



## ● **Colorado River Management Report**

### **Summary**

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This report provides a summary of the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources during November 2010.

### **Detailed Report**

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#### **Metropolitan Completes Recovery of Water Stored in Arizona Demonstration Program**

In November, the final amount of water stored with the Arizona Groundwater Bank was recovered and provided to Metropolitan by exchange of Colorado River water. The water was originally stored in 1992 under a demonstration program whereby Metropolitan paid Arizona to divert additional Colorado River water and store it with the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA). Metropolitan retained those storage credits and first attempted to recover the water in 2004. At that time, the AWBA refused to honor the agreement, as relations between Arizona officials and Metropolitan were not good when an agreement to share in Colorado River shortages was terminated. In 2007, however, as a new cooperative working relationship developed between the Central Arizona Project, the AWBA, and Metropolitan, the agencies reached agreement on delivering nearly 90,000 acre-feet of water to Metropolitan over a four-year period. With the final delivery completed in November, the agreement expired.

#### **Palo Verde Valley Community Improvement Funds being Invested in Local Projects**

After a multi-year process of setting up the Palo Verde Valley Community Improvement Fund Board (CIF Board), obtaining necessary permits, developing bylaws, and developing criteria for funding programs, money is being actively invested in the Palo Verde Valley. In 2004, Metropolitan provided \$6 million to the fund, which is managed by a volunteer Board from the Palo Verde Valley, and with interest that money has grown to over \$7 million. This year, the CIF Board has approved nearly \$500,000 in grants for local development projects, including training in new job skills, and over \$700,000 in small business loans. While the funding was to provide opportunities to offset the potential economic impacts of the Palo Verde Irrigation District land fallowing program, the timing of investments is also helping the community during the ongoing recession.

#### **Salinity Control Forum Considers Options for Replacing Brine Injection Well**

At the November meeting of the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum, there was discussion about the status of the Paradox Valley Well, located in Western Colorado, which captures high saline groundwater that would otherwise enter into the Colorado River and inject the brine two miles below the surface. The well, which was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) under the Colorado River Salinity Control Act in the mid 1980s, has been capturing about 100,000 tons of salt that would otherwise enter the Colorado River. In recent years, the pressure of the aquifer where the brine is being delivered has increased, and there is concern that the well may have a limited number of years before it would need to be shut down. The Forum is evaluating options should the well have to be abandoned, including developing evaporation ponds, or drilling another well to a separate aquifer. The Paradox well is Reclamation's single biggest salinity control project, and the loss of that well could significantly increase salinity downstream if no suitable alternative is developed.

#### **Jerry Zimmerman steps down as Acting Executive Director of the Colorado River Board**

At the November Colorado River Board meeting, Jerry Zimmerman stated that he was resigning as the acting Executive Director for the Colorado River Board, and the board then named Chris Harris as the new acting Executive Director. Jerry Zimmerman will remain on staff as a retired annuitant, and will still be able to assist the board while they search for a new Executive Director. Metropolitan's Human Resources Group is assisting the State of California in recruiting for the position.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Reclamation Meets with QSA Parties to Attempt to Resolve IID-Metropolitan Dispute**

In November, Reclamation met with Imperial Irrigation District (IID), Coachella Valley Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, and Metropolitan to try and resolve the dispute over IID's delivery of otherwise unused water to the Salton Sea this year. While no final documentation has been received, it appears that IID has delivered the additional 41,000 acre-feet of water to the Salton Sea this year, as it stated it would do in its September press release. Until the accounting for this water has been completed by Reclamation, which is not due until early 2011, it is unknown what impact, if any, this action will have on Metropolitan. Two additional meetings of the parties have been scheduled in December 2010 to further discuss the issues before a final accounting decision by Reclamation will be made.