



- Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This Report provides a summary of the activities related to the Colorado River during July and early August.

Detailed Report

Metropolitan Extends Palo Verde Valley Fallowing Level at Maximum Amount

In July, Metropolitan sent notice to Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) farmers to continue the maximum fallowing level allowed under the long-term program for another two years, through the summer of 2012. This fallowing level will provide Metropolitan about 115,000 acre-feet of water per year. For the current fiscal year, last April Metropolitan issued a one-year increase in the fallowing amount for an additional 65,000 acre-feet. The fallowing call made this month does not affect the one-year program. During the next several months, Metropolitan staff will evaluate whether to negotiate with PVID to extend the one-year program.

Metropolitan Funds Additional Conservation Activities by IID

Metropolitan entered into an agreement with Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to fund conservation activities implemented by IID in 2008 and received the conserved water. Metropolitan and IID have a long-standing agreement in which Metropolitan funds IID conservation programs and receives 105,000 acre-feet of water each year (although Coachella has a right to call up to 20,000 acre-feet of that water). During 2008, IID implemented additional conservation activities for its own use, but did not end up needing the water. Metropolitan and IID reached agreement in August for Metropolitan to reimburse IID \$249,000 for their conservation-related activity costs and Metropolitan received 2,141 acre-feet of additional conserved water. Because this agreement was an after the year adjustment and no additional water could be diverted during 2008, the water was added to Metropolitan's ICS storage account in Lake Mead and will be delivered during 2009.

IBWC Hosts Binational Workshop to Advance Mexico and U.S. Water Management Proposal

On August 4 and 5, the International Boundary and Water Commission hosted a workshop with representatives of the Basin States and Mexico to discuss a water management proposal to benefit both countries. Representatives from Mexico presented a proposal which included a discussion of how Mexico would like to store water in Lake Mead and how desalination programs in Mexico could be jointly funded by U.S. agencies and the resulting water could be shared by both countries. It was the first time that the U.S. had seen a detailed proposal from Mexico outlining how the produced water could be shared between the two countries. Commissioner Salmon, from the Mexican section of the IBWC, summarized Mexico's view of the meeting by stated that Mexico is very interested in the Binational Process and has put much effort into developing a proposal. Mexico is interested in exploring both agricultural conservation and seawater desalination projects through the process and is looking for greater support from the United States on addressing environmental issues.

Representatives from Reclamation and the Colorado River Basins States will meet in September to develop a formal response to the Mexican proposal. They will also add development of criteria for determining shortages to Mexico to the agenda for the next binational meeting, which is being planned for October.

Basin States' Proposal Selected for Federal Cost Share Program

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. In early August, the States were informed that they were selected to receive federal matching funds to evaluate options to reduce supply and demand imbalances within the Colorado River Basin. Costs for the \$2 million study will be split 50-50 with the federal government and the Basin States, which each state making a contribution, either with cash or in-kind services. The States are working with the Bureau of Reclamation to refine the study, which will officially begin in October.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar Temporarily Halts New Mining Development in the Grand Canyon Area

On July 20, Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar announced a two-year hold on new mining claims on nearly 1 million acres adjacent to Grand Canyon National Park. This two-year period will allow federal agencies to perform the appropriate scientific studies and environmental analyses, and gain further input from various stakeholders, to determine if a longer ban on mining interests in this area is warranted (under current mining law, the Secretary of Interior can withdraw lands for a period of up to 20 years; a permanent withdrawal requires Congressional action). The Department of Interior's news release can be found at:

http://www.doi.gov/news/09_News_Releases/httpwww.doi.govnews09_News_Releases072009.html

Metropolitan sent a letter to Secretary Salazar highlighting its concerns on the issue of uranium mining and to request that the Department of Interior carefully evaluate the implications on Colorado River water quality and include broad stakeholder review of environmental impact analyses, prior to any authorizations of exploration or mining. Secretary Salazar's actions to temporarily halt mineral entry while allowing the necessary studies and analyses to be conducted is consistent with Metropolitan's request and is a positive step in helping to ensure the protection of the Colorado River.

House Subcommittee holds Legislative Hearing on Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act of 2009

A House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a Legislative Hearing on July 21 to hear testimony on H.R. 644, a bill introduced in January 2009 by Arizona Representative Raul Grijalva (Subcommittee Chairman), to permanently withdraw nearly 1 million acres of land in areas around Grand Canyon National Park from future mining activities. Nine witnesses testified at the hearing, seven of which were generally in favor of the withdrawal. Metropolitan did not testify at this legislative hearing; however, in addition to previous letters sent to the Secretary of Interior, Metropolitan included testimony on the topic of uranium mining in the Grand Canyon area at a May 27 Congressional Field Hearing on Colorado River Water Quality Issues. At the July 21 legislative hearing, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) provided testimony, focusing on the protection of the Colorado River drinking water source. SNWA coordinated with Metropolitan prior to the hearing to incorporate Metropolitan's previous comments and recommendations on this issue.

Basin States Send Letter to Interior Expressing Concern over National Park Position

On July 27, the Colorado River Basin States and several water agencies, including Metropolitan, sent a letter to Secretary Salazar and several senators expressing concern over a recent National Park Service position that it should be co-operator of Glen Canyon Dam along with the Bureau of Reclamation. The Service has taken that position because releases from Glen Canyon affect the streamflow in Grand Canyon National Park. In their letter, the Basin States pointed out the numerous agreements controlling allocation of water from the Colorado River and the history of the States working with the Department of Interior to cooperatively implement numerous agreements, including the QSA and the recent Colorado River operating guidelines which govern releases from Lake Powell. The states offered to discuss the issues further with the federal government to meet the Park Service needs within the legal framework of the Colorado River.