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**MANAGING RECLAMATION FACILITIES
 FOR ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Reclamation ("Reclamation") played a major role in transforming many of the rivers and streams of the western United States into economically productive assets. It was a prodigious achievement: the construction of over 600 storage and diversion dams, more than 16,000 miles of canals and 37,000 miles of laterals, 280 miles of tunnels, and 52 hydroelectric powerplants.¹ In the process, Reclamation emerged as the supplier of water to more than eighty percent of the irrigable lands in farms in the U.S.,² as the country's sixth largest generator of electric power, and as manager of forty-five percent of the West's surface waters.³ Because of Reclamation facilities, thirty million people in the seventeen western states receive water for irrigation, municipal, industrial, and other uses; agricultural crops valued at nearly \$9 billion are produced; forty-eight billion kilowatt hours of electricity valued at \$727 million are generated; and over fifty million recreational visitor days are recorded.⁴

Now, more than ninety years after its creation, Reclamation faces a different challenge: restoring and maintaining a functional level of ecological integrity in the rivers its facilities transformed. This task is indeed a challenge because, in many

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1. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, U.S. DEPT OF INTERIOR, 1991 SUMMARY STATISTICS 1 (1991) [hereinafter 1991 SUMMARY STATISTICS].

2. *Id.* at 2.

3. Daniel P. Beard, Remarks Before the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage 1 (May 18, 1994) (transcript on file with the *University of Colorado Law Review*).

4. These values are based on what occurred in 1991. 1991 SUMMARY STATISTICS, *supra* note 1, at 1-2.

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