

## **Press Release**

# **SALT IN THE COLORADO RIVER CONTROLLED BUT DAMAGES STILL HIGH**

**June 2011**

High salt concentrations in water have a major economic impact to water users. Salt leached from marine shales in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming contributes to the Colorado River's high natural salt load. Water uses such as irrigation and other activities of man have added to the salt load in the river.

Downstream water users in Arizona, California, Nevada and Mexico are experiencing economic damages as a result of the salt load in their water supply. Quantified damages in the United States amount to several hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and the unquantified damages within the United States and damages experienced by Mexican water users are believed to be equally significant.

In 1974, an aggressive salinity control program was authorized by Congress. Over the decades many remarkable partnerships have been forged to help implement salinity control measures. The seven Colorado River Basin States are united in their support of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. Several federal agencies are working together and with the states to control the salt loading to the Colorado River. Additionally, local water users have stepped up and invested their resources.

Every three years the states engage in a formal review of the salinity control program. The 2011 Triennial Review has been adopted and is now available for public comment. To review this document and to consider commenting on it, please go to [www.crb.ca.gov](http://www.crb.ca.gov) or [www.ColoradoRiverSalinity.org](http://www.ColoradoRiverSalinity.org).

In general, the findings of the Review are that: 1) the salt load in the Colorado River has been reduced by 1.2 million tons per year thus far through implementation of the Salinity Control Program, 2) there is not a need to change the adopted numeric criteria, 3) there is a Plan of Implementation identified to remove another 644,000 tons of salt per year by the year 2030, and 4) with the plan of implementation in place, there is a low probability of exceeding the numeric criteria below Hoover Dam, below Parker Dam or at Imperial Dam between now and 2030. Damages due to the use of Colorado River water in the Lower Basin remain high. The Review states that the Forum and the states intend to continue their support of an aggressive salinity control program.