

15 Water Wishes for 2015



by Sharon B. Megdal

I am writing this column after attending the annual conference of the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA), held December 10-12, 2014 in Las Vegas. This year's conference focused on both the challenges facing the region and some great accomplishments. Despite these accomplishments, there is much to wish for the future.

In the end-of-year spirit, I thought I would use my column to put forward some water wishes for 2015. Not all center on the Colorado River, but I'll start out with a few that do.

1. I wish that people both inside and outside the professional water community would watch the movie shown at the CRWUA opening plenary session. Entitled "Challenged but Unbroken: Sustaining the Colorado River," this 9-minute movie effectively captures the essence of where we are with Colorado River supply and demand. It discusses the long-term drought, the structural deficit, and the growing demands associated with growth. The movie can be accessed at CRWUA.org.

2. As I say frequently, I wish to see the general public get excited but not alarmed about water. Actions will be required in Arizona and the Colorado River Basin to close the gap between demand and supply. Some of the paths to addressing the gap are long-term and will be expensive. An informed public will assist decision makers in selecting among options.

3. I wish to see additional public information and education campaigns, including the new video-based project we are working on at the WRRC called ClipStack™.

4. I wish to explore developing an electronic billboard campaign that shows Lake Mead elevation levels and links to sources of information about what these levels mean for Central Arizona Project water deliveries. It could be an interesting way to engage the public.

5. I wish for good precipitation in Arizona and the Colorado River Basin so that Lake Mead and Lake Powell levels rise and our lands are not so parched.

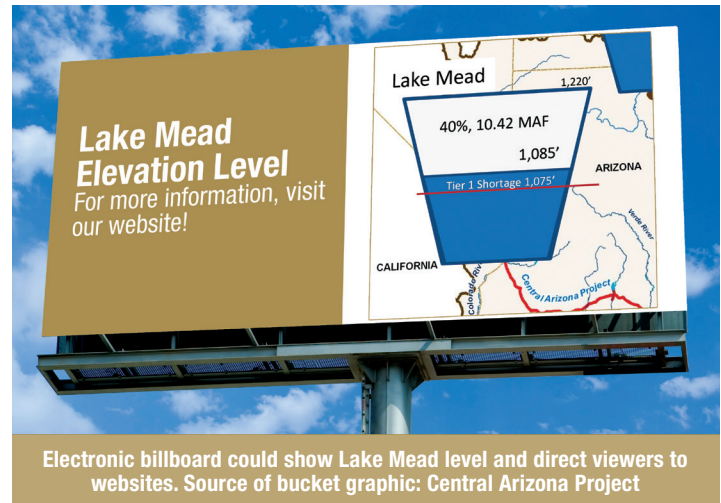
6. I wish to see continued efforts to publicize and build upon the great cooperation associated with the Minute 319 Colorado River Pulse Flow, because it demonstrated how the partners, working with the International Boundary and Water Commission, enabled something not thought doable just a few years ago. It showed the great power of binational collaboration across NGO and academic communities, water suppliers, and governments. I recommend people watch the Robert Redford narrated movie, *Renewal – A Reborn Colorado River Once Again Finds Her Path to the Sea*. It can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/TODV7FW746s>.

7. I wish that each and every water user, regardless of size and type of water use, conserves water. There is great opportunity to use water more efficiently. Conservation should be part of every region's approach to closing the gap between supply and demand.

8. I wish to build on the extensive engagement effort

involved in formulating the "Roadmap for Considering Water for Arizona's Natural Areas" (see insert to this issue). Developing pathways requires creativity and cooperation across water-using sectors. This WRRC project benefitted from extensive input and engagement of many, including our very dedicated project steering committee. We should keep putting our heads together to identify voluntary options for addressing the water needs of our state's natural areas.

9. I wish for a productive dialogue on Arizona's Strategic Vision for Water Supply Sustainability. The vision document released by Arizona Department of Water Resources in January



2014 can be accessed at http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/Arizonas_Strategic_Vision/.

10. I wish that we determine our solution paths here in Arizona and throughout the Colorado River Basin before a crisis develops. It might take some event(s), however, such as a shortage declaration on the Colorado River, to interest the general public and spur action. Although we do know a shortage declaration is likely, even without one, Arizona will voluntarily use less Colorado River water over the next three years pursuant to the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding to leave water in Lake Mead with the hopes of forestalling a shortage declaration.

11. I wish that the students enrolled in my graduate class in Arizona Water Policy are highly inquisitive and interested in water resources as a key component of their careers.

12. I wish for an informative and stimulating WRRC 2015 annual conference, which will focus on Tribal water management and be held June 9-10, 2015.

13. I wish to continue and expand WRRC partnerships in the coming year. Partnerships are essential to everything we do. Please look at the partnership metrics we compiled as part of our annual strategic planning metrics reporting. The WRRC's strategic plan and metrics, along with our Annual Reports, can be found at <https://wrrc.arizona.edu/about>.

14. I wish for continued success of the WRRC's many programs, projects, and activities. Please visit our web site or contact us to learn how you can become engaged.

15. And, of course, I wish every water stakeholder (everyone) a healthy and productive 2015!! 🏡