



● **Colorado River Management Report**

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River Resources for the month of June 2012.

Detailed Report

Report Concludes Wetlands in Mexico Unaffected by Operation of the Yuma Desalting Plant

In June, a study was funded by Metropolitan, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Central Arizona Project to monitor the potential impacts to the Cienega de Santa Clara (a wetland in Mexico) from the one-year pilot operation of the Yuma Desalting Plant. The study monitored any changes in the marshland and associated wildlife species before, during, and after the pilot operation. The report, which summarized the findings of the study, concluded that the changes to the wetland during the test period were within the historic natural range of fluctuation of the wetlands. Additionally, the study concluded that there are many factors that affected the wetlands, including a fire, earthquake, and flood, and that any direct impact from the operation of the desalting plant could not be detected. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is scheduled to release a separate report summarizing the pilot operation of the Yuma Desalting Plant, including the requirements to upgrade the plant to operate at full capacity, in the next month or two.

Metropolitan Receives 2012 Colorado River Water Diversion Approval

On June 19, Metropolitan received its approval to initially divert 620,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water, and store 200,000 acre-feet of conserved water in Lake Mead during 2012. This amount will be adjusted during the year as conditions change or if Metropolitan chooses to store less water in Lake Mead. The approval letter was issued later than usual this year, in part, because of a number of outstanding accounting issues in California related to the Colorado River water supply. Specifically, Reclamation's letter listed three issues that they plan to work with California agencies to resolve. They are:

1. Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) delivery of 46,546 acre-feet of non-conserved water to the Salton Sea in 2010;
2. IID's shortfall to conserve the full amount of water required to meet its transfer obligation to San Diego County Water Authority in 2011; and
3. Recognition that the approved water orders in California exceed the benchmark listed in the Colorado River Water Delivery Agreement. If actual water use exceeds the benchmark, Metropolitan's access to surplus water could be suspended.

Metropolitan staff will keep the Board apprised of any discussions occurring between the California water agencies and Reclamation to address these issues.

Metropolitan Submits 2013 Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Plan to Reclamation

In June, Metropolitan submitted its plan to conserve and store water in Lake Mead in 2013, should Metropolitan not need the water in its service area. The 2013 ICS Plan includes conserved water generated from four different sources. They are:

1. The Palo Verde Irrigation District Land Fallowing and Crop Rotation Program;
2. Metropolitan's 1988 Conservation Program with IID;
3. Pumping groundwater from the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project purchased by Metropolitan; and
4. Local desalination projects in Metropolitan's Service Area.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

If approved by Reclamation, Metropolitan would be able to store 200,000 acre-feet of conserved water in Lake Mead in 2013. By the end of 2012, Metropolitan projects that it will have over 500,000 acre-feet of water stored in Lake Mead.

Colorado Basin Encountering Record Heat, Fires

During the month of June, several heat records were broken in the state of Colorado, and huge wildfires occurred throughout much of the state. On June 25, Denver tied its all-time high temperature record of 105 degrees. The record heat follows one of the driest winters on record, and the runoff projections continue to drop. Typically, in late June, Lake Powell storage increases as the Colorado River rises as the snowpack melts. This year, most of the snow is long gone, and Lake Powell storage is falling by about 20,000 acre-feet a day. By the end of the current water year, Lake Powell is projected to have 13.9 million acre-feet in storage – which is about 5 million acre-feet less than it had in July of 2011. If the projection holds, Lake Powell would end the water year at its lowest level since 2007.