

Arizona General Stream Adjudication Bulletin

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL MASTER • January - March, 2000

CAP Settlement Boosts Tribal Water Right Discussions

Arizona and the Department of the Interior are close to settling lengthy and often contentious litigation concerning repayment charges for the Central Arizona Project. The announced terms of the settlement may free enough water to help settle Indian water right claims throughout the state.

The CAP settlement must be approved by U.S. District Judge Earl Carroll, who has

presided over the litigation. A court hearing is scheduled for April 11th.

The Central Arizona Water Conservation District, the state entity that formally contracted with the United States for CAP construction and repayment, won an early victory before Judge Carroll when he ruled that the district owed no more than \$1.78 billion for the \$4.7 billion construction project. The recent agreement reduces the district's repayment obligation to \$1.65 billion, and the district agreed to the use of an

additional 200,0000 acre-feet of water for the settlement of tribal claims. About 665,000 acre-feet of 1.5 million acre-feet of CAP water delivered annually will now be available for tribal purposes although there appears to be a bar against the out-of-state use of this water. The recent settlement requires that some of this water be used to settle the adjudication claims of the Gila River Indian Community and the Tohono O'odham Nation. These tribal agreements and other conditions of the CAP settlement must be completed within three years.

The Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) has filed a petition with the Arizona Supreme Court asking for review of Judge Susan Bolton's approval of the San Carlos Apache Tribe water rights settlement on December 7, 1999. CAWCD does indicate that the petition will be withdrawn if the CAP repayment settlement is finalized (see lead article).

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State Parties Appeal Federal Rights Decision

The Arizona Supreme Court ruled last fall that federal reserved water rights could be established in groundwater, but only where other sources of water are inadequate to meet the federal purposes in establishing the land reservation. See Sept.-Dec. 1999 Bulletin, p. 1. Now some of the parties involved in the issue have petitioned

the U.S.
S u p r e m e
Court for
review of the
state court decision.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court is not obligated to

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State Parties Appeal Federal Rights Decision

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review state court decisions, the formal mechanism to request review is for the aggrieved party to petition the Court for a writ of certiorari. Two petitions for a writ of certiorari were filed on Feb. 17, 2000—one by the Salt River Project and the other by Phelps Dodge Corp., Arizona Public Service Co., Gila Valley Irrigation Dist., and Franklin Irrigation Dist. The petitioners jointly filed an appendix containing copies of lower court documents.

The Salt River Project argues that the U.S. Supreme Court should review the Arizona decision because the Supreme Court never has decided that federal reserved rights could be established in groundwater and Arizona and Wyoming state courts have now reached opposing results. resolution of this issue, SRP maintains, is important to the completion of water right adjudications in nine western states. As to the merits, SRP argues that by "[c]reating a privileged class of a few federal pumpers," the result could be "disastrous" for most of Arizona. Users of groundwater would

have to curtail their pumping to avoid harmful effects on Indian reservations, parks, or other federal land set aside before pumping commenced. Further, SRP indicates that the "reasonable use" doctrine, which normally governs groundwater use in Arizona, provides an adequate basis to provide water for federal lands and tribes. If reserved rights are recognized in groundwater, the state may be forced to substitute a priority-based groundwater law system for the reasonable use system now in place.

Phelps Dodge and the other parties joining its petition argue that the Arizona Supreme Court's decision is flawed because it was rendered in the abstract and not in reference to a specific federal land reservation. These parties also maintain that existing state groundwater law is nondiscriminatory and adequate to protect federal purposes and does not need to be replaced by a national uniform rule concerning federal rights to groundwater that would interfere with groundwater management in Arizona and many other states.

With the filing of these petitions, the next step is for the United States and some of Arizona's tribes to file responses stating their reasons why the U.S. Supreme Court should not review

the Arizona Supreme Court's decision. On March 3rd, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, and Yavapai Apache Nation asked the U.S. Supreme Court for a two month extension of the deadline for filing briefs in opposition to the

petitions. Unless this extension is granted, these opposing responses must be filed by March 23rd.

The U.S. Supreme Court could decide this spring to accept the case or wait until the fall. If the Court does accept the case, the parties will have opportunities to file their briefs on the merits of the controversy, followed by oral argument. The case could be heard during the 2000-2001 term, with a decision by July 2001.

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The information contained in this Bulletin is provided for informational and scheduling purposes only, and does not constitute a legal opinion by the Special Master on matters contained herein.

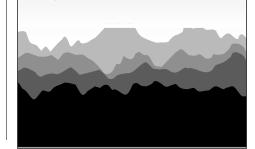
Volume 8 Number 1

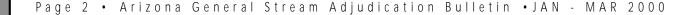
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Gila River Proceedings

Bolton Hearing

On March 6th, Judge Susan R. Bolton held a lengthy hearing on the status of the Gila River adjudication. Much of the discussion concerned activities involving the Gila River Indian Community (see following articles), and Judge Bolton extended some of the upcoming deadlines to allow the parties more time to work on settlement (see calendar, p. 9).

The court discussed with the parties the status of other tribal claims in the adjudication and the type of federal agency claims that have been made in the case. Judge Bolton indicated that it is important to develop a schedule for future hydrographic survey reports so that the Department of Water Resources may plan and obtain necessary funding. The court directed the Steering Committee to propose a schedule for future HSRs and prioritize federal law claims and issues that can be addressed in an early fashion by the court. These reports should be available by the next status conference, which is scheduled for May 2, 2000. (See tables on next page.)

Gila River Indian Community

Contested Case No. W1-203, concerning the water right claims of the Gila River Indian Community, is proceeding on two fronts: settlement discussions and litigation. The major parties are deeply engaged in negotiations, and their efforts recently have been boosted by the agreement on the repayment of Central Arizona Project costs (freeing water that may be used for Indian water right settlements; see lead article), the appointment of Michael Nelson as settlement judge (see article this section), and the desire of Clinton Administration officials to

finalize some agreements before the end of 2000.

Judge Bolton has taken several steps to ensure that litigation on the tribe's water right claims can rapidly proceed in the event settlement discussions fail. More than 18,500 documents have been disclosed by the parties and the briefing of many preliminary motions nears completion. The Arizona Department of Water Resources has published two preliminary volumes of the hydrographic survey report, and the court directed the Indian Community to provide the Department with a list of allottees on the reservation so that these persons will receive notice of the final HSR and other adjudication proceedings. The court also referred several matters to the Special Master in anticipation of trial.

Upcoming Oral Arguments

One matter referred to the Master is a series of motions about the possible preclusive effect of court decrees and agreements executed in the 1900s. The most important of these is the federal Globe Equity Decree, issued in 1935, which may limit the amount of water the Gila River Indian Community and other parties may be able to claim in the state water adjudications. These motions have been extensively briefed, and the Master will hear oral arguments on the motions on April 26th.



Tucson

San Carlos

Sierra Vista

Flagstaff

Prescott

Phoenix

Sells

Another matter referred to the Master concerns the established purposes for the Gila River Indian reservation. If a settlement is not reached for the Gila River Indian Community, the court is expected to order the trial to ascertain the federal purposes for establishing the Indian reservation. A decision on this issue will be helpful to the Department in completing the final hydrographic survey report since the decision will guide the content of the report. In anticipation of such a trial, the Special Master held an informal pretrial conference on March 6th with the parties expected to litigate the purposes of the Indian Community. The parties discussed their perspectives on the

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Gila River Proceedings

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legal issues and commented on the witnesses and exhibits to be used and the time necessary for trial. In early April, the Master will circulate a proposed pretrial order for the "purposes" trial, and the parties will have an opportunity to comment at a more comprehensive pretrial conference scheduled for May 2nd. The final pretrial order will likely be held in abeyance until it is certain that settlement has not been possible and a trial will be necessary on the "purposes" issue.

Nelson Appointed as Settlement Judge

Judge Michael Nelson (Apache County Superior Court) has been appointed as settlement judge for water issues in the upper Gila River. Nelson, who has served for five years as a settlement judge in the Little Colorado River adjudication, was asked by Deputy Secretary of Interior David Hayes and other water users to assist in ongoing negotiations concerning the allocation and management of water in the upper Gila. Judge Susan Bolton agreed with the recommendation and appointed Nelson as settlement judge on February 8, 2000.

Nelson has been meeting with the vying parties including irrigation districts, the Gila River Indian Community, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, and the United States. Many of the contested issues are pending in a federal court proceeding commonly known as "Globe Equity No. 59." Other issues are before the superior court in the Gila River adjudication.

Table 1

List of Tribes with Claims in the Gila River Adjudication (filed by tribe or United States as trustee)

- Ak Chin Indian Community (may be completely settled)
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (settled except for claims to spill water)
- Fort McDowell Indian Community (settled except for claims to spill water)
- San Carlos Apache Tribe (Salt River claims settled)
- Gila River Indian Community (US & tribal claims pending)
- Tohono O'odham Nation (some claims settled by federal law; other US claims pending)
- White Mountain Apache Tribe (US claims pending)
- Yavapai-Prescott Indian Reservation (settled)
- Camp Verde Yavapai Apache Nation (US & tribal claims pending)
- Pascua Yagui Indian Reservation (US claim pending)
- Tonto Apache Indian Community (US & tribal claims pending)
- Hualapai Indian Reservation (US claim pending)

Table 2

List of Federal Agencies with Claims in the Gila River Adjudication

- US Air Force
- US Army
- US Dep't of Energy
- US Dep't of Interior (various land & water management agencies)
- US Dep't of Agriculture (including Forest Service)

Nelson was appointed to superior court in 1989. He has an extensive background in Indian and natural resource law having worked as an attorney on the Navajo Reservation. Nelson is chair of the Arizona State-Tribal-Federal Court Forum and of the Committee on Judicial Education and Training. He received his bachelor's degree from Stanford and his law degree from the University of Arizona. For more background information, see <www.supreme.state.az.us/profile.htm>.

New Case Designation

Issues have been raised concerning the preclusive effect of the Globe Equity Decree on parties other than the Gila River Indian Community. In a minute entry dated January 4, 2000, the Special Master designated a separate case name and number for disclosure and motions relating to these questions. The contested case name is *In re the*

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Gila River Proceedings

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Preclusive Effect of the Globe Equity No. 59 Decree on Specified Parties, Case No. W1-206. Procedures for submitting disclosures were detailed in the same minute entry. Due dates for motions were modified by Judge Bolton on March 6, 2000 (see calendar, p. 9).

Initial disclosures were filed January 31, 2000. Nine parties filed 378 documents, consisting of approximately 2,275 pages. Added to more than 18,000 documents already filed in W1-203, all of these documents and indexes fill 30 file cabinet drawers in the Special Master's office.

Claimant Mailing List

Judge Bolton has approved the Special Master's report recommending improvements to the mailing list of adjudication claimants and finalized a new pretrial order that requires claimants to notify ADWR of changes in their filings. See Sept.-Dec. 1999 Bulletin at p. 5. The Master's report responded to a growing inaccuracy of ownership and address information in the 66,000 claims filed in the adjudication. The report made 18 recommendations on ways to improve the accuracy of this information, including the use of a professional mail management firm to research addresses. Except for a recommendation for statutory change, all of the steps urged by the Special Master were adopted by Bolton. They will be implemented over the next year.

One of the first of these steps is Pretrial Order No. 4, signed by Judge Bolton on January 24, 2000, which requires claimants to notify ADWR in the following instances: (1) when their address changes; (2) when they assign their statement of claimant to another person; (3) when they transfer all or part of the land for which a water right has been claimed; or (4) when they have transferred a claimed water right separately from the land for which it was claimed. The Department of Water Resources is preparing a new form to report these changes.

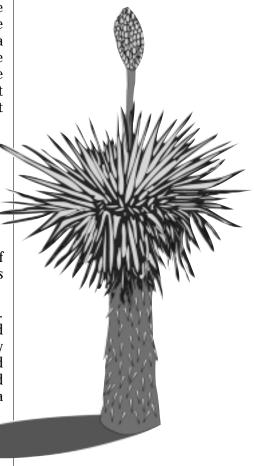
Notice of Hydrographic Survey Reports

A pretrial order being considered by Judge Bolton would remove some of the uncertainty about the notice to be given when hydrographic survey reports (HSRs) are completed. The adjudication statute specifically addresses some of the procedure but is silent about other aspects of the process. For instance, the statute requires the Department to prepare a preliminary HSR and to file a notice 120 days in advance of the filing of the final HSR, but the legislation does not say to whom these documents are sent or how long the comment period on the preliminary HSR extends. The statute did require the Department to adopt rules to ensure that adequate notice is given, but DWR had never done so citing the lengthy process required for the adoption of administrative rules. The Department and many of the parties urged the court to adopt its own order to address these questions.

The proposal is Pretrial Order No. 5. This proposed pertrial order would require that notice of a preliminary HSR be sent to the Court-approved mailing list and to all claimants and water users in the geographic area covered by the HSR. In the case of tribal or federal land reservations, the mailing

will include the owners of fee or allotted land within the reservation, so long as their identity could be ascertained, and will be accompanied by publication of the notice.

Parties and water users will have at least 90 days to comment on the preliminary HSR. Once the final HSR is filed, notice will be sent to all claimants in the Gila River adjudication. Also, the objection notice and the relevant portions of the HSR will be sent to all claimants and water users in the geographic area covered by the HSR. Once again, in the case of tribal or federal land reservations, notice will be published and the relevant materials will be sent to the owners of fee or allotted land.



Little Colorado River Proceedings

Settlement Efforts Nearing Conclusion?

In March 1994, Judge Allen Minker ordered a stay in Little Colorado River proceedings to allow an opportunity for settlement discussions. Six years later, there are signs that these lengthy settlement efforts are nearing an end. The important question is how they will end.

The Clinton Administration is making a frenetic effort to resolve this and other water disputes in the West before its tenure ends. The negotiating parties and congressional members are aware that the opportunity to enact settlements this year will soon pass. How receptive the political process will be to such settlements after the fall elections is anyone's guess.

Judge Michael Nelson continues his shuttle diplomacy meeting with various subgroups of parties. The tribes are busy providing Senator Jon Kyl with information he requested about the long-term cost of the proposed tribal water projects (see Sept.-Dec. 1999 Bulletin p. 6). In an optimistic move, several of the parties have asked the Arizona Supreme Court to adopt a procedure for reviewing a settlement (see next article).

Several outcomes are possible. The comprehensive settlement envisioned by the negotiators may be achieved, with federal and tribal water rights quantified, state-law water rights recognized, and one or more pipelines constructed from Lake Powell for reservation purposes. If the comprehensive approach fails, smaller, individual settlements may still result, leaving the remaining issues for further discussion or litigation in future years.

No successful settlement is also a possibility. parties Some may oppose anything than less comprehensive settlement. The overall cost of the settlement may be more than will Congress approve in election year. Also, the separate coal royalty litigation filed by the Navajo Nation against Peabody Coal Co., the 💠 Yuma River Salt Project, and other negotiating parties continues to dampen the negotiations. The Hopi Tribe has recently joined this lawsuit against the companies. While the Court of Federal Claims recently dismissed the Navajo's companion lawsuit against the Department of Interior for jurisdictional reasons, Judge Lawrence Baskir commented that "There is no plausible defense for a fiduciary [Interior] to meet secretly with parties having interests adverse . . . to the beneficiary [Navajo], and then mislead the beneficiary concerning these events."

Despite these problems, a potential alignment of interests may produce a settlement this year: parties desirous of attaining something positive from their six years of work, an Administration seeking to secure its legacy, and a Congress wanting to wrap up and deliver by year's end lots of benefits for the voters back home.

Dawson Status Conference

🏶 Tucson

Kykotsmovi

Flagstaff

Phoenix

Window

Snowflake 🕈 Saint Johns

On Jan. 28th, Judge Edward Dawson held his second status conference since being assigned to the Little Colorado River adjudication in early 1999. Previously scheduled status conferences were postponed because the negotiating parties were awaiting the results of a meeting with Sen. Jon Kyl who will likely introduce a settlement bill in Congress (see preceding article). The conference was marked by a series of generally upbeat assessments of the status of the settlement effort. Members of the settlement committee reported that they needed additional time to evaluate the new pipeline proposals that recently had been brought to the discussions. Several speakers agreed

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Little Colorado River Proceedings

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that controlling the overall cost of the settlement would be key in seeking congressional approval and funding. The SRP attorney remarked that, with the many provisions, it is unclear whether the parties are producing a water rights settlement or a public works project.

Settlement of federal agencies' claims appears very close and does not depend on resolution of all the tribal issues. The attorney for the federal agencies indicated that once some final issues with the City of Flagstaff are resolved, a settlement of these agency rights could be offered to the court. Unlike any tribal settlement, the resolution of the federal agencies' claims does not have to be approved by Congress.

Many of the parties urged the court to schedule another status conference in about three months. Judge Dawson indicated that the next status conference will be held on April 27, 2000, in St. Johns. Also, taking some steps that may indicate he will not allow the negotiations to continue indefinitely, Judge Dawson ordered the Department of Water Resources to report by March 31st on the steps and time necessary to finalize the hydrographic survey report for Indian lands in the Little Colorado River basin (the preliminary HSR was filed in 1994). Also, Judge Dawson ordered that parties planning to engage actively in litigation over this final HSR must file notices of intent by Sept. 1, 2000, and disclosure statements by Jan. 31, 2001. Disclosure statements provide opposing parties with extensive information that may be used by the disclosing party at trial.

Judge Dawson also heard oral arguments on objections to the Special Master's report in *In re Atkinson's Ltd.* of Arizona (see Sept.-Dec. 1999 Bulletin at p. 6). Atkinson, which operates a trading post at Cameron, Arizona, asks the court to clarify the jurisdiction of the Navajo Nation over its claimed water rights. The Navajo Nation and United States have responded that such a determination is premature. In oral arguments, Atkinson's attorney indicated that the state court should

assert its jurisdiction to avoid reserved of tra

fragmenting decisionmaking over water uses in the area.

Claimant Mailing List

As in the Gila River adjudication, the mailing list of claimants in the Little Colorado River adjudication is also suffering from obsolescence. The great majority of the 11,000 claims in this adjudication were filed 15 years ago. The ownership of many of these

rights has changed and many of the 3,000 parties have moved, changed names, or died. With a possible, upcoming need of notifying these claimants about a pending settlement (see following article), Judge Dawson has taken steps to improve the accuracy of the claimant mailing list. He directed the Special Master to make specific recommendations by March 31st.

In his report, the Special Master urges many of the steps now being implemented in the Gila River adjudication, e.g., using a mailing list contractor to update addresses, researching other Department of Water Resources records for corrections, and requiring claimants to notify the court of address changes or water right transfers. Also, the Master recommends the initiation of a "new use summons"

process to bring persons who established water uses after 1985 into the adjudication. The new use summons procedure would result in a more comprehensive and accurate adjudication.

Comments or objections to the Master's report must be filed by April 21st. Judge Dawson will consider those filings, and perhaps ask for oral argument, before taking final action on the Master's report. Please contact the Special Master's office to obtain a copy of

Master's office to obtain a copy of the report; it may also be accessed on the internet:

<www.supreme.state.az.us/wm/lcrdec.
htm>.

Settlement Procedure Submitted to Supreme Court

In 1991, the Arizona Supreme Court adopted a "special procedural

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Sources for Help

If you have questions in a particular area, here are the proper people to contact.

Access the Arizona Judicial Department web page at

http://www.supreme.state.az.us and the

Arizona General Stream Adjudication web page

http://www.supreme.state.az.wm

Adjudications, HSRs, WFRs, Discovery

Lisa Jannusch Adjudications Division AZ Dept. of Water Resources 500 N. 3rd Street Phoenix, AZ 85004 (602) 417-2442 (Toll free in AZ) 1-800-352-8488

Scheduling, Procedure

Kathy Dolge Office of the Special Master Arizona State Courts Building 1501 W. Washington, Suite 228 Phoenix, AZ 85007 (602) 542-9600 TDD (602) 542-9545

PleadingsGila River

Oscar Garcia Clerk's Office Maricopa County Superior Court Records Management Center 3345 W. Durango St. Phoenix, AZ 85009 (602) 506-4139 FAX (602) 506-4516

Little Colorado River

Clerk's Office Apache County Superior Court Apache County Courthouse P.O. Box 365 St. Johns, AZ 85936 (520) 337-4364 FAX (520) 337-2771

Little Colorado River Proceedings

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order" providing the procedure the Gila River adjudication trial court must use in considering major settlements involving tribal or federal agency water rights. The order was necessary because the adjudication statute and normal court rules did not provide for approving such settlements while the adjudication was underway. Indian water right settlements for four reservations have been approved under the special procedural order: Salt Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (1991), Fort McDowell Indian Community (1993), Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe (1995), and San Carlos Apache Tribe (1999).

Several parties in the Little Colorado River adjudication have now asked the Supreme Court to adopt a similar order to govern the approval process in that adjudication. The proposed order would put in place the procedure and criteria for evaluating any settlements that may result from the longstanding

negotiations in the case (see status, above).

While the proposed order includes most of the provisions of the 1991 order, a major difference appears in the criteria to be applied by the superior court to review any settlement. The 1991 order for the Gila adjudication specifies that the settled water rights not be "more extensive than the Indian tribe or federal agency would have been able to establish" at a trial on the water right claims. The order

proposed for the Little Colorado River adjudication indicates that the settlement must be "fair, adequate, reasonable and consistent with applicable law, considering all of the circumstances surrounding the settlement and all of the consideration provided under the settlement."

The parties proposing the order, including Arizona Public Service Co., Salt River Project, and the Navajo Nation, argue that the different criteria are necessary since a more comprehensive settlement may be proposed for the Little Colorado River adjudication, finalizing tribal, federal agency, and many state-law water rights.

The Supreme Court has indicated that comments on the proposed rule will be received until April 25, 2000.





CALENDAR

The following are due dates in Case No. W1-203, In re the Water Rights of the Gila River Indian Community (GR)

March 31, 2000

Notices re allocation of time for oral argument to be held on April 26

April 24, 2000

Responses to motions for summary judgment re Docket No. 228 filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 209 & 210)

Responses to motions for summary judgment re Haggard Decree, Docket No. 236-D & 1936 Maricopa Contract filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 213 & 214)

April 26, 2000 - 9:00 a.m.

Oral argument before the Special Master on motions for summary judgment filed on March 1, 1999 by Apache Tribes (docket number 118) and GVID-FID, SCIDD, SRP, and Tempe (docket numbers 119 & 120); and filed on Oct. 4, 1999, by ASARCO (docket numbers 202, 203, and 304) and SCIDD (docket numbers 206 & 207) ASCB Room 119-A

May 1, 2000

Supplemental responses to motions for summary judgment re 1907 Sacaton Agreement filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 211 & 212)

Replies, motions for summary judgment re Buckeye-Arlington Agreement & Docket No. 236-F filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 224 & 225)

May 2, 2000 - 9:00 a.m.

Pretrial conference re "purposes" of the reservation ASCB Conference Room 230

May 22, 2000

Replies, motions for summary judgment re Docket No. 228 filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 209 & 210)

Replies, motions for summary judgment re Haggard Decree, Docket No. 236-D & 1936 Maricopa Contract filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 213 & 214)

June 5, 2000

Replies to supplemental responses, motions for summary judgment re 1907 Sacaton Agreement filed on Oct. 4, 1999 (docket numbers 211 & 212)

Other dates to note:

April 21, 2000

Case No. 6417 (LCR)

Due: Comments or objections to

Special Master's Report on mailing list problems filed March 31, 2000

April 25, 2000

Due: Comments to Arizona Supreme Court re special procedural order in LCR adjudication

April 27, 2000 - 9:30 a.m.

Case No. 6417 (LCR) Status Conference Apache County Courthouse, St. Johns

May 2, 2000 - 2:00 p.m.

Case No. W1-W4 (GR) Status Conference before Judge Bolton MCSC, East Court Building 513

May 29, 2000

Memorial Day – state offices closed

September 1, 2000

Case No. 6417 (LCR) Due: Notices of intent to file disclosures on January 31, 2001, re Indian Lands HSR

Memorial Day – state

Motions for summary judgment September 29, 2000

September 5, 2000

The following are due dates in Case No.

W1-206, In re the Preclusive Effect of the Globe Equity No. 59 Decree on Specified Parties (GR)

Replies, motions for summary judgment filed on July 25, 2000

Responses to motions for summary

judgment filed on July 25, 2000

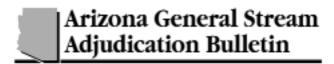
Abbreviations:

May 15, 2000

July 25, 2000

Supplemental disclosure

GR = Gila River adjudication LCR = Little Colorado River adjudication ASCB = Arizona State Courts Building, 1501 W.
Washington, Phoenix
MCSC = Maricopa County Superior Court Building,



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