

Minutes

International Souris River Board

Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza
Regina, Saskatchewan
Tuesday, February 17, 2004

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. (CST) by Mr. Boals. Mr. Boals welcomed Board members and other participants.

04-A-01 Review of Agenda

A request was made to add an agenda item concerning an update from the Souris River Bilateral Water-Quality Management Group. The addition was made to agenda item 9.

04-A-02 Approval of Minutes for September 23, 2003, Conference Call

It was moved by Mr. Frink and seconded by Mr. Dybvig that the September 23, 2003, conference call minutes be approved.

Carried

04-A-03 Compilation of Souris River Flows to December 31, 2003

(Mr. House; handout provided)

The total diversion for Long Creek Basin was 13 715 dam³ (11,119 acre-ft), which was a decrease of about 500 dam³ (405 acre-ft) from August 31, 2003. The total diversion for the upper Souris River Basin was 30 635 dam³ (24,835 acre-ft), and the total diversion for the lower Souris River Basin was 4 370 dam³ (3,540 acre-ft). The total diversion for Moose Mountain Creek Basin was 13 090 dam³ (10,610 acre-ft), which was about 4 500 dam³ (3,650 acre-ft) less than on August 31, 2003.

The total diversion for the Souris River Basin in Saskatchewan was 61 810 dam³ (50,110 acre-ft). Recorded flow at Sherwood was 39 480 dam³ (32,010 acre-ft), which was about 4 500 dam³ (3,650 acre-ft) more than in August 2003. Natural flow at Sherwood was 94 475 dam³ (76,590 acre-ft). The United States share on a 40/60 split was 37 790 dam³ (30,640 acre-ft). The United States received 41 260 dam³ (33,450 acre-ft). Thus, the surplus to the United States was 3 470 dam³ (2,810 acre-ft).

Recorded flow for Long Creek at the Western Crossing was 17 900 dam³ (14,510 acre-ft), and recorded flow at the Eastern Crossing was 21 170 dam³ (17,160 acre-ft). Thus, the surplus from the United States was 3 270 dam³ (2,650 acre-ft).

It was moved by Mr. Frink and seconded by Mr. Wiche to accept the natural flow computations as provided.

Carried

04-A-04 Review of 2003 Hydrologic Conditions and Current Flow Conditions

Saskatchewan (Mr. House; handouts provided)

Spring runoff for 2003 started relatively early (mid-March) in most tributaries. Spring runoff volumes varied from below normal in the upper Souris River Basin to near normal in the southern and eastern portions of the basin. However, rapid recessions and the lack of any significant precipitation-induced runoff resulted in below-normal annual volumes in all areas.

Releases were started from Alameda Reservoir on March 21, 2003, and continued until late June. By that time, about 12 000 dam³ (9,730 acre-ft) had been released. Between September 19 and October 28, 2003, a further release of about 4 200 dam³ (3,410 acre-ft) was made. The elevation of Alameda Reservoir on December 31, 2003, was 561.002 m (1,840.54 ft), which was slightly more than 0.1 m (0.33 ft) higher than at the beginning of the year.

The elevation of Rafferty Reservoir on December 31, 2003, was 548.85 m (1,800.66 ft), which was 0.02 m (0.07 ft) less than at the beginning of the year.

Flows for the Souris River near Sherwood fell below the 10-ft³/s (0.28-m³/s) reporting criteria in early July. Environment Canada distributed weekly reports of the storage rates in the major reservoirs in Canada from that time until late September, indicating storage in the reservoirs was not affecting the flows at Sherwood.

Saskatchewan (Mr. Johnson; handouts provided)

Fall precipitation was below normal throughout the Souris River Basin. Winter precipitation for November 1, 2003, to February 1, 2004, varied from above normal in southern areas of the basin to slightly below normal in northern areas of the basin.

Runoff for the spring of 2004 is expected to be slightly below normal for the upper portions of the Souris River Basin and slightly above normal for the lower portions of the Souris River Basin.

North Dakota (Mr. Robinson; handout provided)

Spring snowmelt in the Souris River Basin was well below average. The peak of 650 ft³/s (18.40 m³/s) on March 23, 2003, at Sherwood was ranked 52nd in 73 years of record.

Spring releases from the Canadian reservoirs lasted about 1 month in 2003 compared to less than 1 month in 2002. Subsequent releases were made in late September and October to correct the flow deficit. Mean daily discharge for 2003 was 44.2 ft³/s (1.25 m³/s) compared to 17.3 ft³/s (0.49 m³/s) for 2002.

The low-flow monitoring program on the Souris River near the Eaton Irrigation Project was continued with six sets of measurements at seven locations.

Flows at Sherwood were slightly less than 4.0 ft³/s (0.113 m³/s) near the end of July but recovered slightly in early August. After the peak in August, flows continued to decline to less than 4.0 ft³/s (0.113 m³/s) on August 22, 2003. Flows remained below 4.0 ft³/s (0.113 m³/s) until the September and October releases to correct the flow deficit.

The tabulation of daily flows at Westhope verifies that the 20-ft³/s (0.566-m³/s) minimum flow criterion for June to October for flows entering Manitoba was met.

North Dakota (Ms. Prindiville; handout provided)

Spring runoff was minimal in the North Dakota portion of the Souris River Basin. Only the Wintering River near Karlsruhe exceeded the National Weather Service established flood stage. No flood statements or warnings were issued for the basin during the runoff period.

Precipitation totals for 2003 varied from 11 to 21 inches (280 to 530 mm). These totals were about 69 to 129 percent of normal.

Drought conditions have improved greatly in North Dakota. The Drought Monitor for February 3, 2004, ranks north-central North Dakota as nearly out of the drought.

The outlook for February through April 2004 shows normal temperatures and precipitation.

Manitoba (Mr. Bowering; handout provided)

Spring runoff was near normal for the western tributaries and well below normal for the eastern tributaries. Peak stages on the main stem occurred in late March.

Flows in Manitoba were somewhat above the long-term median during the first 2 weeks of April and during much of June and subsided during early July.

After a review of the runoff conditions, it was decided by the Board that a conference call will be convened in early March to decide if the flow volumes should be split on a 60/40 basis or on a 50/ 50 basis.

04-A-05 Operation of U.S. Refuges and Reservoirs on the Souris River, 2003

(Ms. Estep; handout provided)

The total provisional inflow at Sherwood for January through May 2003 was 25,469 acre-ft (31 416 dam³). The elevation of Lake Darling increased from 1,595.47 ft (486.30 m) on January 1, 2003, to 1,596.76 ft (486.69 m) on June 1, 2003.

The total yearly provisional inflow at Sherwood was 32,020 acre-ft (39 500 dam³). The total outflow was 14,810 acre-ft (18 270 dam³) less than the total measured inflow. On December 31, 2003, the elevation of Lake Darling was 1,595.81 ft (486.40 m).

The total measured inflow to the J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge was 69,909 acre-ft (86 233 dam³). The total outflow at Westhope for 2003 was 52,288 acre-ft (64 497 dam³). The total outflow was 17,621 acre-ft (21 736 dam³) less than the total measured inflow.

In early June, flows from Alameda ceased. Flows throughout the remainder of the month steadily decreased from about 40 to 12 ft³/s (1.13 to 0.34 m³/s). Flows were less than 4 ft³/s (0.11 m³/s) for 5 days in July and from August 22 to September 23, 2003. Apportionment releases were begun September 24, 2003, and averaged 40 to 45 ft³/s (1.13 to 1.27 m³/s) until the end of November.

Draft manuals for the Lake Darling Emergency Action Plan and Standing Operating Plan were written by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in late 2003 and will be finalized in 2004.

04-A-06 Water Allocations for the Souris River During 2003

Saskatchewan (M.r Johnson)

Nothing new to report.

North Dakota (Mr. White; handout provided)

One ground-water permit was issued.

Manitoba (Mr. Bowering; handout provided)

Nothing new to report.

Board members requested a complete list of permitted Souris River water users for the June meeting so that a point-of-reference year would be available for “nothing new to report” statements. Manitoba’s list was submitted at this meeting.

04-A-07 Report by the Natural Flows Method Committee

(Mr. White)

The funding proposal for the procedures manual has not been done. The manual will document the procedures used to calculate the natural flow computations.

The end-of-month storage and evaporation data need to be revised. Mr. Yee will visit with Mr. Renouf regarding the data.

Committee members are Bob Harrison, Ed Eaton, Megan Estep, Steve Robinson, Doug Johnson, Brian Yee, Charlene Prindiville, and Bob White.

04-A-08 Report by the Flow-Forecasting Liaison Committee

(Ms. Prindiville; handout provided)

Updated gaging-station lists were provided. Concern was expressed over possible closures of some Canadian stations in 2005. It was indicated that the stations targeted for possible closure are climate stations and that most are volunteer sites.

A recommendation was made to revise the station lists so that all lists use the same method to indicate which are real-time stations.

04-A-09 Discussion and Update on Water Management Projects

NAWS (Mr. Frink)

Construction on the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) pipeline began in 2002. When work for the 2003 contract is completed, about 19 miles of pipe will be in the ground. Another contract will be let in 2004 for about 10 miles.

Oral arguments on the lawsuit filed by Manitoba are expected to take place this summer. The lawsuit is for a full Environmental Impact Statement rather than the Environmental Assessment that has been completed.

Lake Metigoshe (Mr. White; handout provided)

A status report was presented to the Board. The natural elevation of Lake Metigoshe is 2,135.8 ft (651.0 m), the elevation of the spillway is 2,138.0 ft (651.7 m), and the elevation of the top of the flashboards is 2,139.0 ft (652.0 m).

No operating plan has been developed for Lake Metigoshe Dam at this time. Therefore, the dam is being operated as it has been since construction. Permits cannot be issued until an interest is shown in the land inundated by the water impounded by the dam and the land the dam occupies. Direction is needed from the Director of the Office of Canadian Affairs and the Deputy Director of the United States Transboundary Division on how to proceed with approval of the dam. Mr. White will draft a letter from the Oak Creek Water Board requesting this direction.

Other (Mr. Dybvig)

The outlet gates at Alameda are being refurbished.

Other (Mr. Sauer)

The Souris River Bilateral Water-Quality Monitoring Group is continuing to monitor the Souris River on a reduced scale. Some exceedances from the established standards occurred at the border, but no trends were established except for boron. The protection of aquatic life is being considered.

04-A-10 Status of ISRB Enhanced Mandate Proposal

(Mr. Boals)

The International Souris River Board was asked in 2001 to consider the mandate. After discussions with the Souris River Bilateral Water-Quality Monitoring Group, a proposal was prepared in August 2003. The proposal was presented to the International Joint Commission in October 2003. On December 8, 2003, the Commission wrote a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs asking for indication of acceptance. The Minister indicated the mandate is being worked on. No objections have been heard from the Secretary of State.

04-A-11 Review of 2002 ISRB Annual Report and Preparation of 2003 ISRB Annual Report

(Ms. Martin)

The 2002 International Souris River Board Annual Report was distributed in November 2003.

A draft of the 2003 International Souris River Board Annual Report will be sent to Board members and support staff in early March. Comments on the draft report need to be returned within 1 week so the April deadline for the report can be met. A request will be sent to the appropriate agencies for updated figure data. The data need to be received by early March so the figures can be produced in a timely manner.

04-A-12 IJC Spring Meeting

The meeting will be held on April 19-23, 2004, in Washington, D.C

04-A-13 Other Business

Excerpt from 1999 Post-Flood Report for the Souris River Basin--Included to give a background for the discussion on flood operations:

Operational and Liaison Responsibilities Under the 1989 International Agreement Between Canada and the United States

Under the provisions of Article X of the 1989 International Agreement for Water Supply and Flood Control in the Souris River Basin, the Government of Saskatchewan and the U.S. Department of the Army are designated as the responsible entities for the management of the improvements covered by the Agreement during periods of flood. In Saskatchewan this authority rests with the Saskatchewan Water Corporation (Sask Water), a Provincial Crown Corporation. In the United States this authority rests with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) through its St. Paul District. During non-flood periods, Sask Water is also the responsible entity for operations in Canada, while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the responsible entity in the United States. Section 6.0 of Annex A of the 1989 Agreement provides that these responsible entities will accomplish liaison with interested states, provinces and agencies from time-to-time as to the operation of the project. Additionally, Section 6.0 provides that representatives of the U.S Department of the Army, Saskatchewan Water Corporation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and North Dakota State Engineer (NDSE) have responsibility to monitor reservoir operations under the Agreement.

Further responsibilities of the Governments of Canada and the United States are defined in Article V of the 1989 International Agreement. These responsibilities include consultation with interested states, provinces and agencies concerning preparation of reservoir regulation manuals and periodic review and revision of the operating plan contained in Annex A at 5-year intervals, or as mutually agreed, to maximize the provision of flood control and water supply benefits that can be provided consistent with the terms of the Agreement.

(Mr. Dybvig)

A letter titled "Formal Administration of Flood Operations" was sent to the North Dakota State Water Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority on September 16, 2003. The letter was distributed among those agencies that have designated responsibility for flood operations under the 1989 Agreement for Water Supply and Flood Control in the Souris River Basin. The letter provided a proposal for formalizing the responsibilities for flood control under the Agreement. The Forecasting and Flood Operations Coordinating Group (FFOCCG) currently coordinates flood operations among the various jurisdictions.

This group provides adequate agency representation but there is not a clear line of accountability for the actions of the group under the Agreement. The proposal calls for each of the four designated agencies to formally name an individual to a group that would be accountable for the operations to ensure the operations are carried out in accordance with the operating plan under the Agreement. The agencies agreed to name individuals for that purpose by the next meeting. In response to a question about Manitoba being named to the accountability group, it was noted that Manitoba was not named in the Agreement as having designated responsibilities but that it was represented on the FFOCG. The FFOCG would continue as the main technical body that would provide day-to-day technical coordination of flood operations.

(Col. Ball)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has not officially submitted the 1999 flood report to the Board. The Board can vote to accept or reject the tasks and terms in the 1999 report. After the report is accepted by the Board, Ms. Martin will forward the report to the International Joint Commission.

A motion was made by Mr. Bowering and seconded by Col. Ball to accept the 1999 flood report.

Carried

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers noted that the 2001 flood report will be shorter than the 1999 flood report. No funding has been procured for the preparation of the report.

The Board agreed to hold a conference call on March 16, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. CST to discuss spring runoff and provide guidance on apportionment operations for the runoff period.

04-A-14 Date and Location of June 2004 Meeting

The 2004 spring meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. CDT. The meeting will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

04-A-15 Date of September 2004 Conference Call

The conference call was scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. CDT.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m. CST.

AGENDA
INTERNATIONAL SOURIS RIVER BOARD
Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza
Regina, Saskatchewan
10:00 a.m. CST
February 17, 2004

1. Review of agenda
2. Approval of minutes for September 23, 2003, conference call
3. Compilation of Souris River flows to December 31, 2003
4. Review of 2003 hydrologic conditions and current flow conditions

Saskatchewan
North Dakota
Manitoba

5. Operation of U.S. refuges and reservoirs on the Souris River, 2003
6. Water allocations for the Souris River during 2003
7. Report by the Natural Flows Method Committee
8. Report by the Flow-Forecasting Liaison Committee
9. Discussion and update on water management projects

NAWS
Lake Metigoshe
Other

10. Status of ISRB enhanced mandate proposal
11. Review of 2002 ISRB Annual Report and preparation of 2003 ISRB Annual Report
12. IJC spring meeting
13. Other business
14. Date and location of June 2004 meeting

15. Date of September 2004 conference call

FINAL MINUTES DISTRIBUTION LIST
INTERNATIONAL SOURIS RIVER BOARD
Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza
Regina, Saskatchewan
10:00 a.m. CST
February 17, 2004

MEMBERS FOR CANADA

- *Russell Boals, A/Chief, Water Survey Division, Environment Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan
- *Wayne Dybvig, Vice President, Water Management, Saskatchewan Water Corporation, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan
- *Rick Bowering, Manager, Surface Water, Manitoba Conservation, Winnipeg, Manitoba

MEMBERS FOR UNITED STATES

- *Gregg Wiche, District Chief, U.S. Geological Survey, Bismarck, North Dakota
- *Dale Frink, State Engineer, North Dakota State Water Commission, Bismarck, North Dakota
- *Robert Ball, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, St. Paul, Minnesota

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD

- *Cathy Martin, Technical Editor, U.S. Geological Survey, Bismarck, North Dakota

OTHERS

- *Randy House, Hydrometric Supervisor, Water Survey Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan
- *Brian Yee, Acting Manager, Water Survey Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan
- *Doug Johnson, Director, Basin Operations, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

*Steve Robinson, Chief, Hydrologic Records, U.S. Geological Survey, Bismarck, North Dakota

*Robert White, Water Resource Engineer, North Dakota State Water Commission, Bismarck, North Dakota

Edward Eaton, Hydraulic Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, St. Paul, Minnesota

*Megan A. Estep, Refuge Hydrologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver, Colorado

*Charlene Prindiville, Service Hydrologist, National Weather Service, Bismarck, North Dakota

*Shawn Salm, Environmental Technologist, Water Survey Canada, Regina, Saskatchewan

*Mike Sauer, Senior Scientist, North Dakota Department of Health, Bismarck, North Dakota

Dean Knauer, Refuge Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Berthold, North Dakota

E. A. Bailey, Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section, International Joint Commission, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Lisa Bourget, Engineering Advisor, International Joint Commission, Washington, DC