

minimize the impact of operations on the Cienega de Santa Clara, a 90-day demonstration operation of the plant is scheduled to begin in March 2007. The plant will operate at about 10 percent of capacity, allowing about 3,000 acre-feet of water to be stored in Lake Mead as a result of recovered bypass flows during 2007.

Continuing its water savings programs from 2006, Reclamation will participate in arrangements with irrigation districts and farmers in the Lower Basin, whereby farmers are paid to fallow their land and the unused water is stored in Lake Mead for future use.

Based on a 2004 Reclamation study recommending construction of additional storage near the All-American Canal, the Drop 2 Reservoir is now in the engineering design and environmental compliance and permitting stage. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2007 and be completed by 2009. The small, 8,000-acre-foot reservoir is being designed to capture extra water in the system that would otherwise flow to Mexico, particularly during storm events.

The 37-page draft report is available at www.usbr.gov/uc/water/rsrvs/ops/aop/aop07_draft.pdf.

Agreement Initiates San Joaquin River Restoration

As part of one of the West's largest river restoration efforts, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Friant Water Users Authority (FWUA),

and the U.S. departments of Interior and Commerce announced in September an agreement to restore water flows for salmon in the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam near Fresno, California.

The settlement ends an 18-year legal dispute over the operation of Friant Dam and resolves longstanding legal claims brought by a coalition of conservation and fishing groups led by NRDC. It provides for substantial river channel improvements and sufficient water flow to sustain a salmon fishery upstream from the confluence of the Merced River tributary, while providing water supply certainty to Friant water contractors.

Historically, central California's San Joaquin River supported large salmon populations, including the southernmost Chinook salmon population in North America. Since Friant Dam became fully operational in the late 1940s, approximately 60 miles of the river have dried up in most years, eliminating salmon above the river's confluence with the Merced River.

Restoring continuous flows to the river will take place in phases. Planning, design work, and environmental reviews will begin immediately, and interim flows for experimental purposes will start in 2009. The flows will be increased gradually over the next several years, with salmon being re-introduced by December 31, 2012. The settlement continues in effect until 2026, with the U.S. District Court retaining jurisdiction to resolve disputes and enforce the settlement. After 2026, the

court, in conjunction with the California State Water Resources Control Board, would consider any requests by the parties for changes to the restoration program.

Funding for the projects will come from several sources, including current environmental contributions from farmers and cities served by Friant Dam, state bond initiatives, and authorization for federal contributions.

Visit www.usbr.gov/mp/, www.fwua.org, and www.nrdc.org.

Feds Drop Protest to SNWA Transfer; Challenges Remain

The day before hearings at the Nevada Office of the State Engineer began last September, agencies of the U.S. Department of Interior reached an agreement with the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) regarding the water agency's proposed transfer of 90,000 acre-feet of groundwater annually from White Pine County in rural Nevada to the Las Vegas area, reported the *Las Vegas Sun*. The agreement, involving Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, calls for SNWA to monitor the county for impacts from pumping and to mitigate "unreasonable" effects in Spring Valley, located in the county. In addition, according to the *Sun*, SNWA also must avoid any impact from its actions to Great Basin National Park under the agreement.

As expected, ranchers, environmental groups, and rural communities in

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HydroFacts

Percent of global CO₂ emissions absorbed by forests: **25**

Percent CO₂ projected to be absorbed by forests stressed by climate change-related drought: **20**

Days in 1970 that northern Alaska was cold enough to operate oil-drilling machinery without damaging the tundra: **213**

Days in 2002 that it was cold enough: **106**

Current annual loss in Greenland's ice cap: **27 cubic miles**

Annual loss in ice cap during the 1990s: **0 cubic miles**

Longest continuous record of temperature measurements: **since 1659 in the English Midlands of central England**

Estimated increase in rainfall due to urban heat island effect in Phoenix, Arizona: **12-14%**

Estimated cost of aggressive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions: **1% of global GDP**

Estimated cost of unabated climate change: **5-20% of global GDP**

Source: SAHRA's Global Water News Watch