

reservoir site. The rather sparse population of fur animals include raccoons, foxes, badgers, muskrats, and beavers. A few rails and waterfowl are found in the river bottoms during fall and spring migrations. Low densities of game species and lack of access limit hunting, and losses therefore would be low.

The above analysis is based upon the investigations and experience of Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife biologists who have been active in project planning for more than 20 years. It also is supported by the experience of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish biologists who are intimately familiar with the project area.

If this project enters detailed studies, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, in cooperation with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, will intensively investigate the project and will make more detailed recommendations on means of preventing losses and enhancing benefits to fish and wildlife.

26. Have the claims for benefits to fish and wildlife been checked by a qualified ecologist?

The people who prepared the fish and wildlife analysis for Hooker Reservoir are qualified fish and wildlife biologists. One of them is a Ph. D. in wildlife management. Others who contributed to the study at both State and Federal levels have graduate training in fish and wildlife ecology.

27. As planned, the Hooker Reservoir would encroach on the Gila Wilderness and Primitive Areas, and in doing so would be destructive of habitat for the native flora and fauna, thus altering the native ecology which it is the function of these areas to preserve. Are the benefits claimed for "fish and wildlife" adequately discounted for this negative effect?

As indicated in the answer to question No. 25, there were no benefits to wildlife. Benefits to fishing were derived after consideration of losses. None of the sport fishes in the project area are native species. In addition, the aquatic habitat appears to have changed over the years as a result of changes in precipitation and the impact of past land use. There also have been changes in wildlife species and their abundance which cannot be specifically identified. It generally appears that the project site does not maintain an undisturbed native flora and fauna.

28. What is the meaning of "wildlife" as used in the claims for benefits from the Hooker project?

"Wildlife" as used in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife's report referred to the big game, upland game, fur animals, and wildlife referred to in question No. 25. Wildlife includes all vertebrate animal life other than fishes, but the wildlife other than those listed above usually are not susceptible to economic evaluation; however, it recognizes them and their importance in its investigations.

29. How could Hooker provide benefits for wildlife under any definition of the term?

Other than for waterfowl, Hooker Reservoir does not provide benefits to wildlife; rather there are minor losses as stated in the answer to question No. 25.

30. What is the meaning of "fish" as used in the claims for benefits from the Hooker Project?

Fish include all finned vertebrates. Although only those brought to creel are mentioned, the non-game species were considered in the analysis. There was no important loss anticipated for non-game species.

31. Is the claim for benefits to "fish" based on prospective improvement of a habitat for native water animals, or does it refer to improve facilities for stocking sport fish for "put and take" recreational fishing?

Benefits for fishing are based upon both improvement of habitat and stocking of fish. Incidentally, there have been so many introductions of fishes in this area that it would be difficult to define native water animals. There would be an initial stocking of warmwater species in the reservoir. These fishes would be expected to be self-perpetuating. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish also has calculated annual fish requirements of 46,555 pounds of trout comprising 512,000 6-inch fish in the reservoir, stilling basin, and downstream; 900,000 3-inch fish in the reservoir and downstream; and 1,800,000 1-inch fish in the reservoir.

35. Has the prospective value of the Hooker Reservoir for conventional outdoor recreation and sport fishing been assessed by a qualified expert or experts on these subjects?

Qualified fish and wildlife biologists of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife participated in the field studies, and their work in turn was reviewed and found adequate by other highly trained biologists. Some of the biologists have had as much as 20 years experience in fish and wildlife management problems on water development projects.