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Admin

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Western Colorado Area Office

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Fax Cover

Date: 2/9/05

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To: JOHN WAIPLE

From: PAT PAGE

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Message: BID'S ISSUES

Fax to: Pat Sage - BOR
1-970-385-6539

From: Robert E. Oxford
Ph. 505-334-9270
505-330-2284 e

Date: 2-7-05

Subject: Shoring Shortage

Message: Carroll Crawford told me
to Fax you a copy of this
for the Meeting on the 18th

Bob O

3 sheets including cover sheet.

WATER SHARING AGREEMENT FOR 2005

San Juan River major users of water are now at a crunch time, whether to enter into a third year of a sharing shortage agreement. Navajo Lake Reservoir is now at a level of elevation 6031, which is 41 feet above an elevation that the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project draws water out of the lake. Every foot in elevation of the reservoir, at this level, represents about 8000 acre-feet of water. This would indicate 328,000 acre-feet of water is available now with a snowpack of about 150-170% of average runoff expected this spring. The demand for stored water for the 2005 season is approximately 250,000 acre-feet, excluding endangered fish flows. Endangered fish flow demands are about 500 CFS through the habitat area below Farmington. Over the course of 2005 this would amount to 360,000 acre-feet. The Animas River could be expected to furnish this 500 CFS until July without release from Navajo Reservoir. This, in effect, reduces the 360,000 acre-foot demand, for the fish, to 180,000 acre-feet. Coupled with the 260,000 demand for NIIP, the Hammond Project, and Public Service Company of New Mexico, the total demand of stored water releases would be 440,000 acre-feet for 2005.

The 50 year average inflow to Navajo Reservoir is about 1,000,000 acre-feet. If the runoff into the Navajo Reservoir is 50% more than average, as projected now, 1,500,000 acre-feet will be available to serve the 440,000 acre-feet demand. All direct flow water rights on the San Juan River can be serviced with 450 CFS, according to the State Engineer. This includes demands below the confluence of the Animas River on the San Juan River. Demands above the confluence are about 200 CFS, not counting the Hammond diversion. According to the State Engineer flows of 250 CFS must cross the Colorado state line, on the Animas River, to satisfy the demands along the Animas River to the confluence with the San Juan River. If flows on the Animas River entering New Mexico are approximately 1000 CFS until July, the releases from Navajo Dam could remain at the 250 CFS minimum.

Herein lies the problem the Bloomfield Irrigation District Ditch faces with this minimum 250 CFS release beginning April 1st, when they start diverting their irrigation, municipal, and industrial demands of water down their ditch until July when the releases from Navajo Reservoir will have to be increased to supplement the lower Animas River flows entering the San Juan River. The San Juan River channel (river bed) below the dam and directly at and above the B.I.D. diversion point has a divided flow of water with only about 130 CFS flowing along the B.I.D.'s side of the San Juan River. This split flow is caused by islands of silt (sand bars) in the river bed. The B.I.D.'s diversion demands from November to April can be satisfied with this split flow of about 130 CFS on the B.I.D.'s side and 120 CFS on the other side of the river bed. An enormous amount of river bed re-channelization would have to be done to change these conditions. The B.I.D. is insisting the dam release be a minimum of 350 CFS from April 1st through the irrigating season be part of the sharing shortage agreement before they will sign this year. Another one of the B.I.D.'s concerns is the failure of the State Engineer to confirm what the B.I.D.'s diversion rate is since additional water has been appropriated and transferred into their ditch since the Echo Ditch Decree granted them approximately 133 CFS. The B.I.D. filed a permit to clarify this approximately 3 years ago with the State Engineer. It was then vigorously protested by the Navajo Nation, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the power plants, and to the B.I.D.'s amazement, the San Juan Water Commission whose water was involved in the requested increase. Due to the B.I.D. unable to negotiate even the withdrawal of

the SJWC protest, and the local office of the State Engineer saying perhaps a permit was not required, the B.I.D. withdrew their application. It is interesting to note that all of these protestors are now the same ones wanting the B.I.D. to just sign their sharing shortage agreement for 2005 without helping the B.I.D. get their answer from the State Engineer.

The remaining issue of the B.I.D. concerns the information supplied by the State Engineer to the B.O.R. for the DEIS in the year 2000. This information was suppose to represent the different diversion demands on file with the State Engineer for the B.I.D. ditch and others below Navajo Dam. It has been discovered recently, by the B.I.D., the information was seriously flawed and wrong. The B.O.R. has based their whole analysis of the preferred alternative minimum diversion rate of 250 CFS on this incorrect information. When confronted by the B.I.D. on this issue, the State Engineer tries to explain it away in a letter dated January 21, 2005 to Rick Gold with the B.O.R. as being preliminary information, not as incorrect.

There will be no shortage of water on the San Juan River this year. This is confirmed by the B.O.R. having a spring release beginning in May of 2005 of about 124,000 acre-feet at a maximum rate of 5000 CFS supposedly to build habitat for the endangered fish below Farmington. This 5000 CFS flow rate causes intake ditch diversion damage to the ditches. The push to get the entities other than the Navajo's and the Jicarilla's to sign the agreement is so the Navajo's can be paid about \$210,000 for letting the Jicarilla's make water available to the power plants if there were to be a shortage. The Jicarilla's in turn receive about \$180,000 whether there is a shortage or not and whether they actually furnish any water under the contracts. If the B.I.D. does not sign the agreement, they have been threatened they will be administered as to any priority calls without any rules in place to administer the rivers and without the B.I.D. knowing what CFS they are entitled to. The State Engineer purports to protect senior water right users but his actions do not reflect this. The 250 CFS dam releases during the irrigation season, supported by the State Engineer, are unacceptable to the B.I.D.

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2-7-05