



- Colorado River Management Report

Summary

The report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of February 2015.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

State Water Resources Control Board to Host Workshop on Salton Sea Petition

On February 6, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) distributed a notice of a public workshop to solicit comments regarding the status of the Salton Sea and the State Board Order WRO 2002-0013, which authorized the transfer of water from Imperial Irrigation District (IID) to San Diego County Water Authority. The workshop, which will be held on March 18, 2015 in Sacramento, is in response to IID's November 18, 2014 petition to the State Board, which requests that new conditions be placed on WRO 2002-2013, which would require the state of California to develop and implement a restoration plan for the Salton Sea. In its notice, the State Board is seeking written comments in advance of the workshop, in particular as to the following three questions (paraphrased): (1) How can the State Board promote implementation of a restoration plan for the Salton Sea, (2) Is there an appropriate role for the State Board in the Salton Sea restoration process, and (3) What changes, if any, should be made to WRO 2002-0013? Written comments are due March 11, 2015; Metropolitan staff is preparing comments and will participate in the workshop.

Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Updates Shortage Outlook

On February 18, staff from Reclamation provided results from an updated water supply modeling analysis that projects the future operations of the Colorado River, and includes outlooks for shortage declarations. After adjusting for the current below-normal snowpack in the Rocky Mountains, the model projected a 21 percent chance of a shortage in the Colorado River next year, increasing to 54 percent in 2017. Even with the forecast for additional releases from Lake Powell, Lake Mead is projected to drop 8 feet this year, reaching an all-time record low level by the end of April. In response to the increased likelihood of shortages in the next few years, Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Central Arizona Project (CAP) are implementing actions within their respective states to reduce the projected decline in Lake Mead. Neither agency diverted all of the water that each was entitled to in 2014, and they both plan to leave additional unused water in Lake Mead in 2015. Additionally, both agencies are funding conservation programs within their states to create Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) supplies that will be added to their storage accounts in Lake Mead this year. While SNWA already has approval to create ICS this year, CAP will need to obtain approval from various water agencies, including Metropolitan, in order to create ICS in 2015. If staff from Metropolitan and CAP agree on terms for the new ICS projects, the plan will be taken to Metropolitan's Board for consideration.

Metropolitan Hosts Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum Workgroup

From February 17 through 19, Metropolitan hosted the Technical Workgroup of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum at its Visitor's Center at Diamond Valley Lake. The Workgroup includes representatives from the seven Colorado River Basin States, as well as federal representatives from Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, National Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Geological Service. The agenda included discussion of options to replace the ageing well in Paradox Valley and the preliminary results of an economic damages study, estimating impacts of increased salinity in the Lower Basin states. The event included a tour, co-hosted by Eastern Municipal Water District and Metropolitan, demonstrating the water recycling activities in the region, and how they can be impacted by increasing salinity.