Date: October 14, 2004

From: Water Resource Group, Salt Lake City

To: All Colorado River Annual Operating Plan (AOP) Recipients

Current Status

	September inflow(unreg) (Acre-Feet)	Percent of normal	Midnight October 13 Elevation	Reservoir Storage (Acre-Feet)
Fontenelle	41,000	77	6497.82	283,000
Flaming Gorge	46,000	71	6011.23	2,681,000
Blue Mesa	22,000	40	7477.31	487,000
Powell	322,000	68	3570.89	9,179,000
Navajo	58,000	145	6023.15	941,000

Expected Operation

FONTENELLE - Inflows during September were approximately 40,900 acre-feet (77% of normal). The reservoir elevation has decreased about 2.4 feet during the month of September. Releases are steady at 950 cfs and will likely remain at this level until next spring (March 2005). The reservoir elevation will continue to decline through the fall and winter months to near the minimum power pool elevation of 6463 feet above sea level.

Open forum discussions on Fontenelle operations take place at the "Fontenelle Reservoir Working Group" meetings. The Working Group is a forum for information exchange between Reclamation and other parties associated with the operation of Fontenelle Reservoir. The public is encouraged to attend and express their concerns and interests with regard to Fontenelle Reservoir operation. The next Working Group meeting will be scheduled for April of 2005 and will likely be held in Green River, WY. At this time the exact time and place have not been scheduled. For more information about the Working Group, contact Ed Vidmar at 801-379-1182.

FLAMING GORGE – Unregulated Inflows during the month of September were approximately 46,000 acre-feet (71% of normal). Releases during the month averaged about 1000 cfs per day with peak fluctuations occurring each afternoon up to about 1450 cfs. Evening and Morning releases were approximately 850 cfs. The total volume released during September was 60,400 acre-feet. Beginning in October, releases will resume steady flows of 800 cfs. This is the minimum release rate under normal operations based on the 1992 Biological Opinion and the Interim Operating Criteria dated September of 1974. The current reservoir elevation of Flaming Gorge is steady at approximately 6011.2 and will likely remain at this level for the next several months.

The next "Flaming Gorge Working Group" meeting is to be held on April 21th, 2005 in Vernal, Utah at 10:00 a.m.. The location will be at the Western Park Convention Center. The Working Group is a

forum for information exchange between Reclamation and all other parties associated with the operation of Flaming Gorge Reservoir. The public is encouraged to attend and express their concerns and interests with regard to the operation of Flaming Gorge Reservoir. For more information about the Working Group please contact Ed Vidmar at 801-379-1182.

ASPINALL – September unregulated inflow into Blue Mesa Reservoir was 22,000 acre-feet or 60 percent of average. Hydrologic conditions remain dry with drought still the controlling factor for water management throughout the region. September recorded precipitation was 165 percent of average. The current inflow rate into Blue Mesa Reservoir is about 550 cfs and reservoir releases are averaging about 1,200 cfs. Blue Mesa's present elevation is 7477.4 feet, which corresponds to a storage content of about 487,000 acre-feet.

Currently, releases from Crystal are subject to change due to maintenance activities associated with the Powerplant. At the present the total release is 950 cfs. The Gunnison Diversion Tunnel is taking about 450 cfs while the river flows below the tunnel are about 500 cfs. Due to the severity of the continuing drought in the Gunnison River Basin, river flows through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison are set to meet downstream water flow rights. It is anticipated that canyon flows will decrease to a minimum flow rate of 350 cfs later this month and will remain at that level for most of this fall and into the winter months.

The next meeting of the "Aspinall Unit Working Group" will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at 1:00 PM at the Pavilion Center in Montrose, Colorado, review of last summer and fall reservoir operations, and plans for this winter and next spring 2005 operations will be discussed. These meetings are open forum discussions on the Aspinall Unit reservoir operations with many interested groups participating. Anyone needing further information about these meetings should contact Dan Crabtree in the Grand Junction Area Office at (970) 248-0652.

NAVAJO – Reclamation decreased the release from Navajo Reservoir from 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 350 cfs on Thursday, October 7, 2004, at 9:00 a.m. Releases are made for the authorized purposes of the Navajo Unit, and to attempt to maintain a target base flow through the endangered fish critical habitat reach of the San Juan River (Farmington to Lake Powell).

As per the recommendations from the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program for 2004, and with the current forecast, the target base flow for endangered fish is 400 cfs. The target base flow is calculated as the weekly average of gaged flows throughout the critical habitat area, therefore daily flows of less than 400 cfs may occur at some gages.

Reclamation will continue to closely monitor the hydrologic conditions in the basin. As such, this scheduled release change is subject to changes in river flows and weather conditions.

The current daily reservoir inflow is averaging about 600 cfs and reservoir releases are set at 350 cfs. Presently, the reservoir water surface elevation is 6022.8 feet, which corresponds to a storage content of about 938,000 acre-feet. The monthly precipitation average in the basin above Bluff was 210 percent of average during September.

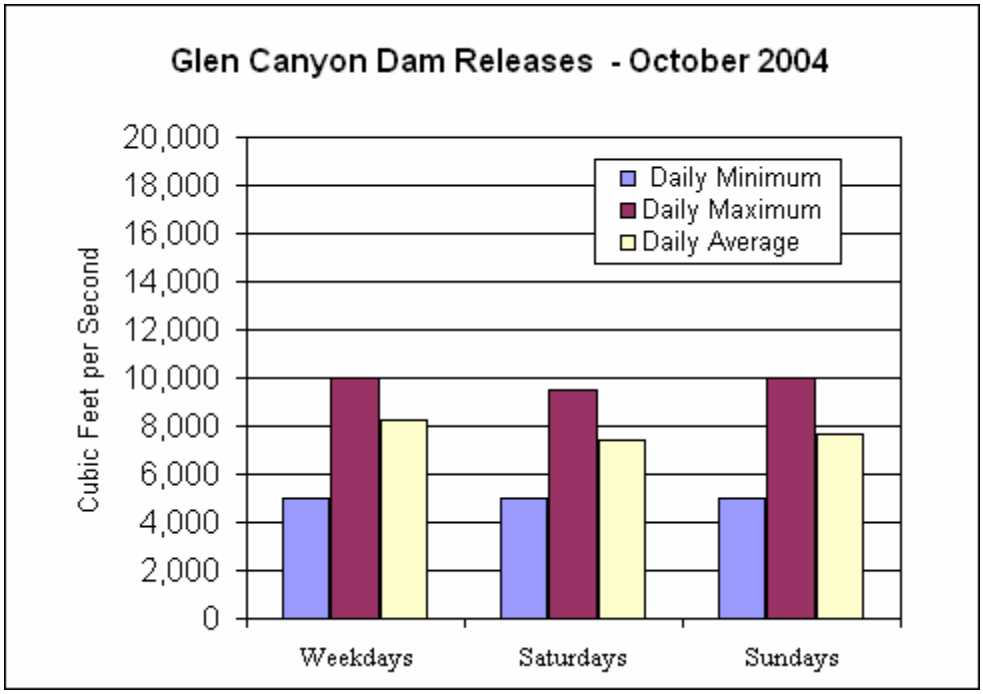
A public meeting on Navajo Reservoir operations was held on Tuesday, August 17, 2004 at 1:00 PM in Farmington, New Mexico. At this meeting, review of last spring and summer reservoir operations, and plans for this fall and winter 2004 operations were discussed. These are open forum discussions

on the operation of Navajo Reservoir with many interested groups participating. Anyone interested in the general operation of the reservoir is encouraged to attend. Please contact Pat Page in Reclamation's Durango, Colorado Office at (970) 385-6560 for information about these meetings or the daily operation of Navajo Reservoir.

Lake Powell Current Status

Glen Canyon Dam Operations

Releases in October 2004 will be similar to those observed in September. A volume of 492,000 acre-feet is scheduled to be released from Lake Powell in September, which is an average of 8,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). On Mondays through Fridays and on Sundays in October, daily fluctuations due to load following will likely vary between a low of about 5,000 cfs (during late evening and early morning off-peak hours) to a high of about 10,000 cfs (during late afternoon and early evening on-peak hours). On Saturdays, releases will likely vary between a low of about 5,000 cfs during off-peak hours to a high of about 9,500 cfs during on-peak hours. However, due to real time power marketing, there may be days in October where on-peak releases are increased to 8,000 cfs, and not raised completely to the scheduled daily peaks listed above. This release pattern is shown in the following graph. It should be noted, however, that actual releases will occasionally deviate somewhat from those displayed due to real-time power system considerations.



The release pattern in November is likely to be similar to the October pattern. Currently, a volume of 476,000 acre-feet is scheduled to be released in November, which is an average of 8,000 cfs. In water year 2004, a total volume of 8.23 million acre-feet was released from Lake Powell.

Upper Colorado River Basin Hydrology

With October 1st comes a new water year. The Colorado River Basin is now entering its 6th year of drought. In July 1999, Lake Powell was essentially full, with reservoir storage at 97 percent of capacity. Since that time, inflow volumes have been below average for 5 consecutive years. The last month when inflow to Lake Powell was above average was September 1999. Total unregulated

inflow to Lake Powell in water year 2004 was only 51 percent of average. Unregulated inflow in water years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 was 62, 59, 25, and 51 percent of average, respectively. Inflow in water year 2002 was the lowest ever observed since the completion of Glen Canyon Dam in 1963.

The summer season in the Colorado River Basin featured cooler than average temperatures with precipitation below average levels. With the exception of the Green River Basin above Flaming Gorge, river flows around the basin were much below average this summer. Unregulated inflow to Lake Powell in July and August was dismal, only 35 and 29 percent of average, respectively. September was a ' wet' month, however, with basinwide precipitation 160 percent of average. It was especially wet in the 4-corners region and the San Juan River Basin during September. River flows increased in response to the September precipitation. Unregulated inflow to Lake Powell in September 2004 was 322,000 acre-feet or 68 percent of average. Inflow to Lake Powell was actually above average for a number of days at the end of September and beginning of October. Unfortunately, there has only been limited precipitation in the basin in October and river flows have receeded. As of October 11, 2004 observed inflow to Lake Powell is running at about 6,900 cfs about 72 percent of what is normally seen in mid-October.

An important factor in reversing the trend of drought is to “wet” the soils in the fall. To increase the efficiency of the snowmelt runoff the following spring, it is necessary to have wetter soils from autumn rains. The past 5 years we have had very dry soils around the basin as we moved into the snow accumulation season. A significant amount of the snowmelt the past 5 years has been absorbed by these dry soils. It will be necessary to have above average precipitation the next two months to reverse this dry soil moisture condition in the Colorado River Basin.

Low inflows the past 5 years have reduced water storage in Lake Powell. The current elevation (as of October 13, 2004) of Lake Powell is 3,571 feet (129 feet from full pool). Current storage is 9.2 million acre-feet (38 percent of live capacity).

Under the current inflow forecast, the water surface elevation of Lake Powell is projected decline the remainder of the year, with current projections showing the lake reaching an elevation of 3,565 feet on January 1, 2005. It should be noted that this projected elevation will likely shift, depending upon weather patterns the remainder of the year.