



International Souris River Board

Conference Call
March 21, 2017

Final Minutes

Board Members:

Russell Boals, Garland Erbele, Lorinda Haman, Frank Durbian, Shelly Wepler, Gregg Wiche, Jeff Woodward, Joe Goodwill, David O'Connell, Mark Lee, John Fahlman

Regrets: Scott Gangl, John-Mark Davies, Nicole Armstrong, COL. Samuel Calkins, David Glatt, Debbie McMechan, David Pattyson

Participants and Technical Support:

Mark Gabriel, Wayne Jenkinson, Bob White, Bruce Davison, Darin Schepp, Lisa Nelson, Laura Diamond, Steve Robinson, Girma Sahlu.

Agenda:

- 1. Spring 2017 Runoff/Flooding Conditions in the Souris River Basin**
- 2. Other Business**

Russell Boals welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. The main topic of the meeting was the spring 2017 runoff /flooding conditions in the Souris River Basin. R. Boals asked each of the agencies to provide an update from their respective jurisdictions as summarized below.

1. Spring 2017 Runoff/Flooding Conditions in the Souris River Basin

Saskatchewan:

John Fahlman reported, as a result of the March 15 forecast made by the Flow Forecasting and Liaison Committee (FFLC), the runoff will be near the median above Estevan and below the median below Estevan. Average runoff above the reservoirs and above average runoff close to the US border which is expected. The March snowfall in Saskatchewan brought the forecast back to the February estimates. Based on the forecast the maximum target flow for Sherwood was 47 m³/s. According to the 1989 Agreement, Boundary Reservoir elevation should not be higher than 557.8 m, which means 7,300 dam³ has to be made available. WSA has to make that

storage available at Rafferty- i.e., divert flow from Boundary into Rafferty. The Rafferty pre-runoff elevation should not be higher than 549.34 m and the reservoir was already below that target elevation (25 cm below target). Therefore, no further releases were needed.

Alameda elevation should not be higher than 557.99 m. That means WSA has to drawdown the reservoir by 2 m by releasing 17,500 dam³. WSA started releasing at 5 m³/s on Friday and stepped it up to 10 m³/s on Monday. That water is now on its way to Sherwood. That is all based on the forecast. Now the freshet is making its way into the system with stronger inflows into Boundary Reservoir than expected from last week's warm temperatures. The inflow into Boundary yesterday was around 30 m³/s. WSA agency opened up the diversion canal and diverted 25 m³/s of that into Rafferty. Boundary is currently at 560.10 m and WSA could fill it to 560.90 m and keep on diverting the extra water into Rafferty Reservoir. Short Creek has also strong response but there is backwater effects caused by ice jam. Before increasing the release from Alameda, WSA will coordinate with the FFLC and the regulators via a conference call tomorrow morning (March 22).

Weather models are suggesting a warm-up next week with a considerable snowmelt. Therefore, WSA is looking at three different operations. On Alameda, continue with the plan to increase from 10 m³/s to 15 m³/s on Wednesday and hold it until April 2. Could step-up to 20 m³/s and be done by March 31st. Or, stop at some time, which could be short of the target. WSA will coordinate with whatever the US regulators want and WSA will accommodate that. The only disadvantage of stopping the release now would be limited storage capacity available to store any water during the rest of the runoff season. At any rate, WSA will try to respect the target flow at the border and not to add to the peak. Will have a revised operation plan after the conference call tomorrow morning. R. Boals asked if there were any question on J. Fahlman's status report. There were none. R. Boals thanked J. Fahlman for his report and for facilitating the FFLC conference call tomorrow.

North Dakota

Steve Robinson, USGS, and Liz Nelson, US ACE, gave a brief overview of runoff conditions in North Dakota. L. Nelson mentioned based on the March 15 forecast they started drawing down Lake Darling to 1593.5 ft and are currently working with Laura Diamond, NWS, and the Flow Forecasting Liaison Committee. Will meet tomorrow to determine what the thoughts are on the releases from Alameda. The target flow, based on the 1989 Agreement, is 2,000 cfs at Minot. R. Boals asked what was happening at the Des Lacs Wildlife Refuge. L. Nelson mentioned there was some uncertainty from a forecasting perspective. Strong melt is expected toward the end of the month, however things are slowing down now due to the cold snap, which is in agreement with the Gamma Surveys done last week. R. Boals asked if measurement were taken in the lower loop of the Souris in North Dakota. Steve Robinson replied they have not done that yet. However, two measurements were made at the Noonan gage yesterday and today. Measurements will be taken tomorrow at Sherwood, Souris River near Foxholm, and downstream gages.

Frank Durbian mentioned the US FWS will continue to assess the situation and work with the FFLC. R. Boals noted that he looked at the website and Westhope was around 300 cfs and F. Durbian agreed. The USGS was there last week and measured 296 cfs. Full flow is expected out of Westhope next week.

Manitoba

Mark Lee mentioned he has received a call from the Melita area from one of the locals who reported that the Souris River was flowing out of its banks and was not sure where the water was coming from – the refuge upstream or some other source. Joe Goodwill stated the Souris River around his area is still frozen with no sign of visible flow. David O’Connell joined the conference call at this point.

D. Connell asked about the flooding situation both in North Dakota and Canada. R. Boals asked the agencies present to provide a brief summary. John Fahlman mentioned based on the forecast WSA will divert all inflow above FSL from Boundary into Rafferty. Rafferty Reservoir is not going to fill this year. WSA will manage the flow out of Alameda to reach the target elevation in conjunction with minimizing the impact downstream of Alameda y working with the US regulators, WSA will either decide to keep the April 2 drawdown target or accelerate or reduce it based on what is best for downstream needs; will know that tomorrow after FFLC meeting. L. Nelson said Lake darling will be drawn down to 1593.5 ft. The target flow at Minot is 2,000 cfs. F. Durbian added the east arm of the Souris River in the US side has considerable snow. J Clark is looking at a couple of feet of snow on the ground. Therefore, expect a bigger melt/flood once the weather warms up. The FFLC conference call is set for tomorrow, March 22, 2017. F. Durbian mentioned the operation plan for Lake Darling will provide some storage for the summer rains to minimize flooding downstream. US FWS has run this idea by the Co-Chairs and will shoot for a June 1st elevation of 1596 ft instead of 1597 ft.

2. Other Business

There was no other business.

Round-table

Garland Erbele mentioned he has no further comments to make.

Jeff Woodward made a point of clarification about apportionment. J. Woodward mentioned there won’t be any change to the split (60/40) that was agreed to earlier.

David O’Connell mentioned he will contact Gary from the International Peace Garden, Manitoba, to make arrangements for the summer face-to-face meeting. Girma Sahlu and Bob White will coordinate and follow-up with D. O’Connell.

Wayne Jenkinson reported that there was no change to the status of the Plan of Study (POS). Still waiting for response from governments. Mark Gabriel echoed the same from the US side.

Next conference call set for April 5, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. CST/ 3:00 p.m. CDT.

The conference call was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. CDT on March 21, 2017