

Public Involvement Plan
Development of Lower Basin Shortage Guidelines and
Coordinated Management Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake
Mead Under Low Reservoir Conditions

Revised 1/5/06¹

Lead Agency

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Upper and Lower Colorado River Regions

Project

The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) has directed Reclamation to develop additional Colorado River management strategies to address operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead under low reservoir conditions. Reclamation proposes to conduct public scoping meetings and prepare an EIS for the development of Lower Colorado River Basin Shortage Guidelines and Coordinated Management Strategies for Operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead Under Low Reservoir Conditions. The proposed action is the development and adoption of these guidelines and strategies.

Situation Analysis

The Colorado River water supply is of utmost importance to Colorado River users and stakeholders. It is a finite system, however, with increasing demands for a variety of uses – farming, urban water supply, power producers, recreation, and environment. The Colorado River is governed by a complex body of existing laws, the Law of the River, that guides appropriation, allocation and use of Colorado River water. Furthermore, the Upper and Lower Basin states have differing priorities and needs, which can be in conflict.

While near term water conservation actions and program may minimize future drought impacts, the Secretary of the Interior has directed Reclamation to develop management strategies for operations under low reservoir conditions that will include shortage guidelines.

For the development of the strategies and guidelines, a reasonable range of alternatives, including those recommended by stakeholders, will need to be considered. Recognizing that not all issues and alternatives raised by stakeholders will be “ripe” for consideration, Reclamation needs to be sensitive to stakeholders’ issues and concerns.

Goal

The goal of this project is to meet public participation requirements set forth in the NEPA for an EIS, identify interested parties or stakeholders, and secure public input that will provide information and facilitate the decisions needed to define, formulate, analyze, compare, and recommend for adoption, water supply management strategies that can be used under low reservoir conditions. This may include the adoption of Shortage Guidelines that can be used to manage water supplies and deliveries in the Lower Basin under shortage conditions.

¹ This document is subject to revision as the project progresses.

Objectives

- Educate stakeholders and interested parties about the study, process, and decisions needed.
- Provide a clear description of alternatives so stakeholders can differentiate between perceived vs. real impacts.
- Engage the public, stakeholders and other interested parties in open and constructive dialogue about project alternatives and issues that may affect them.
- Identify key issues that will be addressed in the environmental review process.
- Identify and address potential “hot button” issues and avoid surprises through the process (for agencies, stakeholders, the public and consultants).
- Ensure that Reclamation and consultants are fully aware of, understand, and appropriately address all community and stakeholder concerns.
- Provide a forum for interested parties to receive briefings on the modeling and analyses of alternatives considered and for the solicitation and exchange of ideas for improvements to the alternatives.
- Provide opportunities for the public to contribute to the process, especially by identifying issues and potential alternatives.
- Generate trust, confidence and credibility in the project, process and partners.
- Facilitate an efficient public involvement process.
- Identify third-party endorsers of the process and outcomes and utilize when possible.

Guiding Principles

- People tend to support what they help create.
- Public participation/public involvement programs must be sincere attempts to involve stakeholders and the public in decision-making.
- Communication must be targeted to all the people who have a stake in the project.
- The outreach program must be sensitive to accommodating multi-cultural demographics.
- Information must be factual, accurate, consistent and presented in a timely fashion.
- Project issues must remain focused and dealt with when and where they occur.
- Consultants and staff must be approachable, must work to fully understand all stakeholder concerns, and must be responsive.
- Communications need to be regular, consistent and repetitive to compete effectively with the many other messages and/issues that will be raised by stakeholders and other interested/affected parties, and reported by the media.
- Provide separate Government-to-Government meetings for affected tribes.
- Take advantage of existing stakeholder venues (e.g. regularly scheduled meetings) when planning briefings/meetings
- Establish a public involvement process that meets EIS requirements of NEPA and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Distinguish between these processes and ad hoc requests for additional meetings with the stakeholders.
- Implement the 2002 CEQ requirements for cooperative agency involvement
- Acknowledge the difference between cooperative agency vs. other involvement.

Tactical Approach

I. Identify Potential Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating Agencies are being identified in accordance with NEPA and CEQ guidelines.

Responsible entity: Reclamation

II. Public Identification and Assessment

Known and potential stakeholders and their key issues and concerns will be identified to help tailor outreach activities for best results. A database / mailing list will be developed and updated as needed to keep stakeholders and interested parties informed and up-to-date. These stakeholders could include:

- Federal agencies
- Colorado River Basin states
- Indian Tribes (e.g., the Ten Tribes Partnership, CAP tribes and tribes potentially involved in compliance w/National Historic Preservation Act)
- Mexico (IBWC)
- Energy / Power interests
- Businesses
- Environmental/Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. SW Rivers, Pacific Institute, Defenders of Wildlife, etc.)
- Recreation interests
- Agricultural
- General public
- Local agencies
- Elected officials
- Media
- Environmental justice communities
- Recreation
- MSCP

Responsible entities: Consultant team in consultation with Reclamation

Deliverable: Stakeholder database / mailing list

III. Develop and Revise Key Messages

To ensure consistencies and relevance of message, and guide the development of information materials and presentations, and support development of management strategies, key messages related to the project and audience specific messages will be developed and updated as necessary throughout the projects. These key messages will be used in information materials and as talking points throughout the project.

Responsible entities: Consultant team in consultation with Reclamation

Deliverable: Key messages

IV. Informational Materials

To educate and inform audiences about the study and related issues, a variety of information materials will be developed. These materials will support the public meetings and other outreach efforts. Materials will be designed to be easy to reproduce

and include on the project website. Language will be appropriate for laypersons, and be consistent with the key messages. All materials will be updated as needed.

- **Fact sheet**

A general fact sheet for use at public meetings, presentations, and other venues will be developed. The fact sheet will include project contact information. Issue-oriented fact sheets could be developed if needed. The value of translating the fact sheet and other materials into other language will be evaluated.

Responsible entity: Consultant

Deliverable: General fact sheet, expected to be one, double-sided page, designed in accordance with Reclamation guidelines.

Optional: Issue-oriented fact sheets; multi-language materials.

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

The FAQs will support the fact sheet with typical and anticipated questions and answers about the project, as well as those questions Reclamation wants the stakeholders to ask. The FAQs will be updated as needed.

Responsible entity: Consultant

Deliverable: One FAQ, expected to be one, double-sided page, designed in accordance with Reclamation guidelines.

- **Web site**

A page providing information about the LRC strategies will be developed for the Reclamation website. All public outreach materials (fact sheets, presentations, maps, comments (Phase 1 only), meeting announcements) will be included. An email link for comments and questions will also be included.

Responsible entity: Reclamation, with assistance as requested from Consultant.

- **Maps**

Project maps will be developed to provide important visual references for stakeholders and the public in written materials and at public meetings. Maps included on the website will be modified to a PDF format that uploads easily for users.

Responsible entity: Reclamation

- **Briefing packets**

Project materials will be assembled into background/information packets for elected officials and their staffs, and media representatives. These packets are also useful for small group presentations and meetings.

Responsible entity: To be determined

- **PowerPoint presentations**

A basic project “canned” presentation for briefings, public meetings, and other outreach efforts will be developed. The presentation can be customized for specific audiences.

Responsible entity: Reclamation, with assistance as requested from Consultant.

V. Formal Consultations

It is important to the success of this process that agencies, Tribes, and other inter-governmental entities are informed and involved, and that issues are addressed in a timely and cooperative manner. Reclamation will conduct consultation meetings at the outset of the process, prior to key milestones, and throughout the process as needed. Appropriate meeting format will be developed to effectively and actively seek input from these entities, and results and outcomes will be documented.

Responsible entity: Reclamation

Deliverables: Meeting results and outcomes.

VI. Stakeholder Outreach

For the purposes of this plan, “stakeholders” are considered to be those agencies and/or organizations that are expected to be, or have been, involved in this process because of a direct vested interest in the outcome. Working with these stakeholders to identify and address issues of concern and sensitivity may forestall opposition and lead to support of the outcome. Appropriate outreach tactics for these stakeholders could include:

- One-on-one briefings
 - Meet with key stakeholders as needed, ideally at least once each phase of the study.
 - Provide opportunities for one-on-one briefings on an ongoing basis for individuals and representatives of larger organizations.
- Small group briefings
 - Offer presentations to groups of individuals and/or representatives of larger organizations with similar issues/objectives.
- Speakers Bureau
 - Make presentations to groups’ existing membership at regularly scheduled meetings and/or opportunistically.

Project spokespersons will be identified to ensure consistency of message, and provided with appropriate support and materials.

Responsible entity: Reclamation with support from Consultant team.

Deliverables: Meeting results and outcomes.

VII. General Public Outreach

Although members of the public are indeed “stakeholders,” for the purposes of this plan, it is assumed that the public is generally represented by a more formal stakeholder entity. The complexity of the issues makes it unlikely that a private citizen will be heavily involved. Nevertheless, it is important to provide the public with the opportunity to be informed and involved, and for Reclamation to take advantage of opportunities to meet with the public. Methods for informing and involving the public include:

- Scoping meetings
- Reclamation project spokesperson(s) to be available for community briefings upon request

- Public meeting for release of scoping report
- Other calendared public meetings or workshops
- Public hearings and informational meetings on draft and final EIS

Responsibility for planning and conducting public meetings and workshops are expected to be as follows:

- Schedule meeting venues that are convenient and appropriate to community - Reclamation
- Publicize meetings through e-mail notices, advertisements, calendar notices, project website, media release - Reclamation
- Prepare sign-in sheets, comment cards, speaker cards - Consultant
- On-site meeting coordination: name tags, agenda, informational materials, poster boards, signage, presentation materials - Reclamation
- Follow up with meeting summary, posted on project website – Reclamation

Responsible entities: Reclamation and Consultant Team

Deliverables: Meeting announcements, calendar notices, presentations, sign in sheets, comment cards, poster boards, meeting summary

VIII. Media Relations

Media relations is an important tool for reaching a larger audience, educating the public and stakeholders on the purpose and need of the study, and generating support for the process and decision-making. Reclamation Public Affairs staff will direct media outreach activities, with the support of the consultant. Activities could include:

- News media and editorial board briefings and endorsement.
- Preparing proactive and reactive media responses.
- ID media targets, including print, broadcast and electronic.
- Develop and revise media database as needed.
- ID media spokespersons and conduct media training as necessary.
- Coordinate editorial board briefings.
- Prepare news releases and op-ed pieces at key milestones.

Responsible entity: Reclamation

Timeline – Phase I

A draft project timeline is attached. More detailed timelines for each phase will be developed as project progresses.

- October 2005
 - Review public involvement plan
 - Set up scoping meetings
 - Prepare fact sheet, presentation
 - Activate website
 - Stakeholder assessment
- November 2005
 - Scoping meetings
 - Tuesday, November 1, 2005 – Salt Lake City, Utah.
 - Wednesday, November 2, 2005 – Denver, Colorado.

- Thursday, November 3, 2005 – Phoenix, Arizona.
 - Tuesday, November 8, 2005 – Henderson, Nevada.
- Written comments on the proposed development of these strategies may be sent by close of business on Wednesday, November 30, 2005
- Approve Public Involvement Plan Outline

- December 2005
 - Send letters of invitation to cooperating agencies
 - Send consultation letters to Tribes, Mexico
 - Draft scoping meeting summary report

- January 2006
 - Finalize scoping report
 - Approve Public Involvement Plan
 - Update project info sheets/FAQ
 - Public meeting to comment on findings/scoping report
 - Ed boards to educate media

Public Involvement Plan Evaluation

Evaluation of the PIP will occur periodically throughout the life of the public involvement effort and adjusted accordingly. As such, the PIP and all associated outreach tactics will be in a constant state of revision to appropriately align with new or changed conditions. We can, however, gauge our efforts and effectiveness on multiple levels, including those described below.

- Quantify number of individuals participating in public meetings, small group discussions, and additional communications.
- Assess level of stakeholder understanding.
- Assess level of stakeholder satisfaction that the process is open, objective and fair.
- Evaluate confidence of decision-makers in process as a whole.
- Assess media coverage

LOWER COLORADO RIVER SHORTAGE GUIDELINES ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

