

SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA
APACHE COUNTY

May 06, 2025

CLERK OF THE COURT

SPECIAL WATER MASTER
SHERRI ZENDRI

B. Powell
Deputy

FILED: May 20, 2025

In re: the General Adjudication
Of All Rights to Use Water in the
Little Colorado River System and Source

Case Nos. CV6417-300 & CV6417-203

In Re: Navajo Nation
Hopi Tribe

**MINUTE ENTRY
STATUS CONFERENCE**

Courtroom 301 – Central Court Building

10:00 a.m. This is the time set for a Status Conference regarding the settlement of this case before Special Water Master Sherri Zendri.

The following attorneys appear in person:

- Judith M. Dworkin and Candace French on behalf of the Navajo Nation
- Guss Guarino on behalf of the United States Department of Justice
- Phillip Londen and Payslie Bowman on behalf of the Hopi Tribe
- Kate Shaffer and Julia Kolsrud on behalf of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
- David Brown and Bradley Pew and Lauren Caster on behalf of the LCR Coalition (“LCRC”)
- John Weldon and Katrina Wilkinson on behalf of Salt River Project (“SRP”)
- Eric Wilkins and Kevin Crestin on behalf of the Arizona State Land Department (“ASLD”)

- Lee Storey on behalf of the City of Flagstaff
- John D. Burnside on behalf of Arizona Public Service (“APS”).
- Karen Nielsen on behalf of Arizona Department of Water Resources (“ADWR”).

Counsel for LCRC, Mr. Brown, reads into the record a list of other parties in the LCR that differs slightly from the litigation. They are as follows:

- Aztec Land and Cattle Company
- Aztec Land Company
- Bar T Ranch
- Bar T Ranch Company Limited Partnership
- City of Holbrook
- City of Show Low
- City of St. Johns
- City of Winslow
- Crater Ranch
- Flying M. Ranch
- Forest Lakes Domestic Water Improvement District
- Grover’s Hill Irrigation District
- J. Albert Brown Ranches
- Lakeside Irrigation Company
- Little Colorado Water Conservation District
- Meteor Crater Enterprises
- Pinetop-Lakeside Sanitary District
- Pioneer Irrigation Company
- Porter Springs
- Show Low/Pinetop-Woodland Irrigation Company
- Silver Creek Irrigation District
- Town of Eagar
- Town of Taylor
- Town of Snowflake
- Town of Springerville

Judith M. Dworkin presents statements to the Court regarding the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024 (“NAIWRSA”) which would settle the water rights to the Little Colorado River (“LCR”) for the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, and the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe. Ms. Dworkin notes Arizona Governor Hobbs approved the settlement in November 2024. Federal legislation was introduced in March 2025, however progress on the legislation is on hold pending confirmations of high-level administrators at Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Reclamation. Because the LCR feeds the Colorado River, negotiations with other Colorado River Basin states are ongoing.

The Navajo Nation is pleased with the settlement. Ms. Dworkin states the federal approval is a long process and recommends periodic updates to the Court.

Counsel for the Hopi Tribe, Phillip Londen, presents statements to the Court about the process. The Hopi Tribe is also positive about the settlement.

Counsel for the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, Julia Kolsrud, makes statements to the Court regarding the process, reiterating the settlement resolves many issues surrounding the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe water rights.

Counsel for Salt River Project (“SRP”), John Weldon, provides the Court with an overview of the entire process in three steps: 1) State/Settling Parties approval; 2) Congressional approval; 3) Revision process by State/Settling Parties to conform with federal legislation. Currently working through “step 2,” which can be a very long process. Mr. Weldon reiterates the federal approval is a long process and also recommends periodic updates to the Court, noting that in his experience, settlement legislation of this type is often resolved during odd-numbered years.

Counsel for LCR Coalition (“LCRC”), David Brown, makes statements to the Court supporting Mr. Weldon’s explanation of the process and notes that the settlement will resolve the water rights claims to the LCR of all the settling parties. Mr. Brown also advocates periodic updates to the Court.

Counsel for City of Flagstaff, Ms. Storey, makes statements to the Court regarding the process and the City of Flagstaff’s support for the agreement.

Counsel for Arizona State Land Department (“ASLD”), Kevin Crestin, makes a brief statement to the Court agreeing with the settlement.

Counsel for Arizona Pubic Service (“APS”), John D. Burnside, fully supports the settlement and applauds the efforts of the parties to get it completed.

Counsel for the United States, Guss Guarino, presents statements to the Court.

The Special Master addresses counsel in the room, thanking all parties for their hard work and acknowledging the process will take some time. Until such time as there is a reason to actually meet for a conference, the Special Master suggests written status reports every six (6) months. If the parties feel a desire for a more interactive report, they can request a status conference be scheduled. All parties agree.

IT IS ORDERED that a status report will be due to the Court **no later than November 7, 2025**.

10:39 a.m. Matter concludes.

A copy of this minute entry is provided to all parties on the Court approved mailing list.

NOTE: All court proceedings are recorded digitally and not by a court reporter. Pursuant to Local Rule 2.22, if a party desires a court reporter for any proceeding in which a court reporter is not mandated by Arizona Supreme Court Rule 30, the party must submit a written request to the assigned judicial officer at least ten (10) judicial days in advance of the hearing, and must pay the authorized fee to the Clerk of the Court at least two (2) judicial days before the proceeding. The fee is \$140 for a half-day and \$280 for a full day.