

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT  
TO THE  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**

**January 10, 2006**

**ADMINISTRATION**

Calendar Year 2006 Board Meeting Schedule

Included in the Board folder is a copy of the finalized Calendar Year 2006 Board meeting schedule that was approved at the December 2005 Board meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Colorado River Board Workshop

A workshop for the Colorado River Board has been scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Ontario Airport Marriott Hotel on January 23, 2006. The purpose of this workshop is to obtain the Board's negotiating position regarding the discussions with the other Colorado River Basin states on the Secretary of the Department of the Interior's process to develop a reservoir operating strategy for the Colorado River system reservoirs during low reservoir and low runoff conditions. As such, all or a part of the workshop may be held in closed session.

**AGENCY MANAGERS' MEETINGS**

Representatives of the agencies have been meeting and having conference calls to discuss various proposals that should be included in any Basin states package regarding operations and management of the Colorado River system reservoirs. This includes the full range of expected reservoir operations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, as well as operational, accounting and management strategies that can improve water supply reliability for entities in the Upper and Lower Basins. The agency representatives are also discussing proposals that are originating in the other states. As discussed above, a Board workshop has been scheduled for January 23<sup>rd</sup> to obtain the Board's support for a Basin states package, which includes elements and activities that should be included within the scope of the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation's) NEPA process for development of shortage guidelines for the Lower Basin and coordinated management guidelines for the operation of Lakes Powell and Mead as well as elements and activities that the states agree to pursue outside of Reclamation's NEPA process.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

Colorado River Water Report

As of January 1, 2006, storage in the major Upper Basin reservoirs decreased by 465,010 acre-feet and storage in the Lower Basin reservoirs increased by 327,900 acre-feet during

December 2005. Total System active storage as of January 5<sup>th</sup> was 34.456 million acre-feet (maf) or 58 percent of capacity, which is 4.594 maf more than one year ago.

December releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 8,600, 6,750 and 5,070 cubic-feet-per-second (cfs), respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of January 2006 are 10,200, 8,400, and 6,100 cfs, respectively. The January releases represent those needed to meet downstream water requirements including those caused by the reduced operation of Senator Wash Reservoir.

As of January 5<sup>th</sup>, taking into account both measured and unmeasured return flows, the Lower Division states' consumptive use of Colorado River water for calendar year 2005, as forecasted by Reclamation, totals 7.079 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.436 maf; California, 4.355 maf; and Nevada, 0.288 maf. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) will divert 1.320 maf, of which 0.119 maf are planned to be delivered to the Arizona Water Bank. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) will use about 0.897 maf, which is 147,000 acre-feet more than its 2004 use of mainstream water.

The preliminary end-of-year estimate by the Board staff for 2005 California agricultural consumptive use of Colorado River water under the first three priorities and the sixth priority of the 1931 *California Seven Party Agreement* is 3.357 maf. This estimate, by Board staff, is based on the collective use, through November 2005, by the Palo Verde Irrigation District, the Yuma Project-Reservation Division (YPRD), the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), and the Coachella Valley Water District. Figure 1, found at the end of this report, depicts the historic projected end-of-year agricultural use for the year.

### Colorado River Operations

*Copies of the Remarks of Assistant Secretary Limbaugh and Commissioner Keys – Colorado River Water Users Association, December 16, 2005*

Included in the Board folder are copies of the remarks of Mr. Mark Limbaugh, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science, and Mr. John Keys, the Commissioner of Reclamation. Both sets of remarks emphasize the importance of the current Basin states negotiations related to the development of reservoir management strategies and shortage guidelines that can be implemented by the Department of the Interior by December 2007. Fine tributes to our late colleague, Mr. Dennis B. Underwood, were expressed by both Assistant Secretary Limbaugh and Commissioner Keys. Finally, I have included a copy of an article published in the Las Vegas Sun on December 16, 2005, that described the comments of Assistant Secretary Limbaugh, Commissioner Keys, SNWA's Pat Mulroy, CAP's Sid Wilson, and the State of Colorado's Scott Balcomb.

### *2006 Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River System Reservoirs*

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, Secretary Norton signed and distributed the 2006 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for the Colorado River System Reservoirs. The partial domestic surplus criterion will govern releases from Lake Mead in 2006. Reclamation estimates that the total amount of

surplus water available is projected to be approximately 300,000 acre-feet. At this date, however, no water user has indicated that it plans to utilize any of the surplus water. A mid-year review of the AOP may be conducted in April 2006, if hydrologic conditions warrant. The final AOP may be downloaded at the following site:

[http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2006/AOP06\\_final.pdf](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2006/AOP06_final.pdf)

*Southern Nevada Water Authority's Comments Related to the Development of Lower Basin Shortage Guidelines and Coordinated Reservoir Management Strategies*

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) submitted a letter to Reclamation on December 9<sup>th</sup> providing initial comments related to the development of Lower Basin Shortage Guidelines and Coordinated Reservoir Management Strategies. In its letter, SNWA highlighted four points that are deemed important to Nevada's long-term interests: (1) conjunctive management of the reservoirs is imperative; (2) shortage criteria should recognize the effects that shortages could have on urban areas; (3) operating measures must consider the full range of reservoir operations, not just low reservoir conditions; and (4) operating measures must be adopted and implemented in a timely manner. Included in the Board folder is a copy of SNWA's comment letter.

Basin States Discussions

*Basin States' Meetings*

Representatives of the Colorado River Basin states are continuing to meet. Meetings of both the seven Basin states and the Lower Basin states have been held and more meetings have been scheduled to meet Secretary Norton's deadline of the beginning of February for providing the Basin states comments on the scope of Reclamation's NEPA process to develop shortage guidelines for the Lower Basin and coordinated management guidelines for the operation of Lakes Powell and Mead. The Basin states have concluded that the scope of this process should be expanded to address the full range of expected operations of Lakes Powell and Mead and not limited to the operations under only low runoff and low reservoir conditions. Also, the states are discussing other elements that should be addressed in this NEPA process to better manage the reservoir system and provide improved water supply reliability for entities in both the Upper and Lower Basins.

Included in the Board folder is a copy of a recent memorandum that provided a schedule for Basin states meetings through January 2006. That memorandum was sent out prior to the Basin states meeting of January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, at which time a number of additional meetings have been scheduled in order to complete the work of the Basin states. During the Basin states meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, the Basin states agreed that the reservoir operating guidelines should address the expected full range of operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead and that the strategy for operating the reservoirs should be the "Hybrid" operating strategy. The Basin states' Technical Committee was given the task of refining the "Hybrid" operating strategy to obtain optimal benefits for both the Upper and Lower Basins during the interim period, through the year 2025. Also, during the meeting of January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, a Drafting Committee was formed to

prepare a draft document outlining the elements of agreement among the Basin states. Elements of the agreement will include concepts contained in the conceptual paper that has been prepared by the Lower Basin states dealing with subjects such as: shortage guidelines for the Lower Basin, including Mexico; bridge water supplies for Nevada as it develops its in-state water resources; extension and modification of the Interim Surplus Guidelines; augmentation of the Colorado River water supply through improving the system's operating efficiency, exchange/demand management and importation of non-Colorado River system water into the Colorado River system; conservation of Colorado River mainstream water through extraordinary conservation; and the accounting and verification measures necessary to provide consistency with the 1964 Supreme Court Decree in *Arizona vs. California*. The Lower Basin states are meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to finalize the Lower Basin's Conceptual Paper that addresses the operation of Lake Mead and the delivery of water to the Lower Division states.

This effort among the Colorado River Basin states will culminate with a seven Basin states meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada on January 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Prior to January 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, I am proposing that a Colorado River Board workshop be held on January 23<sup>rd</sup> to obtain the Board's recommendations regarding the Basin states package that has been developed and to obtain input on a Basin states package that can be supported by the Board.

*H.R. 2995 – The Weather Modification Operations and Research and Technology Transfer Authorization Act (Act) of 2005*

On June 20, 2005, Representative Udall of Colorado introduced proposed legislation that would establish a comprehensive and coordinated national weather modification policy and a federal/state cooperative program of weather modification and research. The Act would create a board to oversee the development of the proposed policies and direct the research and technology program activities. The board would be administered through the U.S. Department of Commerce. Initially, the program would have an appropriation of \$10 million for each year, starting in 2006 through 2015. A copy of H.R. 2995 is included in the Board folder.

In support of this proposed legislation, a draft letter of support from the Colorado River Board of California to the House Subcommittee on Environment, Technology, and Standards is included in the Board folder for the Board's consideration. If approved by the Board, copies of the same letter would be sent to representatives Rohrabacher, Calvert, Woolsey, Honda, and Sherman. The staff is recommending that Board members approve finalization and submission of the letters of support for this important piece of proposed legislation. Weather modification is considered one of the important elements in the overall package of basin-wide water management strategies being evaluated and discussed by representatives of the Colorado River Basin states.

#### Colorado River Environmental Activities

On December 12, 2005, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) released a notice of public availability regarding the proposed development of a "planning agreement" pursuant to the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act between the Imperial Irrigation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and CDFG. Based upon the notice of availability, it is

IID's intent to prepare a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) in order to conserve biological resources while providing an incidental take authorization permit related to the IID/San Diego County Water Authority water transfer project and associated activities. The comment period related to the notice of availability closed on January 2, 2006.

#### Lower Colorado Water Supply Project

Following the Board's action at the last Board meeting regarding Mr. Vic Peloquin's request, two letters were prepared, including: (1) a letter to Mr. Vic Peloquin of J. Victor Construction, Inc.; and (2) a letter to Reclamation. Both letters reaffirm that Mr. Peloquin's company, J. Victor Construction, Inc., is still eligible to receive 84 acre-feet of Lower Colorado Water Supply Project water per year for the Vista Del Lago Development Project in San Bernardino County, California. Any changes or amendments to Mr. Peloquin's subcontract (Subcontract #461) with the City of Needles will need to be addressed by Mr. Peloquin, the City of Needles, and Reclamation. Both letters are included in the hand-out materials for the Board meeting.

### **WATER QUALITY**

#### Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum

At the November Board meeting, I reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) adopted the 2005 Triennial Review report. The Triennial Review contains the salinity standards that should be adopted by the states and then forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for final approval.

In California, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is the state agency responsible for adopting the salinity standards for the Colorado River. The SWRCB has released a Notice of Public Hearing to consider approval of the proposed salinity standards contained in the final 2005 Triennial Review report. The public hearing will be held on February 1, 2006, in Sacramento, California.

Board's staff has prepared and submitted a comment letter to the SWRCB supporting the approval of the Triennial Review salinity standards by the SWRCB. Copies of the Notice of hearing and the Board's comment letter are included in the Board folder.



Gerald R. Zimmerman  
Executive Director