

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

David Hart, Chair
Ken Ekelund
Vacant (BOD Rep)
Mark Nielsen
David Pozzi
Mark Gonzales

John Baillie
Benny Jefferson
Paavo Ogren
Tom Shepherd (Parks)
Mark Sandoval (CalParks)

TIME: 1:30 p.m.
DATE: **Thursday, February 6, 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, David Pozzi, Mark Gonzales, John Baillie,
Benny Jefferson, Paavo Ogren, Richard Riddle (*for Tom Shepherd*),
Mark Sandoval

Members absent: Ken Ekelund, Mark Nielsen

A quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE RESERVOIR OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON JANUARY 9, 2014

The following correction will be made to Item 4: San Antonio Minimum Pool is at elevation 666 feet and 23,000 Acre-Feet Storage.

Committee Action: On motion and second of Committee members John Baillie and Mark Gonzales, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes, with the correction stated above.

4. REVIEW THE STATUS OF BOTH RESERVOIRS; AND, REVIEW RELEASES AND RELEASE SCHEDULE / DISCUSS POSSIBLE RELEASE OPTIONS

Howard Franklin, Senior Water Resources Hydrologist/Program Manager provided a status report. There is a flow of 79 cfs in the Salinas River at Bradley. The Committee discussed

water orders received through September 2014 for the San Luis Obispo County Nacimiento Water Project. The Committee reviewed elevation projections for Nacimiento and San Antonio and discussed scenarios for next season based on forecasts.

NACIMIENTO elevation is 725.65 feet and 81,578 acre-feet of storage, 22% of capacity, and current release is 60 cfs.

SAN ANTONIO elevation is 655.90 feet and 15,935 acre-feet of storage, 5% of capacity, and current release is 10 cfs.

5. RECEIVE REPORT ON AGENCY DISCUSSION WITH NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES ON POSSIBLE RESERVOIR OPERATION DROUGHT CONTINGENCIES

Howard Franklin reported on this item and discussed operation strategies for the 2014 SRDF season. At the direction of this Committee and the Board of Directors, staff has met with NOAA Fisheries to discuss reducing minimum releases from both reservoirs. The Committee reviewed elevation, inflow and release projections for San Antonio and Nacimiento reservoirs. Options were discussed with the Committee recommending holding back on releases if the reservoirs lacked to outflow capacity for flows necessary to operate the Salinas River Diversion Facility (SRDF). The Committee urged the Agency to obtain a commitment from National Marine Fisheries to allow for a reduction in the minimum releases during times of drought.

COMMITTEE ACTION: By motion from John Baillie and seconded by Benny Jefferson, the Committee approved an action for staff to evaluate if conditions would exist for operation of the SRDF for the period April 1 through October 31, 2014. If there were a reasonable option for SRDF operations, of two to four weeks in April, it was the direction of the Committee that an attempt is made to do so. Additionally, whether the SRDF is operated or not, the Agency should reduce to minimum fisheries to the extent possible as negotiated with National Marine Fisheries. The Committee recommends this action to the full Board of Directors for approval.

AYES: 7
NOES: 1

6. RECEIVE REPORT ON CLOUD-SEEDING

Robert Johnson, Assistant General Manager & Chief of Water Resources Management, reported on past cloud-seeding events. In 2004 a cloud-seeding reserve fund was started as recommended by this Committee. Funds were initially added annually to the reserve fund until budget issues were encountered. The existing reserve fund currently has \$125,000. In 2010 a Mitigated Negative Declaration for cloud-seeding activities was prepared for CEQA compliance, but the Agency was informed that legal action would be taken if a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was not prepared. For perspective, it was reported to the Committee that the cost of the EIR being developed by the Agency for channel maintenance has to date exceeded \$600,000. The committee was also informed that storm patterns this season were not “ideal” for cloud-seeding opportunities. Additionally, concerns of possible landslides and debris flows in the areas where wild fires have occurred

have raised opposition to cloud-seeding activities. There was discussion on cloud seeding efforts by Santa Barbara County in which they utilize cost-sharing with water purveyors in their area; and their successful use of a Mitigated Negative Declaration for CEQA compliance. The Committee suggested the Agency explore similar options. Mr. Ogren stated there may be CEQA exemptions due to the State Declaration of a Drought Emergency and offered to discuss the cost-sharing idea with the Board of Supervisors in SLO County.

At the Committee's direction, the Agency has been asked to continue to explore possibilities for cloud-seeding.

COMMITTEE ACTION: On motion of Committee member Paavo Ogren and a second from Mark Gonzalez, the Committee unanimously approved Agency staff direction to pursue options for cloud-seeding opportunities and seek eligibility information for the use of a Negative Declaration under the Emergency Drought Declaration.

7. RECEIVE REPORT ON EFFORTS RELATED TO PASO ROBLES GROUNDWATER BASIN

Paavo Ogren, San Luis Obispo County, provided a report on computer modeling of the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, feasibility studies, governance and management and the potential creation of a water district for management of the groundwater basin. Mr. Ogren will coordinate with Agency staff to give a presentation to the Board of Directors.

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. The annual inspection with DSOD will be scheduled for February or March. Staff will conduct an evaluation on what repairs need to be made to the inlet structure to the outlet works and trash racks at San Antonio. The evaluation has been delayed because of inaccessibility to the location due to closed ramps as well as excessive mud preventing a walk-in inspection.

9. RECEIVE REPORTS ON STATUS OF:

A. LAKE RECREATION BY CONCESSIONAIRE & PARKS DEPARTMENT

Richard Riddle, Senior Park Ranger, Monterey County Parks Department, and Mark Sandoval, CalParks, provided a status report on lake recreation activities. Bass tournaments are the current activities at this time. Operation scenarios are being discussed by Parks staff. One scenario would be possible partial closure at San Antonio, with the worst case scenario being a full closure. The annual Triathlon/Wildflower Festival, including the swim event, is scheduled to occur at San Antonio in May 2014. Details of the proposed dock system at Running Deer Ranch were discussed.

B. EASEMENTS AND AGENCY LEASES

Chris Keehn, Right-Of-Way Specialist, provided an update to the Committee. He reported on a site visit to Rancho del Lago at Nacimiento that there appears to be a watering system that goes into the lake. Mr. Keehn and Mr. Ogren stated they will coordinate to review the list of well owners in the area, and review the contract

amendments with San Luis Obispo County. The Committee was shown one of the no trespassing signs that will be installed around Agency property near Nacimiento Reservoir. The signs state “*No Trespassing, No Off-Road Activities, and No Hunting.*” The signs will be installed next week.

C. QUAGGA / ZEBRA MUSSEL PLAN

Howard Franklin provided a brief update. It has been determined that some boats that were at Lake Piru in Ventura County have been at Lake San Antonio. It was reported to the Committee last month that in December 2013 Lake Piru was found to be infested with Dreissenid Mussels. Parks staff reported they have had discussions about closing access to hand-launched watercraft at San Antonio. Mr. Ogren stated forty-nine (49) vessels visited Nacimiento in 2013 that had visited Lake Piru.

D. UPDATE ON SLO COUNTY ACTIVITIES

There was no additional information to report. (See Item 7)

E. UPDATE ON WINTER OUTLOOK

An update was provided.

10. SET NEXT MEETING DATE AND DISCUSS FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 5, 2014 at 1:30 p.m. at the Agency. Items for discussion include cloud seeding opportunities, and an update on discussions with NOAA Fisheries.

11. ADJOURNMENT BY CHAIR DAVID HART @ 3:30 P.M.

SUBMITTED BY: TERESA CAMPA

Approved on: March 5, 2014