

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

April 13, 2015

ADMINISTRATION

Minutes of the March 11, 2015 Meeting of the Colorado River Board

A copy of the draft Board meeting minutes from the meeting held on March 11, 2015 has been emailed for your review.

Review and approval of a revised Budget Resolution for the Colorado River Board of California and request for authorization of the Executive Director to execute the Standard Agreement Amendment

As was described during the March 11, 2015 Board meeting, there is a need to increase the budget for the Colorado River Board of California above the amount adopted in June 2014, of \$1,651,000, as a result of three factors: a State mandated cost of living increase, vacation leave payouts for two retiring employees and accurately accounting for actual operating expenses. The new proposed budget amount is not expected to exceed \$1,871,000, which would be fully covered by an amended reimbursement agreement with the Six Agency Committee. The Colorado River Board staff requests the Board to adopt a Resolution that authorizes the Executive Director to execute the Standard Agreement Amendment with the Six Agency Committee to increase the reimbursement authority to up to \$1,871,000.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER REPORT

As of April 6, 2015, the water level at Lake Mead was at 1,084 feet with 10.35 million acre-feet of storage, or 40% of capacity. At Lake Powell, the water level was at 3,591 feet with 10.91 million acre-feet of storage, or 45% of capacity. The total system storage as of April 5, 2015 is 28.76 million acre-feet, or 48% of capacity, and is about 683,000 acre-feet more than the where the system storage was at this time last year. Certain areas in the Upper Basin experienced record-breaking lows in March in terms of snowpack and runoff projections and record-breaking highs in terms of temperatures that have resulted in significant decreases in the April-July runoff forecasts for the Upper Basin which were estimated to be 52% of average as of April 2, 2015, compared to 78% of average at the end of February. The snow condition report as of April 6, 2015, indicates that none of the Basin is above 75% of average snowpack and a significant portion of the Basin is below 50% of average, with an overall Upper Basin average of 62%. As of April 5, 2015, the Upper Colorado River basin reservoirs other than Lake Powell ranged from 85% full (Flaming Gorge in Wyoming) to 68% full (Navajo in New Mexico). NOAA's National Weather Service monthly precipitation map for March 2015 shows that the majority of the Colorado River basin received below average precipitation. The next update session from the Colorado Basin River Forecast Center is scheduled for May 7, 2015.

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

On April 1, 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-29-15 which calls for the State Water Resources Control Board to impose restrictions sufficient to achieve a statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water usage through February 28, 2016. The Executive Order also requires the Board to require urban water suppliers to provide monthly information on water usage, conservation and enforcement. The Executive Order requires agricultural water suppliers that supply water to more than 25,000 acres to include a detailed drought management plan in their required Agricultural Water Management Plans. The Executive Order includes a provision requiring the California Energy Commission and the Department of Water Resources to implement a Water Energy Technology program and to streamline government responses to the drought. The Governor's Executive Order was in part brought about by continuing unprecedented drought conditions and a record low snowpack report for April 1.

On March 27, Governor Brown approved emergency funding legislation to allocate \$1 billion in drought-relief and infrastructure funding. Details regarding the 2015 Drought Package are included in the Board packet.

The March 31, 2015, Drought Monitor map for California indicates that over 40% of the State continues to be in the "exceptional drought" category, which is the worst level of drought severity. On March 25, 2015, the Department of Water Resources issued a report comparing the current drought conditions to prior droughts and a copy of the Executive Summary is included in the Board packet.

COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM REPORTS

Basin States Drought Contingency Planning Efforts

The Lower Basin States continue efforts to implement the Memorandum of Understanding for Pilot Drought Response Actions entered among the Lower Basin States, the U.S. and certain municipal water agencies (CAP, SNWA and MWD) in December 2014. The Bureau of Reclamation has evaluated the initial round of proposals for funding through the Pilot System Water Conservation Program in the Lower Basin and has requested follow up information regarding certain proposals. A public announcement regarding the awards is expected in April.

Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study

The Report documenting the progress of Phase 1 of the Basin Study's Next Steps process is expected to be released in April or May of 2015.

Minute 319 Implementation

A bi-national meeting of the U.S. and Mexican Commissioners to review the progress of Minute 319 is being planned for May 14, 2015 in San Diego.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

The next Forum, Advisory Council and Work Group meetings are scheduled for May 20-21 in Salt Lake City, Utah. A Cooperating Agency meeting for the Paradox Well Replacement EIS will be held in early May 2015.

Status of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Stakeholders of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) participated in a subject matter expert Power Systems Webinar on March 27 to discuss the impacts of the Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) EIS alternatives on hydropower. The modeling methods were discussed, as well as the predicted impacts to factors such as power production capacity, timing of water releases and energy production, and power customer rates.

On April 10, the Department of the Interior (DOI) and representatives of the seven Basin States met in Las Vegas, NV to continue discussions regarding the LTEMP EIS. The discussion focused primarily on the recent power system analysis, the incorporation of the Basin States into the adaptive management decision-making process, and the potential impacts of decreased hydropower revenue on the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund. DOI reported that a draft EIS is expected to be distributed to cooperating agencies in May 2015, with a public draft anticipated to be released in July 2015. The final Record of Decision is hoped to be completed by January 2016.

The Technical Work Group of the AMWG will meet in Phoenix on April 21-22, and the AMWG is scheduled to meet next by webinar conference on May 28.

Status of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Work Group met in Yuma, AZ on April 6. The group reviewed the Planet Ranch Program Decision Document in preparation for its presentation to the MSCP Steering Committee for approval on April 22. In anticipation of a potential conflict over the Planet Ranch Decision Document, the work group reviewed the procedures for dispute resolution. Additionally, a draft Environmental Assessment for the Planet Ranch Lease was recently released. Public comments on the draft EA are due by May 1. The MSCP Work Group also discussed a newly released Fish Augmentation Plan, comments for which are also due by May 1.

On April 7-9, the MSCP sponsored a tour to celebrate ten years of program implementation. The tour began with a ceremony at which speakers, including Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Estevan Lopez, described the program, its planning, and its accomplishments. The tour included visits to many of the MSCP's conservation areas and the dedication of the newly completed Laguna Division Conservation Area.

The MSCP Steering Committee will meet on April 22 in Las Vegas, and the Work Group will meet again on May 6-7 in Phoenix. Additionally, the *Draft Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2016 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2014 Accomplishment Report* will be made available for review on April 22, with comments expected by May 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES

On March 26, 2015, the Bureau of Reclamation announced the selection of Brent Rhees as the new Regional Director for the Upper Colorado Region in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mr. Rhees has been working as the Deputy Regional Director for several years and is very familiar with ongoing issues throughout the region.

On April 28, 2015, the Basin States Technical Committee meeting will be held at McCarran airport in Las Vegas. Proposed agenda items include an update regarding the Basin hydrology and operations. Updates have been requested on the California drought and Salton Sea developments. A copy of the draft agenda has been included in the Board packet.

On April 15 at 9 am, Reclamation will host a webinar presentation to preview the results of the April 24-Month Study. Agency staff are invited to view the presentation along with Colorado River Board staff prior to the Board meeting at the Ontario Holliday Inn.

Tanya M. Trujillo
Executive Director