



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This Report provides a summary of the activities related to the Colorado River during March 2010

Detailed Report

Metropolitan Staff Discuss Water Supply Options for Meeting Solar Energy Development Needs

In March, the Colorado River Board (CRB) hosted a meeting with representatives from Metropolitan and two proposed solar energy developments within California near the Colorado River. Because the proposed solar energy developments could be considered to be pumping Colorado River water in the future, the California Energy Commission will not approve the projects until they secure a long-term water supply. After evaluating several options, the CRB recommended that the solar energy developments reach an agreement with Metropolitan to obtain a water supply. Under the proposal discussed, the solar energy developers would fund the development of a new water supply (e.g., brackish water desalination in the Coachella Valley) and provide that water to Metropolitan, which would then exchange water to the solar energy developments. These developments, which could need up to 3,000 acre-feet annually, would acquire the water by pumping groundwater that is considered to be Colorado River water.

Staff from Metropolitan and the solar energy companies agreed to explore this proposal further, and have arranged to meet in April to discuss potential terms for an agreement. As the solar energy companies need a secure water supply in the next few months, any proposed agreement would need to be developed quickly. If a proposed agreement is reached, it would be brought to the Board for consideration in the near future.

Phase I of Rosarito Beach Desalination Feasibility Study Complete

The first phase of a study to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a seawater desalination plant near Rosarito Beach in Baja California with a pipeline to San Diego County has been completed. The study, which was jointly funded by Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project, San Diego County Water Authority, and Metropolitan, concluded that there were no fatal flaws preventing the project from moving forward, and that there is sufficient demand in Mexico and the United States for a 50 mgd desalination plant. A couple of pipeline routes were identified, and sufficient electrical power is available for the site. It was also determined that there are complex cross-border permitting issues.

The Phase I funding agencies will meet and decide whether to fund a second phase of the study, which would include cost estimates to build a pipeline and provide water to San Diego County. Included in the study is examining opportunities for agencies to fund a portion of the desalination plant and in exchange receive an amount of Colorado River water. It is anticipated that, if approved, Phase II would be completed by the end of this year.

Supplemental Palo Verde Valley Following Program Comes to End

In April, the one-year emergency program to temporarily increase following in the Palo Verde Valley came to an end. Last year, due to drought conditions and reduced Colorado River supplies, Metropolitan and Palo Verde Irrigation District entered into a one-year emergency program to increase the following level in the Palo Verde Valley from 29 percent to 44 percent. That program proved successful, with an additional 65,000 acre-feet of water being made available to Metropolitan during the current fiscal year. Some of that water was delivered and some stored in Lake Mead for future use. Because of increased Colorado River supplies available to Metropolitan, the program was not extended another year. If the need arises in a future year, the program could resume, subject to future approvals.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Drop 2 Reservoir and Yuma Desalting Plant Dedication April 28

Reclamation along with Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), Central Arizona Project (CAP), and Metropolitan will host a dedication event for the completion of the Drop 2 Reservoir Project and startup of the Yuma Desalting Plant on April 28, 2010 in Yuma, Arizona. The event will include visits to both facilities, which are testaments of the cooperative relationship that has developed among SNWA, CAP, and Metropolitan. Once completed, Drop 2 Reservoir has been estimated to conserve 70,000 acre-feet annually, while the Yuma Desalting Plant will produce about 30,000 acre-feet of water during the pilot one-year operation.

Jerry Zimmerman to Retire April 30

Jerry Zimmerman, the Executive Director of the Colorado River Board of California for the last 20 years, announced that he will be retiring on April 30, 2010. Mr. Zimmerman was instrumental in the development of California's plan to reduce its use of Colorado River water to 4.4 million acre-feet. He zealously represented the state's interests in resolving issues with Arizona, Nevada, and the Upper Basin States, and was key in successfully developing and implementing the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Plan. At its April meeting, the Colorado River Board will consider whether to retain Mr. Zimmerman for a period of time while the Board searches for a successor.