

**MONTEREY COUNTY WATER RESOURCES AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESERVOIR OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

David Hart, Chair
Ken Ekelund
Richard Ortiz
Mark Nielsen
David Pozzi
Mark Gonzalez

John Baillie
Benny Jefferson
Dean Benedix
Richard Riddle (Parks)
Mark Sandoval (CalParks)

TIME: 1:30 p.m.
DATE: Thursday, March 5, 2015
PLACE: Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Board Room
893 Blanco Circle
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4860

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER @ 1:34 p.m. by Chair David Hart.

Members present: David Hart, Richard Ortiz, Mark Nielsen, David Pozzi, John Baillie, Benny Jefferson, Scott Duffield (representing San Luis Obispo (SLO) County), Casey Nielsen (representing Parks Dept.), Mark Sandoval

Members absent: Ken Ekelund, Mark Gonzalez

A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair David Hart read a letter from Charles Hossom, Delicato Family Vineyards, '*Re: March 5, 2015 Reservoir Operation Committee, Interlake tunnel, Items 4 and 7*'.

Mr. Charles Hossom provided verbal comments. He stated that conditions being experienced at San Bernabe Vineyards are isolated and not necessarily representative of the Upper Valley subarea. Conditions at San Bernabe Vineyards are at a point where releases from the current operation of the reservoirs are beginning to show effects on groundwater levels and surface water in the Upper Valley.

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE RESERVOIR OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 5, 2015

Committee Action: On motion and second of Committee members John Baillie and Richard Ortiz the Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

4. REVIEW THE STATUS OF BOTH RESERVOIRS; REVIEW RELEASES AND RELEASE SCHEDULE

German Criollo, Associate Water Resources Hydrologist, provided a status report. There has been no change in the releases since August 2014. The total combined reservoir storage is 125,401 acre-feet (AF). The USGS gage at the Salinas River near Bradley has recorded approximately 36 cfs. End of flow was observed on March 4, 2015 at between 6 and 6.5 river miles upstream of the King City Bridge. The forecast for the remainder of the season does not look promising. The National Weather Service has just issued an advisory of a weak El Niño that has formed and is not expected to bring significant rainfall for California for the remainder of the season. There will not be significant inflow to the reservoirs.

Staff discussed the amount of reservoir storage that is needed to operate the Salinas River Diversion Facility (SRDF). To operate the SRDF for about a month, about 10,000 AF of storage above minimum pool at San Antonio and about 40,000 AF of storage above minimum pool at Nacimiento are needed. There is currently about 86,000 AF above minimum pool at Nacimiento. San Antonio elevation would need to increase about 23 feet or about 19,000 AF of storage to supplement releases needed to get water to the SRDF. It's very unlikely San Antonio would reach that stage this season. The reservoirs will continue at current minimum releases and staff will continue monitoring river and reservoir conditions. The Nacimiento Water Project will be resuming operations and utilizing their allotted water beginning April 1, 2015. Agency staff requested SLO County staff to provide their data on a daily basis from now on, rather than monthly, to allow staff to produce a more accurate chart. Staff provided an overview of the various triggers for meeting various release and flow requirements of the Salinas Valley Water Project Biological Opinion. The Committee requested that staff looked into showing the release schedule by water year instead of calendar year.

Nacimiento elevation is 736.45 feet and 109,238 acre-feet of storage, 29% of capacity, and current release is 30 cfs.

San Antonio elevation is 656.25 feet and 16,163 acre-feet of storage, 5% of capacity, and current release is 5 cfs.

5. RECEIVE REPORT ON CLOUD-SEEDING

German Criollo, Associate Water Resources Hydrologist, discussed this item. In response to a question from the Committee at last month's meeting, the target area for the Sacramento Municipal Utility District's cloud-seeding program is the upper watershed of the American River in El Dorado County. The American Rivers feeds several reservoirs and hydroelectric plants owned by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Staff also contacted Santa Barbara County and they suggested we review their Negative Declaration dated October 2013. Some of the issues they've addressed include contrails and silver toxicity. Their cloud-seeding is performed by both air and ground. They stated they would be interested in a partnership with Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties in the future once our cloud-seeding program is in place. The Committee asked about PG&E exemptions on cloud-seeding and staff stated they would seek this information. The need to begin using the \$125,000 in the reserve fund to start the process for the environmental report was also

discussed. John Baillie reiterated that due to this area's drought status, there may be exemptions from some of the CEQA guidelines.

Committee Action: On motion and second of Committee members John Baillie and Richard Ortiz the Committee unanimously approved to recommend to the Board of Directors to direct the funds currently allocated for the cloud-seeding program Agency to start the Negative Declaration process and contact San Luis Obispo County about partnership.

Dave Hart and Brent Buche will collaborate in the preparation of a letter to San Luis Obispo County about partnership in the program.

6. RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES AT THE RESERVOIRS

A. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Brent Buche, Assistant General Manager/Chief of Operations and Maintenance provided a verbal report on O&M activities. Both San Antonio and Nacimiento reservoirs are at minimum releases. The Agency has obtained the parts for the repairs to the tunnel at San Antonio. Brent Bartlett is the caretaker residing at San Antonio. Russell Kelso is the on-site caretaker at Nacimiento. The Nacimiento Hydroelectric Plant began operating on February 11, 2015 and Unit 2 is running. Staff is prepared to install the low head runner for Hydroelectric Plant operation as needed. The trash racks have not been ordered yet. Staff is considering using a barge for the installation due to the weight and lack of accessibility. There was a question about whether San Antonio releases would be increased in order to lower the levels to perform this maintenance. Staff had considered this but NOAA Fisheries would not allow it. San Antonio releases will maintain at 5 cfs.

7. RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING INTERLAKE TUNNEL PROJECT

Brent Buche provided a verbal report on the Interlake Tunnel Project. A public information meeting to discuss the Interlake Tunnel Project was held on February 26, 2015 at Heritage Ranch. Mark Nielsen, Bill Capps, Phil Humfrey and other NRWAC staff also spoke about the Project and were exceptional in their assistance to Agency staff. The meeting was well attended and there were many questions, including concerns by numerous fishermen about the bass in the reservoirs. Agency staff and Ron Drake, P.E./Vice president of Underground Operations, EPC Consultants Inc., will compile and address the questions which will then be made available on the Agency's website. Another public information meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

Agency staff is in the process of preparing the two Request For Proposal (RFP) documents - the Environmental Compliance and the Engineering Services. The final draft documents for the two services are nearing completion and will be reviewed in the next week or two. They will be released around the end of March or early April. After their release a mandatory site visit will be scheduled and announced.

The Engineering Services will include work to get the project to 75% design. The project will go through a Prop 218 ballot approval process based on the project cost estimated from

the 75% design work. Assembly Bill 155 requires the use of a design-build on the tunnel. The spillway modification at San Antonio will raise the spillway 10 feet.

Mark Nielsen will meet with property owners who will be impacted by the tunnel going underneath their property. Owners of private wells have expressed concern about wells going dry as a result of the project.

There were many questions about the tunnel operation that need to be answered. The most recent version of the Reservoir Operations Manual is dated 2000. The Salinas Valley Water Project Flow Prescription and Biological Opinion are the controlling documents for the operation of the reservoirs. NRWMAC has provided the Agency with a list of requests, and SLO County will also be included in the update of this document. Staff stated that coordination meetings to develop criteria for tunnel operation need to begin immediately. This will be placed on the Agenda for discussion at next month's Committee meeting.

8. RECEIVE REPORTS ON STATUS OF:

A. LAKE RECREATION BY CONCESSIONAIRE & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Casey Nielsen, Monterey County Parks Department, provided a report. As previously reported, Parks Dept. submitted an application for a \$200,000 grant from the California Department of Boating and Waterways. Parks anticipates receiving a response in a month. The new Parks Director, Mark Mariscal, is scheduled to begin his new role on March 23, 2015.

Mark Sandoval, CalParks also provided an update. The lakes are operating with minimal staff during the winter season. Activities involve a lot of maintenance work. There has been a lot of fishing interest at San Antonio. The lakes have received two new floating restrooms from a state grant and were recently delivered to Nacimiento. We will receive an additional one for Nacimiento and two for San Antonio.

B. EASEMENTS AND AGENCY LEASES

Brent Buche stated there are no updates. The Agency is in possession of the letter from Tri County and no action has been taken yet. Mark Nielsen stated he's been contacted by Phil Humfrey, NRWMAC, about the easement situation of Ms. Betty Eyraud. The Committee requested Agency staff to contact County Counsel to check on the status of this easement.

C. QUAGGA / ZEBRA MUSSEL PLAN

Casey Nielsen provided a reported. Parks Department reported 586 screener hours in January 2015 at about \$9,900. There were 259 boats screened and 336 banded boats. There have been many kayaks, canoes, and small boats at the lakes and there have been incidents of some vessels entering without going through the screening station.

Casey Nielsen reported they are coordinating with private residents for a trip to the quagga-infested San Justo Lake so everyone can see the damage an infestation can cause. There are also plans to visit Lake Piru to learn about the system they are using and what guidance is being provided to the public upon leaving the infected lake.

D. UPDATE ON SLO COUNTY ACTIVITIES

Scott Duffield, SLO County Public Works, provided an update. The leak repair at the Nacimiento Water Project is expected to be completed in about two or three weeks. Testing is anticipated to begin around the last week of March and water delivery is expected before April 1 or the following week. The Heritage Ranch Community Services District's emergency water supply connection project is set to begin soon. As part of that project, SLO County Public Works will be modifying an air/vacuum release valve to provide a connection point. SLO will coordinate with Agency staff for access to the site.

9. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 2, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. at the Agency. The Committee asked about scheduling a meeting soon in South County.

10. ADJOURNMENT BY CHAIR DAVID HART @ 2:44 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY: TERESA CAMPA

Approved on: April 2, 2015