



- 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 March 2016.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Metropolitan and other Conservation Agreement Funders Recognized at White House Summit

On March 22, the Executive Office of the President held a Whitehouse Water Summit to recognize commitments made for actions to build a sustainable water future, and issued a report summarizing those efforts. The report recognized Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), Central Arizona Project (CAP), Denver Water, Upper Colorado River Commission, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and Metropolitan for their roles in funding and implementing the Colorado River System Conservation Program. The report states that the agencies are committed to addressing water scarcity on the Colorado River, a critical source of water for 40 million people, businesses, and the environment in the United States and Mexico. The program compensates water users for implementing voluntary water conservation projects that decrease water use and aid storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

In conjunction with the White House Summit, Reclamation approved an additional \$5 million for water conservation projects in the Colorado River Basin this year, with \$3.5 million available for Phase II of the Colorado River System Conservation Program in the Lower Basin. Reclamation is looking for matching funds from water users in the Lower Basin to implement this program. SNWA and CAP have authorized additional funding for the program this year. In May 2016, staff will present a proposal to Metropolitan's Board to consider additional funding in 2016 to help meet the non-federal cost share goal.

International Boundary and Water Commission Workgroup Explores new Binational Conservation Opportunities

On March 29, the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) convened a workgroup to evaluate opportunities for United States' agencies to fund conservation programs in Mexico and share in the conserved water. If approved, these projects would be included in the follow-up minute to Minute 319 to the United States-Mexico International Water Treaty (Minute 319). Minute 319, which is in effect through 2017, includes a canal lining projected funded by CAP, SNWA, Metropolitan and, through a subsequent agreement, Imperial Irrigation District. Each funding agency contributed \$2.5 million for the binational water conservation project, and will receive about 24,000 acre-feet of water for its share of the funding in 2017. The follow-up minute to Minute 319, referred to as Minute 32X, is anticipated to include an additional binational conservation program, which could be larger than the one in Minute 319. Metropolitan staff is participating in the IBWC workgroup. If the workgroup reaches agreement on projects in Mexico to be funded by United States water users, Metropolitan's Board would have an opportunity to decide whether to participate in the fall of 2016.

Bard Water District Following Agreements Signed with Farmers

On March 28, four Bard Water District farmers signed agreements to participate in the first year of the Bard Pilot Seasonal Following Program, with about 550 acres of land enrolled in the program for 2016. Under the agreement, the farmers will not irrigate their selected fields from April 1 through July 31. It is anticipated that about 1,200 acre-feet of water will be conserved during this initial year. After the 2016 following program is complete, Metropolitan will again solicit participants to participate in 2017, the final year of the two-year pilot

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program. Reclamation will verify the amount of water saved each year and include the amount in its annual Colorado River Water Use Accounting Report.