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WaterSMART Program is Stretching Water Supplies, Making Progress toward Sustainable Balance of Supply & Demand

Program provides scientific, financial and collaborative tools that will enable Interior to meet its water savings goal of 730,000 acre-feet per year by 2013

WASHINGTON - The Department of the Interior's WaterSMART program is saving water, finding better ways to stretch existing supplies and helping partners plan to meet future water demands, according to a three-year progress report on the program released today. The program was launched by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in 2010.

Combining new initiatives with existing programs as part of a comprehensive strategy for sustainable management of water supplies in the United States, WaterSMART projects, along with other conservation activities, are expected to save an estimated 587,839 acre-feet of water a year – enough water for more than 2.3 million people. These water conservation results put Interior well on the way toward achieving its high priority goal of saving 730,000 acre-feet per year by the end of 2013.

"WaterSMART allows us to manage water in a more sustainable manner to achieve balance between the water we have and the water we need for humans and ecosystems," said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle. "Using the best available science, WaterSMART provides relief for immediate water shortages while planning for long-term needs through collaborative processes."

The water savings and other accomplishments are detailed in the report, *WaterSMART: A Three-Year Progress Report*. "SMART" stands for "Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow."

In addition to saving water, the WaterSMART Program has conserved 40 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually – enough power for 3,400 households.

"Water and energy are linked," Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Michael L. Connor said. "Water is necessary to generate power, while energy is required to store, move and treat water. Water saved is energy earned, and energy saved is water earned."

"The WaterSMART initiative has given a big jumpstart to our work on a National Water Census," said USGS Director Marcia McNutt. "This is the first survey in more than 30 years to determine the quantity, quality, and use of the nation's water supply. Our hope is that this information will enable water resource

managers and other stakeholders to optimize how water is used for future human, economic, energy production and environmental purposes."

Other accomplishments identified in the WaterSMART three-year progress report include:

- Since 2009, about \$94 million in federal funding was awarded through Reclamation's WaterSMART Grants for 158 projects, leveraging more than \$280 million in water management improvements across the West.
- Reclamation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service began a new partnership in 2011 to leverage funding for water delivery agencies and agricultural producers in California. Reclamation made \$4.1 million in competitive WaterSMART Grants available to five irrigation districts for water management improvements within the delivery systems used by farmers. NRCS committed \$7 million to farmers who receive water from those districts so on-farm conservation improvements can be made.
- About \$231 million in federal funding was provided for Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Projects since 2009. Eight projects have finished construction since that time, and eight others are expected to be completed in 2013. Project sponsors delivered about 262,000 acre-feet of recycled water in 2011, providing a drought-resistant supply and new flexibility for water managers.
- Reclamation provided cost-shared funding for 129 smaller-scale efficiency projects through the Water Conservation Field Services Program. 69 of those projects are now completed.
- Reclamation has also provided more than \$2.6 million in funding for 18 System Optimization Reviews since 2009, assisting project sponsors in their assessments of the potential for water management improvements in the future.
- As part of the National Water Census, the USGS has begun Geographic Focus Areas Studies – comprehensive technical assessments of water availability and use – in the Colorado, Delaware, and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River basins.
- Interior agencies are also taking steps to conserve water at more than 2,400 of their own facilities across the Nation.
- Reclamation contributed more than \$12 million toward 17 Basin Studies in states across the West, assisting partners plan for the long-term challenges of water scarcity, supply and demand imbalances, and the impacts of climate change.
- Launched in 2012, the Cooperative Watershed Management Program provided eight entities \$333,500 in grants during the first year. Its purpose is to improve water quality and ecological resilience and to reduce conflicts over water through collaborative conservation efforts in the management of local watersheds.

WaterSMART: A Three-Year Progress Report is available online at www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART.

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