



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Reclamation and Basin States Release Colorado River Supply and Demand Study

On December 12, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Colorado River Basin States (Basin States) released the Colorado River Supply and Demand Study (Basin Study), which evaluates future water supply and demands in the Colorado River over the next 50 years, and analyzes options and strategies that could bridge the supply gap. The study takes into account the potential impacts of climate change on the resources of the Colorado River, and estimates that future flows could be reduced by 9 percent from the historic flow record. Additionally, the study evaluates future water demands in the Colorado Basin, which are projected to increase due to population growth of tens of millions of people over the next five decades. The study projects that, if actions are not taken to actively manage Colorado River supplies, the average gap between water supply and demand could reach 3.2 million acre-feet per year or more. In the study, Metropolitan's future water demand is assumed to be a full Colorado River Aqueduct in dry years (1.25 million acre-feet).

The Basin Study evaluates options to meet the projected supply gap. Those options include additional urban conservation, agricultural to urban transfers, increased local projects (e.g., water reuse, brackish and ocean water desalination), and large construction projects, including a large desalination plant in Mexico and/or a pipeline from the Missouri River Basin. The Basin Study evaluates how well the various options would perform, including cost-effectiveness, environmental impacts, and energy requirements. It does not, however, recommend any particular plan for the Basin. Reclamation and the Basin States will embark on a process in early 2013 to obtain input from various stakeholders throughout the Colorado Basin and develop a plan to further evaluate and potentially implement the most promising options.

Metropolitan Agrees to Exchange Additional Conserved Water to San Diego County in 2012

On December 18, San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) notified Metropolitan that Imperial Irrigation District (IID) requested that Reclamation revise its 2012 water schedule to allow for the delivery of an additional 16,722 acre-feet to SDCWA. The additional delivery would correspond to the amount of water that IID was short in transferring in 2011. Metropolitan responded that it would accommodate SDCWA's request and deliver a total of 106,722 acre-feet of water from the IID-SDCWA transfer program, provided that Metropolitan receives verification that the full amount of water was conserved in calendar year 2012. When Metropolitan receives that verification, which would not be available until the spring of 2013, Metropolitan would issue a revised invoice to SDCWA to account for the delivery and exchange of the additional water in 2012.

Metropolitan Stores Approximately 177,000 acre-feet of ICS Credits in Lake Mead in 2012

Metropolitan made several adjustments to its Colorado River water order in December, which allowed it to increase the amount of Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) credits that it stored in Lake Mead in 2012 – now totaling 177,000 acre-feet, subject to any final accounting revisions. This is the seventh consecutive year that Metropolitan has stored ICS water in Lake Mead and its end of year balance, after taking into account evaporation losses, is about 592,000 acre-feet. This total includes conserved water generated from the Palo Verde Irrigation District Fallowing Program, funding Drop 2 reservoir construction, and funding operation of the Yuma Desalting

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Plant. It does not include conserved water that Metropolitan agreed to purchase from Mexico, which will be credited to Metropolitan's ICS account in 2017.

Colorado Snowpack Increases Significantly in December

Following a very dry fall, snowfall in December has been above average in the Colorado Basin. In late November, the snowpack measured less than 60 percent of average, but as of December 20, the measurement has increased to 85 percent, with more snow forecast in the next week. Staff will update snowfall totals at the January 2013 Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meeting.