

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

**April 12, 2011**

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2011**

A copy of the March 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.

**No Board Meeting in May 2011**

Just as a reminder there will be no regularly scheduled meeting of the Colorado River Board of California in May 2011. I do anticipate sending out a copy of the proposed Fiscal Year 2011/2012 budget for Board members, Alternates, and Agency Managers to review in mid-May. This would provide time for a careful review of the proposed budget prior to it being formally adopted at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Retirement of the Board's Principal Engineer, Abbas Amirteymoori**

I also want to announce the retirement of the Board's Principal Engineer, Mr. Abbas Amirteymoori, effective in mid-May 2011. Abbas has been a very valuable member of the Board's technical staff for ten years, and he will be greatly missed by all of us. I hope that all of you will join me in wishing Mr. Amirteymoori the very best in all of his future endeavors.

**PROTECTION OF EXISTING RIGHTS**

**Colorado River Water Report**

As of April 1, 2011, storage in the major Upper Basin reservoirs decreased by 434,100 acre-feet and storage in the Lower Basin reservoirs increased by 73,600 acre-feet during March 2011. Total System active storage as of April 3<sup>rd</sup> was 31.467 million acre-feet (maf), or 53 percent of capacity, which is 1.193 maf less than one year ago (Upper Basin reservoirs decreased by 0.899 maf and Lower Basin reservoirs decreased by 0.294 maf).

March releases from Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams averaged 16,360, 15,890 and 11,270 cubic feet per second (cfs), respectively. Planned releases from those three dams for the month of April 2011 are 18,400, 17,900, and 13,700 cfs, respectively. The April releases represent those needed to meet downstream water requirements including those caused by

reduced operation of Senator Wash Reservoir and storage in the Warren H. Brock (Drop 2) Reservoir.

As of April 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 7.146 maf and is described as follows: Arizona, 2.774 maf; California, 4.103 maf; and Nevada, 0.269 maf. The Central Arizona Project (CAP) will divert 1.555 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 0.566 maf, which is 533,000 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 3.510 maf. This estimate is based on the collective use, through February 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 April 4<sup>th</sup>, the water level at the Lake Mead was at 1,096.67 feet above the mean sea level, and the storage was 11.195 maf, 43.3 percent of capacity, while the water level at Lake Powell was at 3,610.09 feet above the mean sea level and the storage was 12.739 maf, 52.4 percent of capacity.

### Colorado River Operations

#### *Reclamation Completes Successful Pilot Run of the Yuma Desalting Plant*

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, Reclamation announced that it had completed its year-long pilot run of the Yuma Desalting Plant (YDP) demonstrating the potential to augment Lower Colorado River water supplies. In collaboration with MWD, the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, and Southern Nevada Water Authority, Reclamation's operation of the YDP created 30,000 acre-feet of re-cycled water that was then included within the annual water supply delivered to Mexico pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. This resulted in a savings of an equivalent amount of water in Lake Mead thus benefitting the entire System. I have included a copy of Reclamation's news release announcing the completion of the YDP pilot run in the Board folder.

#### *Miscellaneous News Articles—"Colorado River Projection Good News for CAP Water Supply" and "Lake Mead Water Levels on the Rise"*

Two brief news articles indicate that the current water supply projections for releases from Lake Powell into Lake Mead will raise the water surface elevation of Lake Mead approximately 25 feet. This reflects the continued projections associated with a greater than normal snowpack and that runoff conditions in the upper basin will trigger releases from Lake Powell resulting in some measure of equalization between the two major reservoirs based upon the 2007 Interim Guidelines. The articles reported that the National Weather Service projects

that runoff into Lake Powell will be approximately 16% higher than normal this summer. I have included a copy of both of the news articles in the Board folder.

*Remote Sensing Applications for U.S./Mexico Border Water Management Workshop, San Diego, California, June 8-9, 2011*

I have included a brief announcement from the California Department of Water Resources, Water Education Foundation, and NASA regarding the scheduling of a workshop associated with Remote Sensing Applications for the U.S./Mexico Border Water Management. The purpose of the workshop is to provide water managers with an overview of remote sensing data and tools that could be applied to binational water management issues. The workshop will be held on June 8-9, 2011, at the Doubletree Hotel San Diego Downtown in San Diego, California. A copy of the workshop announcement has been included in the Board folder.

*U.S. House Water and Power Subcommittee Oversight Hearing on “Creating Abundant Water and Power Supplies and Job Growth by Restoring Common Sense to Federal Regulations”, April 5, 2011*

For your information, I am including some of the testimony that was provided at a recent oversight hearing conducted by the U.S. House Water and Power Subcommittee. The oversight hearing was entitled, “Creating Abundant Water and Power Supplies and Job Growth by Restoring Common Sense to Federal Regulations” and was held in Washington, D.C. on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The purpose behind the subcommittee hearing was to receive testimony from interested parties associated with the management of water resources in the west and potential impacts of various federal laws and regulations, particularly the federal Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts. I have included a copy of the opening remarks of the Subcommittee Chairman, Rep. Tom McClintock, as well as copies of the testimonies of the Executive Director of the Family Farm Alliance, the President of the National Water Resources Association, the General Counsel of several Arizona irrigation districts, and the President of the American Farmland Trust. Generally, all of those testifying before the House Subcommittee asked for a reassessment of current federal environmental laws and regulations that would result in a more balanced approach to addressing the needs of American farmers and the environmental stewardship responsibilities of federal agencies.

Basin States Discussions

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

As has been discussed at recent Board meetings, Reclamation released preliminary drafts 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 make up the bulk of the Interim Report No. 1, which covers Phases 1 and 2 of the Basin Study. The draft of the fourth technical report, Technical Report C (Water Demand Assessment), was released in late-March for review and comment by the Project Team. Comments on Technical Report C were submitted in early April by MWD and IID. Comments on all of the draft Technical Reports are now currently being evaluated by Reclamation and the Project Team and will be 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”*

As we have discussed at recent Board meetings, Reclamation recently issued a draft Environmental Assessments (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. Reclamation also 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. Reclamation extended the comment period for both DEAs through March 18<sup>th</sup>. The seven Colorado River basin states agreed to collaborate on the development and submission of a joint comment letter by the March 18<sup>th</sup> deadline.

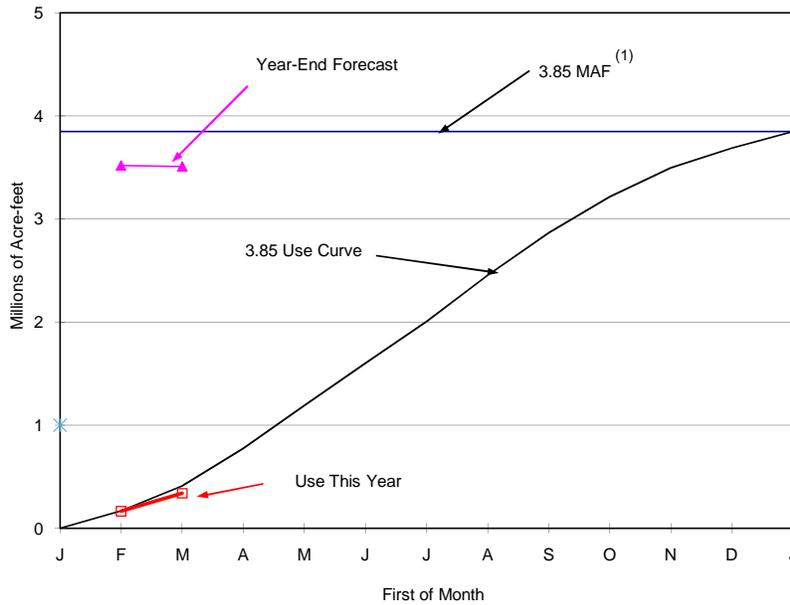
Issues important to the states that were included and discussed in the Basin states’ letter included: (1) revising the “purpose and need” to more clearly articulate the goals of HFE releases; (2) obtaining assurance that the HFE protocol is consistent with the 2007 Interim Guidelines; (3) requesting that the current NEPA analysis more thoroughly identify and analyze potential impacts to the endangered humpback chub; (4) clarify that the HFE protocol is experimental and not a management plan which would require legislative changes; and (5) clarify Interior’s process for deciding when to conduct HFE releases and how to incorporate feedback from the states. Chairman Fisher signed the letter on behalf of the Board and its agencies. A copy of the final Basin states letter has been included in the Board folder.

### *USFWS/Reclamation “Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative” Initiative*

In March 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Reclamation announced a new cooperative initiative, the “Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative.” The purpose behind this new initiative is to provide a science-based response to climate-change impacts on land, water, and wildlife resources. Each Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) will function in a specific geographic area and are intended to form a national, and ultimately international, network. The Desert LCC encompasses portions of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas, and ten states in northern Mexico. The Desert LCC includes three major deserts ecosystems—the Mojave, Chihuahuan, and the Sonoran Deserts. The Desert LCC will be managed by a steering committee made up of federal agencies, states, Native American Tribes, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and representatives from the Republic of Mexico. I have included a copy of the two-page brochure announcing the creation of the Desert LCC in the Board folder.

  
Christopher S. Harris  
Acting Executive Director

**FIGURE 1**  
**APRIL 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	0.340	3.510	0.032
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.