



• Colorado River Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Metropolitan Reduces Palo Verde Irrigation District Fallowing Call

On July 31, Metropolitan sent its annual fallowing notice to farmers in the Palo Verde Valley for the next contract year, which runs from August 2012 through July 2013. For the first time since the program began in 2005, Metropolitan issued the minimum fallowing call allowed under the program. Under the minimum call, farmers in the program are to fallow 9 percent of their lands. As not all farmers in the Palo Verde Irrigation District have enrolled in the fallowing program, a total of 93 percent of the lands in the Palo Verde Valley will be available for irrigation next contract year. Metropolitan anticipates receiving about 29,000 acre-feet of water with a minimum fallowing call.

In addition to issuing the minimum fallowing call for next year, Metropolitan sent a letter to Palo Verde Valley farmers allowing them an early opt out of this year's (August 2011 through July 2012) fallowing commitment. The current fallowing call is for the maximum allowed under the program (35 percent of the lands for each farmer signed up), which would provide Metropolitan about 115,000 acre-feet during the contract year. In an effort to reduce Metropolitan's water supply costs and give the farmers greater flexibility in managing their lands, each farmer has until August 30 to decide to reduce their fallowing amount or not. If a farmer chooses to reduce his or her fallowing amount, he or she is required to first reimburse Metropolitan for the prorated payments to fallow that land. It is not known how many farmers will participate in this voluntary call as of this report; next month's report will include the results from the voluntary offer.

Metropolitan Submits 2012 Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Plan to the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

In July, Metropolitan submitted its ICS plan to Reclamation for calendar year 2012. The plan identifies three sources of extra-ordinary conservation activities undertaken that would allow Metropolitan to store water in Lake Mead. The programs are: (1) water conserved through funding land fallowing activities in the Palo Verde Valley, (2) water conserved through funding water conservation activities in the Imperial Valley, and (3) water conserved in the Metropolitan service area generated through brackish water desalination activities. Metropolitan's plan will allow Metropolitan to store up to 200,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead next year. The plan is being reviewed by Reclamation in consultation with the Colorado River Basin states. In addition to Metropolitan, Southern Nevada Water Authority and Imperial Irrigation District also submitted ICS plans to Reclamation.

Wet Conditions Continue in Colorado River Watershed

July was another wet month on the Colorado River, and the runoff forecast for the year increased by 900,000 acre-feet, for a total runoff into Lake Powell of 17.1 million acre-feet: the third wettest on record. On July 31, Lake Powell reached a total storage of 18.6 million acre-feet (77 percent full): the highest level since 2001. Lake Mead continues to slowly climb; it is currently 47 percent full at an elevation of 1,107 feet – 25 feet higher than it was last November, and is projected to end this year at 1,133 feet.