MONTHLY REPORT TO THE
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

October 12, 2022

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS REPORT

As of October 3rd, the surface water elevation of Lake Powell was 3,529.51 feet with nearly 5.81 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 25% of capacity. The surface water elevation of Lake Mead was 1,045.15 feet with 7.34 MAF of storage, or 28% of capacity. As of October 2nd, the total System storage was 19.54 MAF, or 33% of capacity, which is about 3.32 MAF less than the total System storage at this time last year.

As of October 5th, storage in the Upper Basin reservoirs, excluding Lake Powell, included the following volumes: 81% of capacity at Fontenelle Reservoir in Wyoming; 73% of capacity at Flaming Gorge Reservoir in Wyoming and Utah; 99% of capacity at Morrow Point and 35% of capacity at Blue Mesa Reservoir in Colorado; and 56% of capacity at Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico.

As of September 16th, the August observed inflow into Lake Powell was 0.37 MAF (98% of normal) and the September preliminary observed inflow was 0.25 MAF (71% of normal). The preliminary observed inflow into Lake Powell for Water Year (WY) 2022 is 6.08 MAF (63% of normal). The observed April through July 2022 unregulated inflow into Lake Powell is 3.75 MAF (59% of normal).

COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM UPDATES

Basin States Activities

The seven states continue to meet and discuss the development of actions that can reduce the use of Colorado River System water supplies and bolster storage in Lakes Powell and Mead. This effort is the result of preliminary modeling prepared by Reclamation earlier in the summer indicating that significant water use reductions would be necessary to protect critical elevations at Basin reservoirs over the remaining interim period of 2023-2026. In a September 22nd statement, the Department of the Interior (DOI) reiterated its commitment to take action to protect the system, including evaluating the following actions for implementation:

- Initiating an administrative process to address operational realities under the current 2007 Interim Guidelines while we continue to develop alternatives for sustainable and equitable operations under the new guidelines.
- Moving forward with administrative actions needed to
- authorize a reduction of Glen Canyon Dam releases below seven million acre-feet per year, if needed, to protect critical infrastructure at Glen Canyon Dam.
- Preparing to manage elevations in Lake Powell by implementing emergency drought operations.
- Preparing to take action to make additional reductions in 2023, as needed, through an administrative process to evaluate and adjust triggering elevations and/or increase reduction volumes identified in the 2007 Interim Guidelines Record of Decision.
- Accelerating ongoing maintenance actions and studies of the bypass tubes at Glen Canyon Dam to analyze the feasibility of possible modifications to increase water delivery capacity during low reservoir levels.
- Ensuring that water use determinations for the Lower Basin satisfy appropriate beneficial use standards during this time of historically low reservoirs, including taking into consideration fundamental human health and safety requirements.
- Assessing how to account for and allocate system losses due to evaporation, seepage, and other losses.

On October 5th, California sent a letter to Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau, Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tanya Trujillo, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, stating California's intention to conserve up to 400,000 AF of additional water in Lake Mead each year, beginning in 2023 and running through 2026, to protect critical reservoir elevations. The letter also stated that, with favorable hydrologic conditions, California intends to create and store additional quantities of Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS). California urged DOI to reengage the Basin States, Tribes, and Mexico in efforts to identify additional water conservation, and expressed the need for all water users within the Basin to take immediate voluntary actions to stabilize water supplies in the Basin's major reservoirs. The full letter is included in the October Board Packet.

<u>Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Implementation</u>

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum Work Group Meeting

The Colorado River Salinity Control Work Group met September 19-21 in Santa Fe, NM. The Work Group discussed several program topics including progress on developing the 2023 Triennial

Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System; a proposal to update projected funding associated with the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Funds using the best information on hydropower generation at Hoover, Davis, and Parker dams; program benefits; a proposal for covering habitat replacement requirements associated with new salinity control projects; new studies, investigations, and research; and program funding. The Work Group is also preparing content for the fall meeting of the Salinity Control Forum to be held October 24-26 at South Lake Tahoe, CA.

2023 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System

A key topic discussed by the Work Group was initial modeling assumptions for the 2023 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System. Modeling assumptions include projected cost effectiveness of program implementation, program implementation rates, program funding, future hydrology, and operations of the Paradox Valley Unit. The current Work Group proposal would include a PVU operation at 65,000 tons/year through 2027 and would consider both full operation and no operation of PVU beyond 2027. The Forum will review and provide guidance on the modeling assumptions during its Fall meeting. Section 303 of the Clean Water Act amendments to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act requires that water quality standards are reviewed every three years by the Forum and are adopted by the water quality agencies of the seven basin states for inclusion in their state water quality standards.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

2023 Annual Operating Plan, Fourth Consultation Meeting

The fourth, and what is expected to be, the final consultation meeting for the development of the 2023 Annual Operation Plan (AOP) for the Colorado River System is scheduled for October 12, 2022, via webinar at 12:00 pm. The 1968 Colorado River Basin Project Act (P.L. 90-537) requires that the Secretary of the Department of the Interior prepare a report documenting the actual operations for the previous water year and the projected operations for the upcoming water year. Based on the operating criteria established within the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the August 24-Month Study Report projections for January 1st elevations in the following year sets the operational tiers for the coordinated operations of Lakes Powell and Mead.

Based on the August 2022 24-Month Study Report Study, which incorporates the Lake Powell annual operating decision in water year 2022, including operational neutrality in Lake Powell and

Lake Mead operations, the projected operational tier for Lake Powell in WY-2023 is the Lower Elevation Balancing Tier, with a most probable release of 7.0 MAF from Glen Canyon Dam.
It was determined that the most probable operational tier for Lake Mead in 2023 is the Level 2a Shortage Condition.

The draft 2023 AOP currently projects a delivery to Mexico, pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty, of 1.43 MAF. This volume may be further adjusted for water savings as required under Section IV of IBWC Minute No. 323. Delivery amount may also be adjusted based upon Mexico's utilization of its Water Reserve and obligations under Minute No. 323.

The link for the most recent draft of the 2023 AOP is:
https://www.usbr.gov/uc/water/rsvrs/ops/aop/AOP23_draft.pdf

Washington, D.C. Report

FY23 Appropriations

Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) on September 30th to extend level funding for the federal government through December 16th, giving lawmakers additional time to reach an agreement on an omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2023 and averting a partial government shutdown.

Notably, the CR included an extension for the Calfed Bay-Delta Authorization Act and extensions for the Emergency Drought Relief Act. Prior to passage, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) agreed to remove a controversial measure to streamline pipeline permits, which both Republicans in the Senate and progressive Democrats in the House opposed.

Inflation Reduction Act Implementation

The Department of the Interior (DOI) outlined the framework under consideration Inflation Reduction Act funding, which includes $4 billion specifically for water management and conservation efforts in the Colorado River Basin and other areas experiencing similar levels of drought.

The DOI says that it will solicit short-term conservation contributions and longer-term durable system efficiency projects. Longer-term projects could include initiatives such as canal lining, re-regulating reservoirs, ornamental and non-functional turf removal, salinity projects and other infrastructure. Projects could also be related to aquatic ecosystem restoration and impacts mitigation, crop water efficiency, rotational fallowing, and marginal land idling.

House Republican Water Bill

Earlier this month, all eleven California Republican House members introduced HR 9084, a bill that lays out the Republican water agenda including locking in place 2019 Biological Opinions, provides eligibility for funding for the Shasta Enlargement Project, and reauthorizing storage funding under the WIIN Act. We anticipate this bill will be reintroduced at the start of the next Congress.

NDAA

The Senate will file the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) early next week but will not vote on final passage until after the elections. There is a push to include some water legislation on that package and at this time, we have heard that the Upper Fish Recovery reauthorization bill could be included as part of a public lands package that would get attached to the overall bill.

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