

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

**May 12, 2014**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Minutes of the April 9, 2014 Meeting of the Colorado River Board**

A copy of the draft Board meeting minutes from the meeting held on April 9, 2014 has been included in the Board packet for your review.

**COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT AND CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE**

As of May 5, 2014, the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,093 feet with 11.19 million acre-feet (maf) of storage, or 43% of capacity, while the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,579 feet with 9.82 maf of storage, or 40% of capacity. The total System active storage as of May 4 was 28.10 maf, or 47% of capacity, which is 2.99 maf less than one year ago when the System storage was at 52% of capacity. As of May 1, 2014, the Upper Colorado River Basin reservoirs other than Lake Powell ranged from 40% to 90% of their full capacities.

The unregulated inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year 2014, based on Reclamation's May 2, 2014 information, is forecast to be 10.8 maf, or 100% of average. As of May 2, 2014, the Upper Basin snowpack was at 102% of average and the Water Year 2014 precipitation to date was at 97% of average. The Colorado River Basin Forecast Center's Snow Conditions Map dated May 1, 2014, indicates that some areas in the Upper Basin are experiencing above average snowpack conditions, particularly in Colorado.

On April 25, 2014, Governor Brown issued a Proclamation of a Continued State of Emergency that continues all of the drought relief programs initiated through the initial January 17, 2014, drought State of Emergency declaration and initiates 19 additional actions that should be implemented to help address the drought conditions. The Department of Water Resources has continued to issue weekly Drought Briefs to provide updates on current conditions and key action items taking place regarding the drought. The April 29, 2014 Drought Monitor map for California indicates that over 70% of the State continues to experience extreme or exceptional drought conditions and 100% of the state continues to experience some level of drought conditions. The statewide snowpack reports are still far below average, reading 18% of average as of the May 1 snowpack readings.

The Bureau of Reclamation has released an initial draft of preliminary data regarding the Lower Basin's end of year water uses for 2013, but adjustments are expected as the Decree accounting process advances. The report should be finalized within the next few weeks.

## COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM REPORTS

### Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study

The workgroups continue to analyze data and develop their respective Phase 1 reports. In addition to analyzing the focus reaches, the Environmental Flows workgroup has developed a list of existing programs and mechanisms that have been implemented inside and outside of the Basin that protect ecological and recreational resources. The programs have been categorized into program types that focus on Stakeholder Groups, Project Funding, Species Recovery/Conservation Plans, Water Management Enhancements, and Water Rights Acquisition. The Municipal Conservation and Reuse workgroup has reviewed over 100 conservation and reuse programs within the Basin. The workgroup Co-Chairs have pared the list down to 30 programs that highlight metering and billing, public education, water loss, residential indoor, commercial/industrial/institution (CII), outdoor landscaping and reuse. The Phase 1 report for this workgroup will include case study write-ups of select programs. Similarly, the Agricultural Conservation, Productivity and Transfers workgroup is continuing to develop case studies that highlight water conservation and efficiency activities within the Basin. The workgroups will meet again in May and the Coordination Team is scheduled to meet on May 19, 2014 at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas.

### Minute 319 Implementation

As of May 2, the pulse flow has traveled approximately 80 miles down the river channel from Morelos Dam. Its progress is being closely monitored by U.S. and Mexican scientists in accordance with a monitoring plan developed by DOI/Reclamation, IBWC, CILA and a bi-national group of NGOs to evaluate the operational, hydrologic and ecological conditions relative to the pulse flow. Water has been routed through the irrigation canals in Mexico to try to get more water delivered to the lower stretches of the Delta. The Delivery Plan also anticipates delivery of a base flow of approximately 52,000 acre-feet of water that would be utilized between 2014 and 2017 to maintain active and passive restoration areas.

### Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

A workgroup of Salinity Forum members has continued to develop potential strategies to address the existing funding shortfall issues that the program is facing and to ensure the continued fiscal integrity of the Lower Basin Fund in maintaining an adequate revenue stream for implementation of the Salinity Control Program. The next Salinity Control Forum meeting is scheduled for June 12-13 in Wyoming.

### Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program and Long-Term Experimental Management Plan EIS Process

The Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program's Technical Work Group (TWG) met in Phoenix, Arizona on April 8-9, 2014 to discuss the FY-2015/2016 biennial budget for the

AMP and receive status reports from the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center staff and TWG ad hoc groups.

The Department of the Interior is planning to present the results of the “swing-weighting” exercise, also known as the decision analysis exercise, in the next few weeks. It is hoped that the results will confirm that the RTCD proposed by the Basin States performed well in the analysis.

The next meeting of the Adaptive Management Work Group is scheduled for May 27 by webinar. It is anticipated that the agenda will include a review of the budget, and an update of the LTEMP EIS.

### Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

A meeting of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Steering Committee was held on April 23, 2014, in Las Vegas, Nevada. At that meeting, Chris Harris was re-elected as Chairperson of the Steering Committee, and Ms. Perri Benemelis, of the Central Arizona Project, was re-elected as the Vice-Chair. Additionally, the Steering Committee approved three minor modifications to the Habitat Conservation Plan. These minor modifications are associated with conservation measures specified in the HCP and proposed activities for western yellow bat, Arizona’s Bell’s vireo, and the Colorado River cotton rat. These minor modifications to the HCP are the result of research and monitoring data that has been collected since Program implementation was initiated in 2005.

Reclamation also distributed the draft LCR MSCP “Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2015 Work Plan and Budget, and Fiscal Year 2013 Accomplishment Report”. In FY-2013, just over \$31 million was expended for Program implementation activities. Reclamation is currently projecting that approximately \$37 million will be expended for FY-2015 activities. Reclamation also reported that as of 2013, nearly 3,000 acres of habitat have been created and maintained, including nearly 2,000 acres of cottonwood-willow, just under 500 acres of honey mesquite, and just under 400 acres of marsh, and nearly 100 acres of backwater habitat. Also, a total of just over 130,000 razorback suckers and nearly 60,000 bonytail have been reintroduced to the Lower Colorado River.

Ms. Lesley Fitzpatrick, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) Arizona Ecological Services Office, reported that the USFWS is preparing to publish a technical correction to the official list of threatened and endangered species (50 CFR 17.11) regarding the listed range for the Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris yumanensis*). The result of the technical correction is the restoration of Mexico to the listed range of the Yuma clapper rail. Ms. Fitzpatrick further informed the Steering Committee that implementing the technical correction will have no effects to the implementation of Sections 7 and 9 of the federal Endangered Species Act, as the “take prohibitions” of Section 9 do not apply in a foreign country, and that the Section 7 consultation and Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit establishing the LCR MSCP will not be affected by the technical correction, and no new Section 7 consultation is necessary because of this action.

A meeting of the LCR MSCP Work Group was held on May 7-8, 2014, in Phoenix, Arizona. The purpose of this meeting was to review the draft “Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2015 Work Plan and Budget, and Fiscal Year 2013 Accomplishment Report”. Staff from Reclamation’s LCR MSCP Group gave in-depth technical presentations associated with many of the proposed work tasks identified in the report, and provided detailed overviews of each of the existing and proposed restoration areas. Two new conservation areas are planned for development within California during FY-2015, including the Mohave Valley Conservation Area (backwater, marsh and riparian habitats) near Needles, California, and the Pretty Water Conservation Area (honey mesquite habitat) at the southern end of the Palo Verde Valley.

#### Lower Colorado Water Supply Project Applications

Included in the packet is Board Resolution 2014-1 addressing Lower Colorado Water Supply Project (LCWSP) applications associated with 7 parcels of property and seeking a total of 48 acre-feet of potential water use per year. Each of the current applications meets the eligibility requirements for the project.

By way of background, the project was authorized in 1986. Two Stage I wells (LCWSP-1 and LCWSP-2) in the Sand Hills area were constructed in 1987 and 1993 and currently produce approximately 5,000 acre-feet of water per year. In 2005, Public Law 109-103 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to design and construct Phase II of LCWSP to expand the capacity to 10,000 acre-feet. The target date for the completion of the construction of Phase II is October 2015.

The City of Needles contracts with the Bureau of Reclamation for water from the project and acts as the project administrator for additional water users in California who have been approved to receive subcontracts for water uses under the project. Reclamation estimates that the current uses estimated for 2013 from the project is a total of 5,510 acre-feet. If the Board approves the currently proposed applications for water use, it is expected that the Bureau of Reclamation and the City of Needles would move forward with the subcontracting process for the new uses.

#### Announcements/Notices

On May 13, 2014 the Energy and Natural Resources Committee is scheduled to hold a confirmation hearing for Estevan Lopez who has been nominated to serve as the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. The same hearing will include consideration of Suzette Kimball as Director of the USGS.

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