

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

**August 17, 2011**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Resignation/Retirement of Mr. Thomas Erb**

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Thomas Erb, of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) announced his intention to resign from the Colorado River Board of California as an alternate member for LADWP. Mr. Erb is retiring from LADWP effective August 19<sup>th</sup>. I would like to extend my thanks to Tom for his service on the Board and his dedication to the many important water issues and programs that he and the Board have been involved in during his tenure. I hope that you will all join me in wishing Tom and his family the very best in his retirement. Finally, [I have included a copy of Mr. Erb's resignation letter to the Governor's Office in the Board materials package.](#)

**Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2011**

A copy of the draft July 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes have been included in the Board folder for review and consideration. I am respectfully requesting the Board's review of these proposed meeting minutes in anticipation of adoption and approval at the regularly scheduled Board meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup>.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

**Colorado River Water Report**

As of August 1, 2011, storage in the major Upper Basin reservoirs increased by 1,934,700 acre-feet and storage in the Lower Basin reservoirs increased by 460,300 acre-feet during July 2011. Total System active storage as of August 7<sup>th</sup> was 39.304 million acre-feet (maf), or 66 percent of capacity, which is 5.135 maf more than one year ago (Upper Basin reservoirs increased by 3.272 maf and Lower Basin reservoirs increased by 1.863 maf).

July releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 16,290, 15,350 and 12,390 cubic feet per second (cfs), respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of August 2011, are 13,300, 13,300, and 10,500 cfs, respectively. The August releases represent those needed to meet downstream water requirements including those caused by reduced operation of Senator Wash Reservoir and storage in the Warren H. Brock (Drop 2) Reservoir.

As of August 8th, taking into account both measured and unmeasured return flows, the Lower Division states' consumptive use of Colorado River water for calendar year 2011, as forecasted by Reclamation, totals 7.353 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.816 maf; California, 4.277 maf; and Nevada, 0.260 maf. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) will divert 1.616 maf, of which 0.134 maf are planned to be delivered to the Arizona Water Bank. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) will use about 0.734 maf, which is 365,000 acre-feet less than its 2010 use of mainstream water.

The preliminary end-of-year estimate by the Board staff for 2011 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 3.546 maf. This estimate is based on the collective use, through June 2011, by the Palo Verde Irrigation District, the Yuma Project-Reservation Division (YPRD), the Imperial Irrigation District, and the Coachella Valley Water District. Figure 1, found at the end of this report, depicts the projected end-of-year agricultural use for the year.

As of August 16<sup>th</sup>, the water level at the Lake Mead was at 1,110.45 feet above the mean sea level, and the storage was 12.448 maf, 48.1 percent of capacity, while the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,658.61 feet above the mean sea level and the storage was 18.311 maf, 75.3 percent of capacity.

## Colorado River Operations

### *Draft 2012 Annual Operating Plan*

The second consultation associated with the development of the 2012 Annual Operating Plan was held in Las Vegas on July 28<sup>th</sup>. A new draft of the proposed 2012 AOP has been posted to Reclamation's website, and is available via the following link: [http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2012/AOP12\\_draft.pdf](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2012/AOP12_draft.pdf). Based upon the July 2011 24-Month Study, the Most Probable Unregulated Inflow into Lake Powell is estimated to be 16.21 million acre-feet, or 135% of average. Based upon these projected conditions, the Upper Elevation Balancing Tier will govern the operation of Lake Powell for Water-Year 2012, and the projected annual release from Glen Canyon Dam will be 12.48 MAF. Based upon a projected January 1, 2012, Lake Mead water surface elevation of 1,133.34 feet and consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the "Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Condition will govern releases for downstream uses in Arizona, California, and Nevada during Calendar-Year 2012. While there are no new Inadvertent Overrun and Paybacks anticipated for 2012, there may be paybacks from prior years that will carry over to 2012. Finally, a volume of up to 1.5 MAF will be available to be scheduled for delivery to Mexico during Calendar-Year 2012. I have also included [copies of two pertinent slides from the July 28<sup>th</sup> second consultation presentation for your information.](#)

*Reclamation's Letter to IBWC Regarding Revised Schedule of Calendar-Year 2011 Water Deliveries to Mexico*

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, Reclamation notified the American Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) confirming that it was modifying the Calendar Year 2011 schedule for deliveries of Colorado River water to Mexico. This modification was the result of a request for schedule modification placed by Mexico with the IBWC. The requested modification consists of an increase of 2,170 acre-feet for the month of August and a corresponding decrease in the same amount for the month of October. I have included a [copy of Reclamation's letter to IBWC confirming the modification in the Board information package](#).

*Arizona Water Banking Authority Letter to Reclamation with Final Verified Accounting of SNWA Calendar-Year 2010 Interstate Account*

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Board received a copy of letter from the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA) and the final verified accounting of the Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA) interstate account for Calendar-Year 2010. SNWA began 2010 with 582,772 acre-feet in its account, and ended the year with 600,651 acre-feet, and total available storage credits of 550,651 acre-feet. [A copy of the AWBA letter and accounting has been included in the Board information package](#).

*Imperial Irrigation District 2012 Plan for the Creation of Extraordinary Conservation Intentionally Created Surplus*

In the Board information package I have included [a copy of the Imperial Irrigation District's \(IID\) latest plan to create 12,000 acre-feet of extraordinary conservation intentionally created surplus \(EC ICS\)](#). This quantity of EC ICS water will be created via IID's Main Canals Seepage Interception System project and is one of the components of the Quantification Settlement Agreement Efficiency Conservation Program to create water for transfer from IID to the San Diego County Water Authority and the Coachella Valley Water District.

*Metropolitan's 2012 Plan for the Creation of Extraordinary Conservation Intentionally Created Surplus*

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, I received [a copy of a proposed plan from The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California \(MWD\) to create 200,000 acre-feet of EC ICS](#) during Calendar-Year 2012. The three sources of supply for creation of the EC ICS include: (1) MWD funded Palo Verde Irrigation District Forbearance and Fallowing Program (up to 116,000 AF); (2) MWD funded IID Water Conservation Program (up to 105,000 AF); and (3) MWD funded water supply from desalination (56,300 AF). I have included a copy of MWD's proposed EC ICS creation plan in the Board information package.

## Basin States Discussions

### *Seven Basin States Technical Work Group Meeting—October 5, 2011*

In the Board information package I have also included a copy of the proposed agenda for a meeting of the seven Basin States' Technical Work Group meeting scheduled for October 5<sup>th</sup> at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada. At the meeting, proposed topics of discussion include: Basinwide hydrologic conditions update and status; status of reservoir equalization process; proposed modeling changes (e.g., lower basin tributaries, etc.); Glen Canyon Dam operations; status of binational discussions; and status reports associated with other ongoing projects and issues. [I have included a copy of the proposed meeting agenda in the Board information package.](#)

### *Status of Binational Discussions/Negotiations*

Several meeting regarding the ongoing discussions to develop a comprehensive minute with Mexico dealing with the creation and delivery of Intentionally Created Mexican Apportionment (ICMA), the conversion of ICMA to Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) for use within the United States, surplus and shortage sharing, and the pursuit of new water and environmental projects. To date, the discussions have been focused at the technical level, primarily dealing with salinity and hydrology. Significant progress has been made in the Salinity Group. Both the United States and Mexican representative have shared information and modeled various scenarios. The results are that the United States and Mexico have agreed on the modeling and scenarios have been identified that will not impact normal operations in the United States or the Minute 242 salinity differential at the Northerly International Boundary.

There are still some differences between the United States and Mexican technical representatives in the Hydrology Group regarding the best way to define drought conditions in the Basin. Mexican representative have been focusing on climatological conditions within the Basin and the United States has focused on runoff and storage in the Basin's reservoirs. To date, the Group has narrowed the focus to four different options, two looking at climatological conditions and two looking at runoff and storage in the Basin's reservoirs. Each of these four options is being modeled by the United States and Mexican representatives and a workshop will be held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to review the results.

The objective still remains to have a signed minute, acceptable to both countries, by the beginning of next year. That means that the discussion will need to move out of the technical groups and into the policy group. To that end, a meeting is being held on August 17<sup>th</sup> among the United States representative to begin setting forth the elements of a comprehensive minute that are acceptable to the United States representatives. To date, one of the most controversial issues among the United States representatives is surplus sharing and where the surplus water would come from. By the September Board meeting more information should be available to share with the Board members regarding the elements of a comprehensive minute.

On a positive note, Mexico has submitted a schedule to create 50,011 acre-feet to ICMA this year under Minute 318. Additionally Mexico is developing a schedule for the creation of ICMA in 2012.

### Colorado River Environmental Issues

#### *Basin States' Joint Comment Letter on the Draft Environmental Assessment for Development and Implementation of a Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam—2011-2020*

As we have discussed at previous meetings, Reclamation recently released its draft Environmental Assessment (EA) describing potential impacts associated with the “Development and Implementation of a Protocol for High-Flow Experimental (HFE) Releases from Glen Canyon Dam, Arizona, 2011 through 2020.” The draft EA is intended to evaluate the impacts associated with short-duration, high-volume dam releases during sediment-enriched conditions for a ten-year period of experimentation. The purposes of the action are: (1) to develop and implement a protocol that determines when and under what conditions to conduct experimental high-volume releases, and (2) to evaluate the parameters of high-flow releases in conserving sediment to benefit downstream natural and cultural resources in Glen, Marble, and Grand Canyons. Finally, this experimental protocol is intended to be part of the on-going implementation of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, comply with the Grand Canyon Protection Act of 1992, and follow the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lakes Powell and Mead.


On July 19<sup>th</sup>, the seven Basin States submitted a joint comment letter on the draft EA to Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Regional Director. In summary, the primary points brought forth in the Basin States’ letter included the following: (1) the proposed decision-making process described in the draft EA is still confusing and needs to be clarified; (2) the draft EA still needs to clarify if non-native fish control is needed to mitigate impacts to resources as a result of high flow events; and (3) the draft EA should clarify the description of the HFE Protocol and beach/habitat building flows (BHBF) in the draft EA’s Purpose and Need section. The states’ joint comment letter also supplied Reclamation with a number of specific editorial suggestions or observations. [I have included a copy of the Basin States’ joint comment letter in the Board information package.](#)

#### *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Revised Critical Habitat Designation for the Endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher*

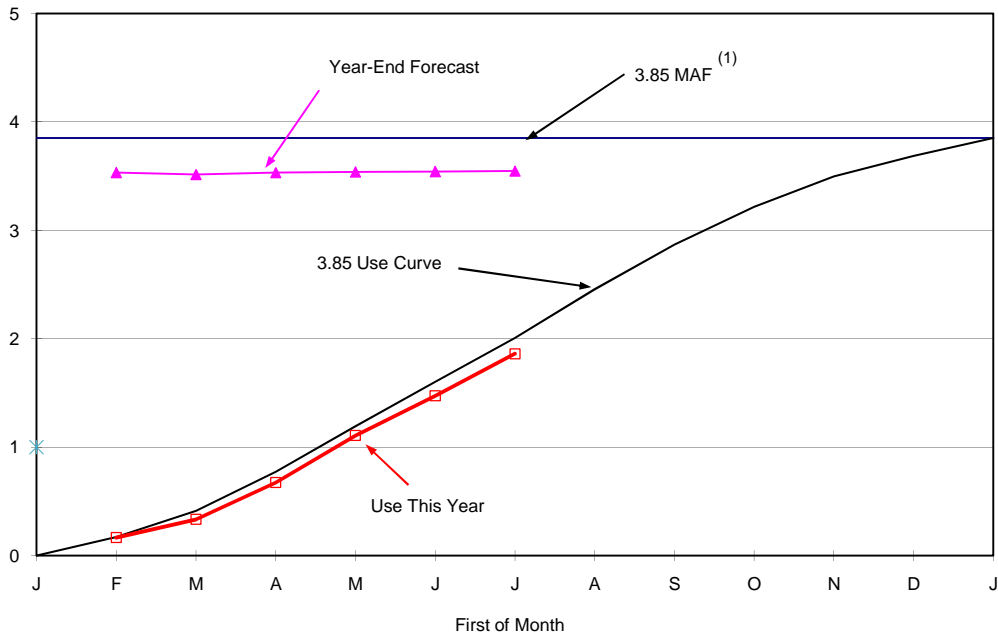
On August 15<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* proposing a revision to designated critical habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (WIFL). The *Federal Register* notice can be downloaded from the following link:

[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/SpeciesDocs/SWWF/pCH2011/SWWF\\_pCH\\_2011\\_FR.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/SpeciesDocs/SWWF/pCH2011/SWWF_pCH_2011_FR.pdf).

Comments on the proposed revisions to the critical habitat designation for WIFL are due to the USFWS Arizona Ecological Services Office in Phoenix, Arizona, on or before October 14<sup>th</sup>. The proposed revisions to WIFL critical habitat affect riparian ecosystems in portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Critical habitat designations may be revised or eliminated in some areas that are currently under the protection of existing management plans, including habitat conservation and restoration plans, such as the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. I encourage interested agencies to review the proposed rule and provide the USFWS with any applicable comments. Board staff will be reviewing the proposed rule and preparing comments for the Board's review, approval and submission prior to the comment deadline.

  
Christopher S. Harris  
Acting Executive Director

**FIGURE 1**  
**AUGUST 1, 2011 FORECAST OF 2011 YEAR-END COLORADO RIVER WATER USE**  
**BY THE CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES**



Forecast of Colorado River Water Use by the California Agricultural Agencies (Millions of Acre-feet)			
Month	Use as of First of Month	Forecast of Year End Use	Forecast of Unused Water (1)
Jan	0.000	-----	-----
Feb	0.167	3.533	0.009
Mar	0.335	3.514	0.028
Apr	0.674	3.531	0.011
May	1.107	3.539	0.004
Jun	1.473	3.542	0.000
Jul	1.861	3.546	-0.004
Aug			
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			
Jan			

(1) The forecast of unused water is based on the availability of 3.542 MAF under the first three priorities of the water delivery contracts. This accounts for the 85,000 af of conserved water available to MWD under the 1988 IID-MWD Conservation agreement and the 1988 IID-MWD-CVWD-PVID Agreement as amended; 80,000 AF of conserved water available to SDCWA under the IID-SDCWA Transfer Agreement as amended being diverted by MWD; as estimated 29,000 AF of conserved water available to SDCWA and MWD as a result of the Coachella Canal Lining Project, 67,700 AF of water available to SDCWA and MWD as a result of the All American Canal Lining Project; 14,500 AF of water IID and CVWD are forbearing to permit the Secretary of the Interior to satisfy a portion of Indian and miscellaneous present perfected rights use and 25,000 AF of water IID is conserving to create Extraordinary Conservation Intentionally Created Surplus. 0 AF has been subtracted for IID's Salton Sea Salinity Management in 2011. As USBR is charging uses by Yuma Island pumpers to priority 2, the amount of unused water has been reduced by those uses - 6,530 AF. The CRB does not concur with USBR's viewpoint on this matter.