

Colorado River Storage Project
Fontenelle Working Group
Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2024

Participation

This meeting was held Thursday, August 29, 2024, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm MT, at Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, 244 Seedskaadee Road, Green River, WY 82935 and via Microsoft Teams virtual meeting. Attendees are listed on the last page.

Purpose of Meeting

The purpose of these working group meetings is to inform the public and other interested parties of Reclamation's current and future operational plans and to gather information from the public regarding specific resources associated with Fontenelle Reservoir and the river corridor below it. In addition, the meetings are used to coordinate activities and exchange information among agencies, water users, and other interested parties concerning the Green River.

Introductions – Alex Pivarnik (Bureau of Reclamation)

Welcome to the August Fontenelle Work Group meeting for 2024. Please sign in if in person or put name and organization in the chat if online.

Current and Forecasted Hydrology – Wolfgang Hanft (Colorado Basin River Forecast Center)

Wolfgang presented on the Water Year (WY) 2024 hydrologic conditions to date and forecasted conditions.

Wolfgang reviewed the previous fall's soil moisture conditions. WY2023's good runoff conditions in the Upper Green provided good conditions for efficient runoff this year.

For precipitation, the Upper Green had a poor start to the WY, but a very wet February and March. Unfortunately, warm and dry conditions in April and June contributed to a below normal accumulation for the year. Combined overall was below average at 88% above Fontenelle.

Modeled Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) also showed a poor start to the WY in the Upper Green but peaked just above average. Warm, dry conditions in April started melt, but cooler conditions and some precipitation in May led to some recovery of the snowpack. A large melt event in June resulted in a rapid melt off.

Temperature plots, especially for the cool May and warm June, were also presented to help explain the snowpack conditions.

Fontenelle inflow was 70% of average with Flaming Gorge was 74% of average.

Wolfgang presented the water supply forecast evolution plot, peak flow forecasts, and current conditions. April-July precipitation was below 15% of average which lead to the reduction of

inflow. 2023 vs 2024, we were at about the 25th percentile for 2023 and we reduced to the 75th percentile over 2024.

Question from online to clarify runoff efficiency graphics.

Fontenelle Reservoir Operations – Amanda Becker (Bureau of Reclamation)

Amanda Becker reviewed Fontenelle operations, starting with observed operations since last meeting and presented the April snowpack from last meeting and compared to what was then observed SWE (snow water equivalent) over the remainder of the season.

For forecasted runoff volume, near median was expected at the April meeting but observed was a significant drop.

Observed inflow had a high peak and shortened peak in June due to the quick melt.

For observed releases, low flows were implemented for the maintenance period. Large inflow came in early so releases increased to meet July 1st flood target elevations. However, significantly under average precipitation.

Modelled operations from the April expected a longer and flatter period of inflow. Observed max releases was only a little above 3000 cfs and the summer flows have not been as high due the inflows being lower than expected.

Future operations are based on August 50% forecast. A reduction from 1,000 cfs to 825 cfs is coming up soon. Winter inflows are currently modelled at 950 cfs. Targeting a release flow we can hold through the icing season. Dropping down to 800 cfs for late-March maintenance period. Spring runoff is unknown at this time. Currently modelled to effect the boat ramp at the dam for only about 10 days.

Question from Howard Hart: Why variations of flows last couple of week?

Response from Cory Anderson: Short term fluctuation during the summer due to new exciter installation and maintenance at the power plant.

General Discussion and Questions

Question from Bryan Seppie GR/RS-JPWB: Last year we saw early ice break up. Will lower flows be needed early in the year before maintenance if the ice breaks up early?

Respond from Amanda Becker: Will not reduce until maintenance starts unless a very low inflow was observed for that time period.

Question from Ron Wild: Any update on the riprap project?

Respond from Alex Pivarnik: No update at this time.

Question from Howard Hart: Are the winter releases due to fish habitat?

Response from Amanda Becker: The winter release are mainly to due to trying to prevent ice dams from forming.

Next Meeting

April 2025. Details to be shared closer to the event.

Attendees

Becker, Amanda - USBR	Blake Gelinias- Sisecam Wyoming LLC
Callahan, Michael – USBR	Courtney Harris, WAPA
Pivarnik, Alex-USB	Mark Westenskow, City of Green River Public Works
Jason Palmer, City of Green River Utilities	Howard Hart- GR Resident
Riley Martin - UCB public affairs	Cory Anderson- USBR
Ron Wild Rocky Mountain Power	Bryan Seppie- GR/RS- JPWB
Jeff Cowley WY State Engineer's Office	Colin Darichin- USFWS
Wolfgang Hanft - Colorado Basin River Forecast Center (CBRFC)	
Suman Chitrakar, WY SEO	
Craig Roof Project West	
Gary Henrie - Bureau of Reclamation, Provo Area Office	
Rob Young, GR/RS/SWCO JPWB	
Roxann Reid, Bureau of Reclamation Flaming Gorge	
Jessica Lockwood WGFD	
Kevin Payne Wyoming State Engineer's Office	