



## ● Colorado River Management Report

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of October 2019.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### **Effort Begins to Better Understand the Long-Range Colorado River Water Supply Outlook**

A new effort to gain greater insight into the potential impacts that climate change and vegetative cover changes have on the future water supply of the Colorado River has been initiated through a partnership of National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Arizona State University (ASU), Central Arizona Project (CAP), and the Colorado River Basin States. The project will use the latest information from new high-resolution climate change and land use change models to plan for future Colorado River flows. The kickoff meeting on the partnership was held on October 8, and ASU professors summarized their initial findings. They observed that the models suggest that by mid-century there will be a 4-15 percent decline in annual runoff at Lee's Ferry compared with current streamflow amounts. Additionally, the declines are higher in the southern part of the Colorado River Basin (CRB). Specifically, the rivers within the state of Arizona (including the Salt River Project), could see declines of more than 20 percent within the next 30 years. These initial findings will be refined as the project moves forward; the goal is to have scientifically-based future water supply planning scenarios to aid in the renegotiations of the Colorado River operational guidelines.

#### **Reclamation Completes Draft Report on Brock Reservoir Savings**

In October, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) shared a draft report summarizing the water savings generated each year by Brock Reservoir, located in Imperial County. The construction of Brock Reservoir was funded by Southern Nevada Water Authority, CAP, and Metropolitan between 2008 and 2012 to capture water that was being lost to Mexico above the treaty allocation each year. The cost to construct the Reservoir was about \$150 million, and in exchange for funding, each agency received Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) credits in Lake Mead in proportion to the amount of funding provided. Metropolitan provided about \$25 million and received 100,000 acre-feet (AF) of ICS credits. Reclamation's draft report concluded that since the Reservoir became fully operational in 2013, nearly 55,000 AF of water has been conserved on average annually, resulting in over 325,000 AF of water in Lake Mead that would not be there without the Reservoir. The funders provided comments on the draft report to Reclamation, which plans on finalizing the report in December 2019 and making it available to the three funding agencies. Staff will notify the Board when the report is completed.

#### **Reclamation Trains Metropolitan, Colorado River Board Staff on Colorado River Water Supply Models**

On October 16 and 17, staff from Reclamation came to Metropolitan's Headquarters to offer a two-day training class for Metropolitan staff and staff from the Colorado River Board of California on the official model used to evaluate Colorado River operations. The model, known as the Colorado River Simulation System Model, can forecast Lake Mead elevations and the risks of future shortages, and was relied on to help negotiate the recent Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. Metropolitan and the Colorado River Board plan to train staff to be able to run the model so that our agencies can develop and evaluate planning scenarios to guide our efforts in the upcoming Colorado River guideline negotiations.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Colorado River Salinity Control Forum Meets in Phoenix**

In October 2019, Metropolitan attended a meeting of the CRB Salinity Control Forum in Phoenix, Arizona. The Forum discussed the Paradox Valley Unit, a deep aquifer brine injection well responsible for approximately 100,000 tons per year of salt control in the upper CRB. The well is currently inactive due to ongoing seismic activity believed to be linked to the brine injection. In late November or early December 2019, Reclamation plans to release a public draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for alternatives to replace the well. Since many members of the Forum (including Metropolitan) have not been party to discussions of the administrative DEIS, the Forum may hold an irregular meeting during the DEIS comment period to try to reach consensus on a preferred alternative to recommend to Reclamation. The Forum also discussed the required Triennial Review of total dissolved solids water quality criteria in the basin, including assumptions underlying Reclamation's modeling of salinity transport.