



- 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 September 2013.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Implementation of Minute 319 Continues

On November 20, 2012, the Secretary of the Interior, the Commissioners of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), representatives from the Colorado River Basin, and representatives from the Country of Mexico commemorated the signing of Minute 319 to the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty. The Minute is a five-year agreement that provides for Mexico to share in surplus water when supplies are plentiful, share in shortages during prolonged droughts, and allows Mexico to store conserved water in United States' reservoirs for later use. The Minute also provides for a pilot project whereby agencies in the United States can fund conservation activities in Mexico and receive a portion of the water saved. Finally, the Minute provides for funding to develop environmental flows to benefit the Colorado River Delta in Mexico.

Those agreements included Metropolitan in partnership with Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Central Arizona Project (CAP) to participate in a pilot project to fund conservation activities in Mexico. In exchange for funding \$10 million for new projects in Mexico, the funders will receive 95,000 acre-feet of Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) storage credits in Lake Mead. In November 2012, the Metropolitan Board approved \$5 million in funding for this project. In exchange, Metropolitan will receive 47,500 acre-feet of conserved water.

In September, Metropolitan staff participated with representatives from SNWA, CAP, Reclamation, and CONAGUA (Mexico's National Water Commission) in a meeting to begin work under Minute 319. The meeting was coordinated by U.S. IBWC and Mexican CILA (Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas). Candidate canal lining projects were presented and discussed. Another meeting on the canal lining projects is expected later this year, at which time Mexico is expected to present project timelines and a schedule for project payments. Metropolitan's first payment for the project is due by December 2014. The ICS will be credited to Metropolitan's ICS account in 2017.

Wet Conditions in Upper Colorado River Basin

During the month of September, the Upper Colorado River Basin (Upper Basin) experienced significantly above normal precipitation over a wide area. While the heaviest rainfall occurred east of the Continental Divide, the west slope also received significant precipitation. As a result, the inflows to Lake Powell increased dramatically during the month. On August 1, 2013, Reclamation made its determination to release 7.48 MAF of water out of Lake Powell next year based on its August 1, 2013 water supply forecast. That projection assumed that between August 1 and December 1, 2013 the inflow to Lake Powell would be 970,000 AF over those 4 months. As a result of the wet conditions in both August and September, the National Weather Service updated that projection, which now forecasts 1,783,000 AF of inflow to Lake Powell during that same period; nearly double the flow that had been predicted during those 4 months.

The new forecast projects that there will be at least 800,000 AF more water in Lake Powell this fall than had been projected in early August 2013. The unexpected increase in Lake Powell storage, however, will not affect the

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releases from Lake Powell next year, as those releases were set back on August 1, 2013. The wetter conditions, however, will help increase the likelihood of higher Lake Powell releases in 2015, which could be critical in avoiding a shortage declaration in 2016.

In addition to the rainfall in the Upper Basin, heavy rainfall fell in the Imperial Valley in September. As a result of the wet weather, the water demands in Imperial Irrigation District (IID) have dropped substantially. In early August, IID was forecasted to have an overrun, and by late September, due to the rainfall, IID's forecast use shows an under-run. If that forecast holds, it will be the first year since 2010 that IID has not overrun its approved water order.