



- Colorado River Management Report

## Summary

---

This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of November 2014.

## Purpose

---

Informational

## Detailed Report

---

### Proposals Received for System Conservation Agreement

In early October, the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) sent letters to users of Colorado River water in the Lower Basin requesting water conservation proposals that could be funded through the Colorado River System Conservation Agreement. Proposals were due in late November, and the USBR received more than a dozen proposals that came from the Lower Basin states. The total amount of funding available under this program in the Lower Basin is \$8.25 million. Funding for the projects will be provided by the USBR, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project, Denver Water, and Metropolitan. Staff from each of the funding agencies will evaluate the various proposals to determine what additional information might be needed and eventually determine which ones to pursue. It is hoped that the selected proposals will begin conserving water in early 2015. All water conserved under this agreement would remain in Lake Mead as system water for the benefit of all users of Colorado River water.

### Glen Canyon Dam releases High Flows through Grand Canyon

In late November, releases from Glen Canyon Dam were significantly increased for several days to benefit the habitat in the Grand Canyon. Since the construction of Glen Canyon Dam in the 1960s, about 90 percent of the sediment that historically flowed into the Grand Canyon has been trapped in the upper reaches of Lake Powell, and the beaches and sand bars in the Grand Canyon have been eroding. The remaining 10 percent of the historic sediment load is transported to the Colorado River from the Paria River and the Little Colorado River, two tributaries to the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam. In years when there are large summer rains, such as 2014, a significant amount of sediment can arrive in the Colorado River from those tributaries. As part of the Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Plan, in years when there is sediment deposited below Glen Canyon Dam, the Department of the Interior (DOI) increases releases out of Lake Powell to move the sediment into the Grand Canyon in an effort to help reestablish sand bars and beaches. In October, releases were increased temporarily from 10,000 cfs to 37,500 cfs to mobilize the sediment in the Colorado River. In order to achieve a flow of that magnitude, the power generation bypass tubes were used. Releases were then reduced back to about 10,000 cfs by late November. The DOI will inspect the changes to the beaches and sand bars in the Grand Canyon to determine the success of the high flow releases. This short-term high flow event does not affect the annual releases from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, and therefore, has no impact on Metropolitan's or any other state's Colorado River water supply.

### Imperial Irrigation District Files Water Right Modification Petition to State Water Board

On November 18, Imperial Irrigation District (IID) filed a petition to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) to modify Water Rights Order 2002-0013, which gave approval for the transfer of water from IID to San Diego County Water Authority and Coachella Valley Water District. The existing Water Rights Order is conditioned in part on the requirement for IID to fallow land to create conserved water to be delivered to the

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Salton Sea on an annual schedule to offset the reduction in agricultural drainage flowing into the Sea resulting from the transfers. These Salton Sea mitigation deliveries are to continue from 2003 through 2017, which was considered to be sufficient time for the state of California to study whether restoration of the Salton Sea is feasible and to develop and implement a restoration plan. In its petition, IID notes that the state has done little towards developing a restoration plan, and asserts that without such a plan in place, the residents of the Imperial Valley face increase dust exposure due to the seabed that will become exposed as the Sea begins to recede in 2018. IID's petition also cites a recent report by the Pacific Institute that estimates that inaction at the Salton Sea could cost up to \$70 billion over the life of the transfers. IID seeks to have the State Board require the Quantification Settlement Agreement parties, to meet with the state of California and other stakeholders to work together to identify a feasible restoration plan and funding mechanism that would address primarily air quality and habitat development on the shoreline. The petition further seeks to condition the continuation of transfers under the Water Rights Order on the state implementing a restoration plan for the Salton Sea. Metropolitan staff is reviewing the petition and will provide a more detailed report to the Board at a future meeting.