

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## High-Flow Experiment Protocol Environmental Assessment Update

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Bureau of Reclamation

# HFE Protocol EA Chronology

- **Announcement by Secretary: Dec 9, 2009**
- **Federal Register Notice: Dec 22, 2009**
- **Initiate Public Scoping, AMWG: Feb 3-4, 2010**
- **HFE Workshop: June 17-18, 2010**
- **Conference Calls w/10 Coop Agencies: Jul-Dec 2010**
- **Coop Agency Review Draft: Nov 23-Dec 6, 2010 and Jun 15-29, 2011**
- **Public Review Draft: Jan 14-Mar 18, 2011 and Jul 5-19, 2011**
- **HFE EA published Dec 30, 2011 w/ new Biological Opinion and Revised Science Plan**

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# The Protocol

- **Experimental in nature; not a policy change**
- **Designed to facilitate better learning of how to incorporate high dam releases into future operations in a manner that effectively conserves more sediment by depositing on beaches and sandbars above the stage of MLFF dam operations**
- **Sandbar building potential is greatest by generating the greatest possible sand concentrations and largest possible areas of inundation, both of which are maximized by increasing flow magnitude**
- **Sandbar building occurs as long as elevated sand concentrations are maintained and there is still space available to deposit sand; thus high flows should be of as long a duration as can be maintained with available sand**

# Comments Received and Addressed

- **Main Recurring Issues**

- Scope, T&E impacts, and EA interactions require EIS
- Must coordinate and integrate two EAs
- Underestimate negative impacts of trout and overestimate positive effects on native fish
- Protocol decision process is unclear; needs more detail
- Insufficient for GCPA; missing targets for measures of success
- Insufficient consideration of navigation risks; other safety, property and financial impacts from low and high flows
- Effects on hydropower and business interests underestimated

# What has not Changed

- **Purpose and Need**
- **Primary Elements of the Protocol**
  - Planning and Budgeting, including Resource Evaluations
  - Sand Budget Modeling
  - Decision and Implementation
- **Primary Approaches**
  - Store and Release
  - Rapid Response
  - Assess timing, magnitude, duration and frequency
- **A Science Plan to Measure Effects**
  - Feedback Loops from Scientists to Managers
  - Incorporation of Learning into the next Phase (LTEMP)

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# What is being Done

- A hard look at assessment of impacts and incorporation of recent findings from scientists
- Further identification of the relationships between HFE Protocol and NNFC proposed actions/impacts
- Investigation of Paria River historic hydrograph and flood wave travel times for assessment of rapid response potential
- Finishing NHPA compliance and development of MOAs
- Ensuring that decision makers have the best analysis possible to use in the decision process for these proposed actions

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# How might things be different under the HFE Protocol?

Total amount of campsite area all sites above 25k

