

- Water Resource Management March 2006 Activity Report

## Summary

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The following is a summary of Water Resource Management Group key activities for the month of March 2006.

## Detailed Report

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### State Water Project Contract Administration

**Oroville FERC Relicensing Settlement Agreement** – Consistent with policy adopted by the board and the General Manager's Business plan, Metropolitan and other stakeholders executed a settlement agreement that addresses key issues such as fish, wildlife, recreation, water quality and cultural resources. Director Peterson and the General Manager along with over 150 public and agency staff participated in a March 21<sup>st</sup> signing ceremony. Signatories to the agreement included:

- Twenty-three SWP contractors and the State Water Contractors, Inc.
- Two Native American tribes
- California Departments of
  - Boating and Waterways
  - Fish and Game
  - Parks and Recreation
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Department of Interior
- One member of the State Water Resources Control Board (Art Baggett)
- American Rivers
- City of Oroville
- Feather River Recreation and Parks District
- Several local Oroville groups:
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Downtown Business Association
  - Parks Commission
  - Redevelopment Agency
  - Rotary Club

Although Butte County was not a signator, it is expected that the parties adopting settlement provides a strong demonstration to FERC that agency and local issues have been adequately addressed. The agreement was submitted to FERC on March 24 with a goal of obtaining a new license by January 2007.

### Lake Perris EIR

In March, Metropolitan issued a DEIR for two water quality improvement projects for Lake Perris. This action is a continuation of an effort, which commenced in 2000, to work with other State agencies to ensure access to Metropolitan's supplies in the lake. The projects will improve water quality by reducing microbial contamination risks resulting from body-contact recreation and by increasing levels of dissolved oxygen in the lower portions of the reservoir. Microbial contamination and low dissolved oxygen levels are most prominent in the summer months and have impaired Metropolitan's ability to use lake water. The work is being partially funded by grants issued by the State Water Resources Control Board.

### Conservation

**Water and Energy Symposium** – Metropolitan participated in an energy and water symposium co-sponsored by the California Public Utilities Commission, California Energy Commission, Department of Water Resources, and California Independent System Operators. The meeting addressed opportunities for utilities to work together to

## Board Report (Water Resource Management March 2006 Activity Report)

more effectively manage water and energy use. Staff provided an overview of Metropolitan's existing water conservation programs, related energy savings and future opportunities for partnering with energy utilities. Staff has been working with state energy officials to explore partnership arrangements in new areas with mutual benefits as identified in the conservation strategy plan.

**Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Program** – Weather-based irrigation controller (WBIC) activity increased during March with about 300 rebates provided to member agencies. Over the past several months, Metropolitan has explored different methods to distribute WBICs to the general public. One successful strategy has been direct distribution of controllers to homeowners who attend Metropolitan's landscape irrigation efficiency training. Since January, more than 130 units have been distributed through the Protector del Agua program. In addition, staff is working with member agencies to coordinate several large distribution events where residents would exchange existing controllers for new, state-of-the-art equipment. This new conservation opportunity is identified as an important landscape initiative under Metropolitan's five-year conservation strategy plan to help meet regional resource targets outlined in the Integrated Resources Plan

### **Resource and Facility Planning**

**Integrated Area Studies** - Staff continues to participate in monthly meetings for the Central Pool and Riverside load areas. As reported to the Board at its March meeting, staff is focusing on the projected needs, objectives criteria, and level of service discussions. In March, staff presented an analysis showing the predicted need for facilities by 2030. To effectively meet demands, this need would be filled by regional or local projects, or by changes in operations by Metropolitan or its member agencies. Metropolitan staff continues to meet with member agencies compiling groupings or portfolios of projects and/or operational changes necessary to meet demands in the future. In addressing the level of service issue, Metropolitan staff presented a policy matrix that showed the history of how decisions on facilities have been made by Metropolitan in the past. This discussion will continue in future meetings. During the March meeting, the Metropolitan and member agency staffs began to jointly formulate and define the criteria for evaluating alternatives. This effort is scheduled to be completed in April. Metropolitan staff is gathering project information from the member agencies that is needed by the end of March to ensure the ability to meet the proposed schedule. This information will then be used to develop the facilities portfolios. Evaluation of the project portfolios is proposed to be completed by June 2006.

**Groundwater Resource Study** - During February 2006, staff worked with member agencies and groundwater basin managers to finalize the groundwater resource study questionnaire. The final questionnaire was emailed to all member agencies and 12 identified basin managers and participants on February 17 with responses requested by March 17.

Available information has been submitted for Central and West Coast basins, Ventura County basins, and five small basins in the southern Orange and San Diego counties. Five other basin areas have indicated that responses to the questionnaire are expected to be submitted by the end of March.

### **Desalination**

**Seawater Desalination** - Metropolitan executed two Seawater Desalination Program agreements with West Basin Municipal Water District for 28,000 acre-feet per year and Municipal Water District of Orange County for 20,000 acre-feet per year. An agreement with Long Beach Water Department was previously executed in August 2005 for 10,000 acre-feet per year. Staff will continue to work with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and San Diego County Water Authority to finalize agreement terms and execute similar incentive agreements. In consultation with member agencies, staff is also developing action items that could be pursued to facilitate relevant regional issues and assist member agencies in implementing seawater desalination projects.