

October 26, 2001

Colorado Plateau River Guides

Statement on Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Colorado Plateau River Guides (CPRG) has been a leader within the river guiding community, in advocating for river protection and restoration. Guides have a special role to play in educating the public about the problems that rivers face and the urgent need for society to address these problems.

CPRG is the only river guides' group to date that has called for the decommissioning of Glen Canyon Dam. We invite other guide groups to join us.

Glen Canyon Dam and its reservoir represent a major, continuing threat to the ecological integrity of the Colorado River besides the Grand Canyon. This includes the lower sections of the San Juan River, Escalante River and Cataract Canyon, and the entirety of Narrow Canyon and Glen Canyon. This also includes the Colorado River delta, which requires immediate instream flows to avoid total ecological collapse.

The U.S. government has recognized some of the dam's negative impacts, and has responded with an "adaptive management" program pursuant to passage, in 1992, of the Grand Canyon Protection Act and the subsequent 1995 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Glen Canyon Dam operations.

CPRG recognizes and appreciates the research and monitoring of Grand Canyon ecosystem conducted under the auspices of the Adaptive Management Program (AMP). We also recognize the contribution that Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG) has made to promoting sound science within the AMP.

However, despite the good work and intentions of scientists and the GCRG, CPRG remains very concerned that adaptive management is functioning primarily as a delaying tactic that is diverting attention away from the fact that Glen Canyon Dam is responsible for most of the problems in the Grand Canyon. That the best way we know to address these problems is to eliminate their source, i.e. remove the dam.

Problems with the AMP

A collaborative/stakeholder group, known as the Adaptive Management Working Group (AMWG), is the primary decision-making body of the AMP. Its primary roles are to oversee and direct research and monitoring carried out by the Grand Canyon Monitoring & Research Center, and to make recommendations concerning dam re-operations to the Secretary of Interior.

The AMWG is a body of political appointees, including many of the very interests responsible for the dam's construction and for its continued operation. The AMWG will

never support decommissioning Glen Canyon Dam, nor will it support any serious study of the need for decommissioning.

Any adaptive management program focused on addressing the effects of Glen Canyon Dam on the Grand Canyon ecosystem will have major inherent limitations on its effectiveness if it does not study the relative benefits of decommissioning to other "re-operation" scenarios.

The AMWG does not even focus exclusively on mitigating environmental damage to the native ecosystem. Among the AMWG's goals in its recently adopted "strategic plan" are the need to increase hydropower production at the dam, and to provide for maintenance of self-reproducing populations of trout, especially in the Lee Ferry reach below the dam.

CPRG Position on AMWG/AMP

The Adaptive Management Working Group is a political body, not a scientific body, and thus should not be in the position of directing scientific research and monitoring activities at the Grand Canyon Monitoring & Research Center. Scientists, not representatives of the water, power, and recreation industries (as constitute a significant portion of the AMWG membership) should decide the appropriate range and scope of work.

CPRG opposes participation by river guides, scientists, and environmental interests in the AMWG/AMP process, as such involvement tends to communicate support for the process.

We call on all those who support restoration of the Colorado River to join us in opposing the AMWG/AMP. We call on our colleagues in the Grand Canyon River Guides (GCRG) to withdraw their formal membership/representation in the AMWG, and to publicly join us in supporting decommissioning of Glen Canyon Dam.

We emphasize that we support the need for scientific research on restoring the native ecosystem of the Grand Canyon, free of political interference and manipulation by the water, power, and recreational industries. As CPRG is a part of the recreational industry above Glen Canyon Dam, we feel that it is also important to state that CPRG does not believe there will be any negative impact on the recreational boating community in Grand Canyon when Glen Canyon Dam is decommissioned, for we in the upper basin already operate a full season without it. We enjoy the relatively free-flowing characteristics of the Colorado, Green and San Juan rivers above Glen Canyon Dam and the challenges of seasonal river flows. We also look forward to the day when we will have more miles of natural river ecosystems to enjoy and will not have to deal more and more with the negative impacts of the progressive sediment load building in the reservoir behind Glen Canyon Dam.