

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

**March 12, 2013**

**ADMINISTRATION**

*Minutes of the December 12, 2012 and February 13, 2013 Meetings of the Colorado River Board*

A copy of the draft meeting minutes from the December 12 Board meeting has been included in the Board folder for your review and consideration. I am respectfully requesting the Board's adoption and approval of those minutes at the regularly scheduled Board meeting on March 13. A copy of the draft February 13 informational meeting minutes has also been included in the Board folder for your review.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

*Colorado River Basin Water Report*

As of March 1, 2013, the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,122.1 feet with 13.810 million acre-feet (maf) of storage, or 53% of capacity, while the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,601.5 with 11.891 maf of storage, or 49% of capacity. The total System active storage as of March 1 was 32.443 maf, or 54 % of capacity, which is 5.491 maf less than one year ago when the System storage was at 64 % of capacity. February releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 11,630, 10,980 and 8,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of March 2013 are 16,100, 15,400, and 11,100 cfs, respectively.

As of March 1 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 7.116 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.698 maf; California, 4.142 maf; and Nevada, 0.276 maf.

As of March 1, 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 3.462 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 0.592 maf.

## **COLORADO RIVER OPERATIONS**

### *Review of Reclamation's Provisional Forecast for Calendar-Year 2012 Water Uses*

Reclamation's Calendar-Year 2012 Provisional Forecast for the End of Year Consumptive Use for California dated February 14, 2012, has been included in your Board packet. A final accounting of actual uses will be developed in the coming months in connection with final accounting process Reclamation conducts in accordance with Article V of the *Arizona v. California* decree. Throughout the year, Reclamation regularly updates the reports of Lower Basin water diversions and consumptive uses as compared against the water users' approved annual water orders and publishes these reports on the Lower Colorado Region's website. The report identifies each of the California water users, the approved and forecasted annual consumptive use or diversion amounts and the uses or diversions up to the date of the report. Reclamation reports estimates of uses that are over or under the water order amounts and differentiates between water users with consumptive use entitlements, namely the City of Needles, The Metropolitan Water District, Imperial Irrigation District and Coachella Valley Water District, and other water users with diversion entitlements. Reclamation's provisional forecast report also displays an Adjusted Apportionment Calculation which factors in subtractions or additions to California's basic 4.4 million acre-feet per annum apportionment and an ISG Annual Target Comparison Calculation which compares relevant water uses with the water use targets identified in Exhibit B to the Water Delivery Agreement.

During the Board meeting we will walk through the various categories of information in the provisional forecast report.

### *Release of the 2013 Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River Reservoirs*

On January 24, 2013, the Secretary of the Interior issued the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for Colorado River System Reservoirs for 2013. The 2013 AOP projects a most probable release of 8.23 maf from Lake Powell and limits water deliveries in the Lower Basin to 7.5 maf during calendar year 2013 plus or minus any credits for Intentionally Created Surplus. The Secretary's cover letter to the Basin States' Governors notes that inflow to Lake Powell has been below average in 10 of the past 13 water years and that 2000 – 2012 is the second lowest period on record in the past 100 years. A complete copy of the final 2013 AOP can be found at [usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/aop/AOP13.pdf](http://usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/aop/AOP13.pdf).

### *Status of the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project*

Congress authorized the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project ("Project") in 1986 to supply water for domestic, municipal, industrial, and recreational purposes within California. The Project consists of wells that pump ground water in exchange for Colorado River water. Accordingly, IID and Coachella have agreed to reduce their diversions from the Colorado River in an amount equal to the volume of groundwater pumped from the Project's wells that is then discharged into the All-American Canal, up to a maximum of 10,000 acre-feet per year. Stage I of the Project was completed in 1996 and consists of two wells located close to Drop 1 along the All-American Canal in Imperial County.

The Project was originally created to provide water to entities whose lands or interests in land are located adjacent to the Colorado River in the State of California and who do not hold rights to Colorado River water or whose rights are insufficient to meet their present or anticipated future needs. The Project authorization was amended in 2005 to allow the Secretary of the Interior to contract with entities that hold existing Section 5 contracts for municipal and industrial uses within the State of California and to authorize the construction of Stage II of the Project.

The City of Needles maintains a master contract with Reclamation for the Project and has administrative authority to subcontract with new entities in accordance with the terms of the Project legislation. The Board serves as a "clearinghouse" for applicants who would like to obtain water through the Project and has developed procedures and an application process that allows the Board to review prospective applications in order to make recommendations to Reclamation as to whether to approve potential subcontracts. Upon concurrence by Reclamation regarding the Board's recommendation, the City of Needles will contact a successful applicant and start the subcontracting process. In addition, pursuant to the 2005 amendments to the Project's authorizing legislation, MWD has contracted with the City of Needles and the U.S. to be supplied with unused Project water as determined on an annual basis. The City of Needles has utilized funding from the MWD contract to establish a trust fund to pay for the costs of the construction of Stage II of the Project and conduct studies regarding salinity, among other purposes.

On January 24, 2013, Reclamation held a meeting in its Yuma Area Office to brief stakeholders on the planning status of Stage II of the Project. Stage II of the Project consists of two additional wells that, together with the original wells, could be pumped to meet the Project maximum of 10,000 acre-feet of water per year. The January meeting was a follow-up to a previous meeting held on July 18, 2012, during which Reclamation provided detailed information regarding the proposed well location sites, a project schedule, an estimate of current costs, a review of accomplishments, and a discussion of next steps. At the July meeting, two proposed well location sites (primary and alternate) were approved by the representative stakeholders which allowed the Project team to move forward with planning activities and to drill an exploratory pilot hole. The well sites were selected based on power supply costs, distance from existing wells, and cultural-sensitivity concerns, among other considerations.

Reclamation reported the completion of the following: (1) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review; (2) consultation with the International Boundary and Water Commission; (3) Endangered Species Act compliance; (4) drilling of the exploratory pilot hole; and (5) preparation of construction and design cost estimates, and development of the project schedule that have been completed for Stage II of the Project.

Reclamation is also proposing to install a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system for monitoring groundwater data (i.e., groundwater depth and flow) associated with the existing wells (i.e., LCWSP-1 and 2). The SCADA system is expected to cost approximately \$90,000-\$120,000. Replacement of the submersible pumps on the two existing wells is estimated to cost approximately \$500,000-\$650,000. The estimated cost of drilling and readying for use the two new wells is estimated to be \$1.3-\$1.6 million. All three of these tasks are expected to be completed over the next two years, including obtaining all necessary permits. The next steps include completion of the final project design, development of a power supply

plan, and completion of a project construction funding agreement. Construction activities will commence once the funding agreement is executed and funding is received.

During the January meeting, Reclamation reported that the contract with IID for the operation and maintenance of the existing two wells had been terminated with the concurrence of IID, which had operated the project since 1997. As of January 1, 2013, well-field administration, operation and maintenance responsibilities have been transferred to Reclamation's Yuma Area Office. Reclamation's January 23, 2013, letter effectuating the transfer was included in the Board's folder for the February 2013 meeting.

#### *Approval of Lower Colorado River Water Supply Project Applications*

Pursuant to the Board's long-standing procedures for obtaining a subcontract for water under the Lower Colorado Water Supply Act of 1986, I am requesting Board concurrence relating to two applications for participation in the Lower Colorado Water Supply Project for a total of not more than four (4) acre-feet of water use per year. Included in the Board materials is a proposed Resolution supporting the applications and a related data table identifying the relevant parcel locations and proposed water allocations.

#### *Reports on the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group Meeting and Status of the Development of the Long-Term Experimental Management Plan*

The Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) met on February 20 and 21, in Tempe, Arizona. At the meeting, the AMWG approved the minutes of their August 29-30, 2012 meeting and renewed the AMWG charter. The AMWG also received reports and updates on Colorado River System hydrology and reservoir operations, the recent release of the final Basin Study Report, and the current status of Glen Canyon Dam facility management. Additionally, the meeting included presentations regarding the preliminary review of the results of the High Flow Experiment held in late-2012, the status of the humpback chub population, non-native fish monitoring, and introduction of the Department of the Interior's new tribal liaison for the Adaptive Management Program. The Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center and Reclamation provided overviews of the Fiscal Year 2014 budget for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program.

On February 20, Dr. Richard Valdez, chairman of the science panel that developed the States' proposed alternative, presented an overview of the Resource Targeted Condition-Dependent Strategy alternative for the LTEMP, and answered questions from the audience.

On February 21, in the morning session, the AMWG heard reports from Reclamation and the Park Service on the process for developing alternatives for the LTEMP EIS and received copies of draft criteria to be used to evaluate alternatives. In addition, Reclamation and USGS described a decision analysis process that may be used to evaluate the LTEMP alternatives. Comments regarding the process and the criteria are due by April 5, 2013.

During the afternoon on February 21, the Central Arizona Project hosted a tour of selected project facilities for the AMWG participants.

## *Report on the Recent Salinity Control Workgroup Meeting*

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum's (Forum) Work Group met in San Diego, California, on February 11-13, 2013. The primary issues discussed during the meeting included: (1) a status update on the Paradox Valley Salinity Control Unit (PVU) injection well alternative study; and (2) the progress of the rangeland study that is underway by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the USGS.

With respect to the PVU injection well alternatives, Reclamation reported that it was preparing a draft environmental impact statement (EIS), which will evaluate a range of alternatives to be considered for the continuation of the operation of the PVU. On January 25, Reclamation sent out a request to several federal, state, and local agencies regarding potential participation in the NEPA process as cooperating agencies during development of the EIS. As discussed at the February Board meeting, the Board formally responded to Reclamation indicating its desire to be one of the cooperating agencies.

Ms. Cole Rossi of USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) updated the Work Group regarding the status of the rangeland study. Phase I of the study was a literature review of references relative to salt mobilization and transport on rangelands. The second phase is a literature synthesis that is being performed in coordination with the BLM, USGS, and Reclamation. The Phase II report is expected to be available for review within the next few months. The overall goal of the rangeland study is to determine whether there are areas of rangeland that may be suitable for salinity control projects based on identification of areas that contribute the largest salt loads to the system. For the next phase, USGS will utilize a GIS-based analysis to identify and map vegetation types and develop correlations to rangeland management activities and transport processes.

The Salinity Control Forum is currently in the process of preparing testimony to support appropriations for the Salinity Control Program for House and Senate subcommittees relating to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Reclamation's Basin-wide salinity control program, and the BLM's salinity control efforts. The Board plans to submit written testimony to the appropriate committees and subcommittees in support of the Salinity Control Program during the appropriations process this year.

The next Forum and Advisory Council meetings are scheduled for May 16-17, 2013, in Grand Junction, Colorado. These meetings have been planned in conjunction with a celebration of the completion of the USDA Grand Valley Salinity Control Project on Wednesday, May 15. A tour of the Grand Valley Salinity Control project is being planned for the afternoon of May 15.

## **BASIN STATES DISCUSSIONS**

### *Minute 319 Updates and Next Steps*

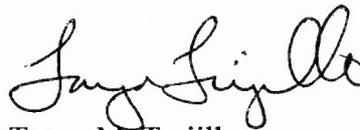
On March 7, 2013, a bi-national meeting was held in Tijuana, Mexico to discuss progress relating to specific projects identified in Minute 319. Several representatives from the U.S. were present for the meeting as was a large delegation from Mexico. Managers from Reclamation's

Boulder City and Yuma offices also participated in the meeting. Representatives from Mexico provided general status updates relating to plans for potential projects including a bi-national turnout off of the All-American Canal, progress on the planning for the Alamo Reforma Canal reservoir project, and updates on the restoration projects at the Miguel Aleman and Laguna Grande sites. The meeting also included a discussion of the status of the Rosarito desalination plant that the San Diego County Water Authority has been involved in.

Additional next steps include developing a process for accounting for the environmental pulse flow and base flows that are contemplated by the Minute and a monitoring plan to track the progress of the pilot program. Minute 319 contemplates the preparation of a delivery plan by January 31, 2014, that would identify a schedule of monthly flows as well as specific delivery points and volumes of water. An organizational meeting of a small group designated to work on these issues will be scheduled in the near future.

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

The Basin States continue to work with Reclamation and additional stakeholders on the development of a plan for moving forward with the next steps associated with the Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study. Additional educational workshops will be held on March 25 (Salt Lake City) and March 26 (Phoenix) and an educational webinar is scheduled for April 3 to help provide more information and clarification regarding the technical complexity and comprehensiveness of the Basin Study. In addition, small work groups will be formed to concentrate on the areas of “Municipal Conservation and Reuse” and “Agricultural Conservation and Transfers”. The Basin States will also continue to evaluate the feasibility of augmentation projects and Upper Basin water banking, among other options.



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