



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

96-42040  
ADM 1.10

JUN 16 2006

## MEMORANDUM

To: Members  
Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group

From: Mark Limbaugh, Assistant Secretary - Water and Science  
Secretary's Designee for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group

I would like to take this opportunity to update you since the last meeting in Phoenix, and provide you with some of the issues that I think deserve greater attention in the coming months.

Significantly, since our meeting in March, former Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne has been sworn in as the Secretary of the Interior. One of the first briefings scheduled with our new Secretary addressed Colorado River operations, including an overview of this important program. I will be working hard in coming months to ensure that the views and recommendations of the AMWG are promptly communicated to Secretary Kempthorne. In addition, as we move forward I will take every opportunity to see that the AMWG is apprised of the Secretary's direction with respect to your recommendations.

Since we met in Phoenix, I have spent 2 days visiting with John Hamill and his staff at the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC). We also had the opportunity to make a site visit to some of the monitoring stations in the Grand Canyon and see the confluence of the Colorado and Paria Rivers. This was my first visit to the GCMRC and the Grand Canyon, and I came away with a better appreciation for the hard work and dedication of the GCMRC staff, as well as the important role that the Paria plays in terms of sediment input in the upper reaches of Marble Canyon.

During my visit to the Colorado River I was particularly encouraged by the detailed briefings I received from Matthew Andersen and other members of the GCRMC staff. It was encouraging to learn that recent field research and population estimates indicate a stabilization of adult populations of humpback chub in the Grand Canyon. Moreover, there is evidence for increased main stem reproductive success above the confluence of the Little Colorado River and an increase in the number of juvenile humpback chub as compared with recent years. I am happy that recent efforts at non-native fish removal, and other actions to benefit the endangered chub, appear to be showing positive results.

I believe there are exciting opportunities to achieve further success as we move the discussion of this effort, and other elements of the Adaptive Management Program, toward more permanent management actions.

In order to help focus our efforts, particularly during our upcoming AMWG meetings, I am committed to be actively involved in setting and carrying out the agendas. Based on my experience at the March AMWG meeting, it is my expectation and goal that the limited time of the AMWG be focused and prioritized on the pending broader and longer-term issues facing the Program.

I recognize that since our March meeting, the Science Planning Group (SPG) and TWG members have worked to develop and refine various options that could be forwarded to the Secretary as recommendations following consideration by the full AMWG. My sense is that the difficulty of arriving at a single, obvious approach reflects the complexity of the Colorado River/Glen Canyon Dam system, the potential solutions, and the competing views of the AMWG members.

As efforts proceed to evaluate recommendations on Glen Canyon Operations, I would like to ask that the SPG focus additional consideration on two areas that should be incorporated within the input and recommendations from the AMWG to the Department.

First, I would ask that the SPG consider a longer-term horizon for a long-term science and operational strategy, perhaps as long as 25 years. In addition, I would like to ask that the SPG integrate the concepts of construction, operation, and assessment of a temperature-control device (TCD) into this long-term plan. The recent warming trend in dam release water associated with drought conditions in the Colorado River Basin suggest the potential benefits that could be associated with committed development of a credible and collaborative plan to fund, construct, operate and assess TCD implementation. This concept deserves consideration by the SPG in the next few months and ultimately by the full AMWG in October.

In light of this additional direction to the SPG and TWG, I will conduct an August AMWG meeting via conference call, with the Agenda focused only on a recommendation for a FY 2007 hydrograph, budget, and workplan. Given the transitional nature of the FY 2007 year, the expectation that it will be an 8.23 maf annual release, and the limited time to complete additional environmental compliance before initiation, we anticipate the 2007 recommendation will be similar to those conveyed to the Secretary in recent years.

In addition to the August conference call, I will convene a full meeting of the AMWG in October, thereby allowing sufficient time for the SPG and TWG processes to come to conclusion. I would like to see the October meeting reserve sufficient time to consider ongoing efforts regarding development of a recovery program for the humpback chub in the Grand Canyon, development of a process for determining when experimental actions should become long-term management actions - such as non-native fish removal, as well as consideration of the GCMRC's Strategic Science Plan and Monitoring Research Plan.

I will soon distribute a draft agenda for the upcoming August and October meetings. These agendas will focus on the areas that I have identified above. My hope is that by improving our management approach for the Adaptive Management Program processes, by focusing on a long-term science plan, by considering construction of a TCD, and by evaluating the potential for a long-term

recovery program, the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program will continue to move in a positive direction.

Lastly, as you all are well aware, the Department is currently involved in litigation regarding the operation of Glen Canyon Dam and issues that are directly addressed by the AMWG. I would like to inform you that the Department is currently involved in preliminary settlement discussions with the plaintiffs in the suit, including the Center for Biological Diversity. In these efforts, the United States' representatives have made it clear that the AMWG makes recommendations to the Secretary regarding operation of Glen Canyon Dam and other associated management actions, and the AMWG's role must not be affected either by the conduct of the ongoing litigation, or in any potential litigation settlement.

I thank you for your continued dedication to this program, and I look forward to working with you on these important efforts in the years to come.

cc: Rick Gold, Alternate Secretary's Designee  
Tom Weimer, Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget  
Matthew J. Hogan, Acting Assistant Secretary - Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Jim Cason, Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs  
Dale Hall, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jason Peltier, Deputy Assistant Secretary - Water and Science  
Tim Petty, Deputy Assistant Secretary - Water and Science  
Mike Olsen, Acting Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs  
Steve Martin, Deputy Director, National Park Service  
Bill Rinne, Acting Commissioner  
Brenda Burman, Deputy Commissioner, External and Intergovernmental Affairs  
John Hamill, Chief, Glen Canyon Monitoring and Research Center  
Kurt Dongoske, Chair, Technical Work Group  
Dave Garrett, Chair, Science Planning Group  
Mary Orton, Facilitator, Adaptive Management Work Group