

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

**June 11, 2013**

**ADMINISTRATION**

*Minutes of the April 10, 2013 Meeting of the Colorado River Board*

A copy of the draft April 10<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes has been included in the Board folder for your review and consideration. I am respectfully requesting the Board's adoption and approval of the April 10<sup>th</sup> minutes at the regularly scheduled Board meeting on June 12.

*Proposed Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Budget for the Colorado River Board of California*

On May 21, I provided Board members and member agency staff a copy of the proposed budget for the Colorado River Board for FY 2013-2014. An additional copy is also included in the Board folder. The total budget request for the Board is \$1,618,000 for Fiscal Year 2013-2014. This amount has been approved by the Governor's office and represents expenses for the Colorado River Board's personnel and operating expenses. Also attached is the renewed agreement between the Colorado River Board and the Six Agency Committee. This agreement is the mechanism used to provide for reimbursement to the State for the funding of the Colorado River Board. I am respectfully requesting that the Board review these budget materials and authorize me to execute Standard Agreement No. 46 at the June 12 Board meeting.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

*Colorado River Basin Water Report*

As of June 1, 2013, the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,108.4 feet with 12.50 million acre-feet (maf) of storage, or 48 % of capacity, and the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,599.4 feet with 11.70 maf of storage, or 48 % of capacity. The total System active storage as of June 1 was 31.22 maf, or 52 % of capacity, which is 5.54 maf less than one year ago when the System storage was at 62 % of capacity. May releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 16,370, 15,600, and 11,010 cubic feet per second (cfs) respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of June 2013 are 16,200, 15,500, and 11,500 cfs, respectively.

As of June 4, 2013, taking into account both measured and unmeasured return flows, the Lower Division states' consumptive use of Colorado River water for calendar year 2013, as forecasted by Reclamation, is forecast to be 7.28 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.73 maf; California, 4.28 maf; and Nevada, 0.266 maf.

As of June 4, the preliminary end-of-year estimate by the Bureau of Reclamation for 2013 for California's agricultural consumptive use of Colorado River water under the first three priorities and the sixth priority of the 1931 *California Seven Party Agreement* is forecasted to be 3.475 maf. This estimate is based on the collective use, through January 2013, by the Palo Verde Irrigation District, the Yuma Project-Reservation Division (YPRD), the Imperial Irrigation District, and the Coachella Valley Water District. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is forecasted to use about 0.718 maf.

## **COLORADO RIVER OPERATIONS**

### *Development of the 2014 Annual Operating Plan*

The first consultation associated with development of the 2014 Annual Operating Plan (AOP) was held via webinar on May 30. Representatives of Reclamation's Upper and Lower Colorado regions provided detailed presentations regarding current and projected hydrologic conditions and reservoir system operations. Reclamation reported that the snowpack in the Basin peaked at 81% of normal on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Additionally, Reclamation reported that the most probable Lake Powell unregulated inflow, as of the May 15<sup>th</sup> forecast, was projected to be 3.0 million acre-feet, or 42% of normal. A copy of the power-point presentations utilized by Reclamation during the webinar has been posted on-line and is available at [http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2014/AOP14\\_1st\\_Consultation\\_PPT.pdf](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2014/AOP14_1st_Consultation_PPT.pdf).

The draft AOP reviewed on May 30 is based on the April 2013 24-Month Study of proposed hydrology for the basin. The draft AOP projects that the "Mid-Elevation Release Tier" will govern Lake Powell operations during Water-Year 2014. Based on the April 2013 24-Month Study, the draft AOP estimates that the most probable inflow scenario the projected water release from Glen Canyon Dam will be 7.48 million acre-feet. This would be the first time since operations began that that level of releases would occur. During the presentation, Reclamation explained that depending on the hydrologic conditions in the future, the amount of release could be increased to 8.23 million acre-feet. In the Lower Basin, the 2014 AOP projects that the "Intentionally Created Surplus Condition" will govern operation of Lake Mead, and that no unused apportionment is anticipated to be available for Calendar-Year 2014. Finally, the 2014 AOP projects that a volume of up to 1.5 million acre-feet will be scheduled for delivery to Mexico in accordance with the 1944 Water Treaty. It is also anticipated that this amount could be increased to address water delivered pursuant to Minute 319. A copy of the draft 2014 AOP may be found on-line at Reclamation's Lower Colorado webpage at [http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2014/AOP14\\_draft.pdf](http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/AOP2014/AOP14_draft.pdf).

### *Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan EIS Process*

On April 15, 2013 the Basin States submitted comments to the Department of the Interior regarding draft performance criteria for the Glen Canyon Dam Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (LTEMP EIS). The comments also addressed a proposed decision analysis exercise that Interior plans to use in connection with the LTEMP EIS process. The comments included a technical analysis and incorporated input from a panel of scientists that is advising the states. DOI responded to the states' letter by setting up a meeting to review the states' comments and further explain DOI's proposal for the structured

decision analysis.

A technical group from the Basin States is continuing to refine and update the Basin States' Resource Targeted Condition Dependent (RTCD) alternative submitted in connection with the LTEMP EIS process. On June 7, 2013, the states submitted additional background information to DOI. Technical discussions between the states and DOI will continue as the EIS alternatives are developed.

In May 2013, the National Park Service issued a "Comprehensive Fisheries Management Plan" (CFMP) to address long-term management of the fishery resources of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Grand Canyon National Park below Glen Canyon Dam. The Colorado River Board provided comments on a draft plan on June 28, 2012. The Board emphasized that the CFMP should be closely coordinated with the ongoing LTEMP EIS process, the existing USFWS Biological Opinion associated with Glen Canyon Dam operations and the recently revised and updated USFWS recovery goals for the endangered Colorado River native fishes. The Colorado River Board submitted additional comments to the National Park Service on June 10, 2013.

#### *Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program*

On April 16, 2013, on behalf of the California Permittees, the Colorado River Board submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife the Annual Status Report associated with the CESA 2081 permit associated with the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP). The report documents the progress of the LCR MSCP in as shown in its accomplishment reports for 2010 and 2011 pursuant to the term of the CESA 2081 permit.

The LCR MSCP Steering Committee met in Las Vegas, Nevada on April 24, 2013. At the meeting, the Steering Committee asked the Chair (Chris Harris, California) and Vice-Chair (Perri Benemelis, Arizona) to continue in those positions. On April 23, members of the Steering Committee attended a day-long tour of native fisheries-related activities on Lake Mead, and received presentations associated with the rearing and repatriation endangered razorback sucker into Lake Mead. Much of this work is being done by the Nevada Department of Wildlife on behalf of the LCR MSCP.

The Steering Committee approved a resolution adding the Yuma East Wetlands Project as an LCR MSCP Habitat Conservation Area (HCA). This large, recently restored wetland complex near Yuma, Arizona brings approximately 190 acres of restored cottonwood-willow habitat and about 160 acres of restored marsh habitat into the Program. While the LCR MSCP will assume 70% of the costs associated with managing this HCA, the other local partners (e.g., City of Yuma, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, Quechan Indian Tribe) have agreed to provide the remaining 30% of the costs associated with long-term management.

The Steering Committee also received updates and status reports from Reclamation's LCR MSCP staff regarding Fiscal-Year 2012 accomplishments, research and monitoring activities and native fish research and stocking activities.

On May 8-9, 2013 the LCR MSCP Work Group met in Phoenix and began its review of the proposed FY-2014 LCR MSCP Work Plan and Budget. The proposed FY-2014 budget associated with LCR MSCP implementation is currently just over \$35,000,000. The primary budget categories include the following:

Administration	\$1.2 million
Fish Augmentation	\$1.7 million
Species Research	\$5.0 million
System Monitoring	\$3.3 million
Conservation Areas	\$13.8 million
Post-Development Monitoring	\$1.4 million
Adaptive Management	\$1.4 million
Existing Habitat Maintenance	\$7.0 million
Remedial Measures	\$0.3 million
Public Outreach	\$0.1 million

The Work Group will meet again in September 2013 to finalize the proposed FY-2014 Work Plan and Budget which will be presented to the LCR MSCP Steering Committee on October 23, 2013 for approval and adoption.

## **BASIN STATES DISCUSSIONS**

### *Minute 319 Updates and Next Steps*

Recent activities to implement Minute 319 have centered on work to establish the parameters for the base flow and pulse flow that Mexico will use to improve habitat and environmental conditions in the river corridor south of Morelos Dam. A bi-national work group has met on several occasions to begin drafting a flow plan and monitoring plan. That group will coordinate with operational experts in the U.S. and Mexico to ensure that the delivery plans will be consistent with the existing parameters of Minute 319 and the 1944 Treaty. The habitat restoration plans within Mexico are being designed to utilize the limited quantities of water available to Mexico under Minute 319 and to fit within the time constraints that have been established by the Minute. A meeting of the Environmental Work Group identified in Minute 319 will be scheduled in the future to review the delivery and monitoring plans.

Discussions have also continued in connection with the development of a plan to provide an emergency connection between the U.S. and Mexico through the All American Canal as identified in Minute 319. Details of any proposal will be reviewed in accordance with the procedures outlined in Minute 319.

In response to increasing drought conditions on the Rio Grande, representatives from the State of Texas have introduced legislation to tie Mexico's delivery obligations to the U.S. on the Rio Grande to Colorado River issues and Minute 319. To date, three bills have been introduced, H.R. 1863 and H.R. 2307 and S. 1125, and a proposed amendment to the Water Resources Development Act was introduced but did not move forward. The bills ask the Secretary of State of provide reports to Congress on the status of Mexican efforts to meet the treaty obligations on the Rio Grande and to report on the benefits to the U.S. from Minute 319. Certain provisions of

the bills prohibit the Secretary of State from extending Minute 319 if the Secretary fails to comply with the reporting requirements. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Governor of Texas have written letters to the Administration regarding these issues. The basin states are considering options to respond to the proposed legislation and other advocacy efforts.

### *Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study Report Next Steps*

After several months of preparation, on May 28-29, the basin states and the Department of the Interior announced the initiation of the “next steps” in connection with the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study that was completed last December. Workgroups have been created to analyze and refine the urban and agricultural conservation assumptions in the study. A workgroup has also been set up to evaluate the modeling potential for environmental flows in certain areas of the basin. Colorado River Board agencies are well represented on the workgroups, which include a variety of stakeholder interests. The goal of this phase of the process is to prepare reports by the end of the year.

### *Basin States Technical Committee Meeting, April 17<sup>th</sup>, Las Vegas, Nevada*

On April 17, members of the Basin States Technical Committee met at the McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada. At this meeting staff from Reclamation’s Upper and Lower Colorado regional offices provided detailed summaries of hydrologic conditions throughout the Colorado River Basin, and an overview of current projected Colorado River System operations. As reported above in the discussion associated with development of the 2014 AOP, the current condition of the reservoir system suggests that the “Mid-Elevation Release Tier” will govern the operation of Lake Powell, and that based upon the most probable inflow scenarios that the Water-Year 2014 release from Glen Canyon Dam will be 7.48 million acre-feet. This determination is based upon the status of Lake Powell as reported in the April 2013 24-Month Study. According to Reclamation and the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center, the precipitation within the Colorado River Basin through Water-Year 2013 has been dry, and the April through July forecast for Lake Powell as of early-April was projected to be 2.7 million acre-feet, or 38% of average. Additionally, the dry antecedent soil moisture conditions will likely reduce stream-flow runoff forecasts.

In its continuing efforts to provide up-to-date and effective river system modeling support, Reclamation reported that it has updated and refined the “Mid-Term Operations Probabilistic Model (MTOM). While the 24-Month Study is still Reclamation’s official model for operational tier determinations, MTOM has been identified as an additional tool that can be utilized to evaluate risk and uncertainty in the Colorado River Basin. Currently, Reclamation has updated the MTOM to extend the model to provide five-year outlooks, incorporate the provisions of Minute 319 and Lower Basin demand variability. As Reclamation refines MTOM, it will continue to seek stakeholder input and make revisions to the model as necessary. Reclamation is also planning to incorporate five-year tributary forecasts within MTOM to enhance Upper Basin reservoir operations.

Brief status updates or reports were provided at the meeting associated with (1) the Basin Study Report process and next steps; (2) LTEMP EIS development process; and (3) the Minute 319 and Binational discussions. Additionally, CH2MHill provided an overview of its “Yuma Desalting Plant Long-Term Operational Alternatives” study. The purpose of the study was to assess the potential to utilize the Yuma Desalting Plant (YDP) to supplement flows within the Lower Basin. This study, funded by the Central Arizona Project, Southern Nevada Water Authority and MWD, evaluated the performance of YDP during the recent Pilot Run and has incorporated significant recent research data and evaluated the feasibility of using renewable energy technologies to offset YDP energy demands.

The Central Arizona Project provided an overview of its proposed “Drain Interceptor Project”. This project would intercept and reroute drainage water from the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District (WMIDD) and discharge it to the mainstream immediately above Imperial Dam. Representatives from CAP will provide an overview of the proposed Drain-Water Interceptor Project at the June 12 Colorado River Board meeting.

The next meeting of the Basin States Technical Committee has been tentatively scheduled for October 16, 2013, and will likely be held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

*Meetings of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, Advisory Council, and Work Group, Grand Junction, Colorado, May 14-17, 2013*

On May 16 and 17, 2013, the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) and Advisory Council held meetings in Grand Junction, Colorado. The Work Group met on May 14 and 15, 2013, preceding the Forum and Advisory Council meetings. Major issues discussed include updates on the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) injection well, the approval of Henry’s Fork EIS, the Triennial Review, and Basin funding issues. The Forum also celebrated the completion of the Grand Valley Salinity Control Project in the Grande Junction area of Colorado.

Reclamation is starting and EIS process to evaluate alternatives to continue brine disposal at the PVU. The Colorado River Board is a Cooperating Agency for the EIS. Reclamation held a meeting of the Cooperating Agencies on June 4, 2013, in included discussion of the appropriate “no action” alternative. Additional meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis and it is anticipated that the EIS process will be completed by 2016. The next step The existing well has operated for more than 20 years and has prevented more than 100,000 tons of salt per year from entering the river system.

Reclamation convened a Paradox Valley Unit Consultant Review Board to review the potential for the construction of a second injection well. The Consultant Review Board identified several potential options, one of which is further studying the injection efficiency and the potential to rework the existing injection well. Another panel of experts will be convened to examine the feasibility of an evaporation pond as a brine disposal alternative at Paradox, including a review of the potential limitations and restrictions posed by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

At the meeting, Reclamation gave a detailed report on a January 23, 2013, 4.4 magnitude earthquake that struck 8.2 kilometers northwest of the PVU injection well. Residents of the town of Paradox felt the effect of the earthquake. In response to the January earthquake, the well was

shut down until April 17 since which time it has operated at a reduced injection flow rate to decrease the pressure buildup until more information can be collected on its correlation with earthquake occurrences. Reclamation plans to conduct further analyses to determine the short-term and long-term risks of equal or larger magnitude events, and to develop a long-term operational strategy to manage future seismic risk.

The Forum Work Group is in the process of drafting an Emergency Action Plan in response to the potential failure of the PVU. If failure were to occur, 110,000 tons of salt controlled annually by PVU would resume discharging into the Colorado River system. Included in this plan will be an educational document that addresses the important role of PVU in the basin's salinity control program to be used for stakeholders when seeking support from state congressional delegations.

The Forum formally approved Henrys Fork Final EIS, designating a 69,929-acre area, including portions of four counties in the northeastern corner of Utah and the southwestern corner of Wyoming, to be a salinity control project area. An estimated salt load reduction of 6,540 tons/year contributed by the Upper Henrys Fork River into the Colorado River system from irrigated agriculture is expected from the implementation of this project. The reduction will be achieved by on-farm irrigation system improvements (i.e., sprinkler systems) and some on-farm water delivery ditches in the project area. Lost irrigation-induced wetland values are anticipated but will be addressed via habitat value compensation practices. The Record of Decision is expected to be posted to the Federal Register by mid June.

Reclamation reported that the accrual balance in the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund (LCRBDF) would currently be at approximately negative \$2.2 million if the cost-share dollars were immediately expended the same time the cost-share obligations were created. The Work Group has been tasked by the Forum to look into the long-term sustainability of the fund. The Forum and Advisory Council plan to make recommendations at the next Forum meeting in October. To help with the cash flow in the LCRBDF in the short-term, the Advisory Council delayed approving the use of \$3 million Basin States Program funds for a couple of the projects identified in the 2012 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) that were previously recommended by the Technical Advisory Group.

The Work Group continues to formulate a paper on the salinity control benefits in the Upper Colorado River Basin to supplement the information previously prepared regarding the benefits in the lower basin.

The next meeting of the Salinity Control Forum, Advisory Council, and Work Group has been scheduled to be held in October 2013, and will be held at the offices of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California in Los Angeles, California.

#### *Status of Navajo Nation v. DOI*

In early June 2013, the Navajo Nation filed a motion with the federal district court in Arizona to amend the Complaint it had filed in 2003 against the U.S. alleging that the U.S. had failed to take the Navajo Nation's water rights into consideration when moving forward with approval of several initiatives that are of interest to the Colorado River water users within

California including the interim surplus guidelines, the 2007 shortage and coordinated reservoir operation guidelines, the inadvertent overrun policy. Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District and the Metropolitan Water District intervened in the original case, along with the states of Nevada and Arizona and the Southern Nevada Water Authority and Central Arizona Project.

*/S/*

Tanya M. Trujillo  
Executive Director