

• **Water Resource Management Group Manager's Update**

Summary

Following is a summary of Water Resource Management Group key activities for the month of October 2004.

Detailed Report

Planning

California Water Plan Update (Bulletin 160) - On October 14, staff participated in a briefing by the California Department of Water Resources on the status of the California Water Plan Update. The public release of the draft Water Plan Update has been delayed to December 2004 as a result of the change in state administration and DWR management. The Plan will have three scenarios with three levels of water demands for 2030. Water budgets will be presented for 10 hydrologic regions and the mountain counties, as well as the entire state. The Plan will include 25 water management strategies, either currently implemented or for the future. This Plan Update will have five volumes: Volume 1 – Strategic Plan that will include a short-term action plan and a longer-term implementation plan; Volume 2 – Resource Management Strategies; Volume 3 - Regional Reports; Volume 4 – Reference Guide; and Volume 5 – Technical Guide. After the release of the public review draft in December 2004, DWR plans to hold public meetings in January and February 2005 with the final Water Plan Update scheduled for April 2005.

System Overview Study - The System Overview Study evaluates the system improvements required to meet water supply reliability, water quality goals, and service objectives and policies. The findings for this study are scheduled to be completed by December 2004. Progress in this study effort includes updating water demand forecasts according to the demographic and economic projections developed in 2004 by the Southern California Association of Governments and the San Diego Association of Governments. In addition, the peaking factors for system deliveries, which affect the capacity and timing of facilities, are being assessed according to the historical record of water treatment plant effluent flow data and the meter readings for service connections. The meter data provides a better indication of demand patterns and eliminates the variability caused by changing system operations.

Regional Urban Water Management Plan (RUWMP) - Metropolitan initiated meetings with those member agencies that have requested follow-up meetings to discuss the initial set of data for demographics, local supplies and retail demands that was distributed at the September 9, 2004, RUWMP kickoff meeting. To date, staff has met with seven agencies and staff anticipates completing this initial round of data coordination by mid-November. Data analysis is scheduled for completion by Spring 2005 and the draft 2005 RUWMP should be available for review by the member agencies in July 2005. The Legal Department will organize a meeting with member agencies to discuss the requirement of the Urban Management Planning Act and its relationship with SB 221 and SB 610 requirements.

State Water Project

California Performance Review - Following coordination with member agencies and direction from the Executive Committee, staff provided written comments regarding the draft California Performance Review recommendations. Staff continued to work with the State Water Contractors to craft a unified message regarding the State Water Project recommendation.

Colorado River

Palo Verde Irrigation District - In support of implementing Board approved water supply and conservation programs to increase reliable Colorado River supplies, staff is proceeding with the implementation of the program with the Palo Verde Irrigation District. Program implementation is proceeding on schedule. The landowner sign-up process, initiated on August 31 will end November 3. To date, over 75 percent of the irrigated acreage in the Palo Verde Valley has applied to participate in the program. Land fallowing is expected to be initiated in January 2005 and be fully implemented by July 2005.

Conservation

California Friendly Landscape Program - In pursuit of new standards to support regional conservation and local resource improvements outlined in Metropolitan's Business Plan, the United States Bureau of Reclamation, Metropolitan, and Eastern Municipal Water District have reached a major milestone in the implementation of the California Friendly™ Landscape Pilot Rebate Program for New Homes. KB Home is the first builder to execute a rebate agreement, under which it will install water-efficient landscapes in all 79 homes in its "Valdemosa" development in the City of Temecula. The front yards of all homes and backyards of model homes will be designed and installed in accordance with program specifications. Features include low-water-using plants from an extensive plant palette and state-of-the-art irrigation systems (including weather-based irrigation controllers and high-efficiency sprinklers). Model homes are scheduled for completion by March 2005. Production units are scheduled to come online from September 2005 through April 2006. The combined outdoor water conservation elements featured in this program could reduce water use in new homes by as much as 25 percent relative to other comparable tract homes. Under this pilot program, ongoing water use will be monitored to determine actual water savings.

Protector del Agua - In an effort to implement and administer conservation programs through new avenues, staff is finalizing a consultant agreement to develop an online version of the residential Protector del Agua class, which would be made available on Metropolitan's website. The one-hour training session would support efforts to provide alternative instruction methods and cover key objectives through an interactive approach including irrigation system design, maintenance, and native plants.

Staff is also developing, for Southern California Home Depot garden experts, training sessions focusing on native plant selection, installation and maintenance. Five sessions are scheduled in November throughout Metropolitan's service area to prepare Home Depot staff to provide training at individual stores on California Friendly and native plants, which use about two-thirds less water than average plants. Training locations include the Water Conservation Garden – El Cajon (San Diego County), Las Virgenes Municipal Water District – Calabasas (Ventura County), Inland Empire Utilities Agency – Chino Hills (Riverside County), Southern California Water Company – Anaheim (Orange County), and Metropolitan Headquarters at Union Station (Los Angeles County).

Local Resources

In managing our existing water management incentive programs, staff has initiated steps to adjust or withdraw Metropolitan's contractual commitments to Local Resources Program projects in response to the General Auditor's assessment of program effectiveness and performance. Project agreements totaling about 2,700 acre-feet per year were terminated for the South Laguna Reclamation Expansion Project, Santa Monica Groundwater Treatment Facility and Rancho Santa Fe Reclaimed Water System. On several projects, member agencies and project sponsors have requested more time to review staff findings and recommendations for reducing Metropolitan's financial commitment.