**Nichols and McClure Reservoirs Restoration Project**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***Why are improvements at the reservoirs needed?***

Replacement of the intake towers at both Nichols and McClure Dams are needed to improve dam safety, operating personnel safety, and improve flow control of reservoir releases.

* Existing intake towers are 70 – 80 years old and do not meet current seismic stability requirements.
* Intake valves leak and only one valve at each tower is in operating condition.
* Intake structure is located several hundred feet from the shore and can only be accessed by boat or walking on ice when the reservoir is frozen.
* Intake towers are 80 - 100 feet high and only 4 – 5 feet in diameter and valves and valve actuators are located inside the tower where there is inadequate room for repair, replacement, or maintenance.

***How long will construction take?***

Construction takes 9 months per dam and will be done one dam per year. Work at Nichols Dam began September 3, 2013 and will be completed in mid-May 2014, when filling of the reservoir will begin. Taking a reservoir out of service beginning in September allows reservoir water to be used to meet peak summer demand. Construction at McClure Dam will begin September 1, 2014 and be substantially completed in late spring 2015 when subsequent filling of the reservoir will begin. Reservoir refilling in late spring allows the capture of late spring runoff from the Santa Fe River watershed.

***Why do the reservoirs have to be drained?***

Water in the reservoirs must be drained for the removal of the existing intake towers. New concrete intake structures will be constructed from the bottom of the dams to the crest of the dams on the upstream face of the dam embankments.

***What will happen to the water being drained from McClure Reservoir?***

A reservoir management plan has been developed to maximize the treatment and delivery of water to Santa Fe customers, meet target flows under Santa Fe’s ‘living river’ program, supply acequias, and fill Nichols Reservoir. The reservoir management plan will be adjusted based on watershed runoff projections, weather conditions, precipitation, and availability of other water supply sources such as the Buckman Direct Diversion Project, Buckman Well Field, and customer’s water demand.

***How quickly will McClure Reservoir be drained?***

Currently, McClure Reservoir is 70% of total storage capacity. It is anticipated it will take until late summer to drain McClure Reservoir. The Office of State Engineer recommends the City Water Division draw down only 1 foot in elevation of water storage capacity per day to avoid damage in the earthen dam embankment such as sloughing. As the surface water area shrinks, the releases from McClure Reservoir will slow down.

***What will happen to the fish in the reservoir?***

Fish will be salvaged to the extent possible and transferred to Nichols reservoir to replace the fish which were moved from Nichols Reservoir to McClure Reservoir last year.

***Will customers experience water shortages?***

No. McClure Reservoir water will continue to be used throughout the summer, with the majority used as drinking water. The City has additional water sources including the Buckman Direct Diversion Facility, the Buckman Production Wells and the wells within the City limits. Even without the reservoirs and continuous drought, the City can still meet customer water demand during the peak demand of the summer months.

***How much water do we get from the Santa Fe River Watershed and reservoirs?***

The Santa Fe River watershed provides up to 40% of Santa Fe’s drinking water. The reservoir storage allows water to be used as needed to meet water demand.

* McClure Reservoir holds 3,257 acre feet of water or 1,061 million gallons when completely full.
* Nichols Reservoir holds 684 acre feet of water or 223 million gallons when completely full.

***What happens if there is a wildfire in the watershed, the Buckman Direct Diversion isn’t operational due to low flows on the Rio Grande, or another heavy rain storm similar to the rain events last fall?***

The City Water Division has planned for worst-case scenarios and has the flexibility to use a combination of different water sources and water saved from the community’s response to water conservation efforts, particularly during peak demand.

***Can work at McClure Dam be postponed?***

Postponing the intake structure replacement offers no benefit. The longer it takes to replace the intake structure, the higher probability that costly repairs to outdated facilities will be required. The degradation of the functionality of the intake structure will also result if replacement is postponed putting the water supply and dam safety at greater risk.

***Where can I find more information?***

The City provides daily information on water production, reservoir capacity, and total system storage at <http://www.santafenm..gov/daily_water_production_reports>.

For drought management information and water conservation, please visit [www.savewatersantafe.com](http://www.savewatersantafe.com).