



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources during January 2011.

Detailed Report

Staff from Metropolitan and Bard Water District Refine Potential Fallowing Program

On January 12, staff from Metropolitan and Bard Water District discussed a potential pilot fallowing program. Under the proposal, farmers in Bard could participate in a program where farmers agree not to grow crops for a six-month period in return for a one-time fallowing payment. The six months would occur during the summer season, when the maximum amount of water could be saved under the program. It is anticipated that the potential program would be brought to Metropolitan's Board for consideration in time to implement a pilot fallowing program during 2012. Staff will keep the Board apprised of discussions as they develop.

Metropolitan Staff Met with Arizona State Lands Department to Resolve Yuma Island Dispute

On January 7, Metropolitan, along with staff from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Colorado River Board, met with the Arizona State Lands Department to discuss management of land in the Yuma Island area of California. Yuma Island, an area next to the Colorado River near the city of Yuma, contains about 2,500 acres of land that have disputed water right claims associated with them. Because of changes to the Arizona-California Border in the 1940s, some land owned by the state of Arizona ended up in California, while some California owned-land wound up in Arizona. The Arizona-owned land in California is at the center of the dispute, and although the area has been irrigated since the construction of Hoover Dam, there are no clear water rights associated with the land. Currently, water used on the Yuma Island is charged under California's priority 2 water rights, which reduces the amount of water available to Metropolitan.

Metropolitan's purpose in meeting with the Arizona State Lands Department was to explore options for having California agencies take over ownership of the lands within California. Discussions were held about the possibility of land exchanges between the two states, or the purchase of land from Arizona. Staff is evaluating options and will present recommendations to the Board when completed. Reclamation is tasked with issuing a determination as to the water right claims on the Yuma Island, but has agreed to hold off making a decision until 2012 to give all of the parties time to explore alternative options.

Colorado River Basin Study Moves to Next Phase

The Colorado River Basin Study, a two-year, \$2 million effort funded jointly by the Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) and Reclamation, has completed a final draft of its projected long-term balance of supply and demands and has identified the amount of unmet demands in the Colorado River Basin by the year 2060. The report is being reviewed by the Basin States and will be made available to the public within the next few months. At the same time, the project heads into a key phase of the study: evaluating options to help meet the projected supply-demand imbalance. The phase will involve evaluating water sharing options (e.g., additional land fallowing programs), new facilities (e.g., water desalination projects), and new operating rules (e.g., interstate water transfers). When completed, the report will recommend specific projects to move forward to meet future water supply needs.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Metropolitan, SNWA, and CAP form Water Quality Partnership

In January, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by representatives from Metropolitan, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Central Arizona Project to memorialize a new coordination effort to protect the water quality of the Colorado River. The new partnership includes development of a coordination committee that will meet on a regular basis to address water quality protection and share information. The committee will focus on salinity, wastewater constituents, industrial contaminants, and invasive species. A paper titled “Lower Colorado River Water Quality Partnership” explaining the new effort is available and can be provided upon request.