



● Colorado River Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to management of Metropolitan's Colorado River resources for the month July 2021.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Delivery of Supplemental Water to Lake Powell Under Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) made additional releases from three reservoirs in the Upper Basin in the amount of 181,000 acre-feet pursuant to the terms in the Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA), part of the Upper Basin's Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. The additional releases are expected to augment Lake Powell's elevation by approximately three feet. In consultation with the Upper Division States, Reclamation found that the additional releases should be made after the July 24-Month Study showed that unregulated inflow has decreased 2.5 million acre-feet in the six-month period between January and July 2021. The current forecast for water year 2021 is for total inflow into Lake Powell of just 3.23 million acre-feet, 30 percent of the thirty-year average. Further, five-year projections predict a 79 percent chance that Lake Powell will fall below the DROA target elevation of 3,525 feet within the next year. That elevation provides a thirty-five-foot buffer above the elevation of 3,490 feet, the minimum power pool at Glen Canyon Dam. In a statement that accompanied the additional DROA releases, Reclamation stated its commitment to reducing the collective risk of Lake Powell and Lake Mead falling to critical elevations.

Annual Operating Plan Consultation for 2022 – First Shortage Declaration Expected in August

Reclamation held the second of three annual consultation meetings regarding its Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River reservoirs (AOP) for 2022. Each year Reclamation prepares an AOP that reports on operations of the Colorado River reservoirs during the past year, and projects operations and releases for the current year based on current and projected reservoir elevations and hydrologic conditions throughout the basin. Based on current and projected conditions, the Secretary of the Interior will make the first Shortage Declaration for the Lower Basin after the August 24-Month Study has been issued on or around August 16, 2021. The Shortage Declaration will trigger reductions in the amount of water that may be diverted by Arizona and Nevada. California does not take shortages. The Shortage Declaration will also trigger water savings contributions pursuant to Minute 323. Projected 2022 Operations show that Lake Powell will be in the Mid-Elevation Release Tier, resulting in a 7.48 million acre-feet release from Glen Canyon Dam. Intentionally Created Surplus may be created or delivered, so that Metropolitan can fill the Colorado River Aqueduct if needed in 2022. Due to the anticipated shortage, accumulation of inadvertent overruns will be suspended. Developed shortage supply may be created and delivered in calendar year 2022. The final AOP consultation meeting is scheduled on August 31, 2021.