

River, which provides most of its water. However, the director of the Arizona Department of Mines and Minerals testified that the elevated uranium concentrations result from erosion rather than mining, and another scientist testified that modern mining techniques are much improved over those used previously that may have caused contamination.

The segregated lands are within portions of the Grand Canyon watershed next to Grand Canyon National Park in northern Arizona, an area that contains significant environmental and cultural resources as well as substantial uranium deposits.

Visit www.doi.gov, resourcescommittee.house.gov, and www.ap.org.

Texas Agencies Battle Over Water

In August, the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) filed a \$1.23 billion lawsuit in the Travis County State District Court for breach of contract against the Lower Colorado River [of Texas] Authority (LCRA). The suit involved a joint water-sharing project the two agencies have been developing since 2002.

The project began after the 2001 Texas legislature authorized LCRA to transfer up

to 150 acre-feet per year of Colorado River water to “a municipality outside its service area” contingent on certain requirements related to the environment, lake water levels, water-conservation efforts on behalf of the municipality, and protection of and benefit to Colorado basin interests. San Antonio, in need of water for development, was the target municipality.

As part of the 2002 agreement, SAWS funded feasibility studies to comply with the legislative requirements, and planned to fund conservation and water-development measures if the project moved forward. But earlier this year, LCRA announced that preliminary scientific findings indicated the joint project would not meet all legislative requirements and that no water would be available for San Antonio.

SAWS claims LCRA’s decision was not based on science. The agency said in a press release that “LCRA incorrectly assumed that the results of technical studies could be altered by unilateral “policy assumptions” made by LCRA’s board of directors. The policy assumptions, according to SAWS, are related to “lucrative promises of a potential coal plant” in LCRA’s service area.

As a result, SAWS seeks financial recovery for an amount defined as the difference between the project cost of 90,000 acre-feet of water for 80 years and the total cost of acquiring the same amount of water from another source. SAWS has already invested over \$43 million in project studies.

LCRA responded that the need for more water to meet growing demands, environmental concerns, and lake-level requirements were the primary factors contributing to their decision: “Updated projections showed that more water than was previously estimated would be needed for cities and industries in the Colorado basin.”

In September, LCRA responded to the lawsuit with a court filing stating that the agency owes SAWS at most \$18 million, or half the cost of the feasibility studies.

The two agencies attempted mediation without success in early summer. San Antonio has struggled to find water sources since 1993, when the state legislature capped the amount of pumping allowed from the Edwards Aquifer to protect endangered species in springs it feeds.

Visit www.saws.org, and www.lcra.org.

HydroFacts

Conservation rebates for removing turf, per square foot:

Las Vegas, Nevada	\$1.50 up to 5,000 square feet, then \$1.00
Albuquerque, New Mexico	up to \$1.20
El Paso Water Utilities, Texas	\$1.00
Los Angeles Water and Power Department, California	\$1.00
Mesa, Arizona	up to \$1.00
East Bay Municipal Utility District cities, California	\$0.50
Scottsdale, Arizona	\$0.25 to \$0.50
Chandler, Arizona	\$0.10 to \$0.20

Conserving hot water reduces natural gas or electric costs as well as water and wastewater costs:

Savings in natural gas per \$1 savings in water and wastewater:	\$2.16
Savings in electricity per \$1 savings in water and wastewater:	\$4.01
Assumes water + wastewater = \$0.05/gallon; natural gas = \$0.92/therm; electricity = \$0.087/kWh	

Source: *Hot-Water Distribution Systems - Part III*, Gary Klein

A survey of swimming-pool-cover usage in southeast Arizona revealed the following:

Months of minimum pool-cover usage:	July (33%), August (37%), June (39%)
Months of maximum pool-cover usage:	September (64%), October and April (62%)
Respondents indicated pool covers are used most in the “shoulder” months to retain heat and lengthen the season, rather than in summer to conserve water.	

Nevada Test Site Monitoring Expanded

In May, the Nevada Test Site office of the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration announced the drilling of nine additional groundwater characterization wells in the vicinity of Pahute Mesa, more than 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. These wells are on or near a Nevada Test Site location that hosted 82 underground nuclear tests between 1965 and 1992.

A 1997 report predicted that tritium and carbon-14 would migrate off the test site within 50 years of the area’s first detonation in 1965. In February 2009, a new report based on computer modeling confirmed the expected movement outside the site boundary, initially in the area of Western Pahute Mesa. The Nevada Test Site office identified the

continued on page 16