

**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, October 2, 2014**
PLACE: Monterey County Water Resources Agency
Board Room
893 Blanco Circle
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 755-4860

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER @ 1:30 p.m. by Chair David Hart.

Members present: David Hart, Ken Ekelund, Richard Ortiz, Mark Nielsen, David Pozzi, Mark Gonzalez, John Baillie, Benny Jefferson, Dean Benedix, Richard Riddle, Mark Sandoval

Members absent: None

A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

John Baillie requested the Committee be provided regular reports/updates on Nacimiento Hydroelectric Powerplant activity and a list of maintenance items and costs.

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE RESERVOIR OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2014

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

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

Jason Demers, Hydrologist, provided a status report. The USGS gage has recorded approximately 34 cfs in the Salinas River near Bradley.

NACIMIENTO elevation is 717.40 feet and 63,650 acre-feet of storage, 17% of capacity, and current release is 30 cfs.

SAN ANTONIO elevation is 649.45 feet and 12,241 acre-feet of storage, 4% of capacity, and current release is 5 cfs.

5. RECEIVE REPORT ON TEMPERATURE AND SNORKEL SURVEYS ON THE ARROYO SECO AND NACIMIENTO RIVERS

Clayton Leal, Water Resources Biologist, provided a report on this item. Upon reducing releases at Nacimiento Reservoir from 60 cfs to 30 cfs, the Agency implemented monitoring recommendations provided by National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS). There was concern from NMFS related to potential increase in water temperature as a result of decreases in minimum releases from the reservoir, which could potentially impact steelhead habitat in the Nacimiento River.

NMFS recommended water temperature monitoring at multiple sites throughout the Nacimiento River, as well as an assessment of the current fish population for presence/absence. The Agency installed recording temperature monitors at five locations in the river, located approximately 1.5 miles apart, sited to evaluate how reduced flows may impact various habitat types. Data has been collected and reported to NMFS on a monthly basis, so far with a favorable response from NMFS. Agency Staff believe we have passed through the warmest months of the summer season and the last data evaluation is beginning to show a declining trend in water temperatures, which is expected this time of year.

Most data collected on steelhead habitat is done on the larger rivers of Northern California. Here in our area we are concerned with the South Central CA Coast Steelhead population, and very few temperature studies have been performed related to this species. Recent studies done on Southern CA Steelhead populations report that steelhead can tolerate water temperatures as high as 30.1 degrees Celsius. Our monitoring has shown that we were below this temperature a majority of the season.

In addition to temperature monitoring, Agency staff snorkeled the Nacimiento River looking for fish. At approximately 7.5 miles downstream of the dam, trout were observed living in water of approximately 27 degrees. Greater amounts of fish were spotted at locations further upstream where water temperatures were cooler. Staff located approximately twenty-five individual steelhead, young of the year and adult fish, in the Nacimiento River during its most recent survey, indicating spawning is occurring in the Nacimiento River. Another survey is scheduled to be conducted this month. NMFS has been very pleased with the information provided by the Agency.

Index reach monitoring is required on the Arroyo Seco every summer. In the past we've used electro-fishing techniques to perform this survey. Our current permits do not allow us to perform this type of survey, so for the earlier Spring Season survey we used the snorkel survey method. This month, the four sites we historically use to perform the Fall Season survey were dry. Staff moved further upstream in hopes of finding flow, but results indicate that the Arroyo Seco is not currently flowing into NMFS designated critical habitat. Observations of isolated pools within the critical habitat did not result findings of steelhead.

6. RECEIVE REPORT ON DIRECTION FROM MCWRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD) REGARDING WATER QUALITY SAMPLING AT SAN ANTONIO RESERVOIR

Tamara Voss, Hydrologist, provided a report on water quality sampling at San Antonio reservoir. Staff responded to this committee's September request to seek guidance and direction regarding water quality sampling at San Antonio Reservoir from the Board of Directors. This request was because of the committee's concern of the potential for pathogens to exist as a result of low water levels and increased wildlife presence at the reservoir.

The Board directed Agency staff to further investigate sampling and to contact the Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) to discuss with EHB responsibility for performing the sampling. Another question to explore was what actions would be necessary should sampling indicate a positive result for pathogens. Staff has been in communication with EHB and is waiting for a reply. Agency staff currently tests for cation, anion and major minerals at the reservoirs in May and September each year. Testing for pathogens would be an extension of that sampling.

Results from two water quality sampling events collected during the month of April 2014, prior to the Wildflower Triathlon, were discussed. The results of that testing confirmed that Fecal Coliform, E. coli, and enterococcus concentrations were all either non-detect or below reporting levels. Funding to perform this increased water quality sampling has not been identified.

Committee members requested the Agency provide links to San Luis Obispo County's water quality sampling programs at Nacimiento Reservoir.

7. RECEIVE REPORT ON CLOUD-SEEDING

There was no update available from Agency staff. Dean Benedix, San Luis Obispo County (SLO), provided a brief update. SLO is beginning its budget preparation process and will include a request for funds to support cloud-seeding. SLO has been in communication with Santa Barbara County to obtain information on the costs of cloud-seeding and resulting benefits. As per Committee's motion last month, Agency staff will be contacting the surrounding counties to seek interest in a cooperative cloud-seeding effort.

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

Brent Buche, Assistant General Manager & Chief of Operations and Maintenance, provided an update on operations and maintenance activities at the reservoirs. Unit 2 at Nacimiento Reservoir is operating and generating power. A total of approximately 30 cfs is being released from the reservoir with approximately 20 - 25 cfs through Unit 2 and the remainder through the bypass valve. We're currently below the manufacturer's minimum recommended head for operation of Unit 2, and may soon be unable to continue its operation. Monitoring of the operation of Unit 2 is on a continual basis. The Committee requested reports on hydro plant operational efficiency and power generation be presented on a monthly basis. Brent discussed the status of our insurance claim of business

interruption resulting from last year's emergency repairs at Nacimiento. Other activities at both reservoirs include general maintenance that routinely occurs prior to winter. Additionally, as a result of this summer's DSOD inspection we are working on a list of approximately twelve items to address at Nacimiento. Brent relayed that several of the items listed have been completed. All items on the list must be completed before the Obermeyer can be raised this winter. Brent assured the committee that by the time rains begin this winter and the possibility of significant inflow is apparent, resources will be made available to complete all items on the list.

Routine maintenance is continuing at San Antonio in preparation for the winter. Repair work inside the tunnel cannot be started until the lake level reaches dead pool. A barge will be needed to make the repairs on the trash racks which are now planned for replacement.

9. RECEIVE REPORTS ON STATUS OF:

A. LAKE RECREATION BY CONCESSIONAIRE & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Mark Sandoval, CalParks, and Richard Riddle, Senior Park Ranger, provided a report. North Shore at San Antonio remains closed and South Shore will be undergoing a few repairs. Nacimiento recreational usage is holding steady. CalParks revenue for July was good with overall revenue for the summer at about 50% of normal.

B. EASEMENTS AND AGENCY LEASES

Chris Keehn, Right-Of-Way Specialist, provided an update to the Committee. As was reported to this Committee last month, illegal hunting occurred on Lease 3 at Nacimiento. The Agency has been contacted by Fish & Game about moving forward on proceedings to prosecute the violator. Over the years there has been an increase in traffic and trespassing in this area. Staff is aware of the need to develop solutions to the problem.

There was a discussion of local property right of way and easement issues, and owner access granted in deeds. Staff requested Committee members' share any information they are willing to share with the Agency on deed grants that grant easement and provide access to the water.

The Committee asked if there was an update on the fiber-optic installation along Tank Road at Nacimiento. Staff stated they have not yet received a reply from Fort Hunter Liggett.

C. QUAGGA / ZEBRA MUSSEL PLAN

There was nothing to report by Agency staff.

D. UPDATE ON SLO COUNTY ACTIVITIES

Dean Benedix, San Luis Obispo County, provided an update. As reported to this Committee last month, leaks were detected in the Nacimiento Water Project (NWP) pipeline. Six leaks have been identified in a 90-foot deep crossing under the Nacimiento River. No water deliveries will be made until repair is completed. SLO County Board of Supervisors gave approval for repairs. Construction is scheduled to begin January 2015. NWP water delivery is scheduled to begin April 2015.

10. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday November 6, 2014. Agenda items will include an update on Nacimiento Hydroelectric Powerplant activities, and O&M work at the reservoirs/flow sheet on repairs.

11. ADJOURNMENT BY CHAIR DAVID HART @ 2:43 P.M.

SUBMITTED BY: TERESA CAMPA, HOWARD FRANKLIN

Approved on: November 6, 2014