Managing Colorado River Water Resources – A Utah Perspective

Colorado River Forum
October 18, 2022
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Colorado River Authority of Utah
Southwestern U.S. Temperature

Degrees Celsius

January to August of Following Year

20 Months  20-Year Average
Lake Powell Unregulated Inflow
Water Year 2022 and 2023 Forecast *(issued September 1)*
Comparison with History

**Water Year 2023 Forecast**
- Sep Min Prob: 4.70 maf (49%)
- Sep Most Prob: 8.30 maf (86%)
- Sep Max Prob: 15.50 maf (161%)

**Water Year 2022 Forecast**
- April-July: 3.75 maf (59%)
- Water Year: 6.08 maf (63%)

Average: 9.60 maf (1991-2020)
Upper Basin Drought Response Actions

The Bureau of Reclamation announced on May 3, 2022, two separate urgent drought response actions that will help prop up Lake Powell by nearly 1 million acre-feet (maf) of water over the next 12 months (May 2022 through April 2023). To protect Lake Powell, more water will flow into the lake from upstream reservoirs and less water will be released downstream:

• Under a Drought Contingency Plan adopted in 2022, approximately 500 thousand acre-feet (kaf) of water will come from Flaming Gorge Reservoir, located approximately 455 river miles upstream of Lake Powell (2022 Plan).

• Another 480 kaf will be left in Lake Powell by reducing Glen Canyon Dam’s annual release volume from 7.48 maf to 7.00 maf (GC Operational Adjustment), in accordance with Sections 6 and 7.D of the 2007 Interim Guidelines.
Upper Division States 5-Point Plan


2. System Conservation Reauthorization

3. Consideration of a Demand Management Program

4. Implementation of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding

5. Aggressive Water Management
Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

Section 50233: Drought Mitigation in the Reclamation States

- $4 Billion through September 2026

- “...activities to mitigate the impacts of drought …with priority given to the Colorado River Basin.”

- October 12, 2022 DOI press release announcing Lower Colorado River Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program (3 components) + $500 million to Upper Division States for “long-term system efficiency improvements”
Utah’s Priorities

• Implement Upper Basin 5 Point Plan

• Secretarial action to protect system in 2023
  Accounting for and allocating evaporation and other losses in the Lower Basin (≈1.2 MAF)

• Continued Basin State engagement and meaningful dialogue with Mexico

• Move toward durable, long-term conservation activities in both basins

• Maximize federal funding opportunities
Utah’s Conservation Efforts

Utah Is Becoming More Water Smart
Utah has reduced its per capita water use by more than 20% over the last two decades through successful conservation measures. But that’s just the beginning. In 2022, legislators approved nearly $500 million for water-saving initiatives statewide. Highlights include:

- $250 million to meter secondary (untreated) water
- $5 million to prohibit water-wise landscapes
- $40 million towards Great Salt Lake watershed enhancements
- Development of the Great Salt Lake Watershed Integrated Water Assessment
- $5 million to allow for water leasing and sharing for environmental use

Utah is upping its game.
Learn more at water.utah.gov.
Colorado River Authority of Utah

01
The Authority may advise, support, gather information, and provide input to the River Commissioner

02
The mission of the Authority is to protect, conserve, use, and develop Utah’s waters of the Colorado River system
Current Authority Membership

Gene Shawcroft, Chair
COLORADO RIVER COMMISSIONER OF UTAH
CENTRAL UTAH AREA: SALT LAKE, UTAH, JUAB, SANPETE, SUMMIT, AND WASATCH COUNTIES

Joel Ferry
GOVERNOR'S APPOINTEE

Dan Larsen
 UINTAH BASIN AREA: DUCHESNE AND UINTAH COUNTIES

Zach Renstrom
VIRGIN RIVER AREA: KANE AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Candice Hasenyager
STATE OF UTAH AREA: REMAINING UTAH COLORADO RIVER USERS AND DIRECTOR OF UTAH DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

Jay Mark Humphrey
PRICE AND SAN RAFAEL AREA: CARBON AND EMERY COUNTIES

Paul Tsosie
TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVE