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RECLAMATION

NEWS RELEASE

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Reclamation announces winter flow plans for North Platte River

MILLS, Wyoming— Reclamation will be running slightly lower-than-normal flows in the North Platte River between Gray Reef Dam and Glendo Reservoir from October 2021 through March 2022 due to drought conditions and to conserve for contract water deliveries in 2022.

North Platte River flows below Gray Reef Dam are normally decreased during September to 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) and that flowrate is maintained through the winter. The releases from Gray Reef Dam and natural inflows are stored in Glendo Dam downstream until the following spring and summer when they are released to water contractors. This year, Reclamation decreased Gray Reef releases to 450 cfs in October in an effort to store water supplies in the larger reservoirs in the upper North Platte System.

The 2021 Water Year (October 2020 – September 2021) on the North Platte River saw uncharacteristically low inflows in the upper North Platte system, which resulted in reduced total North Platte system carry-over storage to 86 percent of the average.

Glendo Reservoir storage is slightly above average, and the small reduction in Gray Reef releases for the winter will decrease the likelihood of the need to release water in excess of water deliveries from Glendo Reservoir in 2022. The small reduction in winter flow should improve the likelihood of Reclamation being able to conduct a flushing flow to improve trout habitat conditions, if requested by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Reclamation tries to accommodate these requests when possible without loss to contracted water supply or power generation.

Reclamation operates its seven reservoirs on the North Platte River as a system and provides irrigation supply to hundreds of thousands of acres, power generation supplying tens of thousands of homes, municipal and industrial water supply, recreation, and other benefits. In preparation for another year of drought, Reclamation is proactively modifying water operations as we begin the 2022 Water Year.

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