



- 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 February 2017.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Lake Mead Levels Rise

Better than expected hydrology this winter has had a positive impact on Lake Mead's elevation, which measures about 450,000 acre-feet higher than it was at this time last year. As of February 1, the end-of-year elevation forecast for Lake Mead is three feet above the trigger at which the Secretary of the Department of Interior would make a shortage declaration. Side inflows between Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Mead continue to be well above normal. In addition to improved inflows into Lake Mead, during this water year Metropolitan plans to store at least 200,000 acre feet of Intentionally Created Surplus in Lake Mead, which will further help maintain lake levels.

Drought Contingency Planning Discussions Continue

Beginning in 2014, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) modeling started to show the increased possibility that Lake Mead elevations could decline to critically low levels within the next 10 years. At the same time, Reclamation's modeling began to show an increased chance that Lake Powell's elevation could decline below the power pool, which would jeopardize Reclamation's ability to release water from Lake Powell to Lake Mead. In response, the seven Colorado River Basin States began an effort to avoid or mitigate these types of serious declines in the Colorado River Basin's two largest reservoirs. These efforts became known as Drought Contingency Planning (DCP).

Both the Lower Division States (California, Arizona and Nevada) and the Upper Division States (Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming) have been working on DCPs for the Lower Basin and the Upper Basin, respectively. The Lower Division States and water agencies, including Metropolitan have been working steadily throughout 2016 to develop a draft Lower Basin DCP term sheet. Late in 2016, drafts of each basin's plans were exchanged.

Work on both the Lower Basin and the Upper Basin DCPs is ongoing, and the parties continue to make progress in their discussions. Initially, the Upper Division States had some issues with the Lower Basin DCP, but those issues have been narrowed significantly as a result of discussions between the basins and representatives from Reclamation.

The Upper Division States have also continued to develop an Upper Basin DCP, which is designed to protect Lake Powell elevations. The Lower Division States' review of the draft Upper Basin DCP Memorandum of Agreement is still in progress. While the details of each plan continue to be modified, it is recognized that both plans would have a beneficial effect on the entire Colorado River Basin.

Metropolitan staff has been directly involved in the development of the Lower Basin DCP, is participating in discussions with representatives of Reclamation and the Upper Division States, and will participate in the next meeting of the Seven Basin States, scheduled for March 8, 2017.

Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

Salinity Control Forum Workgroup Meeting

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) is an organization of the seven Colorado River Basin states that guides state and federal agency work to implement the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program). The Forum promotes efforts to reduce salt loading to the Colorado River and works with Congress on Program reauthorization and funding. The Program keeps 1.33 million tons of salt out of the river annually reducing the salinity at Metropolitan's intake by about 90 parts per million. Metropolitan currently holds one of the three Governor-appointed positions representing California on the Forum's board.

The Salinity Control Forum Workgroup is made up of technical staff, including Metropolitan, appointed by Forum board members to work on a range of issues including technical analysis required to support implementation of the Program. At its February 7-9 meeting in San Diego, the Forum Workgroup edited a draft of the Program's Triennial Review of the Program and developed funding recommendations for 2017 Program-related salinity studies. The Triennial Review is a report that documents the Forum's requests to Congress for funding reauthorizations. Recommendations from the Forum Workgroup will be brought to the Forum for consideration in June 2017.