

COLORADO RIVER AND WATER SUPPLY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Thursday, May 18, 2023

A meeting of the Colorado River and Water Supply Committee was held on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 12:25 p.m. at the District office.

Chairman Tom Goodwin announced a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Goodwin - Chairman, Kevin Karney – Vice-Chairman, Seth Clayton, Pat Edelmann, Mark Pifher, Bill Long and Jim Broderick

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED:

None

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patrick Garcia, Alan Hamel, Andy Colosimo (remote) Southeastern Board members; Erin Wilson, Wilson Water Group; Lee Miller, Peter Levis, Leann Noga; Patty Rivas (remote), Garrett Markus, Mark Scott and Chris Woodka, District staff; Luke Mecklenburg, Assistant Colorado Attorney General (remote at 1:25 p.m.).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Tom Goodwin confirmed that members of the Committee received their copy of the April 20, 2023 minutes, and asked if there were any corrections or additions. Seth Clayton moved, seconded by Mark Pifher, to approve the minutes. Motion unanimously carried.

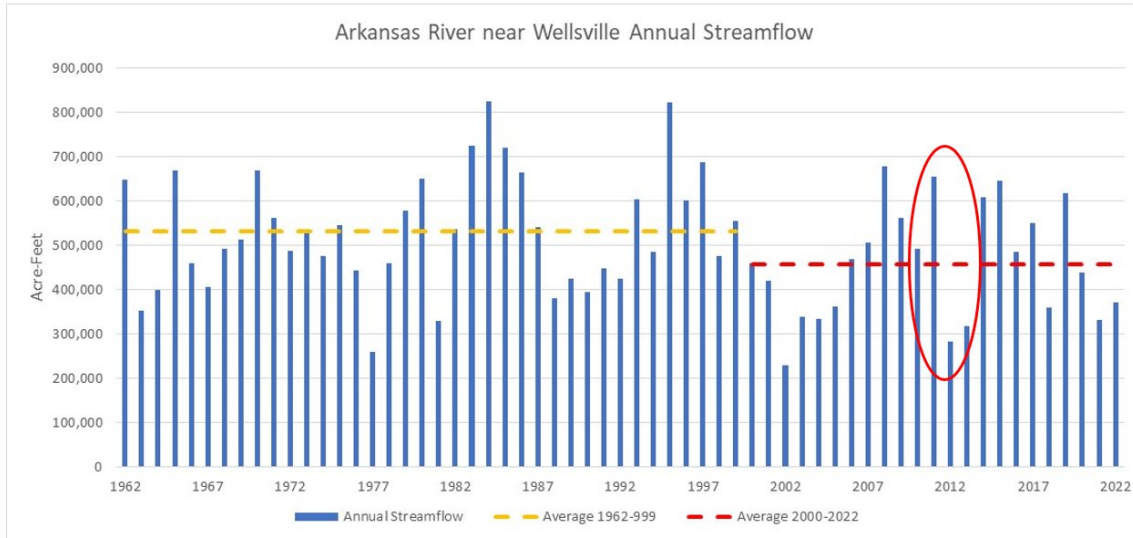
PRESENTATION:

Erin Wilson, of Wilson Water Group, gave a report on Arkansas River Basin Characteristics.

The majority of Arkansas River runoff (native flow) enters the river above the Wellsville gauge, just downstream of Salida. All transmountain water is imported above Wellsville. On average, 40 percent of imports are diverted through the Otero Pump Station above Wellsville.

The hydrology of the Arkansas River basin is extremely variable as shown in this figure:

Arkansas River Hydrology is Extremely Variable



- Annual streamflow varies significantly depending on snowpack and summer monsoon rains
- Wet year 2011 annual streamflow was 2.7 times higher than dry year 2012 annual streamflow

In making forecasts of water availability, the month of May is considered to be the most reliable, with most forecasts within 10 percent of the actual availability of water.

In terms of drought frequency, the Middle Colorado River basin, which supplies Fryingpan-Arkansas water, was in drought for 9 years over a 23-year period (2000-2022). The Upper Arkansas was in drought conditions for 11 years in that same time period, and the Lower Arkansas was in drought conditions for 14 years, with more severe droughts. The Middle Colorado and Upper Arkansas had the same drought severity 83% of the time.

Drought coincides with streamflow.

On average, 12 percent of the flow at Wellsville is from Fry-Ark Project water, with another 6 percent from other transmountain water. About 60 percent of transmountain water flows past Wellsville, with the remainder taken through the Otero Pump Station (Homestake Project). A question was asked about how much native water is taken through the Otero Pump Station, but no answer was immediately available.

COLORADO RIVER COMMITTEE

May 18, 2023

Peak runoff generally occurs in early June, but can come in early May.

The availability of water from precipitation affects the crop irrigation needs. In a dry year like 2002, when only 1.4 inches fell during the irrigation season, 3.5 acre-feet per acre were required to grow a green pasture crop at Rocky Ford. In a wet year like 2017, when 19.6 inches fell during the irrigation season, less than two acre-feet per acre were required.

Another part of the report will be given at a future meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Lee Miller stated a request was made for the Committee to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of:

C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(b): (Conferences with an attorney for the local public body for the purposes of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions)

C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(e): (Determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations; developing strategy for negotiations; and instructing negotiators)

To receive an update on Colorado River issues.

The presence of the following persons was requested:

- Non-Excused Committee and Board Members
- Executive Director
- General Counsel
- Staff Attorney
- Administrator of Finance and Administration
- Senior Policy and Issues Manager
- Water Resources Engineer
- Administrative Support Specialist

Mark Pifher moved, seconded by Kevin Karney, to enter into Executive Session. Motion unanimously carried.

COLORADO RIVER COMMITTEE

May 18, 2023

The regular meeting was recessed at 12:51 p.m. and reconvened at 1:25 p.m.

Minutes were electronically recorded as required by the Colorado Open Meetings Act.

REPORT OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Lee Miller reported that during the Executive Session, the Committee received information on Colorado River issues. No action was taken.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Committee also discussed appointing Lee Miller to the state's Colorado River Drought Task Force, which was created by SB23-295. The Southeastern District has one seat on the 17-member task force. The task force will begin meeting in July, and will have as many as 12 meetings before December 31, 2023.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be following the District and Enterprise Board meetings on July 20, 2023.

ADJOURN

Chairman Goodwin adjourned the meeting at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Woodka

Senior Policy and Issues Manager