



● 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 August 2021.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Lower Basin Shortage Declaration Announced

Due to the forecast of Lake Mead falling below elevation 1,075 feet at the end of the calendar year, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) announced the first Shortage Declaration for the Lower Basin when the August 24-Month Study was issued on August 16. The Shortage Declaration will trigger reductions in the amount of water that may be diverted by Arizona and Nevada. The Shortage Declaration will also trigger water savings contributions pursuant to Minute 323. The forecasted end-of-year elevation of Lake Mead is 1,068 feet; at this level California is not required to make any Lake Mead contributions and will not be required to do so until the elevation falls below 1,045 feet. Also, per the terms of the Drought Contingency Plan, Metropolitan will be able to take delivery of Intentionally Created Surplus in 2022, if needed to fill the Colorado River Aqueduct.

Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) System Conservation Agreement

Metropolitan, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Water Conservation District, and Reclamation finalized an agreement to fund land fallowing programs and forebear up to nearly 180,000 acre-feet of conserved Colorado River water generated by the program to add system water to Lake Mead. Metropolitan's funding share represents one-sixth of the total amount provided by the funding agencies. Reclamation will apply its 50 percent share towards meeting the Secretary of the Department of the Interior's commitment to annually create or conserve at least 100,000 acre-feet of System Conservation Water pursuant to a term in the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan. The water would be conserved through additional fallowing that is not needed for Metropolitan's own use under the Palo Verde Irrigation District/Metropolitan Forbearance and Fallowing Program. Metropolitan and other Colorado River water users will benefit from the improved storage in Lake Mead, reducing the risk of future water curtailments.

To implement the program, Metropolitan has made a voluntary fallowing call for the upcoming contract year (August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022) of 75 percent of the maximum fallowing level under the contract, and farmers may begin fallowing at any time from August 1 through January 1, 2022. Land owned by Metropolitan will also participate in the program. As of August 1, the average fallowing level under the voluntary program is 58 percent of the maximum call. That number will likely increase as more farmers roll into the program throughout the fall season.

PVID/Metropolitan Property Utilization Committee Meets

On August 27, the Property Utilization Committee (PUC) met in Palm Desert to discuss management of Metropolitan owned land in the Palo Verde Valley. The PUC is made up of three board members each from PVID and Metropolitan and was formed in 2001 following Metropolitan's purchase of land in the Palo Verde Valley. The PUC's purpose is to provide input to Metropolitan on how it manages its Palo Verde owned lands for the benefit of the Palo Verde Valley regions. The PUC tasked staff from both agencies to explore new collaborative efforts that could be taken by PVID and Metropolitan to benefit the region and the community that resides in it. The next meeting to discuss these efforts is scheduled for December of this year.