Update on Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Water Planning and Stewardship Committee
Item 6c
June 7, 2021
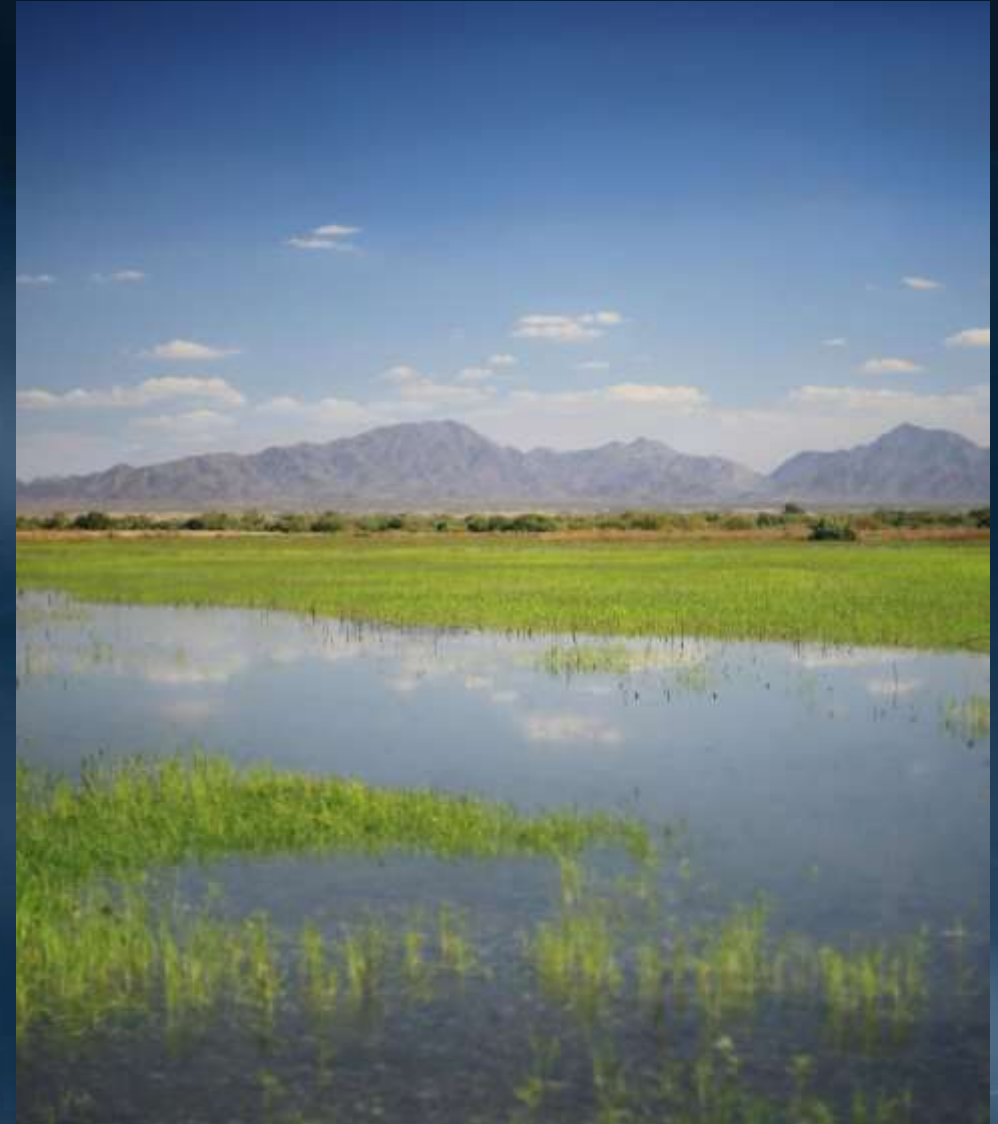
Update Topics

Lower Colorado River
Multi-Species Conservation Program
Balancing Resource Use and Conservation

- Overview of LCR MSCP
  - Background
  - Benefits to Metropolitan
  - Achievements to Date
- LCR MSCP Limitations
  - Background: Change-in-flow limits
  - Possibility of constraints on Metropolitan operations
  - Need for additional coverage

LCR MSCP Background

- Joint Federal/State Program, with 57 participant groups

- 50-year program, established in 2005

- $626 million in funding (2003$)

- Covers current and future activities on or along the Lower Colorado River from full-pool of Lake Mead to the Southern International Boundary with Mexico.

- Flexibility has been critical for implementing programs such as 2007 Guidelines, Pilot System Conservation Program, etc.

Endangered Species Act Compliance
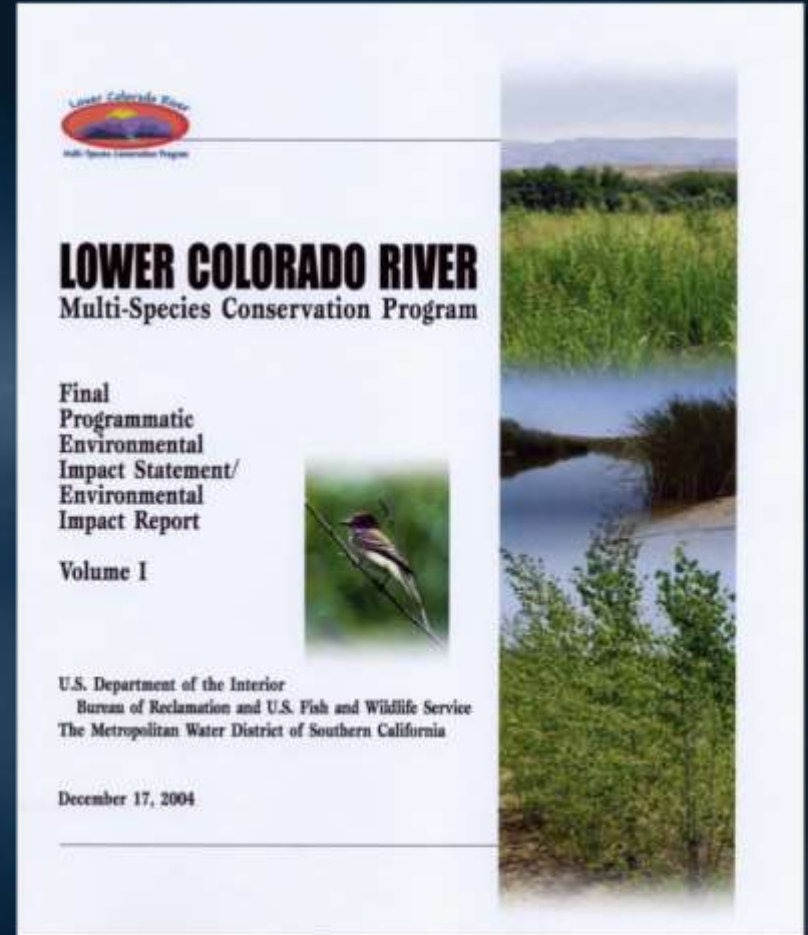
50 Years of ESA and CESA Compliance
- Unique – Section 7 and 10
- Habitat Conservation Plan
- Cost Shared

Covered Actions
- Delivery and Diversion of 9 MAF
- Generation of Power
- Maintenance Activities
- Future Flow-Related Activities

Conservation measures
- Stocking 1.2 million native fish
- Creation and maintenance of 8,132 acres of native habitat

LOWER COLORADO RIVER
Multi-Species Conservation Program

Final
Programmatic
Environmental
Impact Statement/
Environmental
Impact Report

Volume I

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

December 17, 2004

15 Years of Implementation

Through 2020, 6,538 acres (80%) of habitat has been created:

Cottonwood/willow: 4,117 acres

Mesquite: 1,901 acres

Marsh: 362 acres

Backwater: 158 acres

15 Years of Implementation

Through 2020, 481,222 (40%) of native fish have been stocked:

Razorback sucker: 366,736 fish

Bonytail chub: 114,486 fish

Significant species use of LCR MSCP conservation areas, with 255 detections of yellow-billed cuckoos in 2018.
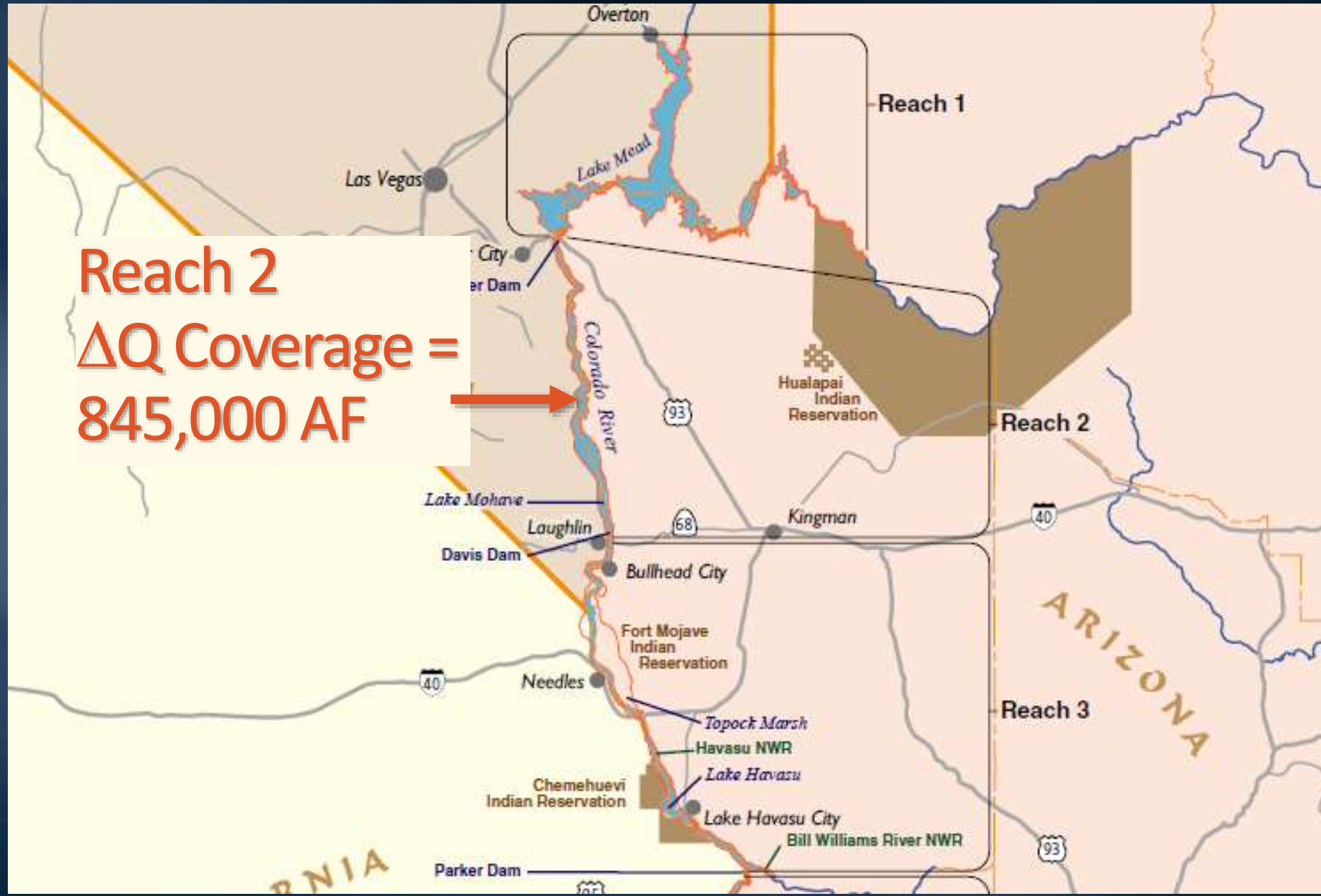
What will the next 35 years of implementation bring?

- Creation of remaining habitat acreage

- Transition into habitat maintenance phase: ensuring habitat continues to meet species needs as it matures

- As operations change, adjustments to program coverage may be needed

LCR MSCP Change-in-flow Coverage

Reach 2
ΔQ Coverage =
845,000 AF

Additional MSCP Coverage May be Needed Post-2026

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

1928