

RESOURCE AND ENGINEERING PLANNING COMMITTEE
Subcommittee for Recovery of Storage
MINUTES
Thursday, January 7, 2021

A meeting of the Resource and Engineering Planning Committee Subcommittee for Recovery of Storage was held on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. via electronic and telephonic attendance.

Chairman Pat Edelmann announced a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pat Edelmann – Chairman, Mark Pifher, Dallas May, Tom Goodwin, and Jim Broderick

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED:

Seth Clayton

OTHERS PRESENT:

Alan Hamel and Curtis Mitchell, SECWCD Board; Roy Vaughan, Bureau of Reclamation; Jenny Bishop, Colorado Springs Utilities; Paul Warren, David Jurich, John Dawson, Jennifer Kohlsaat, Priscilla Jimenez, and Paul Paparella, Mott MacDonald; Brad Anderson, Ace Water; Lee Miller, Kevin Meador, Leann Noga, Garrett Markus, Chris Woodka, Margie Medina, and Patty Rivas, SECWCD staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

This is the first meeting of the subcommittee and there are no minutes to approve.

PRESENTATIONS:

Mr. Woodka presented a short history of the need for Fryingpan-Arkansas Project storage in the Arkansas River basin.

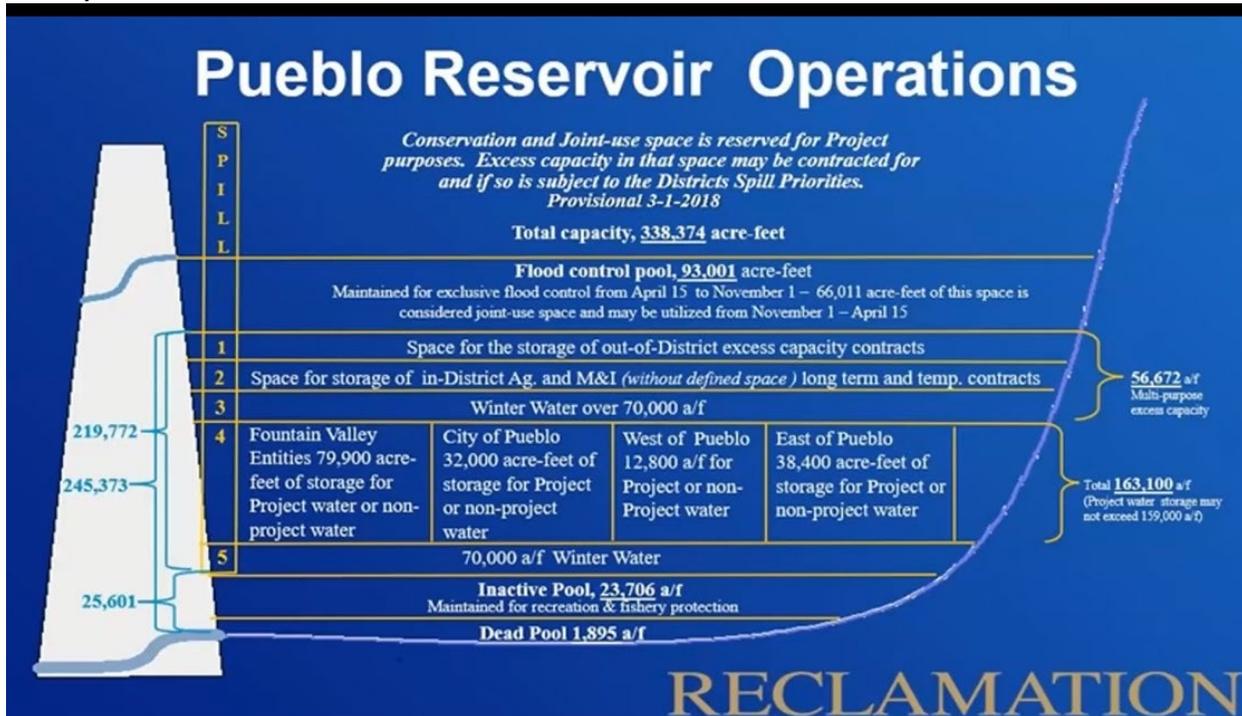
Storage for flood control became apparent in the historic flood of 1921, 100 years ago, while the Great Dust Bowl of the 1930s illustrated the need for a supplemental water supply for both municipal and irrigation uses. With the creation of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project in 1962, both needs could be fulfilled. Pueblo Dam began storing water in 1975, and since that time we have been learning to operate it. We have also added features such as the North Outlet

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Works and South Outlet Works, a fish hatchery, and the James W. Broderick Hydropower Plant. In the future, an Interconnect between the North and South Outlet Works will be built. Municipalities depend on Pueblo Dam, and in the future, demands will increase for Southern Delivery System and the Arkansas Valley Conduit.



Reservoir operations are tightly defined, and the loss of any storage will increase pressure on that storage.

Since 1975, close to 25,000 acre-feet of storage has been lost to sedimentation and the rate of loss appears to be increasing. While the rate is not as great as estimated in Project design, there has never been a way defined to reclaim storage.

The first phase of the Recovery of Storage Study identified ways to recover storage in Pueblo Reservoir either by dredging or expansion of space in Pueblo Reservoir, but other solutions upstream of Pueblo Reservoir were not studied. At the conclusion of Phase I of the Recovery of Storage Study, Mott MacDonald offered six recommendations and a timetable for those. It will be the committee’s task to determine how the study will proceed.

The six recommendations were:

1. Appoint a Storage Recovery Strategy Committee

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2. Define the Study Area
3. Conduct a pre-screening assessment of alternative/methodologies for storage recovery or sustainability within the Upper Arkansas River Basin
4. Conduct a detailed alternatives analysis of pre-screened alternatives
5. Develop a scope of work for data collection programs and develop an implementation strategy prior to advancing the project to a feasibility level.
6. Collect the necessary data, identify a preferred or preferred alternatives in conjunction with stakeholders, and scope a full environmental and engineering feasibility study, including costing and scheduling.

Chairman Edelman opened discussion, asking if there were any questions about the presentation.

Mr. Pifher asked how current the flood control information shown on the graphic identifying pools within Pueblo Reservoir is. Mr. Broderick explained that the Pueblo Water Conservancy District has asked for one and SECWCD has asked for two exceptions to flood control conditions which require evacuation of the flood control pool in spring. This could lead to a study that could require an even larger flood pool. Any expansion of storage at Pueblo Reservoir would require a new analysis of the flood pool. Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Edelman confirmed that the Corps would like to expand the flood pool.

Mr. Edelman reviewed the next steps included in the presentation, pointing out that staff recommendation to pursue Steps 2 and 3 were taken from the report is a “straw man” simply to set up discussion about where the committee would like the study to go.

Mr. Pifher and Mr. Edelman said a hydrologic risk assessment is needed, that would identify the effects of loss of storage or failure to recover it. There were studies around the year 2000 that looked ahead at storage needs, and those at the very least need to be updated.

Mr. Goodwin asked what portion of floods is caused by forest fires as opposed to normal flood erosion. He also brought up the point that sedimentation dams on private lands which at one time could have checked sedimentation into Pueblo Reservoir, but have filled. That brought up the question of how these could affect water rights.

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The Committee discussed the impact of storage downstream of Pueblo Reservoir, but agreed that the Recovery of Storage Study should look at direct impacts on the Fry-Ark Project for the time being.

There was also discussion about the water quality impacts of dredging, or releasing sediment from holding ponds that are breached.

Mr. Edelman suggested “bite-sized” steps in the next phase of the study, looking at existing data to identify the areas that affect Pueblo Reservoir.

ACTION ITEMS:

The Committee recommended to the REPC a revised motion:

I move the Board to have staff develop a statement of work or RFP to:

- 1) Assess the impact of the loss of storage due to sedimentation on District storage and operations, as well as other storage contracts; and project at what point storage loss becomes critical to limiting Fry-Ark operations.
- 2) Using available GIS coverages and basin characteristics, identify and rank/prioritize drainages that are likely major sediment sources to Pueblo Reservoir in the upper Arkansas basin downstream of Wellsville.

Mr. Goodwin moved, and Mr. Pifer seconded a motion to approve the revised scope of work, and recommend approval to the REPC. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

None

OTHER BUSINESS:

None

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, February 4, 9 a.m.

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ADJOURN

Chairman Edelman adjourned the meeting at 10:04 a.m..