

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Series: Organization

Part 155: Bureau of Reclamation

Chapter 1: Creation, Objectives, and Functions

Originating Office: Bureau of Reclamation

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1.1 **Creation.** The Reclamation Act (43 U.S.C. 391 et seq.), signed into law on June 17, 1902, authorized the Secretary of the Department of the Interior (Secretary) to locate, construct, operate, and maintain works for the storage, diversion, and development of water for the reclamation of arid and semiarid lands in the Western States. In July 1902, the Secretary approved an organizational plan for a Reclamation Service within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to perform these functions. In March 1907, the Secretary removed the Reclamation Service from the USGS and established it under its own Director. In June 1923, the Secretary created the position of Commissioner of Reclamation and changed the name Reclamation Service to Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). By Secretarial Order No. 3042, dated November 6, 1979, the name was changed to Water and Power Resources Service to reflect changes in mission. Due to public preference, Secretarial Order No. 3064, dated May 18, 1981, restored the name Bureau of Reclamation. The authority of the Commissioner of Reclamation, delegated by the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, is set forth in Part 255 of the Departmental Manual. The Commissioner's delegation of authority to subordinate officers and employees of Reclamation is set forth in memoranda and the Reclamation Manual, Delegations of Authority.

1.2 **Objectives.** The mission of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public. To accomplish this, Reclamation, directly or through assistance to others, applies management, engineering, and scientific skills to achieve comprehensive solutions to water and related resources issues and problems. This requires close cooperation with states, local governments, and other Federal agencies throughout the 17 contiguous Western States; Hawaii; the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and nationwide, where authorized, by enabling legislation or delegation.

Reclamation projects provide for some or all of the following purposes: irrigation, municipal, rural, and industrial water supplies, hydroelectric power generation, water quality protection and improvement, wetlands management and enhancement, river and ground water basin management, fish and wildlife conservation and enhancement, outdoor recreation, flood control, navigation, river regulation and control, desalination, system optimization, and related uses.

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Through contractual agreements with project beneficiaries, Reclamation arranges for repayment to the Federal government, or cost share of reimbursable costs incurred in the construction, operation, and maintenance of water resource projects.

1.3 Functions. The following are the major functions of Reclamation as authorized by enabling legislation or delegation:

A. Managing water resources developed by Reclamation projects; operating and maintaining projects and their facilities, including the modernization, rehabilitation, and betterment of existing projects; and reviewing the operation and maintenance of projects by water users, pursuant to contracts with Reclamation.

B. Meeting future resource needs through the investigation and development of plans (including basin-wide water resource studies) for the management, regulation, conservation, and utilization of water, hydroelectric power, and related land resources.

C. Developing alternative means of supplying water through modification of existing projects, improved system management and optimization, and joint use of surface and ground water supplies.

D. Maintaining a program to enhance water conservation, including providing technical and financial assistance for development of water conservation plans, implementation of activities identified in water conservation plans, and improved understanding of water conservation techniques through demonstration and education activities.

E. Designing and constructing Congressionally appropriated and authorized projects.

F. Administering water research programs (e.g., desalination), both mission-oriented research and basic research national in scope, developing optimum use of resources, and contributing to meeting the nation's present and projected water supply and quality requirements.

G. Undertaking environmental work to identify needed mitigation for new or ongoing project activities; completing regulatory compliance with environmental regulations; and providing environmental benefits and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, in support of continued operations, through the conservation (e.g., protection, restoration, creation, and maintenance) and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources and habitats, including wetlands and water quality.

H. Negotiating, executing, and administering repayment and cost share agreements for project construction, water service, water-user operation and maintenance, and land disposal contracts required by Reclamation law, including acreage-limitation statutes relating to irrigation with project water.

I. Developing, managing, and protecting water and related resources through financial, technical, and operational partnerships with other Federal and non-Federal entities.

J. Managing acquisition, withdrawal, and disposal of real property including interests in land and water to facilitate the development, operation, and maintenance of Reclamation projects and purposes.

K. Providing technical assistance related to water resources development and utilization to foreign countries in cooperation with the Agency for International Development, the Department of State, and other agencies engaged in international technical cooperation, to the extent that funds are available for that specific purpose.

L. Providing engineering, scientific, and technical assistance to the Department of the Interior (Department) Bureaus, other Federal, state, and local government agencies, and Indian tribes.

M. Managing the safety and occupational health program to meet regulatory requirements and organizational needs.

N. Ensuring that Reclamation facilities do not present unreasonable risks to the public, public safety, property, and/or the environment by monitoring, examining, and evaluating the performance of dams in its inventory of facilities.

O. Meeting future water needs through a variety of tools including using impaired water, providing water supplies to areas of the Western States with unmet needs, expanding or stabilizing water supplies through such actions as efficiency, and conservation activities and water banking.

P. Negotiating and executing, as appropriate, water right settlement agreements with Indian tribes.

Q. Managing the Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Program to comply with the laws and regulations required in the Federal workplace that foster a healthy and productive organization.

R. Ensuring the security of all personnel and facilities in accordance with Federal laws, rules, regulations, and Departmental requirements.