

## Power Plant Wastewater Rules Revised

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to revise the existing standards for water discharges from coal-fired power plants.

Earlier this year, EPA completed a multiyear study of power-plant wastewater discharges and concluded that current regulations, which were issued in 1982, have not kept pace with changes in the electric power industry over the last three decades. Controls installed to remove pollution from smokestacks have made great strides in cleaning the air. However, some of the equipment used to clean air emissions does so by “scrubbing” the boiler exhaust with water. When that water is not properly managed, it redirects pollution to rivers and other water bodies. Treatment technologies are available to remove these pollutants from wastewater streams before they are discharged to waterways, but have been installed at only a fraction of existing power plants.

As part of the study, EPA measured pollutants in the wastewater and reviewed treatment technologies, focusing mostly on coal-fired power plants. Many of the toxic pollutants discharged from power plants come from coal-ash ponds and the flue-gas desulfurization systems used to remove sulfur dioxide from air emissions. Wastewater discharged from coal-ash ponds, air pollution control equipment, and other equipment at power plants can

contaminate drinking water sources, kill fish and other wildlife, and cause other detrimental environmental effects.

Once the new rule for electric power plants is finalized, EPA and states would incorporate the new standards into wastewater discharge permits. A final study will be published later this year.

Visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

## KS, CO Reach Arkansas River Agreement

In August, Kansas and Colorado made a joint filing with the U.S. Supreme Court, ending a 24-year dispute concerning the division of Arkansas River water.

The states’ water officials, Chief Engineer David Barfield in Kansas and State Engineer Dick Wolfe in Colorado, reached agreement on the final technical issues of the case by specifying how Colorado’s replacement requirements will be evaluated in order to maintain compliance with the 1948 Arkansas River Compact.

“Colorado has shown us by this agreement that they are willing to resolve certain disputes without litigation. That being said, Kansas has an enforceable Supreme Court decree with regard to the Arkansas River Compact to rely on if needed,” said Barfield.

Kansas filed suit against Colorado in 1985, claiming it was improperly diverting water by pumping large amounts of groundwater that in fact were connected to the river and belonged to Kansas. In 1995, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Kansas

and ultimately required Colorado to pay Kansas more than \$34 million, largely for loss of farm income due to surface-water depletions. In addition, the court approved the Hydrologic-Institutional (H-I) model developed by Kansas to calculate water depletions in Colorado.

However, some issues remained unresolved, including exactly how stream depletion from groundwater pumping is monitored and determined. Resolving this issue involved modifying the language specifying how the H-I model will be applied.

Visit [www.ksag.org](http://www.ksag.org).

## Flow Returns to San Joaquin River

In October, releases from Friant Dam were increased to send water through two stretches of the San Joaquin River in central California that have been dry, except during extremely high flows, since the dam began diverting water more than 50 years ago, reported the *Los Angeles Times*.

According to the *Times*, the flows are part of a plan to return Chinook salmon to the river by late 2012. The October flow was slated to last six weeks, and marked the start of many test releases designed to study the effects of the flows. The temperature, depth, quality, and path of the released water will be monitored.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that in 1988 the Natural Resource Defense Council and other environmental groups sued federal agencies to prohibit them from renewing agricultural contracts that had been diverting nearly all water from the river. In 2006, a federal judge ordered the reinstatement of flows and the return of the salmon. In March 2009, the project received \$400 million as part of a wilderness protection bill.

The *Chronicle* reported that the river is dry in two separate stretches of 24 and 40 miles. The test release will result in an 18-percent reduction in water deliveries for farmers served by the river. Flows are not planned to reach the 150-mile stretch between Friant Dam and the Merced River year-round until 2014.

Visit [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) and [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com).

continued on page 14

## SWH HydroFacts

Number of Southwest Hydrology issues published to date:	47
Number of pages produced:	1,990
Number of feature articles:	333
Number of unique authors:	657
Number of unique advertisers and sponsors:	112
Number of advertisers who have been in every issue to date: (Baski, Clear Creek Associates, Geosystems Analysis, HydroGeophysics, HydroSystems, Stewart Brothers Drilling Co.)	6
Number of states with Southwest Hydrology subscribers:	50
Current number of subscribers:	about 6,200