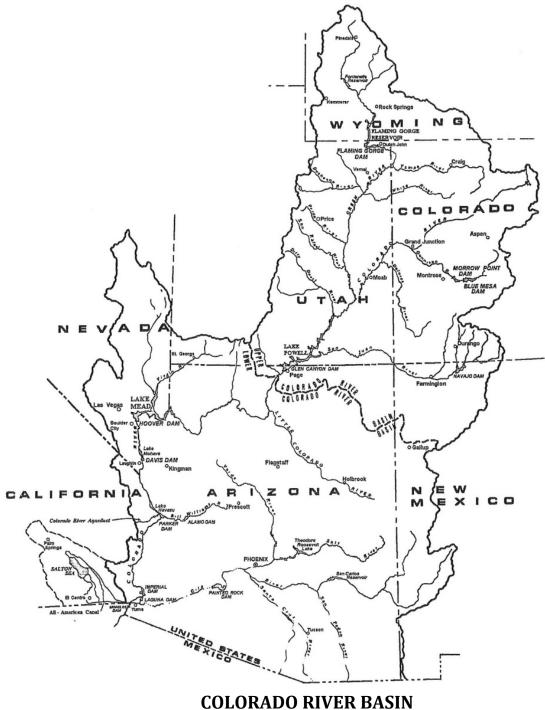
# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL PROGRAM

2014



COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL ADVISORY COUNCIL

December 31, 2014

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Table of Contents	
Background	1
Council Comments and Recommendations	2
General Issues	2
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	4
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	4
Agricultural Research Service (ARS)	5
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)	6
Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)	6
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	7
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)	9
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)	9
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	11
International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)	11
Management and Budget Recommendations	12
U.S. Department of the Interior	13
Basinwide Program (Reclamation)	13
Bureau of Land Management	14
U.S. Department of Agriculture	14
EQIP (NRCS)	14
Conclusion	17

# Tables

1 – Funding Recommendations – Department of the Interior1	6
2 – Funding Recommendations – EQIP1	6

## Attachments

- A Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council Charter
- B Advisory Council Membership
- C Federal Responses to the 2013 Advisory Council Report

#### BACKGROUND

Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act (Act) (Public Law 93-320) created the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program), and Section 204 of the Act created the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council (Council). With the 2008 amendments to the Act that created the Basin States Program (BSP), the Council's consultation responsibilities have been redefined and clearly stated. The Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) originally approved a charter for the Council on February 6, 1976. In 2010, the Charter was revised to better reflect the Legislative changes that occurred to the Program in 2008. The Charter was renewed again in 2014. A copy of the current Council Charter is included as Attachment A.

The Council consists of up to three members from each of the seven Colorado River Basin States. Governors of their respective states appoint the Council members. The Council membership list as of December 31, 2014 is included as Attachment B. The Council has created a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) that it sometimes turns to for advice and analysis. The TAG includes one member from each state. Its chair is appointed by the Council's Chairman.

All of the Council members are also members of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum). The Forum is an organization created in 1973 by the seven Colorado River Basin States for the purpose of interstate cooperation and to provide the states with the information necessary to comply with the Water Quality Standards for salinity on the Colorado River and Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. The Forum, like the Council, has an advisory and analytical group which is named the Forum's Work Group (Work Group).

This report provides annual recommendations to the federal agencies concerning the progress of the Program and the need for specific actions by involved federal agencies. This report comments on the actions taken by the federal agencies through December 31, 2014.

The report does not attempt to fully describe or analyze the Program. Readers unfamiliar with the Program should refer to *Quality of Water, Colorado River Basin, Progress Report No. 24, 2013* (USBR), and the *2014 Review, Water Quality Standards for Salinity, Colorado River System, October 2014* (2014 Review) for a discussion of the Program. The first report is available at <a href="https://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/salinity/pdfs/PR24final.pdf">www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/salinity/pdfs/PR24final.pdf</a> or by contacting Kib Jacobson, Program Manager for the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) portion of the Program.

is available at <u>www.ColoradoRiverSalinity.org</u> or by contacting Don A. Barnett, the Executive Director for the Forum. The addresses and phone numbers for Reclamation and the Forum are provided at the beginning of this report.

The Council met twice in 2014. The first meeting was held on June 12 and 13 in Moran, Wyoming. At that meeting the Council heard summaries of activities and discussed the federal agencies' responses to the 2013 Advisory Council Report. The Council provided the federal agencies the opportunity to report orally and to explain their responses to the 2013 Advisory Council Report. Included in this report as Attachment C are the federal written responses to the 2013 Advisory Council Report. The second meeting was held on October 29 and 30 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. At this meeting the Council heard reports from the federal agencies on implementation of the Program during FY-2014 and discussed the substance of this report.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Issues**

The Council continues to be pleased with the direction of the Program and the way the federal agencies are working together and cooperating with the TAG and the Work Group. The importance of this joint effort is magnified as Reclamation evaluates replacement alternatives to the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) during its current EIS effort. The Council requests that Reclamation not only plan to advance the ongoing planning efforts for the PVU, but that it also secure the needed funding for the ongoing planning. The Council also requests that Reclamation program and budget needed funding for planning and design of the selected alternative after the Record of Decision is issued in early FY-2018. The Council finds that securing the continued future effectiveness of the PVU is a most critical issue.

The Council is also pleased with BLM's continuing effort to study and understand salt mobilization processes on rangelands.. The Council encourages all federal agencies involved in these efforts to continue to work cooperatively to find answers to the salt loading which occurs from these federally administered lands. The Council is committed to work with Reclamation and BLM to pursue opportunities to fully fund these efforts.

The Council also appreciates the efforts of the Science Team in providing the TAG and the Work Group valuable analysis of various issues facing the Program and reviewing potential study efforts. The Council recommends that this support continue.

The Council and the Forum continue to develop opportunities to ensure that adequate up-front cost sharing is available to match the federal expenditures for the Program. The Council encourages all the federal agencies to work with the states on this effort.

The Council appreciates receiving the Federal Accomplishment Report prior to its fall meeting and believes it helps facilitate the discussions at that meeting. The Council does not want to discourage the agencies from making full and complete reporting of their accomplishments to Reclamation. In fact, the Council believes such reporting is valuable to Reclamation in its continuing oversight and coordination of the Program. The Council does ask, however, that the agencies' reports be more concise and focused on the accomplishments of the agencies during the year in implementing the Program.

The Council also recognizes the period after the mid-term elections is a time of change for federal agencies. The Council encourages the agencies to make every effort to fill positions that become vacant in a timely manner to ensure that the Program continues to move forward.

### U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Council recognizes the key and essential role that NRCS has played in reducing the salt load of the Colorado River for the benefit of downstream agricultural and municipal users. Providing these benefits has resulted from a coordinated effort between the three state NRCS offices in the Upper Basin and also the cooperation they have provided when working with other federal agencies, the TAG and the Work Group. The Council recognizes the improvements in the implementation of NRCS's program have been realized through the efforts of NRCS individuals involved in the Program. The Council believes that the efforts of NRCS's Salinity Control Program Coordinator have been critical to this success. The Council sees an absolute need to continue this position and recommends it be filled with a motivated and well qualified individual if the current coordinator were to leave. The Council has observed that the role of an informed state conservationist is a most important role with respect to the success of the Program. Hence, the Council has become concerned about the temporary (acting) assignments that have been in place in the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming for a major part of 2014.

The Council recognizes the interplay between broad policy efforts and actual implementation of contracts by those in the field and the importance of organizing and coordinating the offices of area conservationists and district conservationists in such a way that the efficient implementation of the Program will continue and requests that NRCS make every effort to assure that each of these offices is adequately staffed. The Council also recommends that NRCS pursue salinity control in established salinity control areas before going to other parts of the Basin to expend Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds which have been allocated by headquarters specifically for the Program.

In the Management and Budget Recommendations portion of this report, the Council recommends that funding for the USDA portion of the federal program be in accordance with Table 1 of this report.

The Council requests a written response from the USDA to recommendations contained in this report by **April 15, 2015.** This response should include comment on statements made in this section of this report and also on recommendations found in this report under the General Issues and the Management and Budget Recommendations sections.

### Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

In recent Advisory Council Reports, the Council has not recognized the specific efforts of ARS. However, in this report the Council would like to recognize the great efforts of ARS in compiling a far reaching bibliography of past worldwide salinity control efforts. The Council is eager to receive paper copies of the resulting report.

ARS is also involved in new efforts to study and understand salt and sediment transport mechanisms. The Council encourages ARS to continue this analysis with the hope of developing new tools to help manage salinity on rangelands. The Council is pleased with the cooperative nature of these two efforts as ARS worked closely with BLM. We encourage this cooperation to continue. BLM manages a very significant part of the saline rangelands in the Colorado River Basin.

#### U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)

### **Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)**

The Council greatly appreciates the efforts of the Upper Colorado Region (UC) office in the continued oversight and coordination of the Program and the priority given the Program from the top down, including the assemblage and support of a capable and dedicated salinity team. The Council also appreciates the effort in the UC to address and improve the contracting issues that have faced the Program. Reports from the TAG to the Council have been very positive regarding these efforts and it appears that significant improvement is being made in this area.

The Council appreciates the increased involvement of the Lower Colorado Region (LC) offices. Recognizing the funding issues that are facing the Program and the fact that the LC manages the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund (LCRBDF), the Council finds that the LC's role is critical to the success of the Program. The Forum and Council are dealing with temporarily difficult decisions relative to funding and generation of cost share dollars to the LCRBDF. The Council appreciates Reclamation's efforts to work with the Council to manage this fund over the next several years in a way that avoids the LCRBDF going into deficit. The Council encourages Reclamation to continue to work with the Work Group to study and develop options and project future revenues to the fund.

PVU issues are of great concern to the Council. In the General Issues section, the Council has expressed its support for the PVU Alternative Studies and EIS process and continues to emphasize the need to complete these studies in a timely manner. This should include a fair evaluation of the use of evaporation ponds as a disposal alternative. The EIS effort will require adequate funding. The Council is also concerned about continuing to move forward following a Record of Decision. The Council would encourage Reclamation staff to work with the Work Group to begin developing a strategy for implementing the preferred alternative, including funding opportunities and future budget recommendations. The Council also recommends that Reclamation work with the Work Group to begin developing a contingency plan for placing back into operation as quickly as possible the PVU if a shut-down were to occur prior to the implementation of a preferred alternative. This might include fast tracking the permitting and construction of a replacement injection well.

The Council continues to be concerned that we do not have an understanding and accurate quantification of salinity damages and the economic benefits of the Program. As the Program

moves forward, it is imperative that we have an accurate quantification of salinity damages and the economic benefits from the Program. This becomes even more critical as additional funding for the PVU alternative is requested. The Council recommends that Reclamation work with the Work Group to evaluate and revise the economic damages model. The Council requests that Reclamation make updating and improving the salinity damages calculations a priority.

In the Management and Budget Recommendations portion of this report, the Council recognizes that it is very difficult, given Reclamation's budget cycle, to make funding recommendations that can influence Reclamation's budget request for the next two fiscal years. The Council recommends that Reclamation seek increased appropriations in FY-2016, FY-2017, and FY-2018 in accordance with Table 1. Reclamation is requested to give a detailed report on its efforts to secure additional funding at the next Council meeting.

The Council finds that, with the exception of contracting issues, the management of the Basinwide Program has been most effective. The Council supports timely new FOA funding opportunities. The amount of funding for this most important program is still an issue and the Council pledges its support of Reclamation's efforts to secure more funding.

The Council continues to observe the value of the role played by the Science Team. The Council urges Reclamation to continue this effort.

The Council asks Reclamation to respond in writing to recommendations contained in this report by **April 15, 2015**. This response should include comment on statements made in this section of this report and also on recommendations found in this report under the General Issues and the Management and Budget Recommendations sections.

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Council appreciated Nancy Dean's potentially historic presentation at the Council's Santa Fe meeting. The Council appreciates Ms. Dean's leadership and participation in the Program over the last several years. The progress the BLM program has made during that time is evidence of that leadership. As BLM moves to fill her position, the Council encourages BLM to continue down the path she has established. Ms. Dean reported in Santa Fe BLM's decision to seek a line-item Colorado River Basin salinity control program within its budget. This is something the Council has

been encouraging for many years and we applaud these efforts. The Council is committed to supporting BLM in its efforts to move forward with a Colorado River Basin salinity control line item.

The Council appreciates BLM's efforts to create a better understanding of salt mobilization on public lands, including a significant literature review of rangeland salinity control. The Council notes that when the Forum was drafting its 2014 Review, BLM could not provide an accounting of the tons of salt controlled by BLM programs. This has been a continual challenge. The Council is pleased to hear that BLM is initiating renewed aggressive efforts to identify and implement salinity specific activities in the Colorado River Basin and to account for past and future salinity reductions. There is an important and immediate need for quantifying past net salinity improvements within the Basin. The Council recommends that BLM continue with this effort so that pertinent information may be used in the future to assist the Program.

The success of the other two implementing agencies within the Program, Reclamation and NRCS, has been in large part due to the efforts of salinity coordinators for those agencies. As with those agencies, BLM's salinity coordinator is critical to implementing a comprehensive BLM salinity control program as directed by Congress. BLM, as an Interior agency and as directed by Congress, has a vital role in assisting other agencies in implementing the Program. Part of the coordinator's role is the importance of being available to coordinate and participate directly with the other federal agencies' salinity coordinators in implementation of the Program. The Council recommends BLM's salinity coordinator allocate sufficient time and resources to achieve this role. Currently the coordinator is assigned additional duties, and the Council requests BLM to review the issue of how these other assigned tasks take from the coordinator needed time to focus on the Salinity Control Program. The new path outlined by Ms. Dean in Santa Fe will require additional work and coordinating efforts by BLM staff.

While Reclamation is the lead agency for the PVU EIS, BLM has an important role as the major land manager for the study area. The Council emphasizes the importance for BLM to be an active and aggressive partner in seeking solutions for the PVU salinity control project.

The Council requests a written report responding to each of the Council's recommendations by **April 15, 2015**. This response should include comment on statements made in this section of the report as well as recommendations found in this report specific to BLM in this section and the Management and Budget Recommendations section.

8

### U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

The Council recognizes that change is inevitable but is pleased that USGS will continue to allow Mr. Lambert to work with the Program. The Council looks forward to the TAG and the Work Group working with the USGS team on a day-to-day basis. The Council wants to express its appreciation as to how responsive USGS has become in its science role for the Secretary of the Interior in assisting with moving the Salinity Control Program forward. The Council continues to urge USGS to work with Reclamation and the Work Group to ensure that the data collection, interpretation and analysis efforts are accurate, effective and contribute to the overall goal of Program implementation.

The Council is pleased with USGS efforts (and has also contributed significant Basin States Program funds) to evaluate potential salinity control measures at the PVU and Pah Tempe Springs and encourages USGS to continue those activities. The Council believes the resulting information will be important in evaluating these areas as salinity control projects.

The participation of the USGS in Reclamation's Science Team is essential. The role of USGS in helping to project salinity concentrations into the future is also most important. USGS has been most effective in suggesting how Basin States Program dollars can be best spent on scientific investigations to better understand the hydrosalinity of the river system. The Council appreciates the USGS efforts in these areas and urges the continuation of these efforts.

The Council wishes to thank USGS for the priority it gives to funding the basic stream gaging program on the Colorado River and encourages and supports USGS in their efforts to maintain the 20 gage network.

The Council requests that USGS respond to the Council on its continued ability to perform important data gathering and review functions by **April 15, 2015**.

### U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The Council appreciates USFWS's role in finding, reviewing and supporting viable wildlife replacement projects and the service that USFWS provides in reviewing and tabulating replacement by areas and as requested. The Council recommends that USFWS continue these activities and proactively assist the other agencies in moving the Program forward.

The Council recognizes that USFWS, as an Interior agency, has a vital role in assisting other agencies in implementing the Salinity Control Program and encourages the agency to be collaborative in finding solutions for moving the Program forward and working through the issues, as needed, to continue to implement the Program. This collaborative effort is most needed as Reclamation looks for the best opportunities to control the brine through their PVU project.

The Council requests a written response to the above recommendations by April 15, 2015.

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The Council thanks Region 8 for the role it played in providing NPDES data to the Forum for the 2014 Review. The Council would ask for the continued support of EPA as the individual states forward their standards for approval. The Council continues to encourage EPA's assistance at the PVU, including fast tracking of a UIC permit, if needed, as well as continuing to participate in the review of all alternatives in the EIS process. The Council has found that Region 8 of the EPA has been most responsive to issues it has been asked to address, and the Council would be pleased if this coordination assignment were to remain with Region 8. The Council would appreciate a response to the above comments, and requests that response by **April 15, 2015**.

### International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)

While the Council responsibilities are for activities occurring above Imperial, the Council appreciated the presentation made by the IBWC at its Santa Fe meeting. The Council encourages IBWC to continue its coordination with the Council, Forum and states on issues affecting the salinity of the waters of the Colorado River as they cross the international boundary.

#### MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The funding level recommendations contained in this report are consistent with and support the conclusions regarding the funding required to accomplish the Plan of Implementation (Plan) adopted by the Forum as part of its 2014 Review. The Program includes a significant amount of non-federal cost sharing. The states provide, in total, 30 percent cost share for the Program from the Upper Colorado River Basin Fund and the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund. The states are currently the second largest contributor to the Program behind USDA. In addition to the states' cost share, the local farmers cost share in the USDA on-farm program. The non-federal participants (states, landowners, irrigation districts, etc.) are ready in FY-2015 to contribute their share of the Program costs as up-front payments. The Council continues to be pleased with the funding made available to NRCS as authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014. The Council urges Reclamation to vigorously pursue adequate funding so as to allow timely implementation of its portion of the Program as described it the Forum's 2014 Review. It is important that the pace of the Reclamation's off-farm program not impede or limit opportunities for NRCS to implement the very cost-effective on-farm measures which often rely on improved off-farm delivery systems. The Council is encouraged by BLM efforts in the Basin and recommends that \$1.5 million be allocated to fund on-the-ground salinity-specific control measures. While the Council recognizes the complexities of BLM's budgeting process, it and the Forum stand ready to assist BLM in achieving this funding goal.

Table 1 contains the Council's recommendations for federal funding for FY-2016 through FY-2018. These funds are for the construction activities necessary to meet the Program objectives as set forth in the Plan of Implementation. The Forum also supports these recommendations and will seek adequate funding for the Program. The Council wishes to emphasize that funding delays and funding in lesser amounts will render the Program unable to meet the program objectives, as measured in tons of salt-load reduction.

As indicated in Table 1, the funding recommendations therein are for the federal portion of project implementation costs only. The Council also urges the agencies to provide adequate funding to support operation and maintenance, technical and education assistance, monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects and planning for future projects. The Council recommends funds for these activities be provided <u>in addition</u> to the funds recommended in Table 1. The Council requests that in their responses, federal agencies specifically comment on funding for these non-construction activities.

12

Recognizing the need for the salinity control set forth in the Plan of Implementation, the Council makes the following funding recommendations:

### U.S. Department of the Interior

### **Basinwide Program (Reclamation)**

Reclamation has already received a FY-2015 appropriation of approximately \$6.36 million for the Basinwide Program. The Council recommends Reclamation not reduce this appropriation any further through budgetary manipulations and that, in fact, it attempt to increase this appropriation by reprogramming any Reclamation-wide excess FY-2015 appropriations into the Basinwide Program prior to the end of the fiscal year. The Basinwide Program has proven its ability to effectively and efficiently utilize such end-of-the-year funding. Reclamation has provided the Forum and the Council with data that indicates that approximately 21,000 tons per year of new salinity control is needed if Reclamation is to meet its goal set out in the 2014 Review.

As Reclamation is aware, there are several funding issues facing the Program. The Forum has created a subcommittee to begin to address these issues, and the Council recommends that Reclamation continue to work with this subcommittee in attempting to identify options and strategies for resolving these issues. Prior to reaching that resolution, the Council has recommended temporary funding level expenditures from the LCRBDF in FY-2016, FY-2017 and FY-2018. The Council recommends that as the FY-2017 budget process progresses, Reclamation make every attempt to budget \$11,218,000 to the Basinwide Program and that as it begins budgeting for FY-2018 it budgets \$12,153,000. These funding levels are significantly reduced from previous recommendations by the Council. The Council believes that the funding levels it had previously recommended will ultimately be required if the Program is to maintain both the short and long-term goals set out in its most recent Plan of Implementation which will meet or exceed the requirements established by the salinity standard adopted by the States and approved by EPA for the Colorado River System. The Council appreciates Reclamation's efforts to work with the Council to appropriately manage the funds over the next several years and to assist the Forum as it studies and develops options for generation of future revenues. Because large appropriations will be required in the future, the recommended funding levels are the minimum levels that are acceptable for continued success of the Program.

The Council requests that Reclamation continue to budget sufficient funds for required operation and maintenance of constructed units and for plan formulation, including the PVU alternatives studies and EIS process.

### Bureau of Land Management

For a number of years, the Council has struggled with its funding recommendations for BLM and the accounting of salinity control activities performed by this agency. For many years, BLM has not been able to recite the amount of salinity control which was accomplished through its programs. BLM's salinity control funding comes through its Soil, Water and Air Program. The Council requests that BLM continue to fund projects in the Colorado River Basin under this program which, among other objectives, will improve the water quality within the Basin. In addition, in more recent years, at the request of the Council, BLM, through a manager's discretion, has set aside approximately \$800,000 per year for specific salinity control activities within the Colorado River Basin. The expenditure of the funds in this manner has proven very beneficial to the Program by developing and testing methods of controlling salinity on public lands. The Council appreciates BLM's efforts to make more money available in FY-2014 for salinity control activities. Moving forward, the Council recommends \$1.5 million for the next four fiscal years be set aside for specific salinity control on public lands within the Basin. If BLM is successful in creating a line-item Colorado River Basin salinity control program, the Council asks that this amount of funding be requested.

### U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### EQIP (NRCS)

The Council appreciates levels of funding made available to the salinity control effort through EQIP. Traditionally, on-farm salinity control has been some of the most cost-effective salinity efforts available. While much of the less expensive salinity control has now been accomplished and there has been a notable increase in on-farm salinity control costs in the last couple of years, cost-effective salinity control opportunities still exist. Continued funding is needed to meet the goal identified in the 2014 Review for the Department of Agriculture.

The Council has determined that it will make its recommendations for the allocation of EQIP funding for the salinity control effort based on the Three-Year Funding Plan developed by the NRCS State Conservationists for Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The funding allocations made by NRCS under EQIP generally do not come out until several months after the new fiscal year has begun and, therefore, input to NRCS is more immediate and projections out four years not nearly as germane. Further, the Three-Year Funding Plan put forth by the State Conservationists does not go out to FY-2018. However, to be consistent with other agencies, the Council has simply preliminarily used the FY-2017 amount for FY-2018. The 2015 Advisory Council Report will provide a firm funding recommendation for FY-2018

Based on the information provided in the Three-Year Funding Plan and in support of that plan, the Council recommends the following fiscal year allocations for salinity control in the Basin: FY-2015 - \$17,357,000, FY-2016 - \$18,910,000, FY-2017 - \$17,831,750, with \$17,831,750 as a preliminary amount for FY-2018.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the Council's funding recommendations to the federal agencies. It should be noted that the funds identified in the tables do not include funds needed to continue to operate and maintain salinity control features, nor for the requisite planning and investigation studies necessary for a successful and cost-effective program. The Council expects that where there is a responsibility to provide funding for these purposes, the agencies will also include the needed additional funding in their budgets.

### TABLE 1 Colorado River Salinity Control – Department of the Interior Funding Recommendations (2015-2018) December 31, 2014

	Fiscal Years				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Bureau of Reclamation <sup>1,2</sup> Basinwide Program	N/A	\$11,218,000	\$11,218,000	\$12,153,000	
Bureau of Land Management <sup>3</sup> Salinity Specific Funding from the Soil, Water and Air Program	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	

Notes:

1. The Council anticipates and requests that Reclamation budget sufficient funds for required operation and maintenance of constructed units and for plan formulation in addition to these amounts.

2. Funding recommendations in Table 1 do not include funds recommended for studies and future implementation at the PVU. The Council needs the assistance of Reclamation to determine the level of funding needed to support the PVU.

3. The Council anticipates and requests that BLM budget sufficient funds for inventory and ranking, planning, maintenance, monitoring, evaluation and support.

### TABLE 2

### Colorado River Salinity Control – Department of Agriculture (EQIP) Funding Recommendations (2015-2018) December 31, 2014

STATE	<b>FY-2015</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>FY-2016</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>FY-2017</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>FY-2018</b> <sup>2</sup>
COLORADO				
FA	\$7,600,000	\$7,600,000	\$7,600,000	\$7,600,000
ТА	\$1,520,000	\$1,520,000	\$1,520,000	\$1,520,000
State Total (FA & TA)	\$9,120,000	\$9,120,000	\$9,120,000	\$9,120,000
UTAH				
FA	\$5,875,000	\$7,000,000	\$6,150,000	\$6,150,000
ТА	\$1,880,000	\$2,240,000	\$1,968,000	\$1,968,000
State Total (FA & TA)	\$7,755,000	\$9,240,000	\$8,118,000	\$8,118,000
WYOMING				
FA	\$400,000	\$440,000	\$475,000	\$475,000
ТА	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$118,750	\$118,750
State Total (FA & TA)	\$500,000	\$550,000	\$593,750	\$593,750
GRAND TOTALS (FA & TA)	\$17,375,000	\$18,910,000	\$17,831,750	\$17,831,750

Notes:

1. Based on State Conservationists' Three-Year Funding Plan (2015-2017)

2. Same as FY-2017. Advisory Council recommendation for guidance when developing 2016-2018 Three-Year Funding Plan

#### CONCLUSION

The Council recognizes and appreciates its responsibility to submit comments and recommendations on salinity control activities to the federal agencies. As indicated in the General Comments section, the Council is pleased with the agencies' efforts put forth in 2014 and looks forward to providing a framework for future coordination and consultation. The Council requests that written responses to this report be provided by **April 15, 2015**. Responses should be sent to the Council Chairman, Mr. David Robbins, at the following address:

David W. Robbins, Chairman Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 1660 Lincoln Street, Suite 2720 Denver, CO 80264

It would be appreciated if copies of the responses are sent to Mr. Kib Jacobson, Reclamation's Program Manager for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (who also serves as the Designated Federal Officer to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council), and to the Forum's Executive Director, Mr. Don Barnett, at the following addresses:

Kib Jacobson, Program Manager Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program U.S. Bureau of Reclamation 125 S. State Street, Room 8100 Salt Lake City, UT 84138

Don A. Barnett, Executive Director Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum 106 West 500 South, Suite 101 Bountiful, UT 84010

Attachment A

**Advisory Council Charter** 

# Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council

### Charter

- 1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The official designation of this Federal advisory committee is the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council (Council).
- Authority. The Council was established by Section 204(a) of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, Public Law 93-320, Title II, as amended by Public Laws 98-569, 104-20, 104-27, 106-459, and 110-246 (Act), and in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.
- 3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The Council will provide advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior (Interior) and Agriculture (Agriculture) and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as stated in paragraph 4.
- 4. **Description of Duties.** The Council shall be advisory only and shall:
  - a. Act as liaison between both the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and the Administrator of the EPA and the States in accomplishing the purposes of Title II;
  - b. Receive reports from the Secretary of the Interior on the progress of the salinity control program and review and comment on said reports;
  - c. Recommend to the Secretary of the Interior and the Administrator of the EPA appropriate studies of further projects, techniques, or methods for accomplishing the purposes of Title II; and
  - d. Provide to the Secretary of the Interior advice and consultation regarding implementation of the Basin States Program to carry out salinity control activities.
- 5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports. The Council will report to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, and the Administrator of the EPA through the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).
- 6. **Support.** Support for the Council will be provided by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation.

- 7. Estimated Annual Operating Cost and Staff Years. The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$75,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and .20 staff years.
- 8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all Council and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the Secretary.
- 9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet approximately twice a year, and at such other times as designated by the DFO.
- 10. **Duration.** Continuing.
- 11. **Termination.** The Council is subject to biennial review and will become inactive 2 years from the date this Charter is filed, unless prior to that date, it is renewed in accordance with Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
- 12. **Membership and Designation.** Membership of the Council is specified in Title II as being comprised of no more than three representatives from each of the seven Basin States (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California). The representatives will serve at the discretion of the Governors of the state that appointed them.

Members of the Council serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, members engaged in Council or subcommittee business approved by the DFO may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under Section 5703 of Title 5 of the United States Code.

- 13. Ethics Responsibilities of Members. No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter including a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct financial interest.
- 14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees can be formed for the purposes of compiling information or conducting research. However, subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO.

15. **Recordkeeping.** The records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees of the Council, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2 and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

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# Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council

### Charter

Counterpart Signatory Page

Secretary of the Interio

JUL 0 1 2014

Date Signed

SEP 17 2014

Date Filed

Party 1 of 3

# Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council

Charter

Counterpart Signatory Page

del Secretary of Agriculture

AUG 18 2014 Date Signed

SEP 17 2014 Date Filed

Party 2 of 3

## Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council

### Charter

Counterpart Signatory Page

Administrator Environmental Protection Agency

Date Signed

SEP 17 2014 Date Filed

Party 3 of 3

### **Attachment B**

### ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP December 31, 2014

### <u>ARIZONA</u>

Thomas Buschatzke

Phoenix, Arizona

Larry R. Dozier

Phoenix, Arizona

Phoenix, Arizona

### <u>NEVADA</u>

Leo M. Drozdoff Carson City, Nevada

John J. Entsminger Las Vegas, Nevada

Jayne Harkins Las Vegas, Nevada

### **CALIFORNIA**

Linda Taunt

Bill Hasencamp Los Angeles, California

Tom Howard Sacramento, California

Tanya Trujillo Glendale, California

### <u>COLORADO</u>

James Eklund Denver, Colorado

Dick Parachini (alternate to Steven H. Gunderson) Denver, Colorado

David W. Robbins Denver, Colorado

### NEW MEXICO

Scott Verhines Santa Fe, New Mexico

#### UTAH

Eric Millis Salt Lake City, Utah

Gawain Snow Vernal, Utah

Jeff Studenka (alternate to John Whitehead) Salt Lake City, Utah

### **WYOMING**

Dan S. Budd Big Piney, Wyoming

Patrick T. Tyrrell Cheyenne, Wyoming

David Waterstreet Cheyenne, Wyoming

# Attachment C

Federal Responses to the 2013 Advisory Council Report

## APR 1 0 2014

Mr. Larry Dozier Chairman Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 323 West Irvine Road Phoenix, Arizona 85086

File Code: 300-19-7

Dear Mr. Dozier:

Thank you for your letter of February 27, 2014, and the 2013 Annual Report on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, and recommendations regarding implementation of the program.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service appreciates the support and commitment of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council to reduce salinity loading in the Colorado River Basin. Your long-standing support to improve the environment and economies of Colorado River water users is to be commended. Enclosed are responses to your comments and recommendations, as requested.

Again, thank you for writing and for your continued leadership and support of the Colorado River Basin salinity control activities.

Sincerely,

Signed by

Jason A. Weller Chief

Enclosure

Mr. Larry Dozier Page 2

bc: (w/copy of incoming correspondence) Astor Boozer, Regional Conservationist, West, NRCS, Washington, D.C. Keisha Tatem, State Conservationist, NRCS, Phoenix, Arizona Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist, NRCS, Davis, California Phyllis Philipps, State Conservationist, NRCS, Lakewood, Colorado Bruce Petersen, State Conservationist, NRCS, Reno, Nevada Xavier Montoya, State Conservationist, NRCS, Albuquerque, New Mexico David Brown, State Conservationist, NRCS, Salt Lake City, Utah Astrid Martinez, State Conservationist, NRCS, Casper, Wyoming Travis James, Western Salinity Coordinator, NRCS, Salt Lake City, Utah

## FINAL:NRCS:PGM:FAPD:DAVEMASON:cdh:720-0673:4-9-14:C-14-2 DRAFT:USDA:ODCP:NRCS:FAPD:DAVEMASON:dmh:720-1845:4-8-14: Control Number C-14-12, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act

Enclosure

## Recommendation

"The Council sees an absolute need to continue that position (coordinator) and recommends it be filled with a motivated and well qualified individual if the current Coordinator were to leave."

## Response

NRCS is committed to supporting the Council at the National level. This position is essential to assisting the Council and States. NRCS will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the coordinator in assisting the agency to meets its strategic objectives. At such time that the position might become vacant, NRCS will confer with the Advisory Council and the other salinity partners to determine if filling the vacancy, or if some other preferred staffing action is warranted.

## Recommendation

"The Council continues to recommend NRCS pursue salinity control in established salinity control areas before going to other parts of the Basin with Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds. The Council recommends expending funds outside of established salinity control areas only after the opportunities with these areas have been met."

## Response

NRCS will continue to service applications as funds are available within the defined project areas that accomplish the most environmental benefits, including salt control, in the most cost effective manner. NRCS will continue to coordinate among the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to utilize allocated funding as EQIP applications are available.

## Recommendation

"The Council would also like to make NRCS aware of the Uinta and Lower Gunnison planning studies that are currently being conducted for Reclamation. The Council urges NRCS to work with the Council and the Forum on implementing any recommendations coming from these two planning studies."

## Response

NRCS has been involved in the planning studies at the field and State office level since the outset. NRCS is aware of the recommendations and will identify opportunities to incorporate those recommendations into its management of staff and allocation of resources as allowed by policy and statute. NRCS recognizes that the studies have identified cultural challenges that will require concerted outreach to achieve full success.

## Recommendation

"The Council has now determined that it will make its recommendations for the allocation of EQIP funding for the salinity control effort based on the Three-Year Funding Plan developed by the NRCS State Conservationist for Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. Based on the information provided in the Three-Year Funding Plan and in support of that plan, the Council recommends the following fiscal year allocations for salinity control in the Basin: fiscal year (FY) 2014 - \$17,357,500, FY 2015 - \$17,482,500, and FY 2016 - \$17,607,500, with \$17,607,500 as a preliminary amount for FY 2017."

#### Response

NRCS appreciates the Council's continued strong support for EQIP. The initial FY 2014 allocation of EQIP for financial assistance to the salinity projects in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming is the same as FY 2013, or \$12,100,000. State Conservationists will coordinate with the Advisory Council when developing their State Resource Assessment fund requests.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

UC-240 RES-9.00

Mr. Larry Dozier Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 323 West Irvine Road Phoenix, Arizona 85086

Dear Chairman Dozier:

On behalf of Secretary Sally Jewell and Acting Commissioner Lowell D. Pimley, I am responding to your letter of February 27, 2014, regarding the 2013 Annual Report on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Salinity Control Program), prepared by the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council (Council). The Council contributes greatly to the success of the Salinity Control Program. We truly value your partnership, participation, and recommendations in the Salinity Control Program. The Salinity Control Program continues to make measurable progress in controlling the salinity problem. Our responses to the specific recommendations in the report for the Bureau of Reclamation are enclosed.

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION Upper Colorado Regional Office 125 South State Street, Room 6107 Salt Lake City, UT 84138-1102

MAY 0 1 2014

We thank you for your support and for being such an active and aggressive partner in the Salinity Control Program. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Kib Jacobson at 801-524-3753 or kjacobson@usbr.gov.

Sincerely,

Jacog Hallhoush

Larry Walkoviak Regional Director

Enclosure

cc: See next page.

cc: Mr. Don Barnett Executive Director Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum 106 West 500 South, Suite 101 Bountiful, Utah 84010

> Mr. Kib Jacobson Designated Federal Officer Bureau of Reclamation 125 South State Street Salt Lake City, Utah 84138

Mr. Patrick Dent Chairman, Technical Advisory Group Central Arizona Water Cons. District P.O. Box 43020 Phoenix, Arizona 85080-3020

Mr. Tim Henley Chairman, Work Group 3550 North Central Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85012

#### Enclosure

## Reclamation's Response to the Specific Recommendations on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program's 2013 Annual Report

Paradox Valley Unit (PVU)

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - General Issues</u>: The Council encourages all Federal agencies involved in the [Paradox Valley Unit] Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) efforts to continue to work cooperatively to solve issues associated with the operation of the PVU.

<u>Response</u>: The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency are all active cooperating agencies in the Reclamation-lead Paradox Alternative Study/EIS. Representatives from thirteen state and local agencies, including members from each Colorado River Basin states, also participate as cooperating agencies. These meetings began on May 14, 2013. To date, Reclamation has hosted fourteen cooperating agency meetings to review and discuss PVU operations, current Federal regulations, agency policies and procedures, and potential alternatives for continued long-term operations of the PVU.

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department of the Interior -<u>Reclamation</u>: In the General Issues section, the Council has expressed its support for the PVU Alternative Studies and EIS process. The Council reemphasizes the need to keep these studies moving forward and to continue operating the existing PVU.

<u>Response</u>: Although specific funding for the Alternative Studies/EIS has not been available in fiscal year 2013 (FY13), FY14 or FY15, Reclamation initiated the EIS process in FY13 with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register and hosted subsequent public scoping meetings. A summary scoping report was prepared and released in January 2013. Cooperating agencies meetings began in May 2013, and continue on about a monthly basis to continue moving the process forward.

In April 2013, injection rates were reduced by about 10 percent as a direct result of a 4.3 magnitude earthquake near the PVU Injection well in January 2013. Injection shutdowns were also adjusted. Surface injection pressures have remained fairly constant between 4,700 and 4,800 pounds per square inch (psi) since the changes in operations.

In regards to Alternative Studies, Reclamation convened a Consultant Review Board (CRB) in December 2012 to review existing information to assist in siting a replacement well. Recommendations from the CRB and detailed investigations of recent seismic activity were presented at the May 2013 Forum and Advisory Council meetings. Reclamation then prepared an accountability report and road map for future studies to site a potential second injection well. A follow-up CRB addressing Maximum Allowable Surface Injection

Pressures (MASIP) for the existing injection well, as well as additional seismic review will be held later in 2014. Procurement of an additional CRB to evaluate evaporation technology and permitting for use in developing an evaporation pond alternative is also underway.

Additional studies are planned as funds become available through the existing operations and maintenance (O&M) budget or as fund transfers towards the end of each FY. The current schedule anticipates a Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) in late FY17 to early FY18, subject to the alternatives studies and future appropriations. Alternative Studies/EIS reports and progress can be followed by accessing Reclamation's website at http://www.usbr.gov/uc/wcao/progact/paradox/RI.html

## Calculation of up-front cost sharing

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - General Issues</u>: The Council and the Forum have tasked the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the Work Group (WG) to begin looking at the definition of cost effective salinity control as it relates to calculation of up-front cost sharing. The Council encourages all the federal agencies to work with the TAG and the WG on this effort.

<u>Response</u>: In reviewing the definition of cost effective salinity control as it relates to calculation of up-front cost sharing, the TAG and WG in their recent meetings questioned whether there should be up-front cost sharing on Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) in the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) salinity control program. Reclamation and NRCS were asked to determine the amounts of cost-sharing on CTA expenditures. Reclamation and the NRCS have analyzed the cost-sharing on CTA expenditures since FY 2000 and provided numbers to the Forum's Executive Director. The next step is for these numbers to be reviewed by the TAG and WG, to make a recommendation to the Council who in turn will make a recommendation to Reclamation as to whether up-front cost-sharing should be made on CTA expenditures.

#### Increased Involvement of the Lower Colorado Region (LCR) Offices

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, Department - Reclamation</u>: The Council would also like to encourage increased involvement of the LCR offices. In the past the LCR has not been very involved because most of the projects and activities were managed out of the Upper Colorado (UC) Regional Office. However, with the funding issues that are facing the Salinity Control Program and the fact that the LCR manages the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund (LCRBDF), their role has significantly increased.

<u>Response</u>: The LCR offices agree with the Council's findings as they pertain to the LCR. The Council's encouragement for increased participation from the LCR falls squarely in line with their internal discussions about keeping both Reclamation and our stakeholders fully apprised of the developing salinity situation on the Colorado River. The LCR is interested in increasing their understanding of the salinity economic damages model and accurately quantifying the economic benefits derived from modeling scenarios. Reclamation's challenge to economically dispose of highly saline groundwater in Yuma directly correlates to the success of the Title II salinity control program projects above Imperial Dam. Based on constantly changing conditions on the river, optimum alternatives exist which would benefit both the United States and Mexico - but this requires an accurate and robust modelling platform with which to identify them.

#### Contracting Process

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department - Reclamation: The Council also recognizes the efforts of Reclamation's salinity team to address and improve the contracting issues that have faced the Salinity Control Program. The Council recommends that Reclamation staff continue these efforts so that contracting issues will not handicap the Salinity Control Program in the future.

<u>Response</u>: We are aware of the Council's concerns with Reclamation's acquisition processes. Reclamation continues to implement processes, procedures, and staff assignments to improve the acquisition processes so that the execution of agreements and contracts will not handicap the Salinity Control Program.

#### Funding

 <u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department - Reclamation: .... there are several funding issues facing the program. The Forum has created a subcommittee to begin to address these issues, and the Council recommends that Reclamation continue to work with this subcommittee in attempting to identify options and strategies for resolving these issues. Prior to reaching that resolution, the Council will recommend temporary decisions related to funding and the generation of cost-share dollars in the LCRBDF.

<u>Response</u>: Staff from Reclamation's Upper and LCRs will continue to work with the Forum-created subcommittee, the Forum, and the Council to identify options and strategies for resolving the funding issues so that the Salinity Control Program can continue at its present or higher level of activity.

2. <u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department - Reclamation: The Council recommends that Reclamation seek increased appropriations in FY15 and FY16 in accordance with Table 1 herein. Reclamation is requested to give a detailed report on its efforts to secure additional funding at the next Council meeting.

#### See response #5 below:

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3. <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS</u>: The Council urges Reclamation to vigorously pursue adequate funding so as to allow timely implementation of its portion of the Salinity Control Program as described it the Forum's 2014 Review.

### See response #5 below:

4. <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, <u>Department – Basinwide</u> <u>Program (Reclamation)</u>: Reclamation has already received a FY14 appropriation of approximately \$6.1 million for the Basinwide Program. The Council recommends Reclamation not reduce this appropriation any further through budgetary manipulations and that, in fact, it attempt to increase this appropriation by reprogramming any Reclamation-wide excess FY14 appropriations into the Basinwide Program prior to the end of the fiscal year.

#### See response #5 below:

 <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department - Basinwide <u>Program (Reclamation)</u>: Recognizing this fact, the Council recommends that as the FY15 budget process progresses, Reclamation make every attempt to appropriate \$17,317,000 to the Basinwide Program and that as it begins budgeting for FY16 and FY17, it budgets \$18,245,000 and \$19,172.000 respectively.

<u>Response</u>: Reclamation appreciates the support the Basin States provide to budget funding requests for the Salinity Control Program. Reclamation is making every effort to fund the Basinwide Program at the highest levels possible while balancing the needs of other high priority projects and programs within a flat-to-declining-budget environment. Reclamation also endeavors to transfer as many funds as possible not utilized in other programs into Reclamation's Salinity Control Program. Reclamation's UC Region takes every opportunity to make known the successes and the needs of the Salinity Control Program at all levels of Reclamation, within the Department and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Reclamation welcomes the opportunity to work with the Basin States to identify and prioritize the activities to be funded by appropriations received for the Salinity Control Program. Reclamation will report to the Council on its efforts to secure additional funding.

6. <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS</u>: The Council also urges the agencies to provide adequate funding to support operation and maintenance, technical and education assistance, monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects and planning for future projects. The Council recommends funds for these activities are provided in addition to the funds recommended in Table 1. The Council requests that in their responses, Federal agencies specifically comment on funding for these non-construction activities.

<u>Response</u>: Each year about \$300,000 is appropriated into the Colorado River Water Quality Program (CRWQP) account. In recent years up to \$300,000 in additional funds has been transferred to this account at the end of the year. Funds in the CRWQP are used for staff salaries, monitoring and evaluation of implemented projects, technical and education assistance, and planning for future Salinity Control Program activities. There is no cost-sharing from the Basin Funds applied to these funds.

 <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department, Basinwide <u>Program (Reclamation)</u>: The Council requests that Reclamation continue to budget sufficient funds for required operation and maintenance of constructed units and for plan formulation, including the PVU alternatives studies and EIS process.

<u>Response</u>: In FY13 for operation, maintenance, monitoring, and technical assistance of the salinity units of Grand Valley, PVU, and McElmo Creek, Reclamation expended appropriations of \$1,132,895, \$2,343,972, and \$394,187, respectively. In FY14, \$1,526,000, \$2,607,000, and \$675,000 have been appropriated for operation, maintenance, monitoring, and technical assistance of the same units respectively. Reclamation feels that the units are being adequately funded to operate, maintain, monitor, and provide technical assistance.

Reclamation provided from its Salinity Control Program to the Survey for stream gaging on the Colorado River about \$515,000 in FY13 and about \$555,000 in FY14. This will assist in continuing the long-term monitoring that demonstrates the effectiveness of the implemented salinity projects.

For response to "budget sufficient funds for .... plan formulation" see response #6 above.

For response to "budget sufficient funds for .... the PVU Alternatives Studies and EIS process" see responses under the PVU section.

8. <u>MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS, TABLE 1, Footnote 2</u>: Funding recommendations in Table 1 do not include funds recommended for studies and future implementation at the PVU. The Council needs the assistance of Reclamation to determine the level of funding needed to support the PVU.

<u>Response</u>: Since Reclamation began the Alternative Studies and EIS process for the PVU, Reclamation has provided to the Council a Cost-Loaded Schedule. Reclamation will continue to update this Cost-Loaded Schedule and provide it to the Council. Once an alternative is selected, in consultation with the Council, Reclamation will work closely with the Council in determining and pursuing the level of funding needed for its implementation in the PVU.

#### Economic Damages Model

<u>COUNCIL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>, Department - Reclamation: As part of this effort, an understanding and accurate quantification of salinity damages and the economic benefits from the Salinity Control Program are increasingly important, and the Council recommends that Reclamation make updating and improving the salinity damages model a priority.

<u>Response</u>: Reclamation funds staff each year to update and improve the Economic Damages Model. Presently, Reclamation is involved with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and its affiliates in a major effort to update the inputs to the Economic Damages Model used by Reclamation to quantify economic damages caused by salinity in the Colorado River system. Once the inputs are identified, Reclamation will undertake a major overhaul of the model to incorporate the inputs and to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the model.



## United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT Washington, DC 20240 http://www.blm.gov

## MAY 2 1 2014

In Reply Refer To: 1703 (WO280)

Mr. Larry Dozier, Chairman Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 323 West Irvine Drive Phoenix, AZ 85086

Dear Mr. Dozier:

Thank you for your recent recommendations in the Advisory Council's 2013 Annual Report on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. As requested, this letter addresses the Council's recommendations to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

1. "The Council appreciates BLM's initiation of efforts to create a better understanding of salt mobilization on public lands, including major literature search on rangelands. The Council recommends that BLM continue with this effort so that pertinent information may be used tin the future to assist the Program."

We appreciate the Council recognizing BLM's efforts regarding salt mobilization process knowledge. The National Agricultural Library (NAL) Salinity Bibliography publication is available permanently available electronically and will be available physically available at the BLM library. The NAL can continue to receive electronic documents as it will remain dynamic until December, 2016 one reviewed by Dr. Cole Green Rossi (Salinity Specialist, NOC). This BLM-sponsored project is now complete per the agreement established with USDA ARS in 2012; however, we are willing to partner on future updates.

2. "The Council is pleased that BLM has initiated efforts to identify and implement salinityspecific activities in the Basin and further requests that BLM provide and accounting associated with these activities to the Forum. Recognizing, however, that the Forum is currently drafting its 2014 Review of Salinity Standards for the Colorado River, there is an important and immediate need for quantifying past salinity improvements within the Basin. The Council recommends that BLM work with the Work Group for inclusion of this information in the draft review."

BLM will continue current efforts to identify and implement salinity –specific activities and quantify outcomes when appropriate. As indicated in prior communications, BLM is working to improve quantifications and report of salinity reductions achieved from its land management programs. This is a long-term effort because of the complexity of our programs and will ultimately include multiple years of effort. We will contribute available information to the draft of the 2014 Review of Salinity Standards for the Colorado River as data permits within the Basin. We agree that BLM will continue to work with the Work Group for inclusion of what data albeit quantitative or qualitative for inclusion into the draft review.

3. "...BLM's Salinity Coordinator is considered critical to implementing a comprehensive BLM salinity control program as directed by Congress. BLM, as an Interior agency, has a vital role in assisting other agencies in implementing the Program. Part of that role is the importance of having the BLM Salinity Coordinator available to coordinate and participate directly with other federal agencies' Salinity Coordinators in implementation of the Program. The Council recommends BLM's Salinity Coordinator allocate sufficient time and resources to achieve this role."

We appreciate the Chairman's recommendation and agree that BLM supports the commitment to supporting the BLM Salinity Coordinator's position to coordinate efforts with the Forum and other participating agencies and stakeholders. As previously communicated, we recently expanded the position to include water quality technical expertise. This change was made in part to be more responsive to Forum requests to improve reporting and quantification of salinity reductions from BLM programs. The change was also necessary to meet workforce challenges resulting from decreasing Federal budgets.

4. "The Council would also like to again emphasize the importance for BLM to be an active and aggressive partner in seeking solutions for the PVU salinity control project."

We continue to be an aggressive partner in seeking solutions for the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) salinity control project via the Environmental Impact Statement and the Montrose field office. The BLM actively participates in the Dolores River Restoration Partnership, a consortium of Federal, State, and local stakeholders that collaborate on watershed management issues such as tamarisk eradication, restoring native riparian plant species, and improving aquatic habitat for native fish populations. We are open to discussing and supporting additional actions that promote watershed function and sustainable ecosystems, where such actions are consistent with goals and objectives described in our Resource Management Plans, laws and regulations, and other applicable policies and considerations.

5. In the Management and Budget Recommendations sections of this report, the Council recommends states that 1) that the BLM has been unable to quantify the amount of salinity control that it has accomplished through its programs; 2) the Council states that BLM's salinity control funding comes through its Soil, Water, Air (SWA) Program which is funded at about \$35 million nationwide annually; 3) in the past the Council has recommended that BLM spend \$5.2 million annually from SWA on projects within the Colorado River Basin (CRB) to reduce salt loading to the Colorado River. Since they have not received any new information, they continue to recommend to this amount, but also request that BLM better define how those recommendations can be made; 4)

additionally, at the request of the Council in recent years, BLM, via a manager's discretion, has set aside about \$800,000 per year specifically for salinity control activities within the CRB. This expenditure has been beneficial to the Program by developing and testing methods of controlling salinity on public lands; 5) The Council now recommends \$1.5 million for the next four fiscal years be set aside for specific salinity control on public lands within the Basin.

Unlike the Bureau of Reclamation, the BLM does not receive a line-item appropriation to support the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. The BLM has used discretionary funding from the Soil, Water, and Air Management (SWA) subactivity for many years to conduct salinity control activities and support the Salinity Coordinator position. The SWA subactivity was funded at about \$24 million in FY 2014, which is not sufficient to meet existing requirements. We understand that the \$5.2 million sum that was derived by the Council is a reflection of the amount of land with the CRB that lies on BLM land and is based on a full budget within SWA and does not consider staff salaries and benefits, operational support, recurring monitoring and project maintenance needs, information technology and data management, and administrative overhead. Most SWA funding is used for staff salaries and benefits, operational support, recurring monitoring and project maintenance needs, information technology and data management, and administrative overhead. Relatively modest funding (less than 20 percent) is available to support specific activities such as salinity control projects and as to be prioritized across air, water, and other soil resource needs. The BLM cannot increase SWA funding for salinity control projects as recommended by the Council because it lacks discretionary funding to do so.

The BLM does provide substantial funding and support for salinity control activities in addition to the direct annual allocations through the SWA subactivity. Base program funds allocated to State Offices provide labor, logistical, and administrative support for salinity control projects. A number of other BLM programs support watershed management and science activities related to Salinity Program objectives. These programs include the Healthy Lands Initiative, Cooperative Landscape Conservation Initiative, Abandoned Mine Lands Program, Rangeland Management Program, and Riparian Management Program. It is difficult to determine which of these projects may benefit salinity control efforts and time intensive to quantify salinity reductions, especially in terrestrial upland areas where objectives are to reduce erosion. Some progress has been made in this area in recent years, and we will continue working with the Council on efforts to improve capabilities. Currently, the Salinity Coordinator is working with the Fire Program to quantify total dissolved solids in the waters after they have had to intervene and before they revegetate an area and then again after the vegetation has been reestablished.

The BLM understands the Council's concerns about funding issues and will continue working to improve the effectiveness of future expenditures. The Council could help with these efforts by working with the BLM Salinity Coordinator establish common goals or identify geographic areas of concern to both parties. The Council also contact appropriate Department of the Interior Landscape Conservation Cooperative units to discuss including salinity control as a regular part of their planning and conservation efforts.

The BLM thanks the Council for their support and recommendations and will continue efforts to make measurable progress toward reducing salinity in waters of the Colorado River Basin.

If you have additional questions or information needs, please contact Nancy Dean, Division Chief for Environmental Quality and Protection, at (202)912-7136.

Sincerely,

Srf

Edwin L. Roberson Assistant Director Resources and Planning

cc: Kib Jacobson, Designated Federal Official CRBSC Advisory Council USBR UC 240 Rm 7311
125 South State Street Salt Lake City, UT 84138

> Don Barnett, Executive Director Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum 106 West 500 South, Suite 101 Bountiful, UT 84010



## United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY Office of the Director Reston, Virginia 20192

In Reply Refer To: Mail Stop 101 GS14000321

MAY 1 6 2014

Mr. Larry Dozier, Chairman Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 323 West Irvine Road Phoenix, Arizona 85086

Dear Mr. Dozier:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Advisory Council's comments and recommendations presented in the 2013 Annual Report on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (CRBSCP). We appreciate the Council's recognition of the responsiveness of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) science support to CRBSCP information needs. We will continue to work within the CRBSCP science planning process to help make the science activities we conduct collaboratively with CRBSCP participating agencies as relevant to the goals of program management and implementation as possible.

As noted by the Advisory Council, the USGS has been working with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and other CRBSCP participating agencies to assess salinity loading to the Virgin River from Pah Tempe Springs near Hurricane, Utah. Discharge of thermal, saline groundwater from Pah Tempe Springs to the Virgin River is one of the largest point salinity load sources to the Colorado River Basin river system. In January 2014, the USGS, with support from the CRBSCP and in collaboration with Reclamation, completed a successful experiment assessing the effects of managed groundwater withdrawal on spring discharge to the river. The results of this test and additional planned work in the area will aid program managers in assessing the feasibility of mitigation of Pah Tempe Springs salinity load to the Virgin River.

Twenty streamflow and water-quality monitoring sites in the Colorado River Basin extend from near the headwaters to the Mexican border. Flow and salinity data at the 20 gages are used to assess compliance salinity-level criteria and also track long-term trends in streamflow and salinity. These data also are incorporated in the Reclamation planning model known as the Colorado River Simulation System to simulate both flow and salinity throughout the Colorado River Basin. The USGS recognizes the importance of the 20-gage network to CRBSCP management and to Reclamation flow and salinity transport modeling efforts, and understands the Advisory Council's concern that the network continues to be maintained in USGS programs. USGS funds approximately 48 percent of the operation and maintenance of the 20-gage monitoring network, mainly through the USGS National Streamflow Information Program and

#### Mr. Larry Dozier

the USGS Cooperative Water Program. We project no reduction in that level of funding to these gages in fiscal year (FY) 2014. As is the case with other Federal agencies working in, or with, the CRBSCP, the USGS continues to face uncertainty in out-year program funding. However, Colorado River Basin monitoring sites, including those in the 20-gage network, are historic gages with substantial periods of record, and are of significant Federal interest. We will continue to work within these programs toward maintaining funding for these monitoring sites in FY 2014 and beyond.

The USGS will also continue to work with Reclamation to make data products as timely and relevant to CRBSCP information needs as possible. This year, for example, we have advanced methods for providing instantaneous salinity concentrations and loads at USGS Colorado River Basin gages via the web. Data for selected gages of the 20-gage monitoring network currently are being served from the USGS public National Real-Time Water Quality web site (http://nrtwq.usgs.gov/).

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond to and address the Council's comments and recommendations. If you would like any additional information or have questions, please contact Patrick Lambert, Director of the USGS Utah Water Science Center and the USGS Representative to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum at (801) 908-5033 or plambert@usgs.gov.

Sincerely, Steep Hz On Kemball

Suzette M. Kimball Acting Director

Copy to: Don A. Barnett, Executive Director, CRBSC Forum Kib Jacobson, Designated Federal Officer, CRBSC Advisory Council cc: Director's File – MS 114 Director's Chron – MS 114 Associate Director for Water – MS 150 Southwest Regional Office – MS 911

USGS:SWR:PLambert:seb:3/14/2014:801-908-14000321

APR 1 4 2014



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Ecological Services Colorado Field Office P.O. Box 25486, DFC (65412) Denver, Colorado 80225-0486



IN REPLY REFER TO: Der ES/CO: BR/Salinity TAILS: 06E24100-2014-CPA-0004

April 10, 2014

Larry R. Dozier, Chairman Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council 323 West Irvine Road Phoenix, Arizona 85086

Dear Mr. Dozier:

We have reviewed the Annual Report on the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program-2013, and offer the following response to comments addressed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

In your report you acknowledge the role of the Service in finding, reviewing and supporting viable wildlife replacement projects, as well as reviewing and tabulating replacement by areas. The Service plans to continue these activities and work proactively to assist the other agencies in moving the Program forward. We have been working closely with the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to come up with habitat replacement plans that all parties, including state wildlife management agencies, agree will provide long term habitat replacement.

Most recently, the Service has been involved with the development of a method to calculate project acres for in stream habitat projects in the Henry's Fork Salinity Control Project area. The Henry's Fork Salinity Control Project Plan and final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) identified potential impacts to a total of 800 wetland acres. The NRCS acknowledged that it will be difficult to fully replace such large acreages of wetland habitat, and that presently, only 129 acres of on-site replacement has been identified. Of these 129 acres, NRCS anticipates that only 14 acres will involve wetland creation or enhancement. Thus, it was recognized that we are going to need to consider "out of kind" and "off-site" projects to be able to fully replace wildlife values foregone in the Henry's Fork project area. To this end, recent opportunities to work with Trout Unlimited (TU) have been identified regarding in stream improvement projects within the drainage. The value of these projects toward replacement of lost wildlife values is not well represented by the Montana Wetland Assessment Method. The Service Salinity Coordinator and Partners for Wildlife biologists have been coordinating with NRCS and TU to develop methods to: 1) prioritize in stream improvement projects, 2) to calculate project acres for in stream improvements, and 3) compare and weigh in stream improvement projects in relation to wetland improvement projects. These methods will allow us to take advantage of in stream improvement project opportunities currently available with TU.

The Service continues to participate as a cooperating agency in the evaluation of alternatives for salt control at the Paradox site, attending most cooperating agency meetings. The Service is committed to working with the Salinity Control Program to evaluate Paradox alternatives, with the goals of controlling salinity loads in the Colorado River while also minimizing impacts on the environment and to trust resources, including migratory birds.

The Service participates in the Salinity Control Program by providing technical assistance on fish and wildlife resource impact assessment, restoration, and management, through implementation of Federal statutes including the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Service provides independent review and oversight of program aspects dealing with fish and wildlife resources, including our assessment of the degree to which fish and wildlife have received due consideration in project planning and incidental fish and wildlife values foregone have been replaced. We will continue to consult with the Bureau under Section 7 of the ESA regarding historic and new depletions associated with piping projects, and will continue to provide technical assistance to the Salinity Control Program in order to avoid impacts to Virgin River endangered fish associated with future salinity control efforts at Pah Tempe hot springs.

We appreciate the opportunity to work cooperatively with our Federal partners to address fish and wildlife values forgone and assist with meeting their mitigation goals. Please contact Barb Osmundson on any wildlife related issues at (970)628-7189.

Sincerely,

Asar Jime

Susan Linner Colorado Field Supervisor

Cc: Kib Jacobson, Program Manager, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program, U.S.Bureau of Reclamation, 125 S. State Street, Room 7311, Salt Lake City, UT 84138-1102

Don A. Barnett, Executive Director, Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum, 106West 500 South, Suite 101, Bountiful, UT 84010