

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

**March 8, 2011**

**ADMINISTRATION**

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2011

A copy of the February 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes has been included in the Board folder for review and comment. I am respectfully asking for approval and adoption of these meeting minutes by Board members.

Updated Statements of Economic Interest (Form 700)

Updated statements of economic interest forms (Form No. 700) are required from Board members and alternates and should be completed and submitted to the California Fair Political Practices Commission by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

Colorado River Water Report

As of March 1, 2011, storage in the major Upper Basin reservoirs decreased by 656,400 acre-feet and storage in the Lower Basin reservoirs increased by 397,400 acre-feet during February 2011. Total System active storage as of March 1<sup>st</sup> was 31.866 million acre-feet (maf), or 53 percent of capacity, which is 1.110 maf less than one year ago (Upper Basin reservoirs decreased by 0.485 maf and Lower Basin reservoirs decreased by 0.625 maf).

February releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 11,420, 10,550 and 7,470 cubic feet per second (cfs), respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of March 2011, are 16,100, 15,600, and 11,500 cfs, respectively. The March releases represent those necessary to meet downstream water requirements including those caused by reduced operation of Senator Wash Reservoir.

As of February 28th, 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 7.181 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.808 maf; California, 4.092 maf; and Nevada, 0.280 maf. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) will divert 1.558 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 0.559 maf, which is 540,000 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 3.519 maf. This estimate is based on the collective use, through January 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 March 1st, the water level at the Lake Mead was at 1,095.83 feet above the mean sea level, and the storage was 11.121 maf, 43.0 percent of capacity, while the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,614.80 feet above the mean sea level and the storage was 13.220 maf, 54.4 percent of capacity.

### Colorado River Operations

#### *MWD's Report on the Status of SNWA Interstate Account for Calendar-Year 2010*

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, MWD submitted its final verified accounting for the Southern Nevada Water Authority Interstate Account administered by MWD through calendar-year 2010. In 2010, SNWA began the year with a beginning balance in its account with MWD of 70,000 acre-feet. There were no additional water supplies diverted and stored in the account; nor were any water supplies withdrawn from the account in calendar-year 2010. Consequently, SNWA maintains a total of 70,000 acre-feet in cumulative storage credits in its account with MWD. I have included a copy of MWD's final verified accounting of the SNWA Interstate Account in the Board folder.

#### *BLM News Release Announcing that the BLM will Re-evaluate Commercial Oil Shale Rules and Plans*

I have included a copy of a brief news release from the BLM that indicates that it will be taking a new look at rules and plans associated with commercial development of oil shale resources in the western United States. The Department of the Interior and the BLM want to ensure that rules and planning requirements for commercial oil shale development reflect the current state of knowledge and latest research technologies. Additionally, the BLM recently implemented a "Research, Demonstration and Development" program to more effectively work with companies and promote the development of technologies for development of oil shale resources. Finally, the BLM does anticipate utilizing a public comment and review process to evaluate the merits and impacts associated with existing and proposed rules, regulations and planning requirements for oil shale resource development. I have included a copy of the BLM's news release in the Board folder.

## Basin States Discussions

### *Status of the Colorado River Basin Water Study Report Project*

As was discussed at the last Board meeting, in late-January 2011, Reclamation released a preliminary draft of three of the technical reports (i.e., Technical Reports A, B, and D) of the “Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study” (Basin Study) to members of the Project Team for review and comment. These technical reports are main parts of the Interim Report No. 1, which covers Phases 1 and 2 of the Basin Study. The draft of the fourth report, Technical Report C, still has not been released to the Project Team. Comments on draft Technical Reports A, B, and D were submitted to Reclamation the Project Team and are currently being evaluated and incorporated as appropriate.

## Environmental Issues

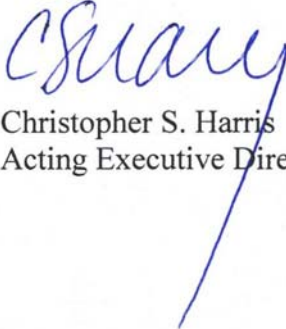
### *Department of the Interior News Release, “Glen Canyon Dam High-Flow Experiments Provide Insights for Future Flow Management of the Colorado River”*

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Department of the Interior issued a news release announcing the publication of report prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) that evaluates and synthesizes the scientific data collected during three high-flow release experiments conducted at Glen Canyon Dam (GCD). The USGS report, entitled “*Effects of Three High-Flow Experiments on the Colorado River Ecosystem Downstream from Glen Canyon Dam, Arizona*” indicates that high volume water releases from GCD can build sandbars, but can also cause large increases in populations of non-native rainbow trout that feed on young endangered humpback chub. The report also indicated that it may be more effective to schedule future HFE in the fall months, or shortly after enough sand and sediment resources have accumulated in the main channel below GCD to warrant a high-flow release. I have included a copy of the DOI news release and USGS Fact Sheet describing the results of the report in the Board folder.

### *Reclamation’s Draft Environmental Assessments—“Development and Implementation of a Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam, Arizona, 2011-2020” and “Non-Native Fish Control Downstream from Glen Canyon Dam”*

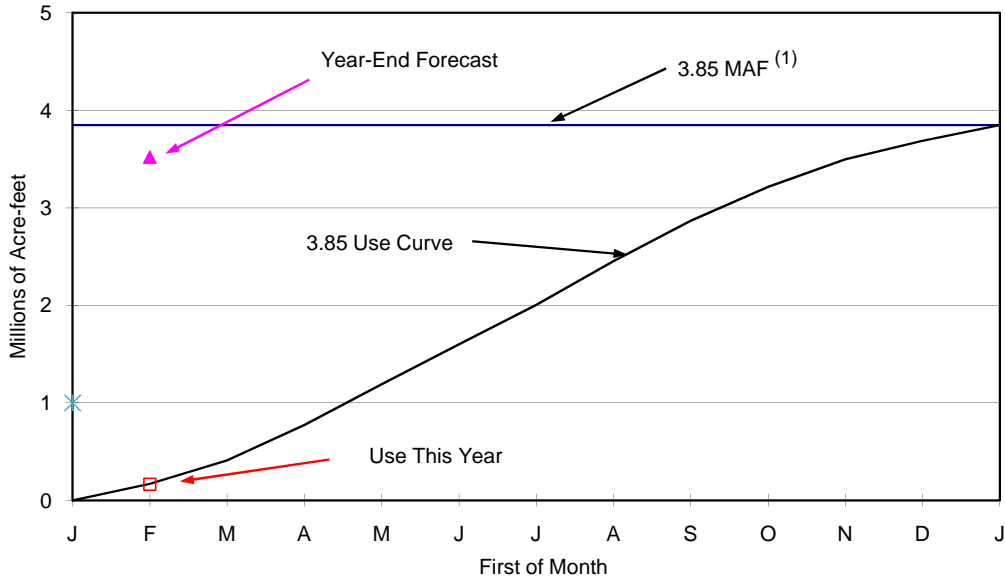
As we discussed at the Board meeting last month, Reclamation recently issued a draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) associated with the proposed development and implementation of Protocol for High-Flow Experimental Releases from Glen Canyon Dam for the period 2011 through 2020. Shortly thereafter, Reclamation released its DEA for Non-Native Fish Control Downstream of Glen Canyon Dam. At the last Board meeting, I had indicated that the seven Basin states had requested additional time to review and provide comments on the two DEAs. Initially, Reclamation had indicated that it would extend the comment period through February 28<sup>th</sup>. Subsequently, Reclamation has extended the comment period for both DEAs through March 18<sup>th</sup>. Following the circulation of draft versions of the Basin states’ letter, and conference calls, the Basin states continue to work on the draft comment letter being readied for submission to Reclamation by the March 18<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Issues being currently evaluated for inclusion in the letter include: (1) obtaining assurance that the HFE protocol is consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines; (2) requesting that the current NEPA analysis more thoroughly identify and analyze potential impacts to the endangered humpback chub; (3) evaluating the need for a trigger associated with rainbow trout populations to act as a surrogate or “bell-weather” for the overall well-being of humpback chub; and (4) whether or not the DEA should be withdrawn and reissued as an Environmental Impact Statement. These issues are still being discussed by the states for inclusion in the final letter. It is my understanding that the letter is likely to be finalized and readied for signature by the middle of next week (i.e., on, or about, March 16<sup>th</sup>). I would like to request that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the final letter on behalf of the Board.



Christopher S. Harris  
Acting Executive Director

**FIGURE 1**  
**MARCH 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	3.519	0.023
Mar			
Apr			
May			
Jun			
Jul			
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 1989 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; an 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.