

## Purpose

The purpose of the AOP is to illustrate the potential range of reservoir operations that might be expected in the upcoming water year, and to determine or address: (1) the quantity of water considered necessary to be in storage in the Upper Basin reservoirs as of September 30, 2011, pursuant to Section 602(a) of the CRBPA; (2) water available for delivery pursuant to the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty and Minutes No. 242, 314, and 318<sup>9</sup> of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC); (3) whether the reasonable consumptive use requirements of mainstream users in the Lower Division States will be met under a “Normal,” “Surplus,” or “Shortage” Condition as outlined in Article III of the Operating Criteria and as implemented by the Interim Guidelines; and (4) whether water apportioned to, but unused by one or more Lower Division States, exists and can be used to satisfy beneficial consumptive use requests of mainstream users in other Lower Division States as provided in the Consolidated Decree of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Arizona v. California*, 547 U.S. 150 (2006) (Consolidated Decree).

Consistent with the above determinations and in accordance with other applicable provisions of the “Law of the River,” the AOP was developed with “appropriate consideration of the uses of the reservoirs for all purposes, including flood control, river regulation, beneficial consumptive uses, power production, water quality control, recreation, enhancement of fish and wildlife, and other environmental factors” (Operating Criteria, Article I(2)).

Since the hydrologic conditions of the Colorado River Basin can never be completely known in advance, the AOP presents projected operations resulting from three different hydrologic scenarios: the minimum probable, most probable, and maximum probable reservoir inflow conditions. Projected river operations are modified during the water year as runoff forecasts are adjusted to reflect existing snowpack, basin storage, flow conditions, and as changes occur in projected water deliveries.

## Summary

**Upper Basin Delivery.** Taking into account (1) the existing water storage conditions in the basin, (2) the August 24-Month Study projection of the most probable near-term water supply conditions in the basin, and (3) Section 6.B of the Interim Guidelines, the Upper Elevation Balancing Tier governs the operation of Lake Powell for water year 2011. The October 2010 24-Month Study<sup>10</sup> of the most probable inflow scenario projects balancing is likely during water year 2011 with the annual release from Glen Canyon Dam projected to be 9.0 million acre-feet (maf) (11,100 million cubic meters [mcm]). Given the hydrologic variability of the Colorado River System, the water year release from Lake Powell in 2011 could be in the range of 8.23 maf (10,150 mcm) to 13.4 maf (16,500 mcm) or greater.

---

<sup>9</sup> Minute No. 318, Adjustment of Delivery Schedules for Water Allotted to Mexico for the Years 2010 through 2013 as a Result of Infrastructure Damage in Irrigation District 014, Rio Colorado, Caused by the April 2010 Earthquake in the Mexicali Valley, Baja California dated December 17, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> The 24-Month Study refers to the operational study that reflects the current Annual Operating Plan that is updated each month by Reclamation to project future reservoir contents and releases.

For further information about the variability of projected inflow into Lake Powell, projected Lake Powell elevations, and projected monthly releases, see the 2011 Water Supply Assumptions section and the Lake Powell section under the Summary of Reservoir Operations in 2010 and Projected 2011 Reservoir Operations, Tables 3 through 6, 8, and 9, and figures depicting projected elevation and storage at Lake Powell in the Appendix.

**Lower Basin Delivery.** Taking into account (1) the existing water storage conditions in the basin, (2) the most probable near-term water supply conditions in the basin, and (3) Section 2.B.5 of the Interim Guidelines, the Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) Surplus Condition governs the operation of Lake Mead for calendar year 2011 in accordance with Article III(3)(b) of the Operating Criteria and Article II(B)(2) of the Consolidated Decree.

No unused apportionment for calendar year 2011 is anticipated. If any unused apportionment becomes available after adoption of this AOP, Reclamation, on behalf of the Secretary, may allocate any such available unused apportionment for calendar year 2011. Any such allocation shall be made in accordance with Article II(B)(6) of the Consolidated Decree and the Lower Colorado Region Policy for Apportioned but Unused Water<sup>11</sup> (Unused Water Policy).

Colorado River water may be stored off-stream pursuant to individual Storage and Interstate Release Agreements (SIRAs) and 43 CFR Part 414 within the Lower Division States. The Secretary shall make Intentionally Created Unused Apportionment (ICUA) available to contractors in Arizona, California, or Nevada pursuant to individual SIRAs and 43 CFR Part 414.

The Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy (IOPP), which became effective January 1, 2004, will be in effect during calendar year 2011.<sup>12</sup>

The Interim Guidelines adopted the ICS mechanism that among other things encourages the efficient use and management of Colorado River water in the Lower Basin. ICS may be created and delivered in 2011 pursuant to the Interim Guidelines and appropriate delivery and forbearance agreements.

**1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty Delivery.** A volume of up to 1,500 maf (1,850 mcm) of water will be available to be scheduled for delivery to Mexico during calendar year 2011 in accordance with Article 15 of the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty and Minutes No. 242, 314, and 318 of the IBWC.

---

<sup>11</sup> Lower Colorado Region Policy for Apportioned but Unused Water, February 11, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Record of Decision for Implementation Agreement, Inadvertent Overrun and Payback Policy, and Related Federal Actions, Final Environmental Impact Statement, October 10, 2003; 69 *Federal Register* 12202, March 15, 2004).