grand Junction. "It's arrogant to believe we know more than the Creator when he put the river there."

Henry Rider, a 30-year Grand Junction resident, said during the meeting that he opposes proposals to decommission the dam.

"I think it's wrong," he said. "People need to go up there to enjoy life, they need to have that reservoir."

Orr said the Glen Canyon Action Network is concerned that the BLM has already decided not to address full recovery of the endangered species and is limiting access to documents and data on the recovery process.

The next public scoping meeting for the environmental impact statement will be from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at the Western Park Convention Center in Vernal, Utah.

07/18/00

Babbitt won't drain lake on his watch

BY TODD GLASENAPP for Arizona Daily Sun

Don't expect Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to take his sledgehammer to Glen Canyon Dam in his last six months in office.

Despite hinting two years ago that he might support draining Lake Powell to restore natural flow in the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, Babbitt told the mayors of three nearby communities last weekend that he's opposed to draining the lake, a 186-mile-long reservoir backed by the dam, an Interior spokesman confirmed Monday.

More than a dozen dams have been decommissioned since Babbitt took over leadership of Interior in January 1993.

He has likened their removal to taking a sledgehammer to them in the name of restoring river systems. The U.S. has about 75,000 dams in all.

Babbitt, in the area for a Saturday hike of a proposed national monument at Paria Plateau west of Page, opened a Friday meeting with some reassurance for the mayors of Page, Fredonia and Kanab, Utah.

"He said, 'I just want to let you know that it's not going to happen,'" said Mayor Karen Alvey of Kanab, a small town about 70 miles west of the lake.

To that, Page Mayor Bob Bowling said, "It's worth coming to this meeting just to hear that," Alvey said. Bowling is out of town this week and was unavailable for comment.

Interior spokesman John Wright confirmed that Babbitt is opposed to draining Powell. Wright said Babbitt wouldn't elaborate further.

Before Friday, Babbitt hadn't publicly stated a clear opinion on a proposal to drain the nation's second-largest artificial lake. Two environmental groups want Congress to decommission the 37-year-old dam near Page in order to restore Glen Canyon.

Babbitt has lamented ecosystem changes in the Grand Canyon that were brought about by the dam. In an October 1999 magazine article, the Flagstaff High graduate wrote, "In the depths of the Grand Canyon the waters rose and fell on a daily cycle, in response to the heating and air conditioning demands in Phoenix and Los Angeles."

Yet he is falling short of an early goal to take out a big dam during his tenure, says David Orr, of lake-drain advocate Glen Canyon Action Network based in Moab, Utah.

It's possible Babbitt is being careful to avoid offending Arizona's politicians and developers, Orr said, adding, "After he's finished at Interior, he'll be looking for something to do.

"We think the Interior Department is of two minds on this issue," Orr said Monday. "There is evidence that many people think decommissioning the dam makes a lot of sense. Obviously, Secretary Babbitt will be in office less than a year. He's punting, obviously, to the next administration."

Lake defenders had a much different take.

"Secretary Babbitt's comments are welcomed and perhaps will restore some sanity to this environmental agenda," said Paul Ostapuk, a spokesman for Page-based Friends of Lake Powell.

Kanab Mayor Alvey said too much is at stake to lose the lake and dam. At risk are the water, power, recreation and economic needs of millions.

Page officials have estimated the lake provides for 2,355 jobs for the city's three largest employers, with an annual payroll of \$42 million.

Momentum for draining the lake picked up four years ago with a vote by the Sierra Club's Board of Trustees. The Flagstaff-based Glen Canyon Institute organized in 1996, and Glen Canyon Action Network followed suit six months ago.

Glen Canyon Institute executive director Brian T. Gibbons declined comment Monday. Gibbons said he'd need to know more about the context of Babbitt's remarks before commenting.

Ostapuk was critical of the drain-the-lake advocates and accused them of "ice cream environmentalism." Glen Canyon Action Network sells ice cream from its "Restoration Creamery" in Moab.

"The Glen Canyon Action Network/Glen Canyon Institute notion to drain Lake Powell is not mainstream and has actually alienated many thinking individuals," Ostapuk said. "This is the chance you take when you engage in 'ice cream environmentalism.'"

In an August 1998 speech to the Ecological Society of America, Babbitt hinted at the possibility of draining Powell in the distant future.

"I think back to my beloved Colorado River, which I hiked and rafted and saw change before my very eyes," he said. "Once one of the mightiest rivers in America, it no longer makes it to the sea. That is a shame.

"As our generation passes, the toughest decisions rest firmly in your hands," closed Babbitt, then 60.

He also told the group that he preferred that dams be removed by community consensus.

"The truth is I have not brought my sledgehammer to a single dam that was not approved for removal by consensus of the inhabitants of the watershed," he said.

He said big-dam removal is tricky because it involves complex issues like water storage and electrical generation. That's why he said he liked the idea of controlled flooding to help restore ecosystems. Glen Canyon received a controlled flood four years ago.

07/25/00

Flaming Gorge Dam Debate Threatens More Than Fish

BY BRETT PRETTYMAN for Salt Lake Tribune

Catch and release angling has turned Utah's Green River below Flaming Gorge Reservoir into a world renowned fly-fishing destination. If some groups get their way, anglers will have to put back the biggest catch of all: 29 miles of blue-ribbon tailwater trout fishing and a 90-mile reservoir with its trophy-sized lake trout.

But like all the fish they have pulled from the Green and the Gorge, many anglers are willing to give up the fisheries if it means endangered species will be saved. They do question if that would be the case.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation recently held public meetings and now will analyze the response as it prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the operation of Flaming Gorge Dam in northeastern Utah. Although the EIS does not list decommissioning the dam as an alternative, several groups -- led by the Glen Canyon Action Network -- argue that removing the dam may be the best way to save the four endangered fish species on the Green below Flaming Gorge. The group threatens litigation if the Bureau doesn't explore the possibility of decommissioning the dam.

"I fully support the preservation of a species," said Steve Schmidt, owner of the Western Rivers Flyfishers shop in Salt Lake City. "If they can prove beyond a doubt that they can save a species by taking down a dam, then I am behind it."

The angling community is concerned about the possibility of losing two premier fisheries, but feels any change would take a long time for it to happen, if ever.

"They haven't done enough studies," said Paul Dremann, vice president of conservation for the Utah council of Trout Unlimited. "We are a long way from decommissioning or even beginning to support it. They need a study of the entire watershed of the Upper Colorado River system, not just Flaming Gorge Dam. There is no basis for decommissioning right now, except the ideology by a certain group of people that all dams should be removed."

Trout Unlimited was one of the main forces behind the successful effort to eliminate Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Maine last summer. Owen Lammers, a spokesperson for the Glen Canyon Action Network, agrees with Dremann about the need for a comprehensive study of the entire watershed, but says Flaming Gorge Dam is no longer needed for the purposes it was built for -- water storage and producing electricity -- and that all dams will come down eventually.

"The Endangered Species Act requires recovery," Lammers said. "They have not demonstrated the species can be recovered with the dam still there. The Bureau has to consider all the alternatives. This is not unprecedented to ask for." The Network is also asking the Bureau to review the need to eliminate non-native predatory fish in the watershed. If the dam is drained, the non-native fish could disappear because the dam helps maintain the colder temperatures needed for trout species.

After a five-year study on the razorback sucker, Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub and bonytail, the Bureau is recommending river flows that will assist in the recovery of the endangered fish be controlled by the dam. There are five proposed scenarios for flows, set up to match the natural water cycle of the river. Although concerned the experimental flows tested on the river might hamper fishing, anglers now say it helped trout populations.

"As I understand it, the flows will not be any jeopardy to the trout," said Steve Brayton, the Division of Wildlife's project leader over Flaming Gorge and the Green River below the dam. "There isn't much of a difference from what we have already faced."

Brayton said the development of the EIS has "opened up the dialogue" between all the organizations concerned with flows from the dam and said the angler's voice is being heard more now than ever.

"People have the right to speak their mind; to let the Bureau know what resources they are interested in protecting," Brayton said. "Some people feel the best thing for the endangered species is to remove the dam. They are certainly entitled to voice that opinion."

No one wants to say one species of fish is more valuable than another, but there are some numbers and facts the Bureau has pointed out in literature available at the public meetings:

- The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area is the flagship of the national recreation areas in the U.S. Forest Service. It was the first national recreation area in the agency.

- The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area attracts between 700,000 and 2 million visitors annually.

- Direct and indirect annual expenditures connected with river experiences and uses are estimated at \$25 million. The total is close to \$100 million for the entire national recreation area.

-- The 13 outfitter/guide businesses which use the Green River below the dam to the Colorado stateline report an annual revenue or more than \$1.3 million.

Those interested can send written comments to Kerry Schwartz, Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office, 302 E. 1860 South, Provo, Utah 84606-7317. Comments can also be sent via e-mail to Kschwartz@uc.usbr.gov Written comments must be received no later than Sept. 5.

"We have had some good comments and not one of them is more important than the other," Schwartz said. "We will analyze them all and determine whether they are pertinent to the EIS process."

Schwartz said once all the comments have been received by the Sept. 5 deadline, new issues will be identified and placed in a draft EIS. The draft will include alternatives and should be ready by July of next year.

Once the draft document is published, there will be another public hearing process. Comments from those meetings will be reviewed and a final EIS should be released in December, 2001.

07/27/00

Ralph Nader Denounces Administration's Extinction Plan For Rivers

CONTACT: Owen Lammers, 435-259-1063

MOAB, Utah -- Today environmental leaders, led by former Sierra Club Executive Director David Brower, joined Green Party Presidential candidate Ralph Nader in blasting Vice-President Al Gore and the Clinton Administration for their failure to forestall the extinction of endangered fish species in the Columbia River and Colorado River watersheds.

Despite overwhelming scientific agreement that breaching of four fish-killing dams on the Snake River in eastern Washington state is necessary to protect dying salmon species, Mr. Gore is on record supporting the Clinton Administration's recent decision to abandon the breaching proposal.

"Al Gore has shown that enforcing the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act is unimportant in a tight political race," said Mr. Nader. "Despite his reputation as being stiff, the Vice-President seems to have little backbone when it comes to protecting the environment."

Trout Unlimited recently called the Administration's position a "death sentence" for Snake River salmon.

Noted environmental leader David Brower echoed Mr. Nader's sentiments. "The Vice-President is ignoring the law; is extinction necessary to get Mr. Gore's attention?"

In the Southwest earlier this month, calls for decommissioning fish-killing dams were dismissed by the Administration. Federal dams in the Colorado River watershed are largely responsible for the endangerment of four fish species native to the river system vital to our prized national parks, including Grand Canyon.

A coalition of fifty-five organizations led by Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN) of Moab, Utah, called for decommissioning studies to be done on Flaming Gorge Dam on the Green River and a comprehensive study of endangered fish recovery to be performed for the entire Colorado River basin. In clear violation of Council on Environmental Quality guidelines under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Administration announced it would not conduct a decommissioning study for Flaming Gorge. CEQ and NEPA regulations specify that the Administration must examine a range of alternatives in the NEPA process, not concentrate solely on a predetermined course of action which does not guarantee recovery--a requirement of the Endangered Species Act.

Recently the Administration declared its opposition to decommissioning Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River, failing once again to support recovery of endangered species and restoration of the river ecosystem through Grand Canyon National Park. Over the past four months, a GCAN-led coalition of sixty-five organizations has called for removing Glen Canyon Dam and restoring 250 miles of inundated river.

"Al Gore fiddles while the Earth burns," said Mr. Brower, Chairman of Earth Island Institute. "Scientists agree that many dams have to go if we're to save our rivers, but the Vice-President seems willing to sacrifice it all for commercial interests."

Many rivers in the United States are profoundly harmed by dams which block fish migration routes and destroy habitat. For years, dam removal has been known to be critical in protecting and restoring endangered fish populations.

"The Columbia and Colorado river systems are dying, and their resuscitation depends on dam decommissioning," said GCAN President John Weisheit. "Alternatives are available to address all the supposed benefits of these dams, but Clinton and Gore would rather watch these rivers perish than have the Vice President lose campaign contributions."

The Administration continues to discount the viability of and growing need for removing large dams as part of a sound river management policy for the twenty-first century.

* Power generated by dams is becoming less economical as the cost of environmental mitigation increases. Increasing energy conservation efforts using existing technologies can lead to significant reductions in electricity demand.

* The vast majority of water diverted from rivers is used for heavily subsidized and inefficient irrigated agriculture. More appropriate agricultural practices could eliminate the need for many of these dams and still meet municipal needs for generations to come.

* Existing road and rail transportation systems provide viable alternatives to dam-assisted river transportation and allow the costs of moving commodities to be incurred by shippers instead of being subsidized by taxpayers.

* Despite massive investments in structural approaches to flood control, rising economic flood losses have caused river management experts to plan for and work with floods instead of trying to defend against them.

Mr. Brower and Mr. Nader noted that Vice-President Gore "has set a new standard for hollow environmental rhetoric" and urged the Vice-President to act on his book, "Earth in the Balance," to safeguard biological diversity.

"Had Mr. Gore read his book as carefully as I have," said Mr. Brower, "he would realize the necessity of decommissioning the dam that could restore Glen Canyon, a world wonder equal to the Grand Canyon."

07/29/00

CREDA's credibility called into question

Glen Canyon Action Network

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: DAVID ORR (435) 259-1063

Power association misleads, inflames public opinion, environmental leaders say

MOAB, Utah -- Colorado River restoration advocates today blasted the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association (CREDA) for misleading its member electric utility companies and the communities throughout its service area about the effects of decommissioning dams in the Colorado River watershed.

According to recent reports in the Farmington, New Mexico, Daily Times, CREDA has asked the Farmington City Council to approve a resolution opposing draining Lake Powell and other unneeded reservoirs on the grounds that purchasers of hydroelectric power generated by these dams might pay higher prices for electricity.

"By oversimplifying the problem, CREDA is misleading its member companies and attempting to inflame public opinion," stated David Orr, Field Director of Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN). "In this rapidly deregulating energy market, it is dishonest to make such predictions."

CREDA is a trade association representing buyers of hydropower from dams on the Colorado River and its tributaries. CREDA's member companies have for years enjoyed heavily subsidized electric power financed by federal taxpayers. Environmental costs have been largely ignored over the lifetime of these projects.

"Dinosaur utilities like CREDA may just go extinct unless they respond to changing conditions in energy markets," said Mr. Orr. "These executives need to understand that

it's no longer necessary for them to destroy rivers and pollute the air to generate electricity for their customers."

Dams in the Colorado River watershed drowned major river segments and caused significant harm to the river and to native fish and wildlife. Glen Canyon Dam in particular has caused enormous damage to Grand Canyon National Park. Passage of the Grand Canyon Protection Act in 1992 was a first step in mitigating the destructive effects of Glen Canyon Dam. Costs of the first phase alone were more than \$60 million. These costs, which have recently fallen on ratepayers, continue to mount. Glen Canyon Dam hydropower costs will continue rising in order to pay growing environmental mitigation bills.

Colorado River dams are known to cause thermal and chemical pollution of water and destroy critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Four species of native fish are endangered in part because of Glen Canyon Dam and other dams in the Colorado River watershed.

In recent months, more than sixty environmental and community groups have joined with GCAN in calling for decommissioning Colorado River dams--pointing to Glen Canyon in particular--as an integral and necessary element of a successful river restoration solution.

Dirty power not only kills rivers but pollutes our air, too.

The Four Corners Power Plant in nearby Shiprock, New Mexico, is one of the dirtiest power plants in the region, according to a recent report by the Public Interest Research Group. Coal burning power plants will also be decommissioned in coming years as Clean Air Act regulations force older plants to shut down. Because of high environmental costs, no new coal fired plants are likely to be constructed.

While residents of northwest New Mexico choke on mercury and other toxic pollutants from Four Corners, and the Colorado River and Grand Canyon ecosystems are destroyed by dams, CREDA goes on the defensive.

"Utilities should be leading the charge for cleaner power, not running away," continued Mr. Orr. "The potential for cheap solar power development in this region is tremendous, yet the industry clinging foolishly to past technologies."

New technologies are leading to development of high-efficiency appliances and affordable solar and wind power generating sources. Engineers are racing to perfect inexpensive fuel cells which promise to revolutionize the way that power is delivered to consumers.

Conservation is a critical component of a strategy to shift away from coal, nuclear, and hydropower, toward low-polluting renewable sources. As large dams are decommissioned, state of the art energy conservation practices, including demand management techniques, will reduce consumption of electricity while maintaining a high quality of life.

The dams on the Colorado River were built nearly forty years ago when utilities operated as monopolies and politicians promoted power development to stimulate economic growth and development of cities such as Phoenix and Las Vegas. The economy, culture, and environment have changed dramatically over the years.

"Even if the projected rate increases were to come to pass, they amount to about one to three dollars per month per household," said Mr. Orr. "Given the enormity of the ecological damage, shouldn't we be willing to pay this small price for restoring our rivers?"

"Rivers are the lifeblood of the Southwest," continued Mr. Orr. "Certainly the people of Farmington can make the distinction between dollars and sense."

#

[Glen Canyon Action Network is a people's movement dedicated to the integrity of the Colorado River Watershed. Through grass-roots organizing, research, education and lobbying of federal and state river management agencies, GCAN promotes alternative approaches to energy generation and water utilization to create opportunities to decommission structural interventions into the Colorado River system and to restore its natural processes.]

11/22/00

Living Rivers Phoenix Office opens

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2000

CONTACT: Lisa Force 480.990.7839 email Owen Lammers 435.259.1063

GROUP SEEKING TO RESTORE COLORADO RIVER OPENS PHOENIX OFFICE

Targets Central Arizona Project with Conservation Strategies

PHOENIX, Arizona - The Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN), the environmental group working to restore Glen Canyon, today announced formation of an umbrella organization called Living Rivers, with the aim of promoting river restoration in the western United States. Lisa Force, an accomplished and successful advocate for river restoration in Arizona, will lead Living Rivers' new southwest regional office, opening today in Phoenix. Formerly a program director with the Center for Biological Diversity, Ms. Force was lead negotiator responsible for convincing Arizona Public Service Company to decommission its Childs and Irving hydroelectric power plants, including the removal of its dams. She was recently spokesperson for the successful "No on Proposition 102" campaign.

"The Colorado River desperately needs advocates now," says Ms. Force. "The riverine ecosystem of our magnificent Grand Canyon and the once biologically rich Colorado River Delta are dying, yet Arizonans are being asked to give more of their river every day." Tremendous environmental destruction is wrought by the Central Arizona Project (CAP). In 1993, Arizona politicians completed the CAP, a canal from the Colorado River capable of diverting nearly 20% of the Colorado's annual flow.

"We never needed the CAP, and we don't need it now," says Owen Lammers of Glen Canyon Action Network and the Executive Director of Living Rivers. "We can implement water conservation strategies that will assure sustainable water supplies for years to come while allowing the river to flow again. Now the CAP is promoting more development and water abuse to pay off its \$4 billion construction costs. It's time to put a lid on CAP."

The CAP legislation requires mitigation for the environmental destruction it causes. "Mitigation has never been implemented," says Ms. Force. "Living Rivers will be asking CAP to comply with the law. One way CAP could achieve partial mitigation would be to restore Glen Canyon and the Delta."

Other environmental groups praised the founding of the new organization. Sierra Club Director Michael Dorsey of Ann Arbor, Michigan, states, "Living Rivers is the new style of river advocacy that is desperately needed for the 21st century."

Living Rivers' mission is to give voice to the growing popular support for large-scale river restoration. The initial focus is the Colorado River, with efforts also building on the Rio Grande River watershed to the east. "Through education and conservation we can eliminate the need for straws from the Colorado, and impoundments like Glen Canyon Dam," says Owen Lammers, the Executive Director of Living Rivers. "We can meet our water needs and revive the river at the same time; it's a win-win."

Living Rivers' message will soon be arriving in the metropolitan areas in the seven-state Colorado River Basin that includes Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

###

For more information, contact:

Owen Lammers, Executive Director Living Rivers P0 Box 466, Moab, UT 84532 Tel: 435.259.1063; Fax: 435.259.7612 owen@drainit.org, www.drainit.org

Lisa Force, Living Rivers Program Director PO Box 1589, Scottsdale, AZ 85252 Tel: 480.990.7839; Fax: 480.990.2662 lforce@livingrivers.net www.livingrivers.net

11/29/00

To National Park Service to Proposed Stop Lake Powell Marina

Mr. Kelsey Begaye
President Navajo Nation
Office of the President Window Rock, AZ 86515

Re: Antelope Point Marina project

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing out of concern for the effects on the Navajo Nation from the development of the proposed Antelope Point Marina project on the Lake Powell reservoir. The Diné Medicine Men's Association Incorporated (DMAI), represents the interests of traditional Diné people and the protection, preservation, perpetuation and restoration of cultural properties important to us. We are concerned about sacred and ceremonial sites and the health of our people. Solicitations for developing the Antelope Point project were recently sent to five prospective developers, yet we believe that there are serious issues which must be addressed by our nation before any further actions are taken pertaining to this project.

We applaud your efforts to pursue economic development opportunities for the Navajo people, and for attempting to secure some of the tourism revenues resulting from the bilįgani's use of what was once Navajo land at Lake Powell reservoir (Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, or GCNRA). We appreciate the efforts to make this project as beneficial as possible to our people's financial and political interests. The preferential hiring recommendations, the arts & cultural center, educational objectives, political position as well as income from the ground lease and percentage of gross revenues are important.

However, given the large size of the project and other concerns, we do not see this as sustainable economic development for our people. We believe the Nation's economic development strategy should emphasize taking over the existing concessions operations at Lake Powell reservoir, particularly at Wahweap Marina, rather than promoting additional development that increases pollution and ill health among our people, and causes damage to cultural and historic properties. We further suggest the Antelope point development be designated to be related to and designed to be a quiet zone, a place for solitude and healing (a traditionally based healing place for all people to enjoy). Such a move would be far more economical and financially rewarding for the Nation and the environment and the health of people.

Antelope Point is a complex project that will require the commitment of a huge amount of the Nation's resources, which may not, in the end, prove to be a good business investment. Let the Wahweap portion be the bilįgani's version economic progress, it is already successful. The Antelope Point will be for healing. We have a tremendous opportunity to implement a strategy that is part of a longer-term vision for sustainability

for our people, to enable them to live in harmony with the land and reverence for our culture and traditional properties and way of life.

To this end, we request that you suspend action on the Antelope Point project until the Navajo people can be made fully aware of the impacts. Alternative strategies for the Nation to benefit financially from the recreation and tourist industry on Lake Powell reservoir must be considered. Specifically, we request that you support the efforts of our association in calling on the National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. We also request that the Navajo Nation fully disclose the proposed sale of alcoholic beverages and the disturbance of ceremonial and archeological sites that will be required for this project. It is spiritually and sacredly out of balance to promote healing on one hand and sell liquor in the other.

Background

Before Glen Canyon Dam was built, the land that is now flooded by Lake Powell reservoir along the Colorado River and San Juan River belonged to the Navajo Nation. Our people had direct ownership and control of these rivers right to the centerline. Some of the most beautiful and sacred canyons on Earth, including many narrow side canyons, were also important places where our people farmed, raised sheep and cattle, and practiced traditional cultural ways and ceremonies. Diné and other indigenous people who lived in or near and used these canyons were relocated to make way for the bilįganį's reservoir. Some of our most important sacred sites--including Rainbow Bridge--were also flooded by the reservoir.

These concerns have been expressed over many years. In the 1970s, medicine people from Navajo Mountain Chapter and Shonto Chapter sued unsuccessfully in federal court to stop the filling of Lake Powell reservoir because it would desecrate Rainbow Bridge. I often wonder how defeated they felt while they lost the land. The experts agreed that the reservoir harms our right to practice our traditional ways of life, but the court refused to stop the flooding.

The City of Page, Arizona, stands today on former Navajo Nation land that was traded to the U.S. government in 1958 to build the Glen Canyon Dam work camp. The town became privatized in the 1970s and has come increasingly under control of non-Navajo corporate interests ever since. Imagine our young entrepreneurs capitalizing on this and with our own effort. Today, the ARAMARK Corporation controls virtually all tourist access to Rainbow Bridge through guided tours from Wahweap Marina and other marinas on the reservoir. Hundreds, sometimes thousands, of visitors in a single day come to visit this sacred shrine not for the same reasons we would go there but for pleasure. The Navajo Nation gets none of the profits from this tourist trade, merely a few jobs and because of the lack of privacy to practice our ceremonies, the practice now subject to the destruction of our ways. We lost much when Glen Canyon Dam was built. The Navajo Nation has a continuing interest in seeing that tourism at Lake Powell reservoir and Rainbow Bridge in particular is appropriate and respectful. We must use this opportunity to do the right thing. The elders say that water is sacred and must be

treated with respect and the firma is our mother and must also be treated with respect. These values we must perpetuate for our people.

As you know, the Diné Medicinemen's Association Incorporated supports the restoration of our sacred sites in Glen Canyon. While this will not happen right away, we believe we must deliberately move in that direction and this is a beginning. In the near term, however, we need sustainable economic development that enhances and protects and promotes our cultural traditions. The Navajo Nation can begin managing the concessions around Lake Powell (Specifically Wahweap area) reservoir, and promoting a more human-powered, environmentally benign and culturally aware and appropriate tourism industry at the Antelope Point. This would be a welcome replacement to that which exists today, where motor boaters use our sacred sites as a playground with no environmental or cultural awareness.

Our Concerns about Possible Violations of Navajo Nation Law

We are concerned that the impacts resulting from the Antelope Point project will have significant effects on the social life of our people if it follows the course designed currently. We worry that increasing tourist development that is not respectful of our heritage and our traditional ways will only further erode the Diné (The People's) knowledge of and respect for our culture. Additionally, if we were to compete with the ARAMARK Corporation just across the lake it would be our financial miscalculation and loss. A new marina on Lake Powell reservoir will emphasize motorized recreation--a pastime for the bilįganį.

Sacred Sites

Navajo Nation laws make it a crime to harm or destroy sacred sites and places of historic and cultural significance. We want our government to enforce that law. The Antelope Point project would be constructed in an area that has cultural sites needing protection under this law. Lake Powell reservoir itself violates tribal law because it covered over many significant sacred and cultural sites beneath the waters. Rather than continue to desecrate and destroy, we ask for respect, restoration, protection, preservation and perpetuation of our sacred sites and ways. Our traditional and unwritten laws of the holy beings have prescribed this to be so.

Alcoholic Beverages

According to the U.S. government's 1986 document, "Antelope Point Final Development Concept Plan Environmental Assessment," the project's feasibility depends upon legalizing the sale of alcoholic beverages (page 7). This would require legalizing the transport and consumption of alcoholic beverages on Navajo land. This would have significant social impacts on the Navajo Nation where, as you know, alcohol is currently banned. An exemption to our law would be required, and we worry that the Navajo people have not been fully informed nor have they given their consent for these changes to be made. We would like an open debate on this question before any further commitments are made on the project. Alcohol has been our destruction as we all know and have seen all around us.

Many recreational users of Lake Powell reservoir have a reputation for heavy drinking and other inappropriate and disrespectful illicit activity. Earlier this year, the Associated Press listed the reservoir as the nation's second most dangerous recreation area for injuries and deaths. Most of these incidents involved alcohol. This kind of behavior may become common at Antelope Point. Do we want our children to grow up witnessing it on the reservation?

The marina operator would have to transport significant quantities of liquor onto the reservation just to supply the marina. But many private vehicle and boat owners will bring alcohol to the marina across reservation lands. We need to know how this will be policed, and how the nation will deal with expected increases in law enforcement incidents such as drunk driving and motor vehicle accidents on the narrow road that leads to the marina. An increase in alcohol-related injuries and possibly deaths may occur not only on land but also on the water, especially on heavy use weekends. Is this the price that must be paid for a few jobs?

The social impact of the Antelope Point Marina project would be great, yet it has not been adequately considered. Before any additional work is done on the project, we must obtain and evaluate this important information in detail, and allow for an opportunity to discuss and debate the issues across the Navajo Nation.

Environmental Degradation and Violations of Federal Law

In 1986, the U.S. government produced the "Antelope Point Development Concept Plan Environmental Assessment" (DCPEA), along with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). This document, the DCPEA/FONSI--is now fourteen years old, yet many changes have occurred in and around Lake Powell reservoir. We believe the document was legally insufficient at the time it was produced, and it is insufficient today.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires full study and evaluation of any project that involves the U.S. government that has a significant impact on the human environment. The impacts of Antelope Point have not been fully studied or revealed, therefore the law requires that a new study be done that supersedes the 1986 DCPEA. And since the impacts are significant, it will require that an EIS be done.

The marina would permit a significant increase in the number of boats and personal watercraft (PWC) on the reservoir during heavy recreational use periods. The exhaust emitted by these craft contributes to air and water pollution. PWCs in particular are known to spew oil and gasoline into the water, polluting not only the reservoir that is the drinking water supply for millions of people downstream, but also harming our sacred sites. This concern was not evaluated in the 1986 DCPEA, and the NPS has not studied or even monitored this pollution to date.

There is also a human waste problem. The NPS has had to close many beach areas on Lake Powell reservoir in the last decade because of human waste contamination. The filth comes from houseboaters and other recreational users. We do not want sacred waters to become cesspools. The Antelope Point will probably add to this problem by putting more boaters on the reservoir.

Another point of concern for us is the proposed marina's location near the Navajo Generating Station (NGS), a coal-burning electric power plant. The 1986 DCPEA does not consider the health effects on our people of living and working near this plant, which is shown by U.S. government records to be one of the largest air pollution sources in the country. Pollutants from the stacks fall back to Earth on our reservation, where our children breathe them in. Asthma and other respiratory diseases are already a big problem. How badly will the workers at the marina be exposed to the poisons in the air, and how many will become ill from it? These questions have to be addressed. We must move here with cultural information and with the purpose of affecting the policy of the polluting neighbor.

We request that you ensure our people have access to such analysis, and join us in calling on the National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement on the Antelope Point project.

Sustainable Economic Development

The Antelope Point Marina project requires the existence of an artificial reservoir, the extensive use of polluting non-essential vehicles, at a location downwind of one of the most polluting power plants in the country. For this our people will receive a few jobs, some rental payments, increased illness, alcoholism and further degradation of our sacred lands. This is not sustainable economic development, and we regret the Navajo Nation's use of this term in the prospectus released October 27. If this were the last or only possibility to support our people, maybe it could be justifiable. But it's not. It merely reflects an ongoing pattern of the Navajo people accepting a few scraps to service development for wealthy white people, while the real problems affecting our own people become more entrenched. Currently the Navajo Nation receives hardly any revenue from the tourism trade. At Rainbow Bridge, for example, a big corporation, ARAMARK receives profits from hundreds, and sometimes thousands of tourists every day on boats owned by ARAMARK. ARAMARK is one of the companies that want to build and operate the Antelope Point Marina project. The Diné Medicine Men's Association Incorporated does not promote tourism to sacred sites, but we feel that so long as Lake Powell reservoir remains in place, Diné should be in control of managing the boatloads of tourists and other economic concerns and of those who visit Rainbow Bridge, the sacred waters and sites. This is a good opportunity to teach about our duty to protect the earth for which we have been recognized as a people.

The Lake Powell reservoir tourist business is very profitable to ARAMARK, but we must remember that much of the land that was flooded by Lake Powell reservoir was once our land, and the Colorado River and San Juan River our rivers. We have a responsibility to be good stewards of the rivers and the land, and work to protect and restore them. We cannot stand by and allow them to continue being harmed by pollution, or to be disrespected by those who are ignorant of our traditions and the sacred ways.

We have an opportunity to assert our culture and ourselves to demand that the NPS begin giving back to the Navajo people. We should be championing a Navajo-based

management plan for Glen Canyon, as opposed to one driven by the rich corporations. Glen Canyon is a sacred place, and should be treated as such. We the Navajo can do this, and we do not need additional development to succeed. Instead of receiving some small payments from something new, we should go back and take control of what's there now. The corporations are making money off what is our traditional land, especially Rainbow Bridge National Monument. There is no reason why the Navajo people should not take responsibility for this concession. In fact we should see it as our responsibility to our sacred gods to do so. The same may be said of Wahweap Marina, and other developments along the reservoir. We are the people who live and have cared for these lands. If profits are to be made, they should arise in a fashion consistent with our traditions, and stay in Navajo hands, not go to a corporation based in Philadelphia.

We can manage these concessions such that we are reducing the level of pollution, and increasing the level of cultural awareness, while generating far more income than what may come from the Antelope Point Marina project. We can do this without disposing of our ban of alcoholic beverages. And once Glen Canyon Dam is decommissioned, either because of sediment, an act of the gods, or the growing social demands that our sacred sites be uncovered, we will be ready to service all those new visitors wishing to experience with us nature's healing ways.

Implementing local control and a more sustainable economy for Glen Canyon can also be applied to our water and energy needs on the reservation. Our people get no power from the Navajo Generating Station, only pollution and some jobs. It may soon be required to close this down, as it is not in compliance with written environmental laws and of the unwritten sacred laws which govern us. The Navajo Nation could aggressively invest in solar and wind power to both service our people's needs and to sell to white people in Phoenix, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, many of whom are willing to pay very high prices for cleaner energy now. We could also use this energy to pump water from either our aquifer at Navajo Mountain or from the river. In summary, we should use our discussions surrounding the Antelope Point project as a turning point to help our economy become more in balance with nature and our traditional ways, not a further threat to both.

Conclusion

The Antelope Point Marina project must not be given further consideration until a much more detailed analysis of the impacts and the economic alternatives for the Navajo people have been completed. We expect that increased pollution from boats and PWCs will result from the project, as will social problems relating to the use and abuse of alcohol and dangerous drugs. Health problems resulting from exposure to air pollution from the nearby Navajo Generating Station will likely afflict Navajos and others employed at the marina. The analysis of these impacts in the 1986 NPS document does not meet the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Diné Medicine Men's Association respectfully requests that you inform the BIA, the NPS, and the prospective developers that the Navajo Nation will require a full EIS which examines in detail the social and environmental effects of the project, and an open debate of the

project's precedent-setting nature, before the government can agree to proceed with design and construction of the marina.

The Navajo Nation sometimes has a short memory when it comes to our land and our rivers. Why would we support construction of a big tourist development that will only pollute the land and water and air that we need for our survival, when we can work to reverse this and generate revenue for the nation at the same time. Is the Navajo Nation forgetting our Diné history? These canyons are the very places where a traditional Diné Leader, Hoskinninni, led his people to hide from the white man's army when Kit Carson's men took the rest of our nation's people away from the Dinetah on the Long Walk to the Bosque Redondo. We should be honoring these places which are sacred not only to our traditional ways of life but also to our people's more recent history. We should not be leading the effort to further desecrate them and commercialize them, nor should we be handing over the land to corporations. Our people deserve better.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Thomas Morris, Jr. President

Cc: Speaker, Navajo Nation Tribal Council Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Navajo Nation Youth Council Diné Care Diné at large Joe Alston, Superintendent, Glen Canyon NRA Bureau of Indian Affairs ARAMARK Delaware North Forever Resorts KOA Kampgrounds Swift Trucking dba GMT Antelope

www.drainit.org PO Box 466, 21 N. Main Street Moab, UT 84532 (435)259-1063
info@drainit.org

11/30/00

Native Americans question proposed new Lake Powell marina

Groups call for E.I.S. on project
CONTACT: David Orr, 435-259-1063

MOAB, Utah -- A coalition of eight Native American and environmental organizations today called on the National Park Service (NPS) to suspend contract and other work on development of the proposed Antelope Point Marina near Page, Arizona. In a letter to the NPS, the groups asked that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared before approving construction contracts for the project at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (Lake Powell reservoir).

The Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN) of Moab, Utah, and the Diné Medicine Men's Association of Window Rock, Arizona, are leading the effort, with support from environmental groups Diné CARE, Bluewater Network/Earth Island Institute, Colorado Plateau River Guides, Flagstaff Activist Network, Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, Utah Environmental Congress, and Wild Wilderness.

The "Development Concept Plan & Environmental Assessment" for Antelope Point was completed in 1986, but did not acknowledge the project's significant impact on the environment. The inadequate and now-outdated plan does not satisfy legal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

"Federal law requires that all environmental impacts be evaluated in a timely manner, and a full range of alternatives be considered," said David Orr, Director of Field Programs for GCAN. "The National Park Service has not done its job."

According to published plans, up to 225 hotel rooms and 300 boat slips are to be constructed at Antelope Point, as are a gas station and fueling docks, 150-space RV campground, sewage plant, up to 100 units of commercial housing, food service, and other commercial operations. The NPS recently issued a prospectus to five developers seeking to build and operate the marina, which the NPS and the Navajo Nation would jointly oversee.

Native American leaders expressed concerns about the marina project.

In a separate letter to Navajo Nation President Kelsey Begaye, the Diné Medicine Men's Association questioned the tribe's plan to legalize the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at the proposed marina, despite the Navajo Nation's longstanding prohibition on alcohol.

According to the marina development plan, archeological and ceremonial sites would be harmed by construction and recreational activities.

"We are working to save our sacred sites and protect our cultural heritage," said Mr. Thomas Morris, Jr., of Window Rock, President of the Diné Medicine Men's Association. "The Navajo Nation should be supporting traditional ways and setting good examples for children, but here they want to sell liquor and promote jetskis."

The medicine men and other indigenous leaders also asked for consideration of economically viable alternatives to building a new marina. The groups are proposing that the NPS study, in the EIS, allowing the Navajo Nation to take over the concession contract for the existing Wahweap Marina, just five miles away from Antelope Point and located in a less environmentally sensitive area.

"Building more tourist resorts won't really help people build a sustainable economic future for themselves," said Ms. Anna Frazier, Executive Director of Diné CARE, a Diné (Navajo) environmental group. "We need to focus on providing basic necessities, like developing safe drinking water supplies and renewable energy sources for our rural communities, and educating our people on ways to conserve energy and water."

The groups also expressed concern about the water pollution that the Antelope Point Marina project would generate, especially from increased numbers of personal watercraft (PWCs) on Lake Powell reservoir. The inefficient two-cycle PWC engines emit large amounts of unburned oil and gasoline into waterbodies through their exhaust systems, potentially endangering drinking water quality for more than 20 million Colorado River water users downstream. Environmentalists are asking NPS to institute

a comprehensive water pollution monitoring program as part of the planning process for the new EIS.

The five corporations bidding to develop the Antelope Point project are: ARAMARK (current monopoly concessioner at Lake Powell reservoir), Delaware North (concessioner at Yosemite and Grand Canyon), Forever Resorts (concessioner at Lake Mead), KOA Kampgrounds, and Swift Trucking Company dba Antelope GMT.

11/30/00

Comments on proposed marina at Antelope Point

Ms. Kathryn Cook
Acting Superintendent, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
National Park Service
P.O. Box 1507
Page, AZ 86040-1507

Re: **Request for EIS on Proposed Antelope Point Marina Project**

Dear Acting Superintendent Collins:

Glen Canyon Action Network (GCAN) is an environmental advocacy group based in Moab, Utah, dedicated to protecting and restoring the integrity of the Colorado River watershed. We are joined in this letter by the following organizations: Din? CARE, Bluewater Network of Earth Island Institute, Colorado Plateau River Guides, Flagstaff Activist Network, Grand Canyon Private Boaters Association, Utah Environmental Congress, and Wild Wilderness. We write to you concerning the proposed development of the Antelope Point Marina at Lake Powell reservoir/Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA).

We understand that a prospectus was published and mailed to prospective developers of the project on Friday, October 27, 2000, by the GCNRA Concessions Office. However, we are concerned that this project is moving forward without sufficient environmental review as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We believe that the National Park Service (NPS) did not comply with NEPA requirements in preparing its 1986 "Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment" (DCP/EA). Significant impacts existed at the time that should have been analyzed in a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), not in an EA.

Much has changed since 1986, and some additional significant impacts have come to light in the interim. We disagree with NPS's February 19, 1997, determination that the project does not require additional NEPA analysis. We believe the law requires that an EIS must be prepared before further steps are taken toward developing the project. We therefore respectfully request the following:

1. that the prospectus be withdrawn pending resolution of these concerns;

2. that you determine that the "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) issued in 1986 and the letter written by NPS staff Mr. Ken McMullen on 2/19/97 to then-Superintendent Joseph Alston are not legally valid and do not reflect compliance with NEPA; and
3. that you prepare an EIS before proceeding with any further work on the Antelope Point Marina project.

We also specifically request that you consider as an alternative in the EIS the option of reassigning the existing concessions contract at Wahweap Marina and the associated Rainbow Bridge tour concession to the Navajo Nation, in lieu of constructing new recreational infrastructure at Antelope Point.

Please provide us with a list of all planned and/or completed mitigation measures for this project, including especially any measures relevant to the archeological resource concerns discussed in Item 1 of the 1986 FONSI.

We respectfully request that you provide us with a response to this letter by December 11, 2000. If you disagree with our analysis and decline to grant our requests, we will request a review of the project by the Park Service Director in Washington, DC.

We are happy to discuss this matter with you in more detail if you wish. We have prepared an analysis of our concerns in this letter. We are confident that our conclusion constitutes an appropriate interpretation of the applicability of NEPA to the circumstances of this case, and we hope that you will agree. Please do not hesitate to contact GCAN should you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you.

BACKGROUND

The Antelope Point Marina project covers lands and waters managed by NPS and by the Navajo Nation. The project is currently moving forward with joint approval by NPS, the Navajo Nation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. NPS has assumed the role of lead agency.

The DCP/EA and FONSI were published in 1986. More than a decade passed before the agencies involved showed serious interest in pursuing the project. In 1997 a decision was made to reactivate the long-dormant proposal. On February 19 of that year, GCNRA environmental specialist Ken McMullen sent a three-page letter to the GCNRA Superintendent, recommending that the 1986 DCP/EA be accepted as "accurate and applicable" to the old plan under NEPA. Apparently there was concern within the agency about the adequacy of the 1986 DCP/EA. This letter sought to resolve those concerns by making the following points:

1. The current proposed action is essentially the same as the old plan;
2. a reasonable range of alternatives has already been analyzed;
3. the same information and circumstances exist today as in 1986;
4. the impacts discussed in the 1986 document are not significantly changed;

5. public involvement and participation in 1986 were appropriately covered and are still relevant; and
6. no additional consultation is required, except possible cultural resource consultation with the Navajo Nation.

Following issuance of this letter, several significant events occurred. In 1999, an access road, boat launch ramp, and parking lot were constructed at Antelope Point (identified as "Phase One" of the larger project). Meanwhile, NPS issued a solicitation for prospective developers to indicate their interest and qualifications for constructing and operating the project. Five developers were then selected to receive invitations to submit full proposals following issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) on October 27, 2000.

We disagree with the conclusions of the 1997 letter. We believe the same information and circumstances do not exist today as they did in 1986. The impacts have changed significantly since that time. Public involvement and participation were insufficient in 1986 and are not relevant to new information that has come to light in the interim. Therefore, additional consultation, study, and NEPA documentation are required.

The issues we will address include: Water Quality, Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Carrying Capacity, and Lack of Appropriate Consultation.

WATER QUALITY

Lake Powell stores Colorado River water behind Glen Canyon Dam, and that water eventually becomes a source of drinking water for millions of residents of California, Arizona, and Nevada. Water pollution in the Colorado River upstream is a source of great concern for municipalities. Millions of dollars are spent annually to remove pollutants and treat river water to comply with federal and state regulations. Thus, large development projects such as Antelope Point along Lake Powell's shoreline are a matter of potential concern for their potential to contaminate drinking water supplies.

The Antelope Point DCP/EA fails to evaluate the cumulative impacts of Antelope Point and other marinas on Lake Powell, in particular the potential for harm to water quality. Petroleum product spills and discharges from motorized watercraft, sewage overflows, runoff, human waste, and other sources of contaminants can have long-term negative effects that may defy standard emergency remediation measures.

Direct project impacts. The DCP/EA calls for boat slips to accommodate as many as to 300 boats (page 40). A boat launch ramp (which has since been constructed and was opened to the public in 1999) provides launching facilities for over 300 boats per day (page 89, Table 6, assuming all ramp traffic is outbound). Vessels utilizing the marina and launch ramp are mostly motorized and include houseboats, small boats, and personal watercraft (PWCs).

The DCP/EA (pp. 40-41) calls for constructing the following: a service station with six pumps and three tanks for fueling and repair; boat pump-out station; dock space for 60 small boat rentals, 60 houseboat rentals, and 2 tour boats; parking lots for a total of up

to 800 cars; campgrounds with space for 150 RVs; sewage system sized to service up to 225 lodge rooms, a restaurant, health club, cultural center, rental offices, retail shopping facilities, and up to 100 units of commercial residential housing.

Strong potential exists for significant direct water quality impacts from the development, including stormwater runoff from parking lots and other locations, fuel spills, and sewage system malfunctions. The DCP/EA notes the following on page 85:

"The development proposal would result in the installation of sewage treatment facilities, fuel storage tanks, and storage tanks for waste oils and fuels in a new area very close to Lake Powell. Leaks, seepage, storm-induced washout of containment structures, or careless operating practices could all result in contamination of lake waters. In addition, porous sandstone substrates at the site make ground water vulnerable to contamination from the same sources. To mitigate such potential impacts, the sewage treatment facility and hazardous materials storage must be located and designed to isolate possible effluents from surface and ground waters. Methods used would include substrate sealing, drainage control, and provision of surface containment structures."

Sewage system. The sewage system is described on pp. 54-55 as a "sealed evapotranspiration bed sewage disposal system," essentially an elaborate version of a septic system, with more than a mile of collection line. The sewage system would be constructed, with appropriate linings, near the water intake facility for Navajo Generation Station. The DCP/EA states on page 55, "alternative sewage treatment methods should be evaluated..." and offers a list of potential technologies that are variations on the septic tank model. However, despite the somewhat detailed description of the preferred system, the document leaves open to question what specific system would actually be constructed. Thus it is impossible to adequately evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed sewage system since the document clearly leaves the door open for an alternative system to be chosen at some later date.

Advances in technology over the last 14 years may have made possible a wider range of options to construct and operate an effective and reliable sewage system. A new environmental review is necessary to evaluate options that may be preferable to those presented on page 55.

Water Supply. The DCP/EA notes on page 53 that the water supply for the project will be two wells "drilled into Lake Powell bank storage." Given the highly porous nature of the surrounding soils and rock, there seems to be high potential for contamination of this supply. The document states on page 85, "Should unforeseen contamination [of the groundwater source] occur, the condition would be corrected or a new supply developed." The document fails to state what alternative sources are available and feasible for developing if serious groundwater contamination were to occur and the wells had to be closed.

Runoff. The potential for significant contamination from parking lot runoff and from other overland sources is great.

The DCP/EA states on page 84:

"Areas of shallow soil at the site have little capacity to absorb runoff. This factor, in combination with the addition of impervious parking lots and other hard surfaces, could lead to excessive erosional soil loss and consequent sediments in the marina unless drainage from all surfaces is carefully planned during the design phase."

The document discusses runoff in the form of soil erosion, but fails to address strategies to reduce or eliminate chemical-laden stormwater runoff from parking lots entering Lake Powell. The DCP/EA provides no data to evaluate the dimension of the risk posed to Lake Powell water quality by runoff from as many as 800 parking spaces across the project area.

The DCP/EA does not discuss specific measures that might be undertaken to minimize or eliminate the chances of sewage spills contaminating Lake Powell in the event of a pipeline rupture.

Onshore human waste impacts. The DCP/EA mentions human waste on shoreline campsite areas as a matter of concern. We note that since the document was written, numerous episodes of fecal contamination have occurred, especially in the early 1990s following significant changes in the reservoir's water level. Personal communications between GCNRA personnel and GCAN indicate that NPS believes that a significant percentage of the contamination events were caused by the inundation of fecal matter deposited by campers along the shoreline during periods of low water.

In the past year NPS has adopted measures requiring boaters to carry approved human waste containers. Floating dump stations have been provided at scattered points along the reservoir to encourage boater compliance with the new regulations. However few data yet exist to indicate the extent of compliance- particularly in the case of small boats which typically do not have installed toilet facilities. Furthermore, the widely fluctuating lake levels that occurred in the early 1990s have not occurred in recent years. No data yet exist to indicate whether the new regulations have had their desired effect in minimizing the amount of onshore human waste contamination. Only time and fluctuating lake levels will tell if visitors are in substantial compliance with the new regulations.

The DCP/EA fails to adequately evaluate the impacts of possible additional human waste contamination on Lake Powell's water quality from boaters launching at Antelope Point.

Personal watercraft and two-cycle motor impacts on water quality. Nearly all commercially available PWCs and many small boats use two-cycle motors. These motors have greater acceleration than the four-cycle engines found on larger boats and automobiles. Two-cycle engines use a combination of gasoline and motor oil for fuel. Operation of these engines is inefficient, however; a significant amount of fuel mixture passes through the pistons unburned and passes out the exhaust.

Water quality impacts of PWCs are a serious problem and one acknowledged by NPS and other federal and state agencies. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated that PWCs employing two-cycle motors routinely emit unburned fuel through their exhaust systems, in an amount equivalent to about 25% of the gasoline-and-oil mixture pumped into their tanks (documentation available from Bluewater Network). The PWC's exhaust system essentially injects an atomized spray of fuel into the jet of water that passes by the exhaust orifice. After passing through the jet, the contaminated water is thrown into the air, then falls back to the water's surface. Thus, for every four gallons of fuel consumed by a PWC, about a gallon ends up in the waterbody as exhaust. The total amount of unburned fuel dumped directly into Lake Powell by individual PWCs is staggering, yet goes virtually unnoticed by recreational users.

Earlier this year, NPS acknowledged the significant impacts of PWCs on park resources nationwide by issuing a new rule banning PWC use at many NPS units. GCNRA was granted an exemption from this immediate ban. NPS has acknowledged in personal communications with GCAN that a special PWC management plan for GCNRA will be prepared in the coming biennium to address growing resource protection and visitor safety impacts.

Regulators are beginning to take note. Recently the State of California initiated a ban on two-cycle PWCs at Lake Tahoe, out of concern for growing water quality problems traced directly to PWC contamination. Some local jurisdictions have banned PWCs from nearby waterbodies.

In September 2000, the US General Accounting Office issued a report titled, "Agencies Need to Assess the Impact of Personal Watercraft and Snowmobile Use," (GAO/RCED-00-243) documenting a widespread lack of information and monitoring by federal agencies, including NPS, of the impacts of this fast-growing sector of motorized recreation. Among the reports findings: (1) agencies have authority to assess the impacts of PWCs; (2) units report limited assessment of the impacts of PWCs; (3) agencies have not made collecting impact information a priority; and (4) existing information has identified adverse effects. The GAO recommends that federal agencies implement monitoring programs to generate information that can be used in developing appropriate management plans and minimizing the adverse impacts of PWCs.

The Department of Interior, in a letter to the GAO dated August 23, 2000, and signed by the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks (Appendix IV), expresses general agreement with the GAO's recommendations (page 76). The letter also states that the NPS agrees with the report (page 77).

We find no mention in the Antelope Point DCP/EA of PWCs or of their impact. The marina is expected to attract large numbers of the craft. A new environmental review of the Antelope Point project must include a detailed analysis of PWCs' direct and cumulative water quality impacts. This analysis should evaluate anticipated increases in petroleum distillates and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) dispersed into Lake Powell by PWCs launched from Antelope Point.

Pollution from PWCs may already be significant at Lake Powell, even without the Antelope Point development. Currently no data exist which accurately reflect the extent of the problem. At this time, NPS' water quality monitoring program tracks only fecal coliform (indicators of human waste contamination), not petroleum products or VOCs. Before proceeding with the Antelope Point project, an adequate monitoring program must be put in place, and sufficient data collected and evaluated to provide meaningful information about the extent of existing pollutant levels and the potential for increases associated with Antelope Point development.

AIR QUALITY

Voluminous evidence exists to show that two-cycle engines are significant contributors to air quality problems. Not only do they emit large quantities of unburned fuel but they also emit significant amounts of combusted pollutants. Lake Powell is in the immediate vicinity of several Class One Air Quality regions (e.g. the Grand Canyon and Canyonlands National Parks).

In the years following publication of the DCP/EA, significant public debate and legal actions occurred, relating primarily to the effect of nearby Navajo Generating Station (NGS) on haze and visibility. NGS is a coal-fired power plant that produces up to 2200 Megawatts of electricity and is within direct line of sight of much of the project area.

The DCP/EA on pages 80-81 acknowledges that air pollution from offsite sources is already a problem at the site, but states that the development of Antelope Point would not "significantly affect air quality":

"Visibility is affected on some days through the presence of regional haze and/or a locally generated plume. Preliminary monitoring data indicate that the regional haze may originate from metropolitan areas and smelters of southern Arizona, and metropolitan areas of southern California. It is carried into the region through atmospheric long-range transport and reduces visibility. The local plume that affects visibility results primarily from nitrogen-oxides emissions of the Navajo Generating Station... None of the development alternatives would significantly affect air quality..."

"A local increase in gaseous emissions-carbon dioxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides-is anticipated from the additional auto, truck, powerboat, and other internal combustion engine operations. Local air quality for gaseous pollutants including development of Antelope Point are well within the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (40 CFR, Part 50) presented in Table 5, (and the increases would be insignificant).

"No emissions of ozone or sulfur dioxide would result from development."

The DCP/EA fails to provide any data that would indicate the specific estimated amount of air emissions anticipated directly or indirectly from development of Antelope Point. We therefore cannot determine the accuracy of the following unsupported claims that: (1) "local air quality for gaseous pollutants... are [sic] well within... [regulatory]

standards... and the increases would be insignificant," and (2) "no emissions of ozone or sulfur dioxide would result from development." Thus, more information is needed.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archeological resources. The DCP/EA indicates that significant archeological resources exist within the project area, and that some unavoidable damage to these resources would be required in order to construct the project as currently proposed. There is no explanation whether efforts were made to identify possible sites for development that avoided archeological resource sites altogether.

The FONSI itself states the following (page 143):

"1. This finding is contingent upon a successful mitigation of unavoidable impacts to the two identified archeological sites within the project area regardless of whether or not the sites are determined to be eligible for inclusion on the national Register of Historic Places. All construction activities related to these sites will not be permitted to commence until these sites have been properly mitigated."

The FONSI states that no significant impact would exist only if the two sites were successfully mitigated. However, it is not clear that any progress on mitigation has been made. In his 1997 letter, Mr. McMullen states on page 2:

"There is a need to complete mitigation of two cultural sites prior to any construction of facilities (Item 1 of FONSI). I have not been able to locate a report or information that indicates mitigation has been completed for Antelope Point."

The DCP/EA contains some detail which indicates (pp. 24-25) the significance and extent of Antelope Point's archeological resources:

"During the survey of the proposed 710-acre project area, 11 sites containing archeological artifacts, and 2 Navajo ceremonial sites that are still in use were recorded. ...

"Taken as a whole, the Antelope Point archeological sites seem to 'offer a possibility of filling in gaps in the chronology of the Glen Canyon area.

From the discussion it appears that Antelope Point has considerable archeological significance and thus deserves more detailed analysis in assessing the impacts of development at the site.

The document also states on page 92 the following:

"Two recorded sites would be directly, significantly affected by all three development alternatives. ... This site extends around much of the point along the shoreline and is unavoidable.

"The second directly affected archeological site is located within the marina development zone... This affected site is probably one of the most significant recorded

archeological sites on the point and is the only site believed to have potential for long-term occupation. ... [emphasis added] "

The DCP/EA does not make clear what mitigation might be considered sufficient to compensate for destroying such an important site. The document inadequately describes how NPS will assure compliance with Item 1 in the FONSI, i.e. successful mitigation of the two sites mentioned here.

Ceremonial sites. The traditional practices of medicine people are important elements of Navajo culture and heritage. The Dineh Medicine Men's Association, based in Window Rock, Arizona, has expressed its concern about proposed development activities on identified ceremonial sites as noted in the DCP/EA.

The document states on page 25 that a significant portion of the beaches in the project area are ceremonial sites:

"Another aspect of Antelope Point's cultural significance is its traditional and current continued use as a location for ceremonial rites. Accessibility, sandy beaches, and seclusion are the reasons Antelope Point is used for this purpose." However, some of the attributes that make this area attractive for ceremonial purposes (accessibility and beaches) also make it desirable for industrial recreational development. Construction of the marina and resulting increased visitor usage of the beach areas would render a significant amount of the ceremonial site unusable. The DCP/EA states the following (page 93):

"The development alternatives would preclude use of most of the Antelope Point beaches, which are within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, for traditional Navajo ceremonial rites. Much of the beach areas would actually be occupied by facilities, while most of the remainder would offer little or no opportunity for solitude once the development is in operation. However, at least one small, accessible embayment with a beach would remain, which could possibly be protected by fencing sufficient to offer solitude for ceremonial purposes. All three development alternatives are similar with respect to these impacts.

"The American Indian Religious Freedom Act requires consideration of impacts on traditional Navajo ceremonial sites. An alternative ceremonial site was identified and a plan developed to ensure seclusion from marina-related activities and intruders. These procedures were developed by the Navajo Nation and the National Park Service in consultation with LeChee Chapter and the Navajo Medicine Man Association...."

The DCP/EA does not explain whether attempts were made to locate alternative sites for the marina, but instead focuses on the proposed mitigation offered to the practitioners. It is not clear from the discussion whether the traditional practitioners with whom NPS consulted had agreed to the mitigation proposed (alternative ceremonial site) in the plan.

It is a matter of great concern to traditional practitioners when development projects intrude on these sites. In many instances, they believe that mitigation is simply not

possible. Traditionalists have long been concerned about visitation to areas used for ceremonial purposes.

Lake Powell flooded hundreds of miles of canyons that contained extensive archeological resources and ceremonial sites. Little effort was made to mitigate that significant harm. Now the government proposes destroying more sites to promote increased recreational usage at Antelope Point.

[The Dineh Medicine Men's Association of today is based in Window Rock, Arizona. It is not the "Navajo Medicine Man Association" that is mentioned in the DCP/EA.]

NPS must reinitiate consultation with traditionalists in order to determine whether damage to ceremonial sites can be adequately mitigated.

CARRYING CAPACITY

The development of a major marina will provide additional launching capacity for significant numbers of motorized watercraft users on Lake Powell. The DCP/EA discusses the concept of carrying capacity for the reservoir, which it defines on page 87-88 in the following way:

"The model was used to estimate levels of use where boat numbers would become constrained by either the natural environment or safety. These estimated use ceilings are the 'carrying capacity' of Lake Powell.

"Factors found to be most significant to carrying capacity at present include: the number of shoreline campsites; the distribution of boats into the Escalante Canyon and Rainbow Bridge areas; the distance of destination zones from launch sites and services (gas); boat safety; beach invasion by tamarisk and consequent loss of campsite; beach fouling by human waste; archeological site damage; and the types of boats launched ..."

Outdated information. The discussion of carrying capacity in the DCP/EA is largely confined to justifying the new marina's launch capacity as within the parameters established under a 1982 carrying capacity study. Subsequent to the completion of the DCP/EA, NPS completed another carrying capacity study (1987). We assume the data collected and analyzed in the 1987 study were not incorporated into the 1986 DCP/EA. In any event, the 1987 study is nearly as outdated as the 1986 DCP/EA.

Safety. The project site is along the old Colorado River channel, now a relatively narrow, winding arm of Lake Powell. Design considerations for the marina must take into account the narrow configuration of the channel to minimize chance of boating accidents.

In its discussion of anticipated carrying capacity impacts, the DCP/EA focused on boat launch rates as a means of quantifying effects on crowding. The document states on page 91:

"The principal effect of the Antelope Point development on Lake Powell would be to raise the capacity for downlake boat launches up to, but not exceeding, the lake's

estimated capacity to absorb such use under current management of the shoreline. Normally facility use at full capacity would only be expected during peak seasons. Nevertheless, these analyses indicate a need to consider additional management programs to alleviate boating impacts in concert with the phasing in of approved marina developments." "

The DCP/EA acknowledges the potential for crowding problems at peak use times (despite the assertion that the project is within the reservoir's carrying capacity) and indicates that at some future date these concerns will probably have to be addressed. Thus we question whether the current plan is adequate to handle crowding problems.

Earlier this year, the Associated Press published an article describing Lake Powell as the second-most dangerous recreation area in the nation (after Lake Mead) in terms of deaths and injuries. Alcohol-related accidents are common and present a growing challenge to law enforcement on the nation's second-largest reservoir.

The explosive growth in popularity of PWCs over the last decade has made the craft a significant issue in safety impacts at Lake Powell. GCNRA officials have confirmed in personal communications to GCAN that PWCs account for a significant number of visitor complaints and safety concerns. PWCs are sometimes known as "thrillcraft" for their agility, fast acceleration and ability to make quick turns. They are all too frequently operated in a reckless manner in close proximity to other boaters, swimmers, or fixed objects.

The DCP/EA cannot be considered adequate until these new safety impacts are thoroughly evaluated and addressed.

LACK OF APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION

We note that the DCP/EA (pp. 138-139) indicates that no comments from any environmental advocacy organization were received in response to the Draft EA. Comments and responses listed in the DCP/EA generally did not address environmental impacts of the project. Two public workshops were held, one at the dam's visitor center near Page and the other at the Le Chee Chapter House near Page. Except for a list of individuals and organizations to which the Draft EA was mailed, it is not clear that NPS made a serious effort to solicit public comment from outside the immediate community of Page and Le Chee. It cannot therefore be concluded that NPS fulfilled NEPA requirements for appropriate public participation and consultation in 1986.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, we conclude that the DCP/EA is inadequate, outdated, and violative of NEPA. NPS should have prepared an EIS in 1986. The EA was inadequate then, only more so today. The amount of time that has elapsed since the document was written only underscores the need for updating and expanding upon the information originally presented.

The 1997 McMullen letter was insufficient to meet NEPA requirements. Before NPS makes any additional commitments of staff time and resources in pursuit of a

prospective developer for the project, we ask that the project instead be subjected to a rigorous review, and an EIS be prepared.

We also point out the need for expanding the current water quality monitoring program, particularly with respect to petrol.

12/01/00

Living Rivers Currents

PDF Version: [Volume 1, Number 1](#)
