



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month of March 2022.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Lake Powell Elevation and Operation of Glen Canyon Dam Update

The elevation of Lake Powell recently declined to 3,525 feet for the first time since Glen Canyon Dam was filled. In the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan, Lake Powell's surface elevation 3,525 feet is considered the "Target Elevation" for minimizing the risk of Lake Powell declining below minimum power pool (approximately elevation 3,490 feet) and to assist in maintaining Upper Division States' compliance with the Colorado River Compact. The Upper Basin's goals in protecting elevation 3,525 feet include balancing the need to protect infrastructure, compact obligations, and operations at Glen Canyon Dam. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) March 2022, 24-Month Study's most probable scenario forecasts that Lake Powell elevations will remain near elevation 3,525 feet before rising with spring runoff and then declining back to around 3,525 feet in December 2022, which the possibility of falling below minimum power pool in 2023. The Upper Division States and Reclamation are exploring an additional release of water from one or more Colorado River Storage Project Act facilities upstream to Lake Powell to support its elevations, as provided in the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan Drought Response Operations Agreement. Additionally, Reclamation is working with the seven Basin States to consider reducing releases from Lake Powell this summer to help reduce the chance of falling below minimum power pool in the next few years. Metropolitan staff is involved in the discussions and will keep the Board informed as these discussions evolve.

Conference Focusing on Colorado River Tribal Issues

On March 17-18, Metropolitan staff participated in the Water & Tribes Initiative Basin-wide Gathering at the 27th Annual Wallace Steger Center Symposium. The program agenda covered a candid conversation about the past, present, and future of water management in the Basin, and the historic roles the tribes have played in it. Assistant Secretary Trujillo provided opening remarks emphasizing the Department's concern about Lake Powell's low elevation. Staff presented on the panel "Strategies to Equitably Share Available Water" and highlighted the collective actions Metropolitan and its member agencies have taken to reduce reliance on the Colorado River. Staff will continue to participate in these conversations and outreach activities as Metropolitan and the rest of the Basin community prepares for the upcoming process to develop new operational rules for the Colorado River, which are currently scheduled to begin in January 2023.

General Manager and Staff meet with PVID and Metropolitan's Palo Verde Lessees

On March 25, General Manager Hagekhalil and staff traveled to the Palo Verde Valley to meet with Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) representatives to discuss farming practices in the Valley. Metropolitan staff participated in a tour of various farms and learned about operational challenges and economic factors affecting the Palo Verde region. Following the tour, staff participated in a meeting with Metropolitan's lessees in the Palo Verde Valley, where the General Manager shared his vision of his partnership of collaboration with our tenants to conserve water while maintaining a healthy agricultural community. Our lessees had some new ideas to save additional water, which could potentially be funded through implementation of the 500+ plan to protect Lake Mead over the next two years. Staff will follow-up with the lessees to refine those options.

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