



- Colorado River Management Report

## Summary

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This Report provides a summary of the activities related to the Colorado River during May.

## Detailed Report

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### **Metropolitan to Provide Funds for Environmental Compliance Activities of Yuma Desalting Plant**

In May, Metropolitan, along with Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD), agreed to provide funding to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for a portion of the environmental compliance activities associated with the one-year pilot operation of the Yuma Desalting Plant. Each agency contributed \$110,000 to Reclamation, allowing for completion of the necessary NEPA requirements. It is anticipated that the environmental compliance activities will be completed by August, allowing the pilot operation preparation to begin in September. Metropolitan, along with SNWA and CAWCD, will consider entering into a funding agreement with Reclamation for the pilot operation in late summer; mostly likely at its August Board meeting. The agreement would allow Metropolitan to obtain up to 25,000 acre-feet of storage credits in Lake Mead in exchange for its share of funding the pilot operation of the Yuma Desalting Plant.

### **Imperial Irrigation District Hosts Water Conservation Tour**

On May 22, Imperial Irrigation District (IID) hosted a meeting with staff from Metropolitan and other water agencies to demonstrate the extraordinary conservation programs it is implementing this year to develop "Intentionally Created Surplus Water" (ICS) under the 2007 Interim Guidelines for Colorado River operations and related agreements. While expanding its land fallowing program to transfer water to SDCWA, IID is constructing and operating a seepage recovery program to capture water that is currently lost to the Salton Sea. IID plans to create 25,000 acre-feet of ICS water that would be stored in Lake Mead, the maximum amount allowed under the agreement for IID. Under an agreement with California water agencies, Metropolitan has the option to take delivery of any ICS water created by IID instead of having the water stored in Lake Mead. Metropolitan would have to return the water to IID upon request, unless Metropolitan has implemented a water supply allocation plan during that year. For 2009, Metropolitan will take delivery of any and all ICS water created by IID and will not be obligated to return such water until the water supply allocations to its member agencies has been lifted.

### **Reclamation Advances Basin States Joint Colorado River Basin Water Supply Study**

As part of Reclamation's Water for America Initiative, the Basin States submitted a joint proposal to study water supply augmentation options under the Basin Studies Program. Under the Program, which provides federal matching funds for studies evaluating options to reduce supply and demand imbalances, Reclamation is evaluating different proposals to determine which ones to further evaluate before making a final decision to provide matching funds. On May 14, the Basin States were notified by Reclamation that its proposed study was among those selected for Step 2 of the evaluation process. A more detailed study proposal is required to be submitted to Reclamation by mid-June, and Reclamation will determine which studies to move forward in July. Up to \$1 million in matching federal funds is available for each study.

### **Metropolitan among Agencies Receiving Secretary of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award**

On May 7, Metropolitan and organizations who worked collaboratively on developing the *Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and the Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead* received the Secretary of the Interior's annual Partners in Conservation Award in Washington, D.C. The award recognizes conservation achievements made possible through partnering among a diverse range of entities including Federal, State, local governments, and nongovernmental entities. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar presented the award to each agency

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Colorado River Storage Operation**

Snowfall in the Colorado River Basin finished slightly above normal this season, resulting in an increase in total system storage in the Colorado River Basin of about one million acre-feet since last year at this time. Due to the operating rules in the Interim Guidelines, all of the increase in storage has accrued to the Upper Basin reservoirs, principally Lake Powell. Lake Mead is actually lower than it was last year, and for the first time in more than 40 years, the reservoir fell below elevation 1,100 feet, which is about 11.3 million acre-feet (44% of capacity). Lake Mead is projected to continue to drop down to 1,092 feet by the end of summer, while Lake Powell increases (Lake Powell is currently at 59% of capacity). The reason for the disparity in storage of the two reservoirs is that Lake Powell must first reach a certain level for additional releases to be made to Lake Mead, and Lake Powell will not hit that level this year. The rules governing reservoir operations were adopted in the Interim Guidelines and agreed to by all states. It is most likely that Lake Powell will release additional water next year, and Lake Mead will recover. During the summer of 2009, many boat ramps in Lake Mead will become inoperable, and the National Park Service has expressed concern about the impact to the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.