

**ALLOCATION & STORAGE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 6, 2025**

A meeting of the Allocation & Storage Committee held on Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 10:03 a.m. at the District Office 31717 United Avenue, Pueblo, Colorado 81001 and via Zoom virtual conference.

Chairman Andy Colosimo announced a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Andy Colosimo - Chairman, Howard "Bub" Miller - Vice Chair, Tom Goodwin , Justin DiSanti, Curtis Mitchell, Matt Heimerich, Bill Long (via Zoom), and Leann Noga

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED:

Alan Hamel

OTHERS PRESENT:

Pat Edelmann and Greg Felt (via Zoom), Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (District) Board; Roy Vaughan, H2O Consultants; Lisa Brown, Wilson Water Group (via Zoom); Mike Holmberg and Terry Dawson, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; Chris Woodka, Gordon Dillon, Margie Medina, Michelle Tocydlowski, Lee Miller (via Zoom), Peter Levish (via Zoom), Patty Rivas (via Zoom), District staff.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Colosimo confirmed that members of the Committee received their copy of the November 7, 2024 Allocation & Storage Committee minutes and asked if there were any corrections or discussions. Tom Goodwin moved, Bub Miller seconded, to approve the minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS:

Approach to 2025 Water Year

Leann Noga said the District hopes to have a Water Resource Engineer on board by the end of March or early April. Engineering Manager Gordon Dillon, Senior Policy and Issues Manager Chris Woodka, and Administrative Support Specialist Margie Medina will be the District's in-house team in the interim. They will be assisted by Wilson Water Group, Roy Vaughan, Bill Tyner, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Division of Water Resources in moving through all aspects of the water allocation process.

Wilson Water will document the allocation process, which will help the future Water Resource Engineer understand it better.

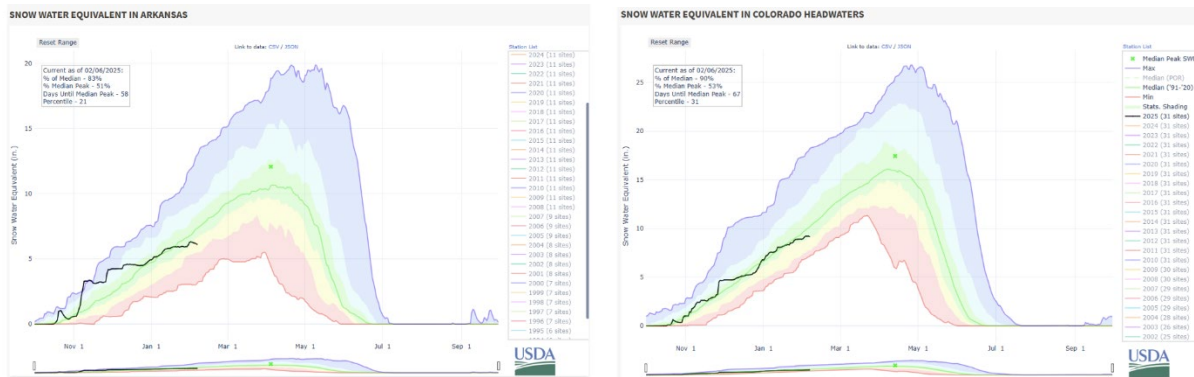
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The District also is upgrading GIS mapping for the Reclamation Reform Act (RRA) irrigation acreage with the help of Elephant Fish consultants, and Ms. Medina is leading that effort. The project seeks to align legal descriptions of eligible acres with maps.

Matt Heimerich asked if the maps could be used in some sort of on-line verification that would streamline the RRA process for landowners. Mrs. Noga answered that RRA requires signatures on forms and will be in place until the Fryngpan-Arkansas Project debt is paid off by the District in 2031. After that, the Committee and the Board will have to make decisions on how water is equitably allocated in future years.

Fryngpan-Arkansas Project Water Supply Outlook

Mrs. Noga shared information about snowpack in the Arkansas River and Colorado River basins with the following charts:



Arkansas River basin storage is slightly below 100 percent, while the Roaring Fork basin, where Project Water comes from, is at about 83 percent. Winter storms are expected to boost that total in the near future.

Mike Holmberg of the Bureau of Reclamation reported that the February 1, 2025 forecast for Fryngpan-Arkansas Project imports is 57,500 acre-feet, which is slightly below normal. However, he noted that more accurate numbers will come in the spring, because March and April are the drivers that determine the May 1 forecast used for allocations.

Mr. Holmberg also talked about the likelihood of a spill at Pueblo Reservoir, which is being driven by several factors, including:

- Timing of movement of water from Turquoise Reservoir to Pueblo Reservoir is dependent on the availability of the Mount Elbert Conduit as Mount Elbert Power Plant repairs continue.
- Winter Water is heavier than usual, and most of the remaining available storage is in Pueblo Reservoir, since most downstream reservoirs other than John Martin Reservoir are filled.
- There is still some irrigation water that could be released prior to April 1.

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Mr. Holmberg said the situation could change quickly. Last week the Joint Use Pool held 16,000 acre-feet, but this week it is at 11,000 acre-feet. "It's a lot of guess work, based on prior years, at this point."

Extension of Joint Use Pool Deadline at Pueblo Reservoir

Mrs. Noga told the Committee that it is too late in the year to ask the Army Corps of Engineers for a waiver to the April 15 deadline to make the entire Joint Use Pool at Pueblo Reservoir available for flood control. However, there has been a change in leadership at the Albuquerque office of the Corps that could lead to more flexibility in the deadline.

Roy Vaughan and Pat Edelmenn explained their roles in the past in dealing with the Corps to ask for flexibility as to when water must be moved from the Joint Use Pool. In the past the Corps was rigid about the conditions, basing them on the number associated with probable maximum flow. Large April storms have occurred in the past that would mean the Joint Use Pool would be needed for flood control.

Mr. Holmberg said the Corps has talked to the Eastern Colorado Area Office about changing the criteria. The Corps now might be receptive to using "Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations" (FIRO) that take real-time data into account, with realistic estimates of weather forecasts and how quickly water could be released in the event that Joint Use Pool space is needed. This is used at Reclamation projects where the Corps takes jurisdiction during flooding in other parts of the country. Current guidelines were last updated in 1996, and new flood control manuals might use the FIRO approach. Pat Edelmenn asked Mr. Holmberg to present the FIRO model to the Board at a future meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

None

INFORMATION ITEMS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

ADJOURN

Mr. Colosimo adjourned the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Woodka,
Senior Policy and Issues Manager