



## ● 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 months of March and April 2020.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Detailed Report

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#### **Metropolitan and Southern Nevada Water Authority Sign Letter of Intent**

In March, Metropolitan and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) took a historic first step towards partnering together to develop a Regional Recycled Water Program (RRWP) by signing a Letter of Intent (LOI). Metropolitan and SNWA have a long history of working together to enhance Colorado River supplies, and this LOI furthers that effort. In the LOI, Metropolitan and SNWA agree to build on the existing cooperative working relationship in order to lay the foundation to further the goal of developing the RRWP. This effort will lead to a joint development agreement that provides the scope and terms of contributions and allocations, if the RRWP is finalized and approved by Metropolitan's Board of Directors and other conditions are met. Metropolitan and SNWA anticipate that the development agreement will describe the scope of the project, including studies, planning, and construction; allocate resources provided by each party; commit the parties to future water distributions upon project completion; and provide for the parties to cooperate regarding any necessary regulatory changes.

#### **Paradox Valley Unit to Resume Brine Injection Operations**

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) notified cooperating agencies of its intent to begin a six-month test of decreased injection well operations at the Paradox Valley Unit in April. The injection well has been shut down for more than a year, since an earthquake occurred in that area more than a year ago. During this test, Reclamation will capture and dispose of brine at a reduced injection rate of 68 percent. Reclamation plans to closely monitor the injection pressure and seismic response near the well. If any abnormal responses are observed, Reclamation will shut down well operations for evaluation. Reclamation will use data collected during the test to decide how to operate the well in the future. This level of operation could capture and inject approximately 63,000 tons of salt per year.

#### **Bard Seasonal Fallowing Program Update**

Metropolitan and Bard Water District (Bard) launched the Bard Land Management and Seasonal Fallowing Program (Program) on April 1, following the execution of agreements with four farmers within the Bard Unit in March. Metropolitan has since performed an inspection of the fallowed land. The total enrolled acreage for the 2020 Fallowing Season is approximately 2,750 irrigable acres, which will occur from April 1 to July 31, 2020. By providing an annual incentive of \$452 per irrigable acre fallowed, Metropolitan will issue a total payment of \$1.26 million for this year's fallowing season. In addition to the payments to participating farmers, Bard will receive an estimated payment of \$326,000, which includes \$15,000 for direct program costs and system improvements. Metropolitan anticipates that it will receive about 5,500 acre-feet of Colorado River supply under this program this year.

Bard and Metropolitan are amending the original agreement within the authority provided by Metropolitan's Board. To ensure Metropolitan only provides funding to lands that could have been otherwise irrigated, the amendment defines which acres within the Bard Unit are "fallowable" and therefore eligible for participation in the Program. The amendment also clarifies Metropolitan's method of calculating fallowed acreage for the Program.

## Board Report (Colorado River Management Report)

### **Reclamation begins 2007 Interim Guideline Review**

In March, Reclamation hosted a webinar to outline the process that the Department of Interior, acting through Reclamation, will follow to complete its formal review for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the 2007 Interim Guidelines (Guidelines) for the operation and management of the Colorado River. In the Record of Decision that adopted the Guidelines, the Secretary of the Interior is to initiate the review no later than December 31, 2020, in consultation with the Colorado River Basin States. In the webinar, Reclamation explained that they will focus the review on how well the Guidelines performed for the purposes identified in the Record of Decision, including providing the operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, greater certainty in water supplies, and the incentives to conserve and store water in Lake Mead. They plan to complete their review by the end of 2020. There will be two opportunities for the public to provide input: (1) during the current initial scoping process in April and May 2020, and (2) after the preliminary draft report is issued this summer. Metropolitan is coordinating with other agencies to develop a single comment letter from the Basin States to Reclamation.