

BR-CO-070461-Fv.4

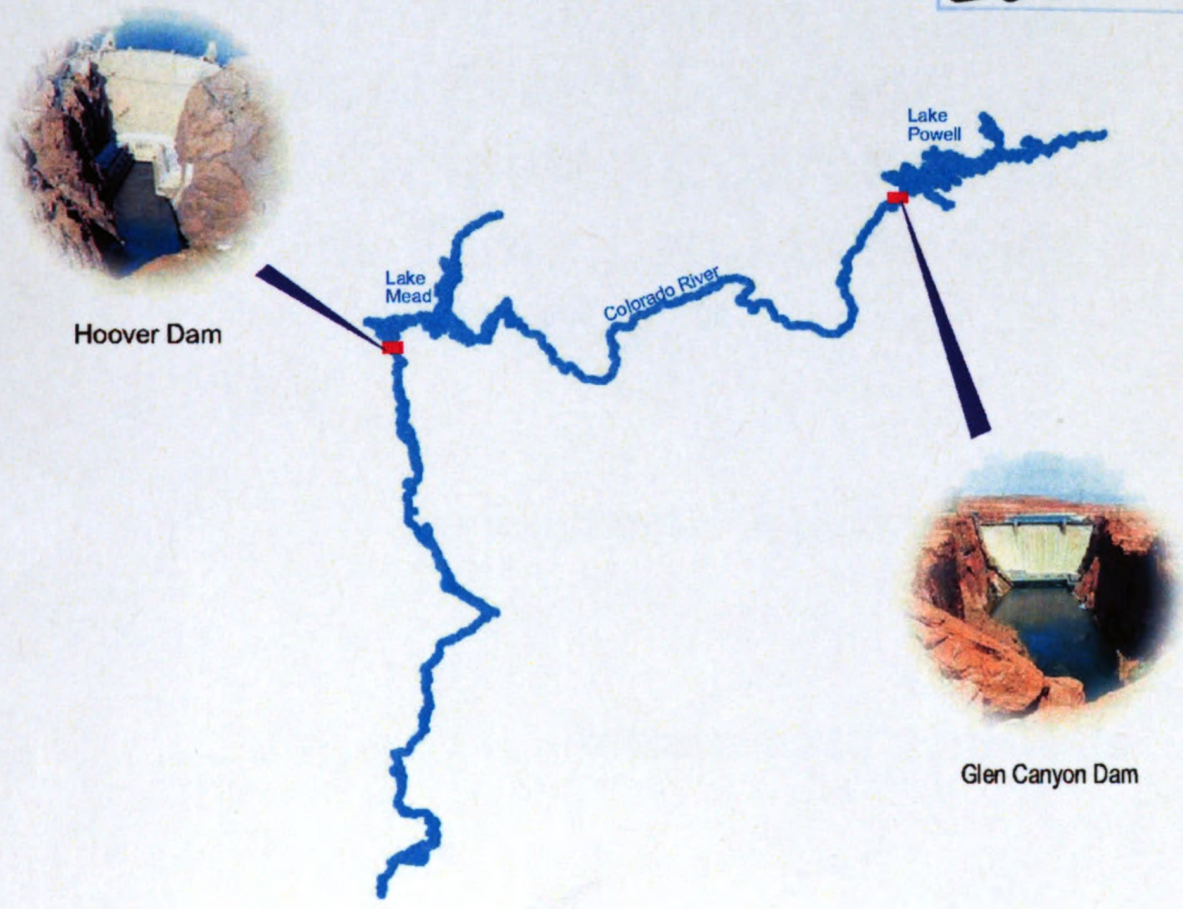
nw4

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Final Environmental Impact Statement

RECEIVED
OCT 26 2007
20070461



Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Volume IV – Responses to Comments



NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
NOV - 2007
Digitized by Google

Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

**Final
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Volume IV
Responses to Comments**

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Upper and Lower Colorado Regions
October 2007

RECLAMATION

Speaker Request Form

Please write clearly so that we do not misspell any personal details. Give the completed card to a project representative prior to the meeting's comment session.

4/4/07
Date

JOHN WEISHEIT (WHY-SIGHT)
Name*

PO BOX 466 MOAB UT 84532
Address* ☐ Please check this box if you'd like your address withheld from publication

LIVING RIVERS
Organization

435-259-1063
Telephone

*Mandatory Information

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Yes.

2 VAL DANOS: What's the nature of these meetings in
3 California? Are they hearings or --

4 TERRY FULP: No, not at all. It's a request from
5 an agency for information, so -- and so we'll -- we'll do
6 that. We try to meet all the requests we get, so ...

7 They are not public hearings. They're just
8 requests for either additional information or some dialogue
9 in terms of explaining what the analysis is.

10 Okay. If that's the case, then we'll turn it back
11 over to you, and ask you if anyone would like to make a
12 public comment, please -- please do so.

13 NAN YODER: Okay. I have one.

14 Was anyone else going to be brave?

15 Okay. Well, then the spotlight is for
16 John Weisheit. And if you would like to get up and give us
17 your comment, we'd appreciate it.

18 JOHN WEISHEIT: My name is John Weisheit. I am
19 the conservation director of Living Rivers. Our base is in
20 Moab, Utah. I'm also a Colorado River Keeper, which has an
21 affiliation of an international organization called the
22 Water Keeper Alliance. As background, we submitted comments
23 as an organization during scoping called the One Dam
24 Solution, and it is a dam-decommissioning alternative to
25 decommission Glen Canyon Dam.

1

GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 The reason is to save water through the loss of
2 evaporation because of its existence, to also reduce
3 salinity in the Colorado River, and also to take care of the
4 environmental problems that are being -- that are occurring
5 in Grand Canyon National Park as the result of the
6 operations of Glen Canyon Dam.

7 This alternative was not -- was rejected in this
8 EIS. There is a -- a ban, congressional rider, against
9 federal funds being used to study -- to decommissioning of
10 Glen Canyon Dam, and that is why it was not considered as an
11 alternative.

12 I did bring some copies of our document. It's
13 outside the door on a chair on the right as you're leaving
14 if you care to look at it. I have extra copies in my
15 backpack, too, in case we run out.

16 These are my comments.

17 Models are only as valuable as the inputs they
18 receive. While the sophistication and effort put into these
19 projections are unprecedented and well-appreciated, the
20 models' inputs, however, fail to provide the public the
21 results necessary from which to make an informed decision as
22 to merits of any of the proposed alternatives.

23 Garbage in, garbage out, as they say, but this
24 garbage is so well masked that the people of the Colorado
25 River Basin are being asked to put the rubber stamp on a

 GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
 www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Katrina in the making. Those levees in New Orleans did not
2 hold, nor will the assumptions painted on what otherwise is
3 probably a very valuable model.

4 Scientists have been in agreement for decades that
5 the Colorado River flows through the past century were among
6 the wettest in 1200 years. Scientists are also in agreement
7 that the Colorado River Basin in modern times has warmed
8 upwards to two degrees during this period, and the trend is
9 expected to continue, compromising streamflows upwards of 20
10 percent in the next 50 years.

11 We're now in the longest drought in recorded
12 history. Things are changing all over the Basin, but not at
13 the Bureau of Reclamation.

14 The results produced by their inflated inputs are
15 based on historical streamflows that, while useful, in and
16 of themselves must not alone be used to gauge future runoff.

17 Failing to account for a more long-term historical
18 view of streamflow coupled with the climate change we are
19 already experiencing is tremendously misleading to the
20 public when developing shortage strategies.

21 Even under Reclamation's inflated scenario, this
22 system is headed for an imbalance of water use, namely an
23 oversupply of 400,000 acre-feet annually in the next 50
24 years. Corrected for a more accurate presentation --
25 representation of historical streamflow, this increases to

GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 1.1 million-acre-feet.

2 But most importantly, we must begin to accept the
3 reality of climate change. Anyone can notice how the
4 reservoirs are dropping. A ten percent reduction on
5 long-term flow estimates show an annual deficit right now of
6 1.1 million acre-feet rising to 2.8 million acre-feet by
7 2060.

8 Adjust this to 20 percent, as an increasing number
9 of scientists are recommending, and we're looking at a
10 2.6 million -- million acre-feet deficit now, and nearly
11 4 million acre-feet in 50 years.

12 We're at ground zero tonight. Phoenix, Chandler,
13 Tucson are not going to be protected by token changes in
14 reservoir operations or even its ground-water banking
15 Arizona is first in line for cuts, and there is no plan or
16 how -- for how the state will survive if the rosy inputs put
17 into this model evaporate away as Lakes Powell and Mead drop
18 lower and lower.

19 The public is quite fortunate that the National
20 Research Council has completed its recent Colorado River
21 Report at this time. It reiterates the warnings that have
22 yet found their way into the assumptions used by this model.
23 We certainly hope these changes in the final EIS will
24 present a more realistic view of what the future may hold.

25 And the public would also benefit from a more

GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 comprehensive presentation of what the real benefits are to
2 these minimal dam operational changes it is being asked to
3 support.

4 Chart 4.3, dash, 26 and 27 illustrate that a
5 significant amount of water savings, at least in terms of
6 increased levels for Lake Mead, occur not because of new
7 operating plans that are the focus of these documents, but
8 the results of anticipated but as yet mostly undetermined
9 water-conservation activities.

10 It's already clear in looking at the plotted data
11 represented from the 50th percentile the net volume of
12 stored water in Lake Powell and Mead is greater under the No
13 Action Alternative than what the Basin States -- States hope
14 to implement.

15 Reclamation must present a comparable analysis of
16 strictly the reservoir-operation component of the Basin
17 States Alternative, not volumes of studies and charts based
18 on undefined activities that may be exaggerating these
19 limited benefits.

20 There is no question that the objective of this
21 DEIS is critical or that valuable work has not gone into
22 developing the model, but the public is anxiously awaiting
23 some assurances that the water managers they rely on will
24 develop a real strategy to guide us through what looks to be
25 a very parched future ahead.

 GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
 www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 Unfortunately, Reclamation is still hoping history
2 repeats itself and high flows will bail us out as demand
3 continues to grow and temperatures continue to rise. But
4 we're already at the end of what the river has historically
5 provided.

11

6 There's no water left, and climate change is
7 taking what their -- what's there back. It's time for
8 Reclamation to admit this and get on with the real task
9 ahead: Developing a solution for managing the system headed
10 for failure.

12

11 Thank you.

12 NAN YODER: John, thank you for your comment.

13 Is there anyone else? No?

14 Okay. All right. So we'll remind you one more
15 time that we're in our public-comment period. It closes
16 April 30th. And we are more than welcome to hear from you
17 tonight or also from here forward to fax or e-mail. And
18 again, your input is valuable to our process. Thank you
19 very much.

20 (Whereupon the presentation was concluded at
21 7:30 p.m.)

22 (Whereupon the public-comment session at this
23 public meeting was concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

24

25

GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2

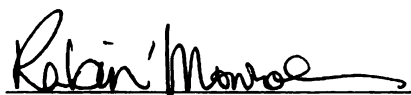
PUBLIC HEARING - 4/4/07

1 STATE OF ARIZONA)
2) ss.
3 COUNTY OF MARICOPA)

4 BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing Public Meeting was
5 taken before me, RABIN' MONROE, RMR, CRR, a Certified
6 Reporter, No. 50653, in and for the County of Maricopa,
7 State of Arizona; that the proceedings were taken down by me
8 in machine shorthand and thereafter transcribed by
9 computer-aided transcription under my supervision and
10 direction; that the foregoing pages, numbered from 1 to 24,
11 inclusive, constitute a true and accurate excerpt of all the
12 proceedings had upon the taking of said public meeting, all
13 done to the best of my skill and ability.

14 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am in no way related to
15 any of the parties hereto, nor am I in any way interested in
16 the outcome hereof.

17 DATED in Phoenix, Arizona, this 20th day of April,
18 2007.

19
20
21
22
23 
24 RABIN' MONROE, RMR, CRR
25 CR #50653

26 GRIFFIN & ASSOCIATES - 602.264.2230
27 www.griffinreporters.com

PC-2