



April 30, 2026

## NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** pursuant to the call of the Chairman, J.B. Hamby that a regular meeting of the members of the Board is to be held as follows:

### Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Time: **10:00 AM**

Place: Orion Room  
Classic Club  
75200 Classic Club Blvd  
Palm Desert, CA 92211

The Colorado River Board of California welcomes any comments from members of the public pertaining to items included on this agenda and related topics. Members of the public may provide comments in the following ways: (1) Oral comments can be provided at the beginning of each board meeting; and (2) Public comments may be submitted by email, addressed to the board's Chairman, J.B. Hamby, at [crb@crb.ca.gov](mailto:crb@crb.ca.gov) and will be accepted up until 5:00 p.m. on May 11, 2026.

If accommodations for individuals with disabilities are required, such persons should provide a request at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting by email to board staff at [crb@crb.ca.gov](mailto:crb@crb.ca.gov).

Requests for additional information may be directed to: Ms. Jessica Neuwerth, Executive Director, Colorado River Board of California, 770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 100, Glendale, CA 91203-1068. A copy of this Notice and Agenda may be found on the Colorado River Board's web page at [crb.ca.gov/meetings](http://crb.ca.gov/meetings).

A copy of the meeting agenda, showing the matters to be considered and transacted, is attached.



## **REGULAR MEETING AGENDA WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026 — 10:00 AM**

At the discretion of the Board, all items appearing on this agenda, whether or not expressly listed for action, may be deliberated upon and may be subject to action by the Board. Items may not necessarily be taken up in the order shown.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS (LIMITED TO 5 MINUTES.)**

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

From Pipes to Partnerships: Next Generation of Water Management  
Given by: Dan Denham, General Manager, San Diego County Water Authority

### **REPORTS**

1. Water Supply and Operations Report
2. Colorado River Basin Programs Report
3. Executive Director's Report

### **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

4. Consideration and approval of meeting minutes of the January 9, 2026 Board meeting **(Action)**
5. Consideration and approval of meeting minutes of the February 18, 2026 Board meeting **(Action)**
6. Consideration and approval of meeting minutes of the March 11, 2026 Board meeting **(Action)**
7. Presentation of Draft Colorado River Board of California FY 2026-2027 Budget **(Information)**
8. Member Agency and Public Member Reports



## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT (Pursuant to California Water Code § 12528)**

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

9. Discuss interstate claims to the use of Colorado River system waters in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, and/or negotiations with representatives from the other Basin states or federal government. (Wat. Code, § 12519)

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Next Scheduled Board Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026  
Time: 10:00 AM  
Place: Sycamore Room  
Doubletree by Hilton Claremont  
555 West Foothill Blvd  
Claremont, CA 91711



## **WATER SUPPLY AND OPERATIONS REPORTS**

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### **Highlights**

- Forecasted April to July inflow to Lake Powell is 13% of normal and ranked the worst for the entire period of record. The forecasted WY-2026 inflow into Lake Powell is 35% of normal.
  - The April 24-Month Study projects the end of calendar year most probable elevation of Lake Powell is 3,471.06 feet. Reclamation provided modeling results to support DROA and 6E actions to protect Lake Powell's elevation.
  - At the end of April, snowpack in California is 21% of normal. Overall water year precipitation is 90% of average. As of May 1, state reservoir storage is 118% of the historical average.
- 

### **Basin Report (as of May 6, 2026)**

Since November 2025, the Colorado River Basin has been plagued by warmer temperatures than normal. March was the warmest month on record in the Southwest and during the second half of March, the Basin experienced a heat wave that led to rapid snowmelt and increased streamflow in rivers and streams in the Upper Basin. In April, temperatures cooled down, but warmer than normal temperatures are expected during the first two weeks of May.

The Upper Colorado River Basin experienced storm activity during the last few days of March and the first week of April. Areas in the Upper Basin received between 1.2" to 1.5" of precipitation. Despite this, Upper Basin snowpack conditions were much below normal due to poor snowpack accumulation and warm temperatures.

The Colorado River Forecast Center (CBRFC) reported that snow water equivalent (SWE) peaked in early March, a month earlier than normal and was 7 inches less than peak SWE. As of the beginning of May, monitoring stations in the Upper Basin reported less than 30% of median SWE in areas that contribute significant runoff to Lake Powell with exception to stations above Fontelle and Flaming Gorge reservoirs reporting 70% and 50% of median SWE, respectively.

The CBRFC reported that the May 1 water supply forecast for April to July runoff into Lake Powell is 13% of 1991 to 2020 average and ranked the worst for the entire period of record. The water supply forecast for April to July runoff into Lake Powell for the Upper

Green River Basin ranged between 27% to 48% of average, while forecasts for the Colorado River Headwater ranged between 33% to 30% of average.

**Reservoir Conditions**

The water surface elevation of Lake Powell was 3,526.24 feet, with nearly 5.62 million acre-feet (MAF) of storage, or 24% of capacity. The water surface elevation of Lake Mead was 1,055.54 feet, with 8.09 MAF of storage, or 31% of capacity. The total system storage was 20.64 MAF, or 35% of capacity, which was about 2.78 MAF less than the total System storage at this time last year.

The storage volumes of Fontelle and Flaming Gorge reservoirs in the Upper Basin were 47% and 81% of capacity, respectively. The storage volumes of Morrow Point, Blue Mesa, and Navajo reservoirs were 100%, 43%, and 62% of capacity, respectively.

**Table 1: Reservoir Storage (as of May 4, 2026)**

Source: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/weekly.pdf>

	<b>Volume (MAF)</b>	<b>Elevation (ft)</b>	<b>% of Capacity</b>
<b>Lake Powell</b>	5.62	3,526.24	24%
<b>Lake Mead</b>	8.09	1,055.54	31%
<b>Total System Storage</b>	20.64	-	35%

**April 24-Month Study**

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) released the April 2026 24-Month Study. The End of Calendar Year (EOCY) most probable elevations for Lakes Powell and Mead were 3,471.06 feet (13% full) and 1,056.36 feet (31% full), respectively. The 24-Month Study shows the elevation of Lake Powell dropping through the winter of 2027 before recovering with projected spring 2027 runoff and ending 2027 at 3,503.06 feet. The modeling assumptions did not include DROA releases from the Upper Initial Units in the Upper Basin or operations triggered under Section 6E of the 2024 SEIS ROD that allow reductions of releases from Glen Canyon dam to protect a Lake Powell elevation of 3,500 feet (see below for a summary of modeling results that consider DROA releases and 6E actions).

The EOCY 2026 most probable elevation for Lake Mead is 1,056.36, which places Lake Mead in a Tier 1 Shortage condition. The projections show that by the spring of 2027, Lake Mead’s most probable elevation declines below 1,050 feet and by the end of the year the most probable elevation is 1,033.47 feet (25% full). The Lower Basin reservoir modeling assumptions are consistent with the 2007 Guidelines, Lower Basin DCP Agreement and Minute 323. In addition, the modeling assumptions include additional conservation under the 2024 SEIS ROD, Lower Colorado Conservation program and Minute 330 of the U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty.

Reclamation reported that Water Year 2026 operations will include releases from Upper Initial Units ranging from 660,000 AF to 1.0 MAF from Flaming Gorge reservoir. In support of this potential action, Reclamation presented Minimum and Most Probable modeling results from the April 24-Month Study including a 1.0 MAF release from the Upper Initial Units as well as a release of 6.0 MAF from Glen Canyon Dam in accordance with Section 6E of the 2024 SEIS ROD.

The combination of both 6E and 1.0 MAF of DROA operations is projected to keep Lake Powell above elevation 3,490 feet through March 2028 under the minimum and most probable hydrology. The projections show that 1.0 MAF of DROA alone is insufficient to keep Lake Powell above 3,490 feet. However, the modeling shows Lake Mead’s elevation declining significantly under the most and minimum probable hydrology as a result of 6E and DROA actions to protect Lake Powell. Both scenarios show Lake Mead’s elevation dropping below 1,050 feet by December 2026 and declining further below elevation 1,025 by the end of December 2027.

**Table 2: Lake Powell Inflows**

Water Year	Unregulated Inflow		April to July Inflow	
	Volume (MAF)	% of normal 1991 to 2020	Volume (MAF)	% of normal
<b>2026*</b>	3.37	35%	0.900	14%
<b>2025</b>	4.69	49%	2.63	41%
<b>2024</b>	7.98	83%	5.33	82%
<b>2023</b>	13.42	140%	10.62	166%

\*Forecasted as of 04/21/2026

Lower Basin and Mexico Water Use – CY-2026

The Calendar Year 2026 (CY-2026) forecasted water use for Arizona, California and Nevada was 1.87 MAF, 4.07 MAF, and 0.20 MAF, respectively. Total forecasted Lower Basin use is 6.15 MAF.

**Table 3: Lower Basin and Mexico Water Use (as of May 6, 2026)**

<b>Calendar Year 2026</b>	<b>Use to Date (AF)</b>	<b>Forecasted Use (AF)</b>
<b>Arizona</b>	665,315	1,870,846
<b>California</b>	1,175,794	4,072,916
<b>Nevada</b>	49,632	203,600
<b>Lower Basin Total</b>	<b>1,890,741</b>	<b>6,147,362</b>
<b>Total Deliveries to Mexico</b>	679,850	1,450,000

Source: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/forecast.pdf>

*Regulatory Flows and Excess Flows to Mexico – CY 2026 Provisional Year to Date Totals*

Through the end of April, Brock and Senator reservoirs have captured 40,785 AF and 19,061 AF, respectively. Excess flows to Mexico were 1,250 AF, compared to 1,185 AF at this time last year. As of March 3, 2026, saline drainage bypass to the Cienga de Santa Clara was 53,434 AF.

**State Report (as of May 1, 2026)**

*Precipitation*

At the end of April 2026, the statewide average precipitation accumulation is below average conditions - it was about 21.39 inches, which is 90% of average for the water year.

*Reservoirs*

Statewide reservoir storage at the end of April 2026 was approximately 32.7 MAF, which is 118% of the historical average.

*Snow*

At the end of April 2026, the statewide average SWE was about 4.3 inches, which is 21% of normal to date.

## Streamflow

As a result of rapid snow melt, natural flow at the end of April for Feather, Yuba, American, Tuolumne, Merced, Kings, and Kern rivers show above normal conditions. Inflows to Shasta Lake are at near average conditions.

## **Local Reports (as of May 1)**

### The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

As of April 27, 2026, MWD's estimated Colorado River Supply for 2026 is approximately 884 thousand acre-feet (KAF), including an estimated agricultural adjustment of -78 KAF. Additionally, approximately 574 KAF of State Water Project (SWP) supply is available from the 30% Table A Allocation. This brings Metropolitan's current total supply estimate for 2026 to 1.46 MAF.

Metropolitan's current 2026 demand forecast, including commitments, totals 1.49 MAF. At this time, Metropolitan is projecting to take approximately 36 KAF of water from storage. Although Metropolitan currently has a slight supply-and-demand gap, this may change as the year progresses, and future conditions will determine whether Metropolitan withdraws from storage to meet increased demand or stores additional supplies.

In terms of Metropolitan's operations, the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) operated at 6-pump flow for most of April but was reduced to 4-pump flow for a few days at the end of April while staff addressed repairs at one of the pumping plants. The current diversion projection for May ranges from 56 to 85 KAF, and the CY-2026 diversion projection ranges from 820 KAF to 935 KAF.

### Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)

In late February, snowpack in the Eastern Sierra was recorded at 100% of April 1 normal, but rare very warm temperatures in March melted much of the snowpack, resulting in reduced snowpack at 24% of normal on April 1. This was the third time since 1938 that LADWP recorded such a large snow melt off in March.

Although the snow melted early in March instead of April due to the warm temperatures, LADWP has been able to store the early runoff in reservoirs. Temperatures were back to normal in April and runoff slowed to typical for this time of year.

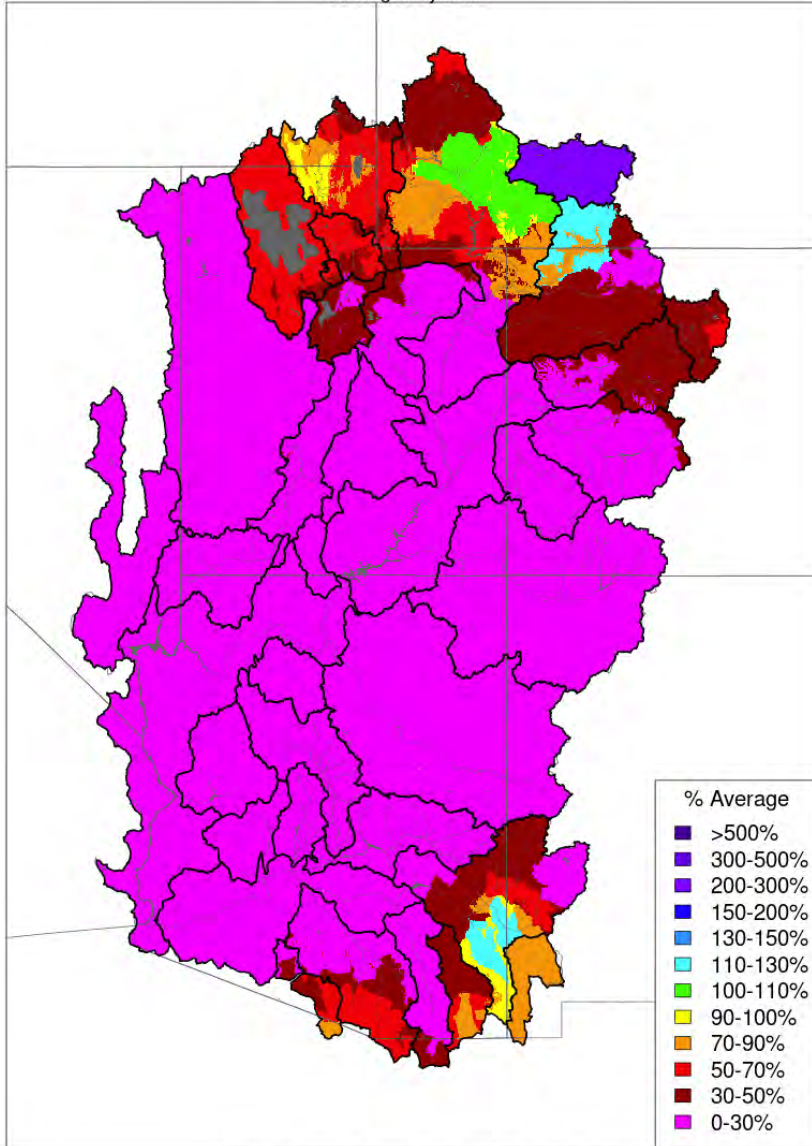
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## Technical Appendix

1. Monthly Precipitation Maps
  - a. March 2026 □ April 2026
2. April 24-Month Study Report
3. Upper Basin SWE- Above Lake Powell
4. Colorado River Basin SWE Map
5. Wyoming SWE Map
6. Colorado River Basin Precipitation Map
7. U.S Drought Monitor Map - West
8. CA DWR Water Supply Report
9. MWD Report
10. LADWP Eastern Sierra Condition Report

### Monthly Precipitation - March 2026

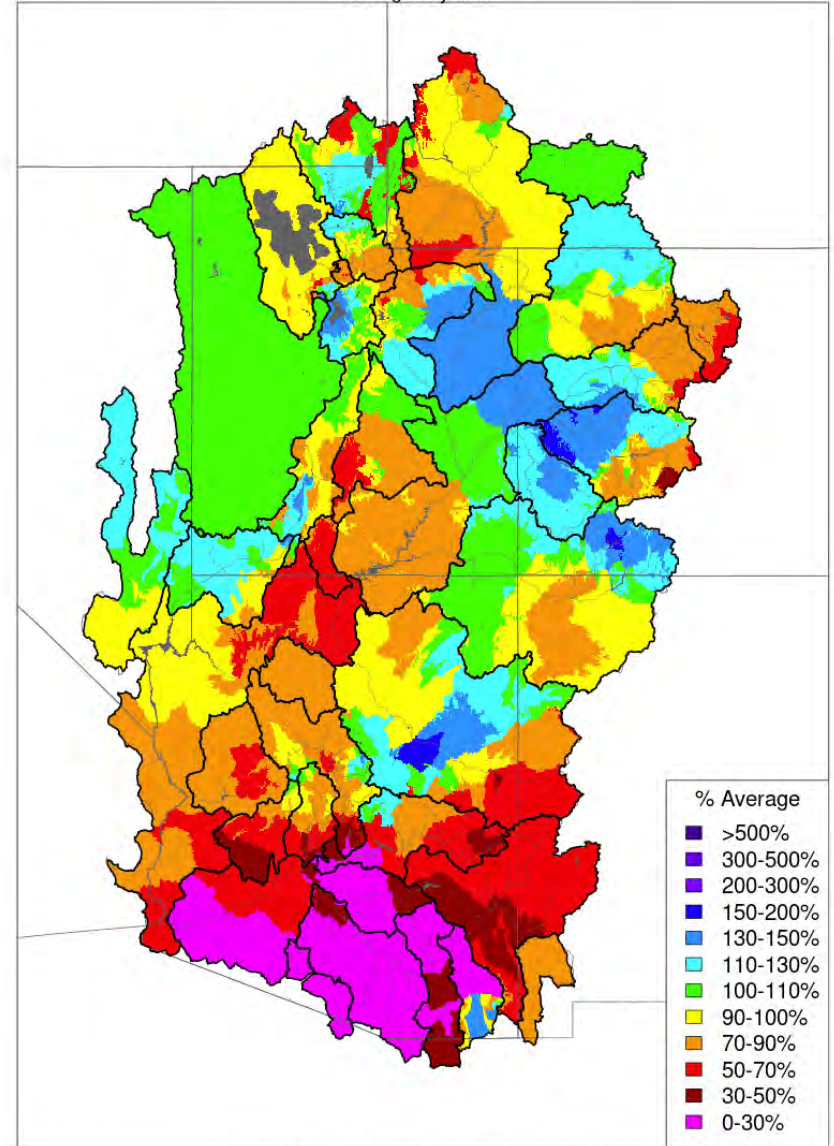
Averaged by Basin



Prepared by NOAA, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
Salt Lake City, Utah, [www.cbafc.noaa.gov](http://www.cbafc.noaa.gov)

### Monthly Precipitation - April 2026

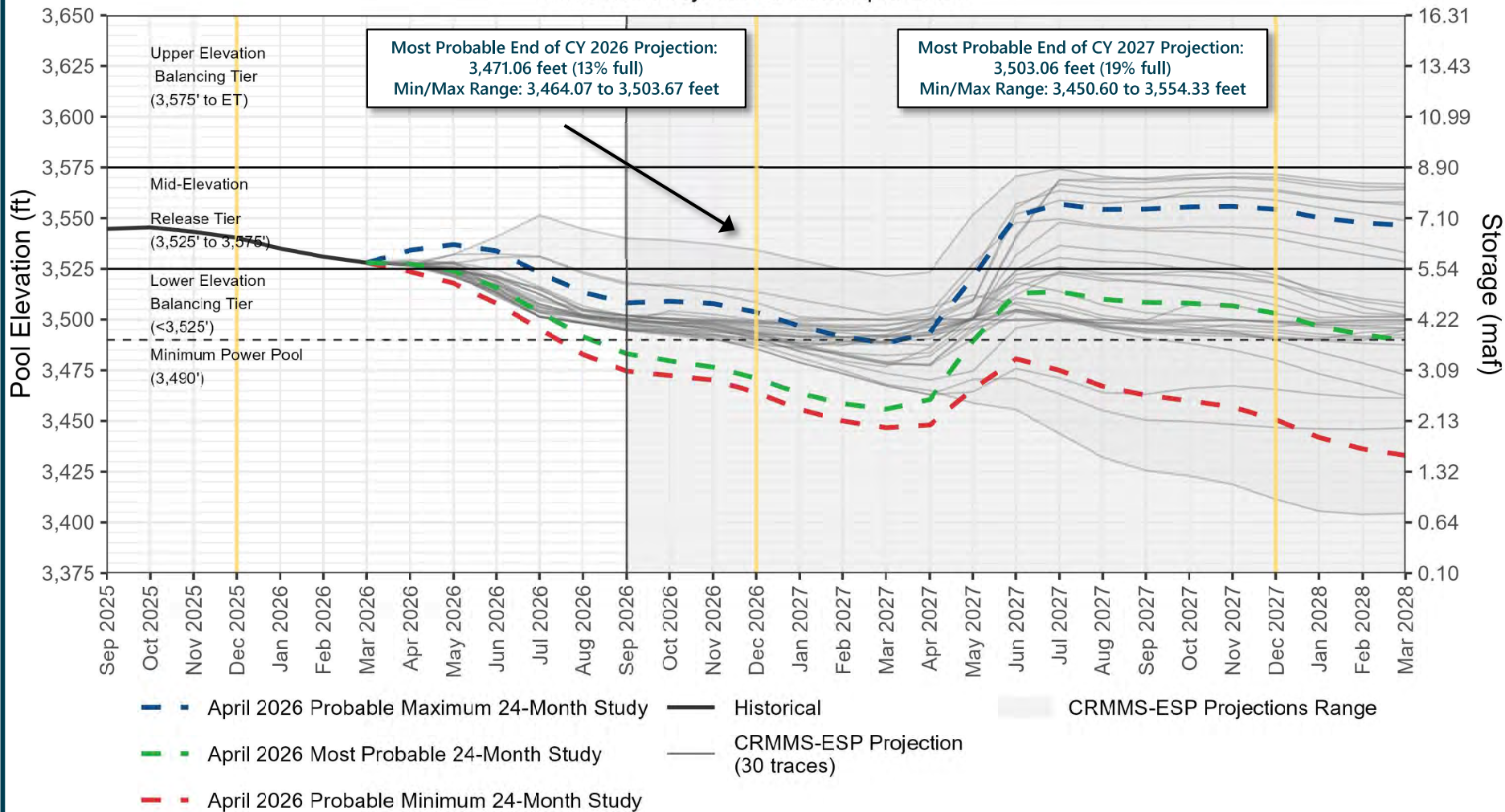
Averaged by Basin



Prepared by NOAA, Colorado Basin River Forecast Center  
Salt Lake City, Utah, [www.cbafc.noaa.gov](http://www.cbafc.noaa.gov)

# Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations<sup>1,2</sup>

## CRMMS Projections from April 2026



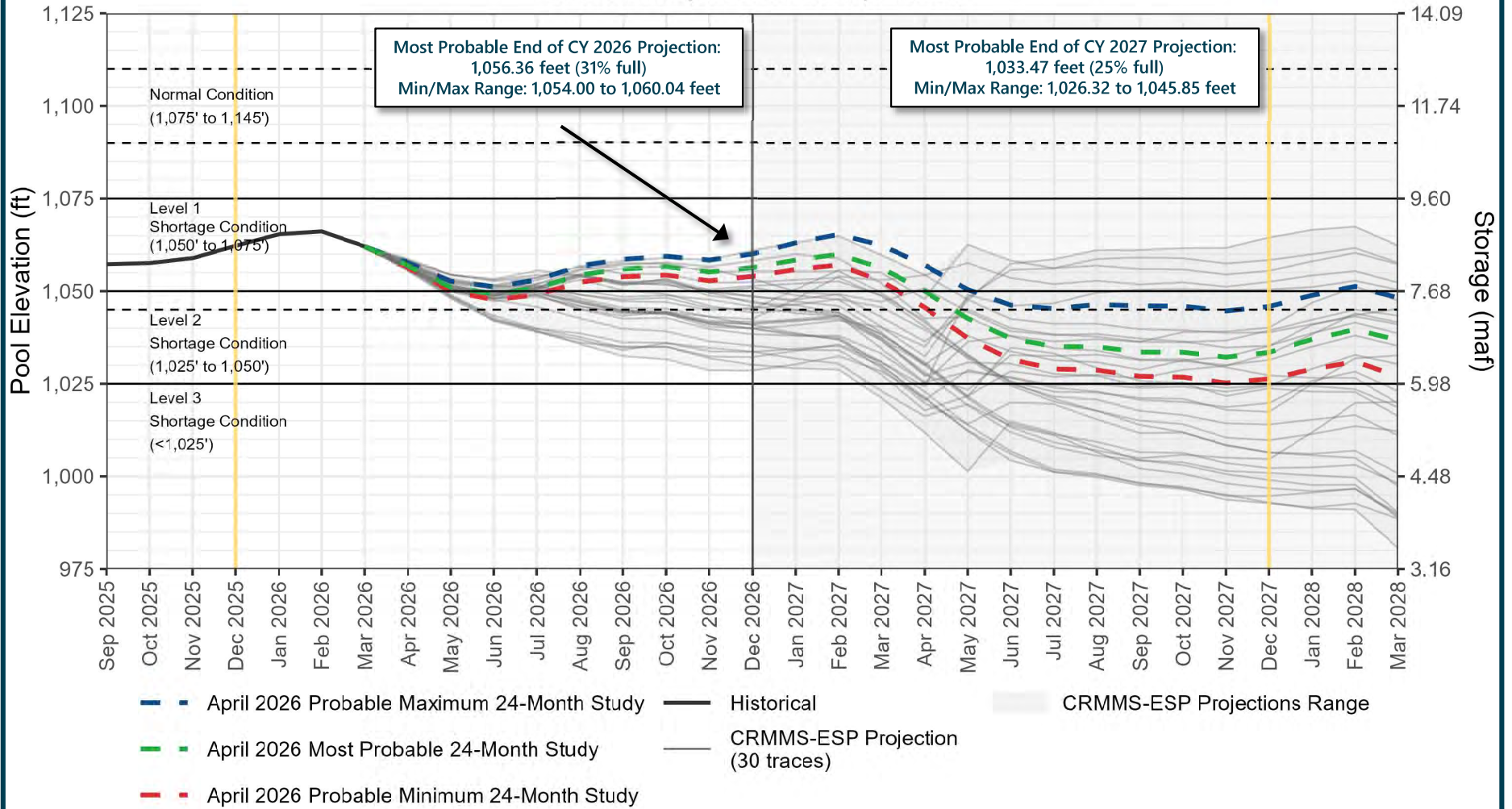
<sup>1</sup>For modeling purposes, simulated years beyond 2026 assume a continuation of the 2007 Interim Guidelines including the 2024 Supplement to the 2007 Interim Guidelines (no additional SEIS conservation is assumed to occur after 2026) the 2019 Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plans, and Minute 323 including the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan. With the exception of certain provisions related to ICS recovery and Upper Basin Demand management, operations under these agreements are in effect through 2026.

<sup>2</sup>For modeling purposes, this graphic contains existing operational assumptions built into CRMMS that constrain Glen Canyon Dam releases to prevent Lake Powell from falling below elevation 3,500 feet. As described in Sections 6.E and 7.B of the Supplement to the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines, Reclamation will consider all tools that are available to avoid Lake Powell elevation declining below 3,500 feet and any actual constraining of Lake Powell releases is subject to appropriate consultation between Reclamation and other Basin partners with respect to the implementation of potential releases. The Probable Minimum also shows Lake Powell elevations without any Glen Canyon Dam release constraints so Reclamation and Basin partners can assess the hydrology and be prepared to discuss appropriate solutions.



# Lake Mead End-of-Month Elevations<sup>1,2</sup>

## CRMMS Projections from April 2026



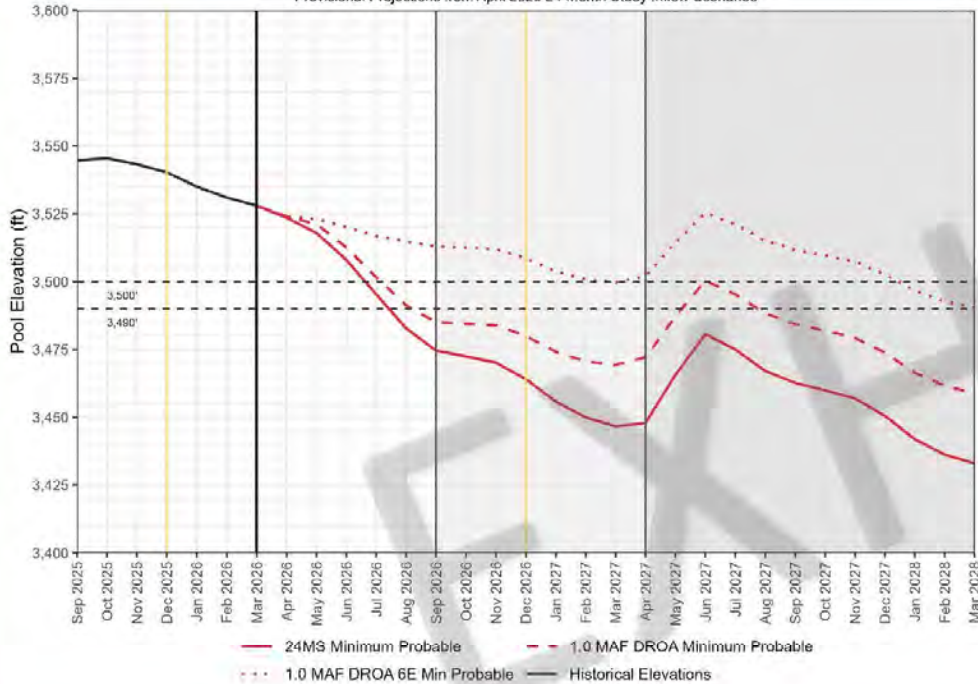
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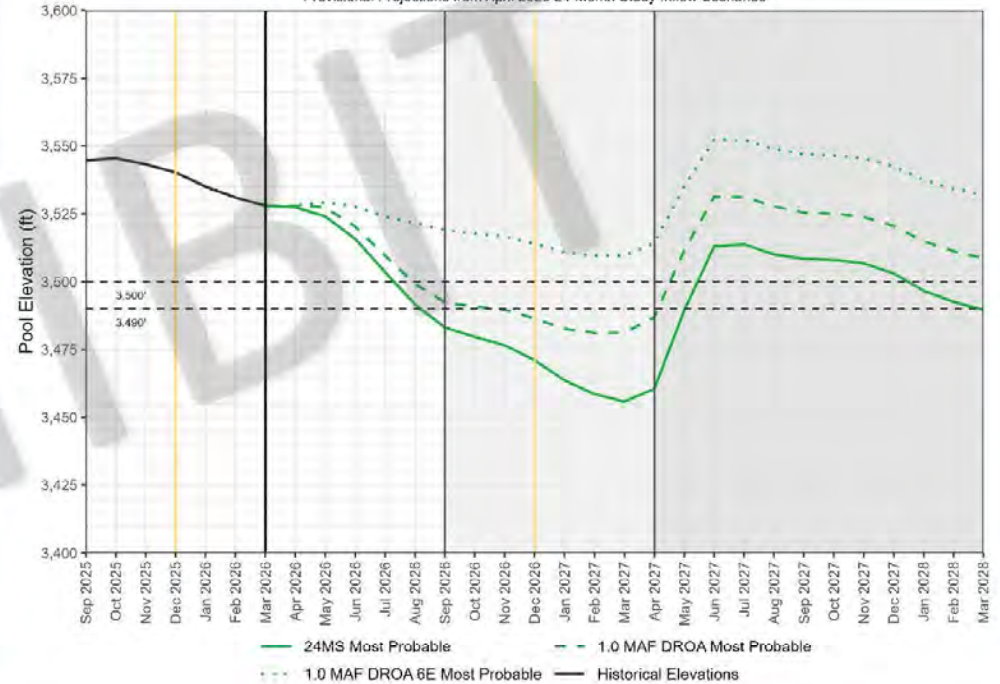
# DROA & 6E Exhibit Model Results

## 1 maf Release from UIU and 6.0 maf Release from Powell in WY 2026

**Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations**  
Provisional Projections from April 2026 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios

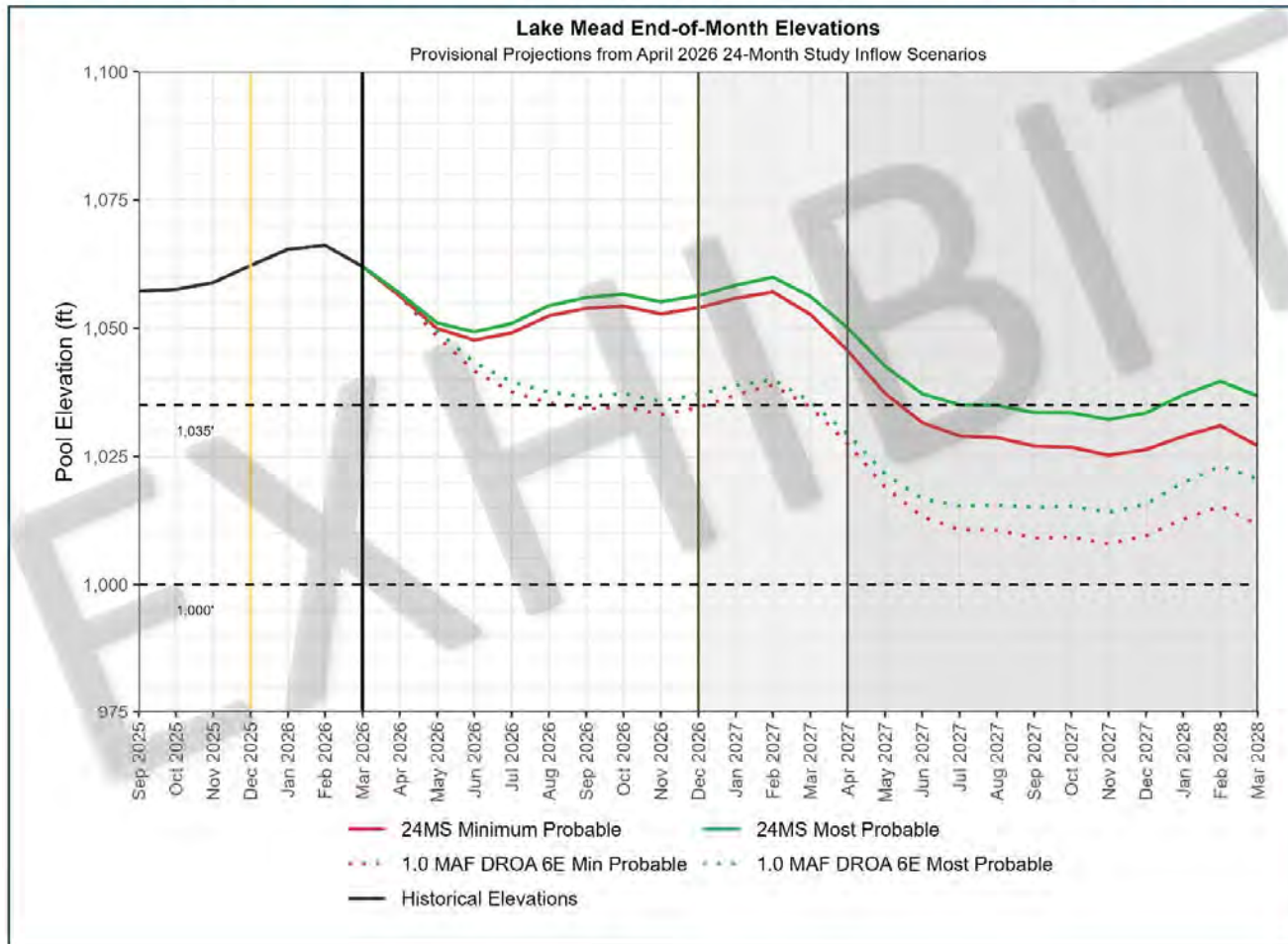


**Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations**  
Provisional Projections from April 2026 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



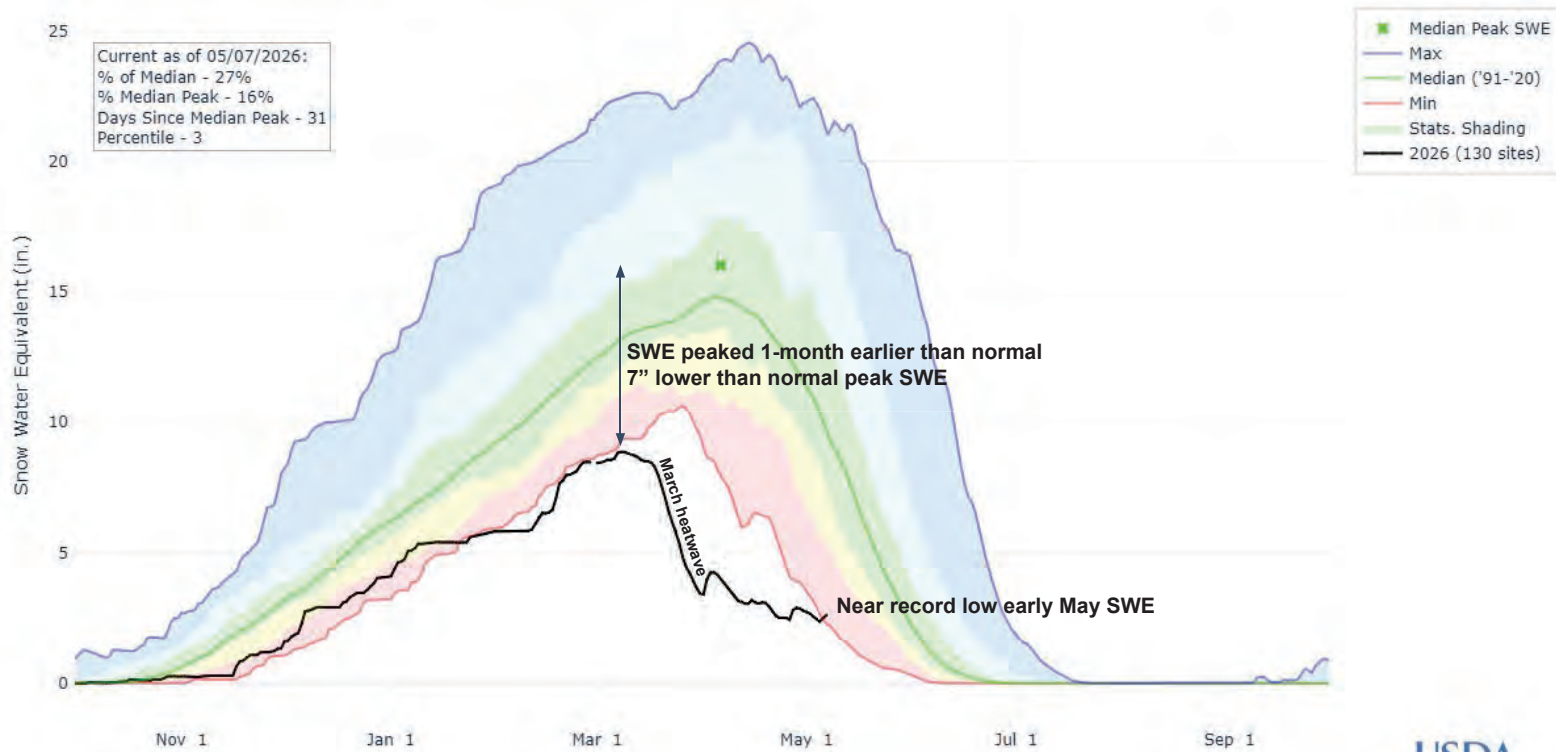
# DROA & 6E Exhibit Model Results

## 1 maf Release from UIU and 6.0 maf Release from Powell in WY 2026



# Snowpack Conditions

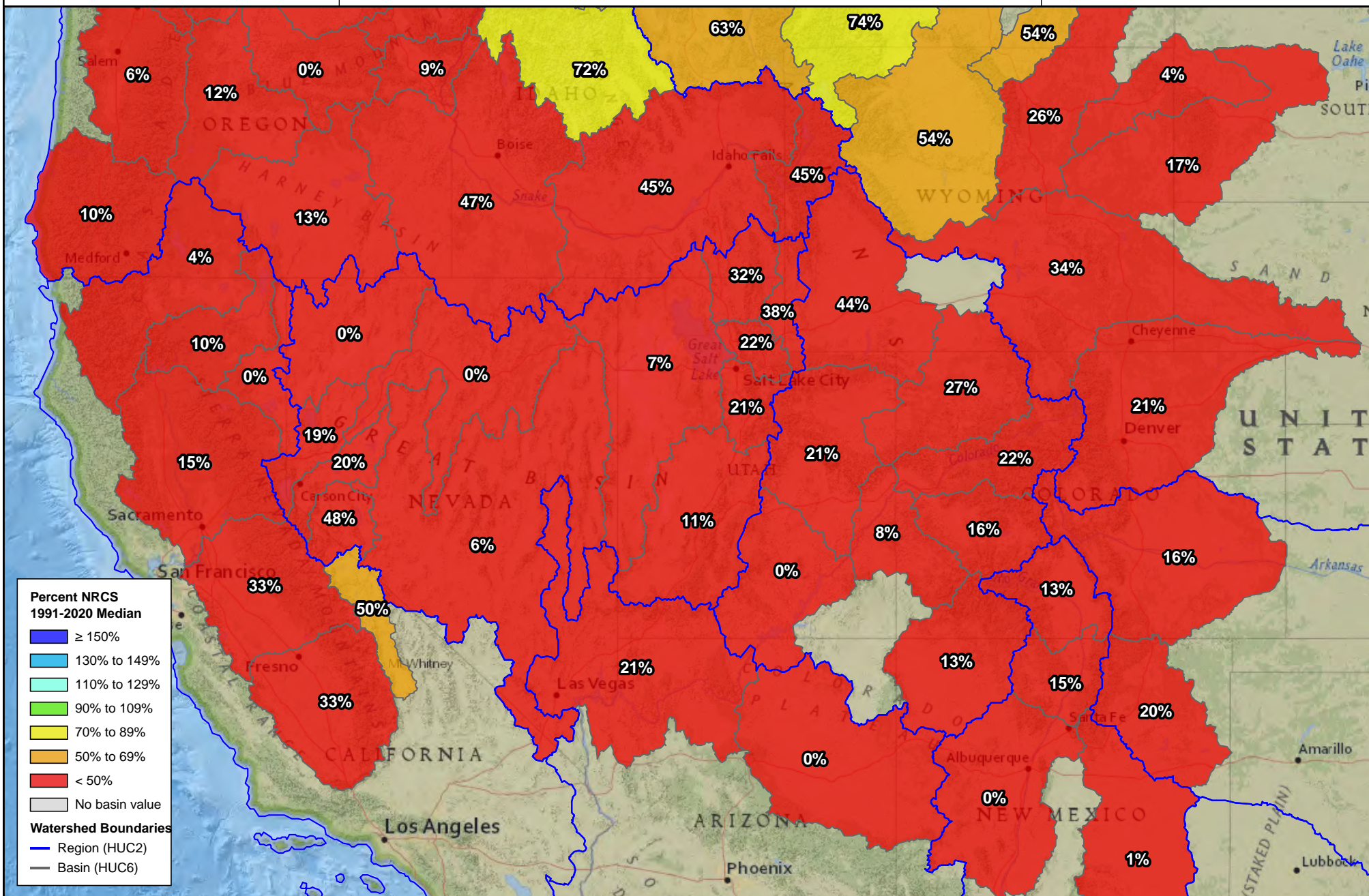
SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN UPPER COLORADO REGION



Snow Water Equivalent

Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median

May 1, 2026



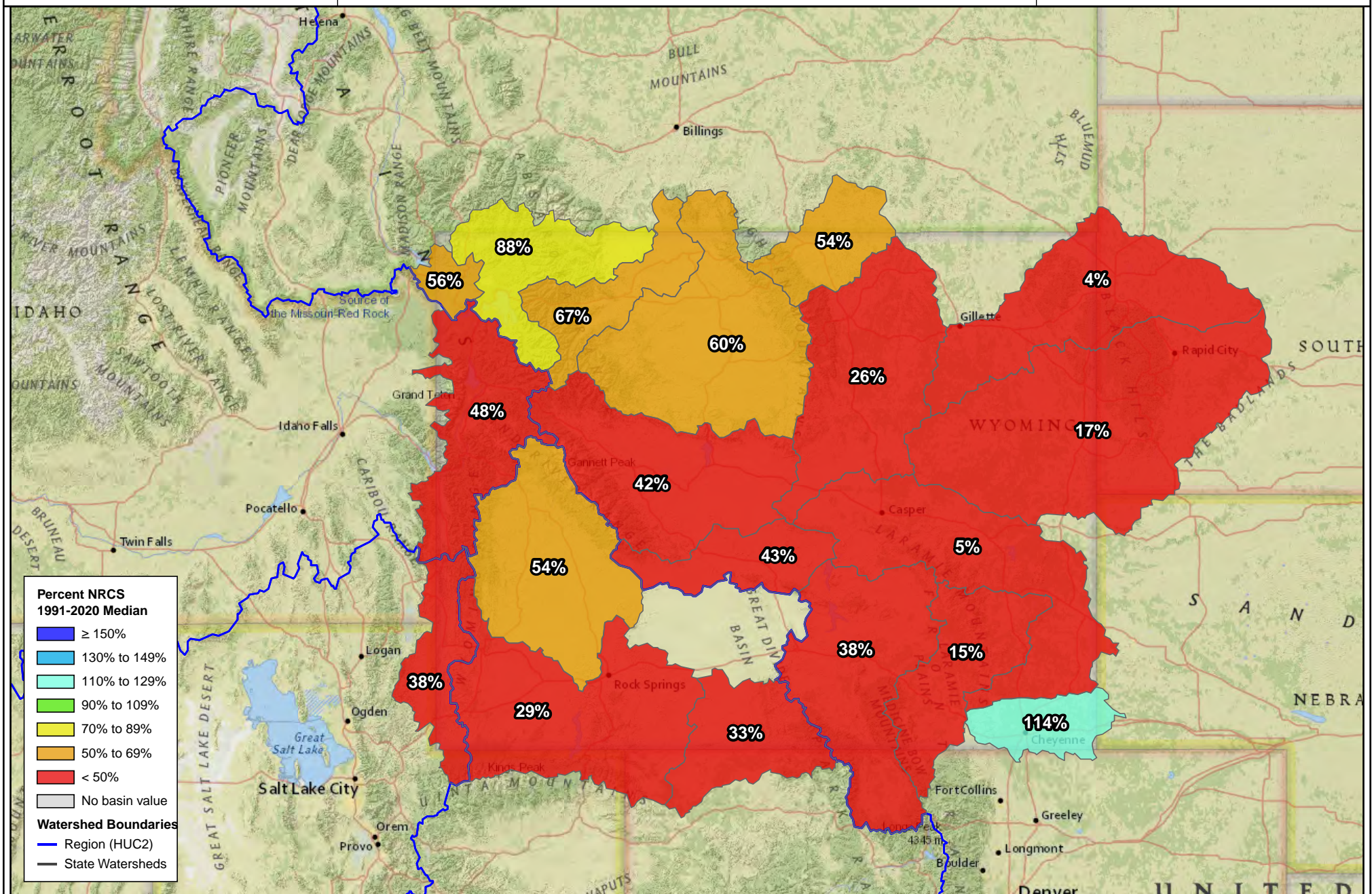
**Percent NRCS 1991-2020 Median**

- ≥ 150%
- 130% to 149%
- 110% to 129%
- 90% to 109%
- 70% to 89%
- 50% to 69%
- < 50%
- No basin value

**Watershed Boundaries**

- Region (HUC2)
- Basin (HUC6)





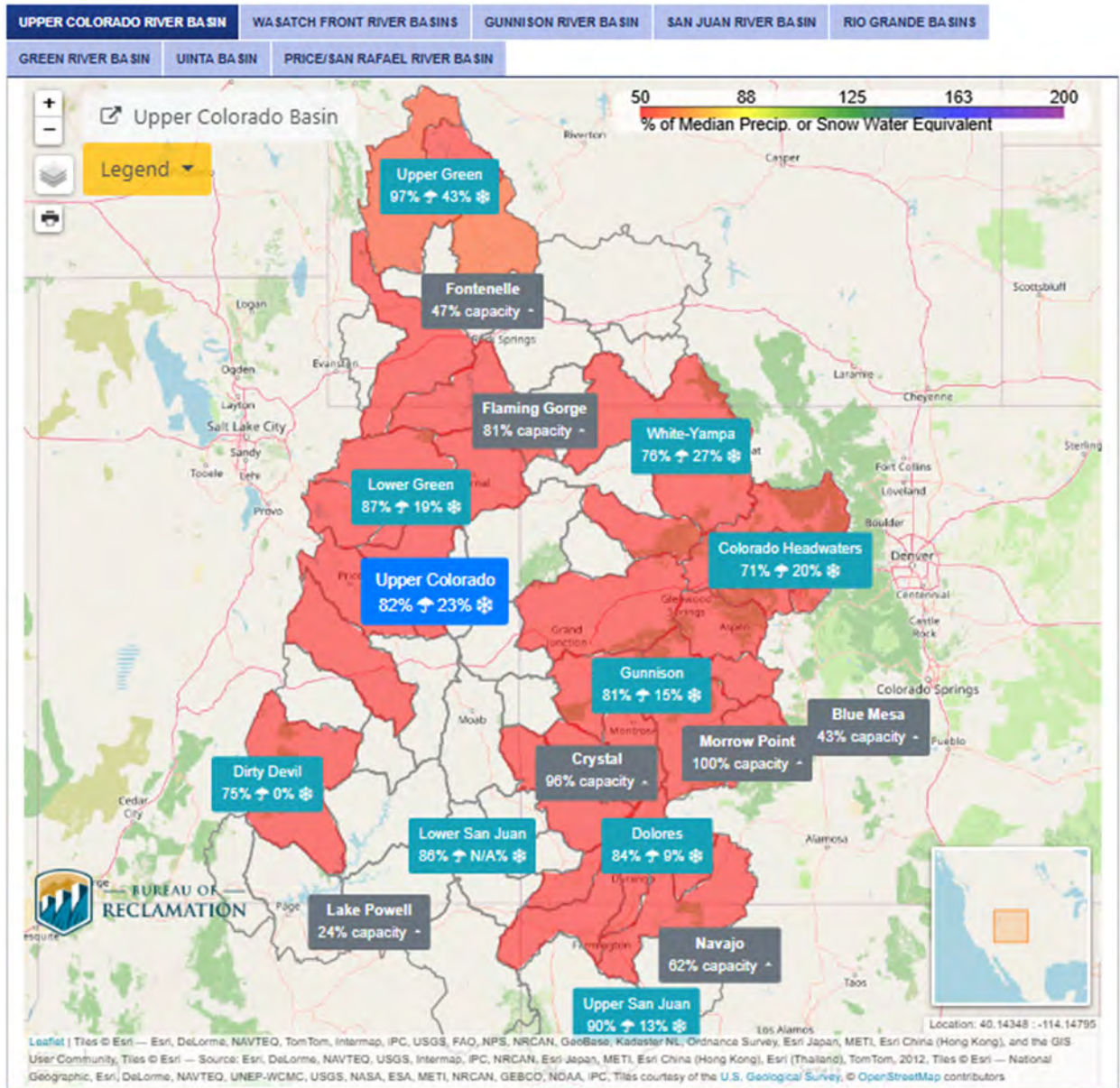
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- 130% to 149%
- 110% to 129%
- 90% to 109%
- 70% to 89%
- 50% to 69%
- < 50%
- No basin value

**Watershed Boundaries**

- Region (HUC2)
- State Watersheds



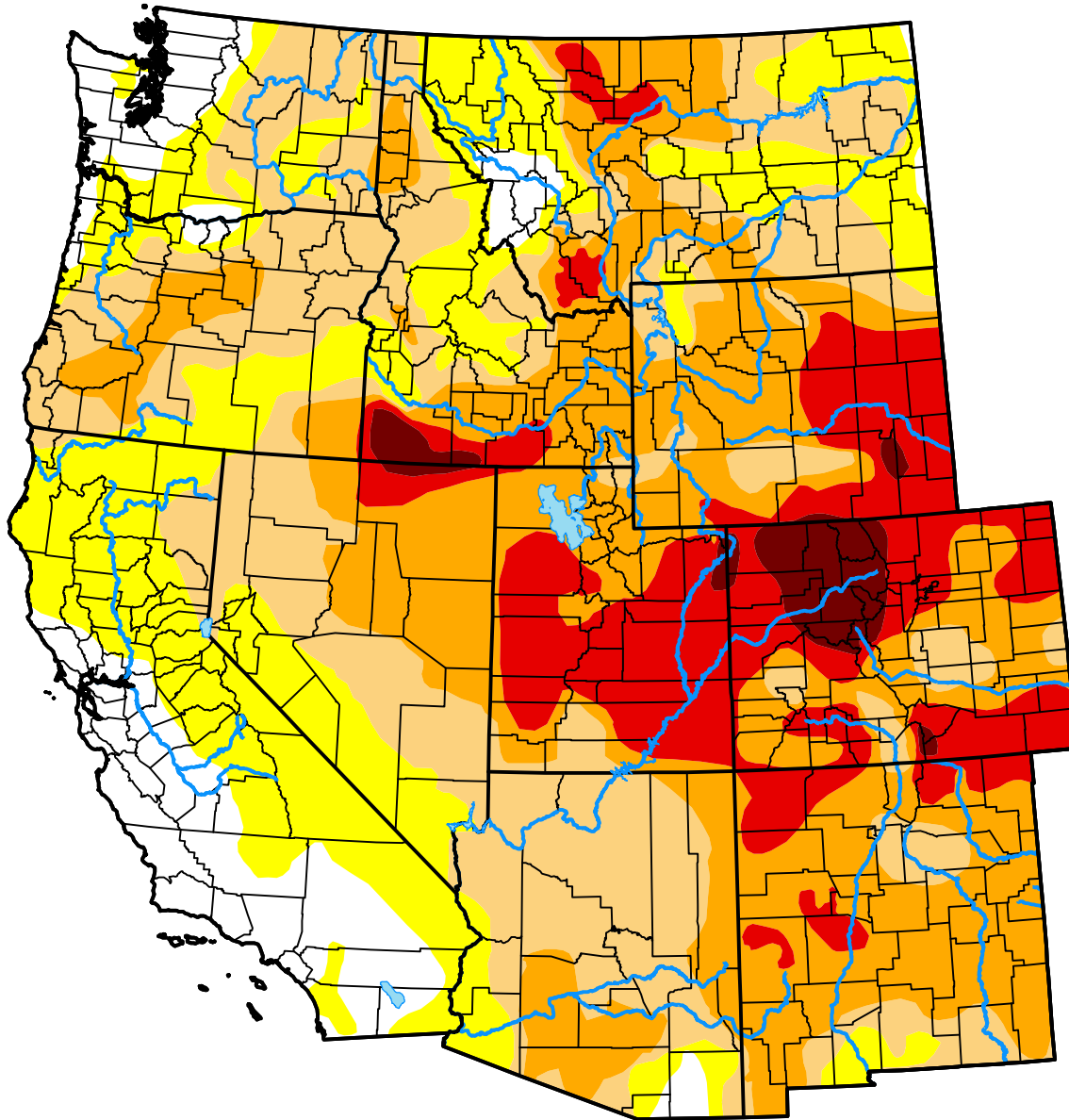


Colorado River Basin Precipitation, May 4, 2026.

# U.S. Drought Monitor

## West

**April 28, 2026**  
 (Released Thursday, Apr. 30, 2026)  
 Valid 8 a.m. EDT



*Drought Conditions (Percent Area)*

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	8.45	91.55	70.31	43.79	15.58	2.18
<b>Last Week</b> <i>04-21-2026</i>	7.91	92.09	70.27	44.17	15.20	2.51
<b>3 Months Ago</b> <i>01-27-2026</i>	37.28	62.72	36.37	14.22	1.04	0.07
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> <i>01-06-2026</i>	40.61	59.39	36.26	14.36	1.16	0.06
<b>Start of Water Year</b> <i>09-30-2025</i>	18.15	81.85	64.82	44.12	12.00	0.69
<b>One Year Ago</b> <i>04-29-2025</i>	32.60	67.40	51.80	31.83	16.34	1.88

***Intensity:***



*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>*

***Author:***

Brad Rippey  
 U.S. Department of Agriculture



**droughtmonitor.unl.edu**

## Precipitation Statistics (period of record: 1981-current)

### Statewide as of 04/30/2026

Water Year to Date: **21.39"**

% of Average: **100%**

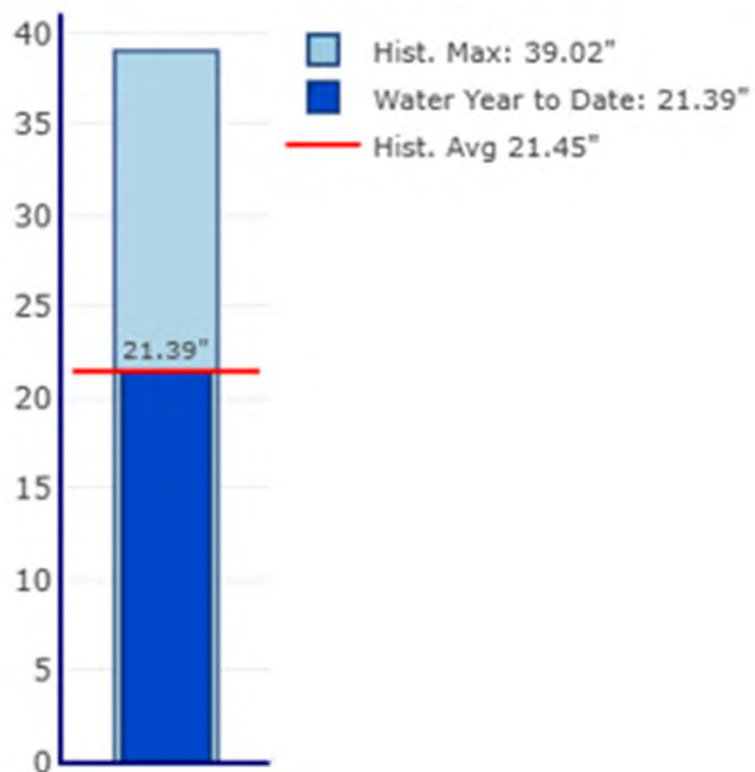
Precipitation % of average for  
full water year through  
September 30th: **90%**

#### Historical Record to Date:

Max: **39.02"**

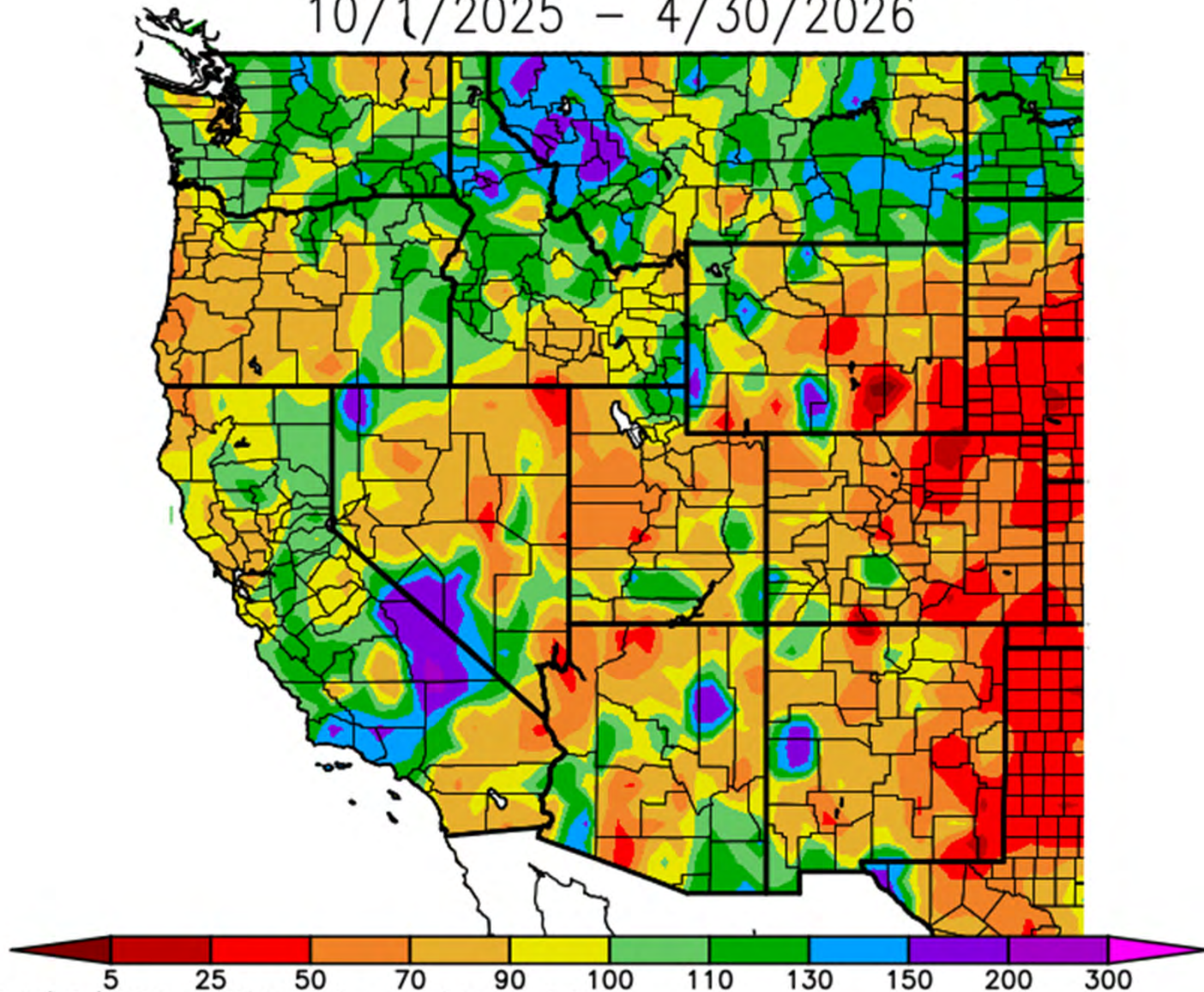
Mean: **21.45"**

Min: **10.93"**



Precipitation for water year to date is  
100% of historical average

Percent of Average Precipitation (%)  
10/1/2025 - 4/30/2026



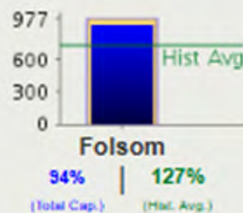
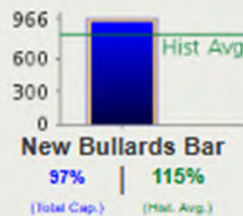
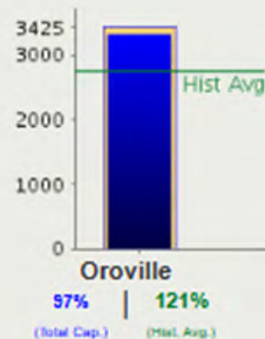
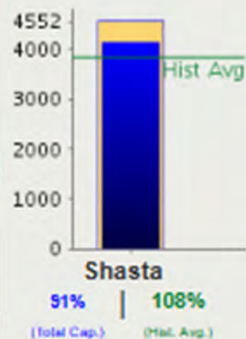
Generated 5/ 1/2026 at WRCC using provisional data.  
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

<https://wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/anomimage.pl?wrcOctPpct.png>

**CURRENT CONDITIONS: MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS:30-APR-2026**

Data as of Midnight: 30-Apr-2026

Change Date: 30-Apr-2026

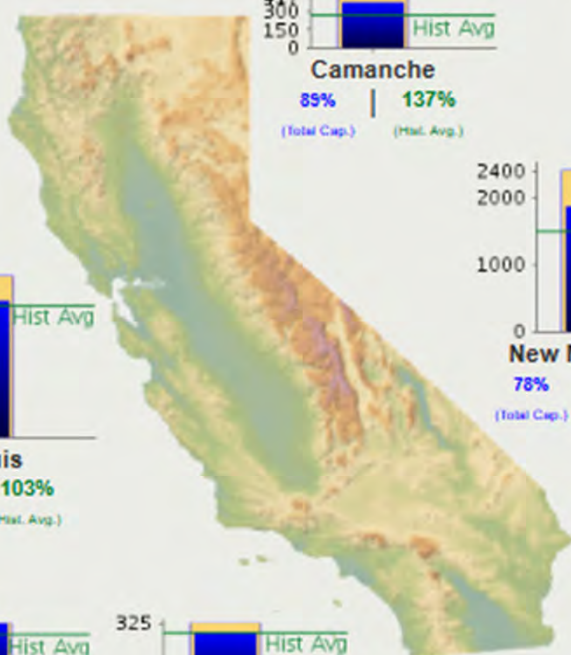
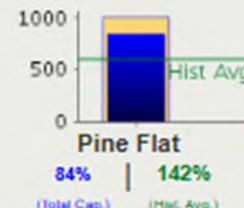
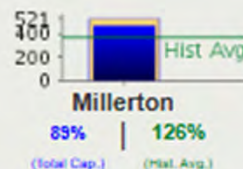
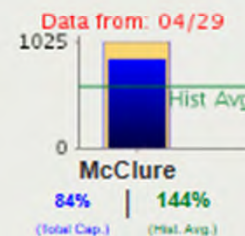
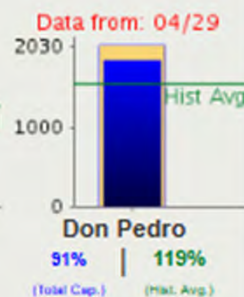
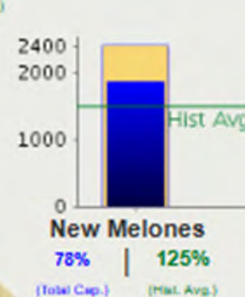
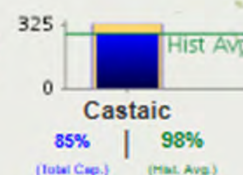
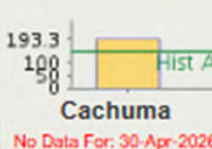
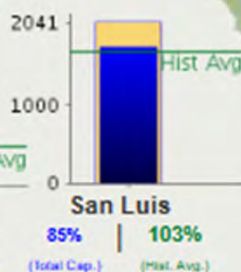
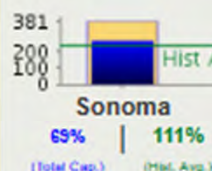
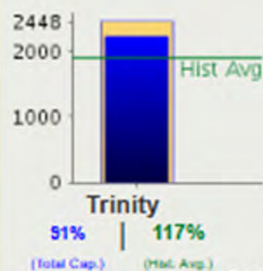


**LEGEND**

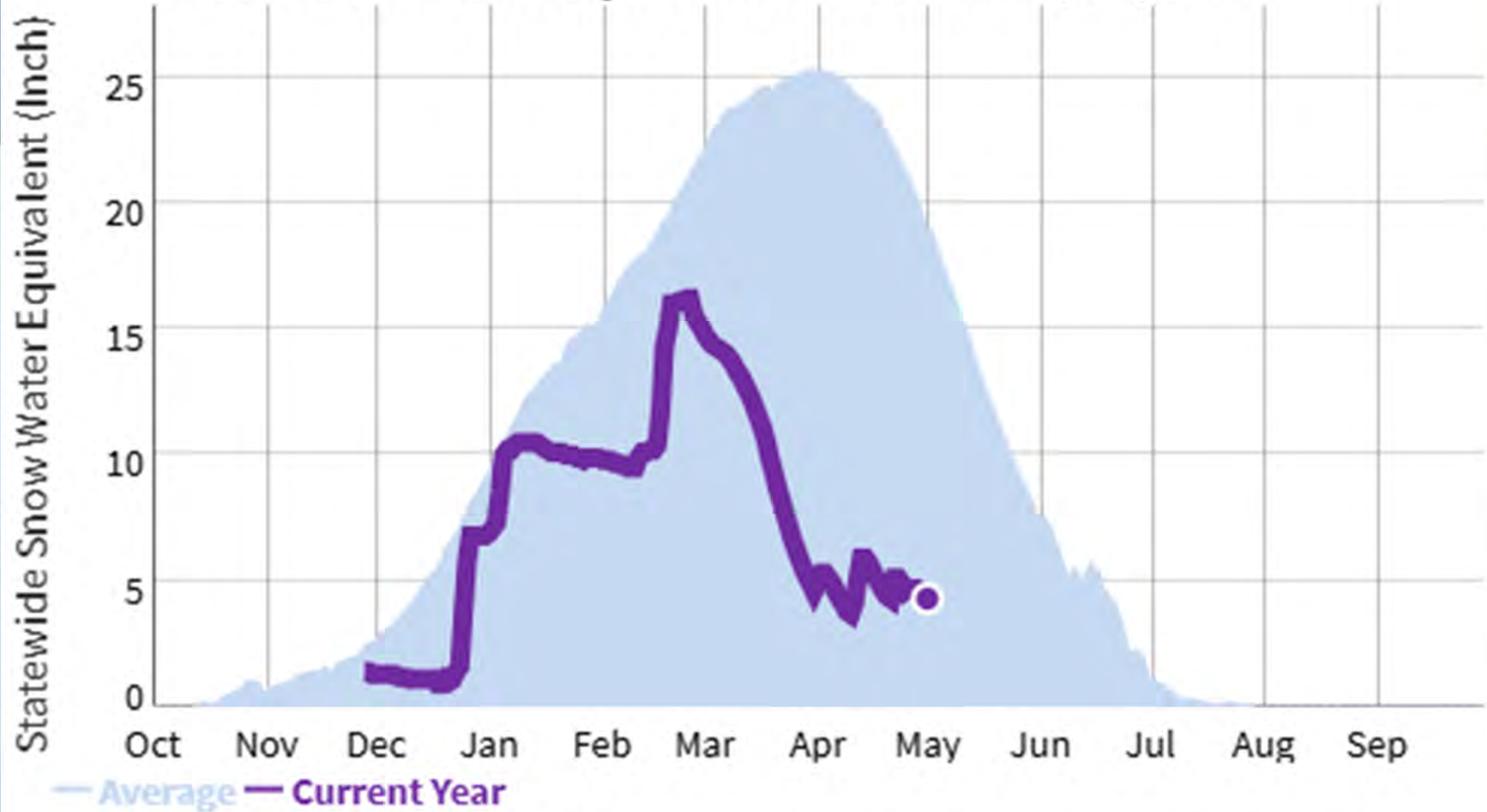
- Blue Bar:** Storage level for date
- Gold Bar:** Total reservoir capacity
- Green Line:** Historic level for date.

Capacity (TAF) | Historical Avg Mark

**% of Capacity | % Hist. Avg.**  
(Click res. 3 char. code for details)



## Statewide Snowpack Chart as of 04/30/2026



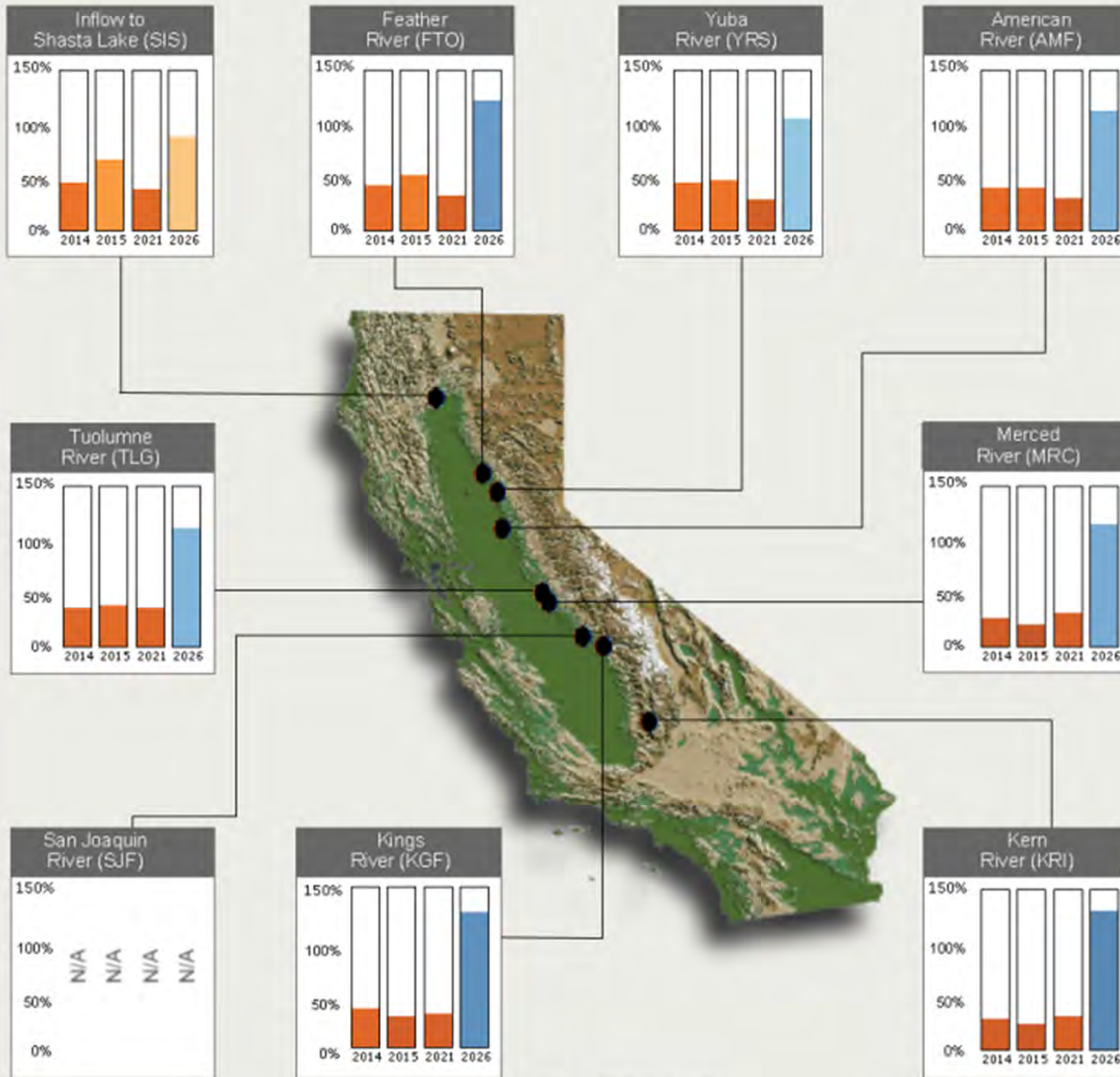
Percent of normal to date: 21%

Percent of April 1st average: 16%

# Full Natural Flow at DWR Forecast Points on Selected California Rivers

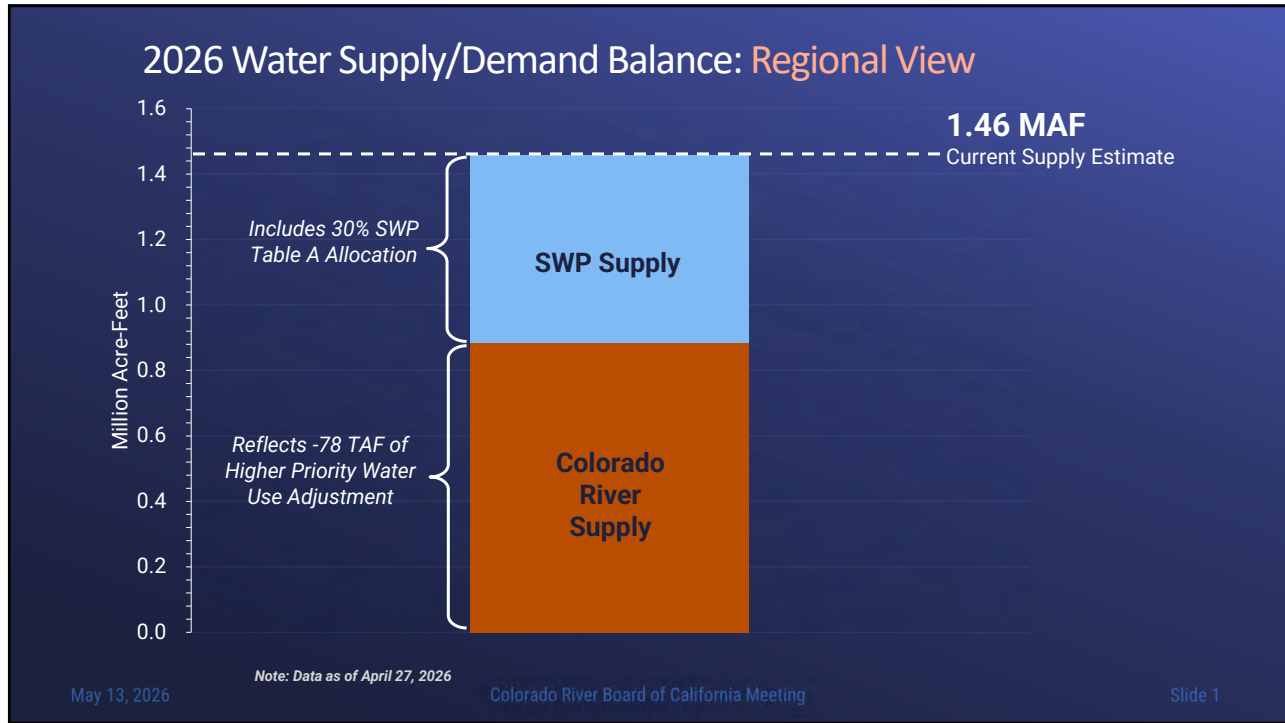
Shown as a Percent of Average to Date

Data as of Midnight: 30-Apr-2026

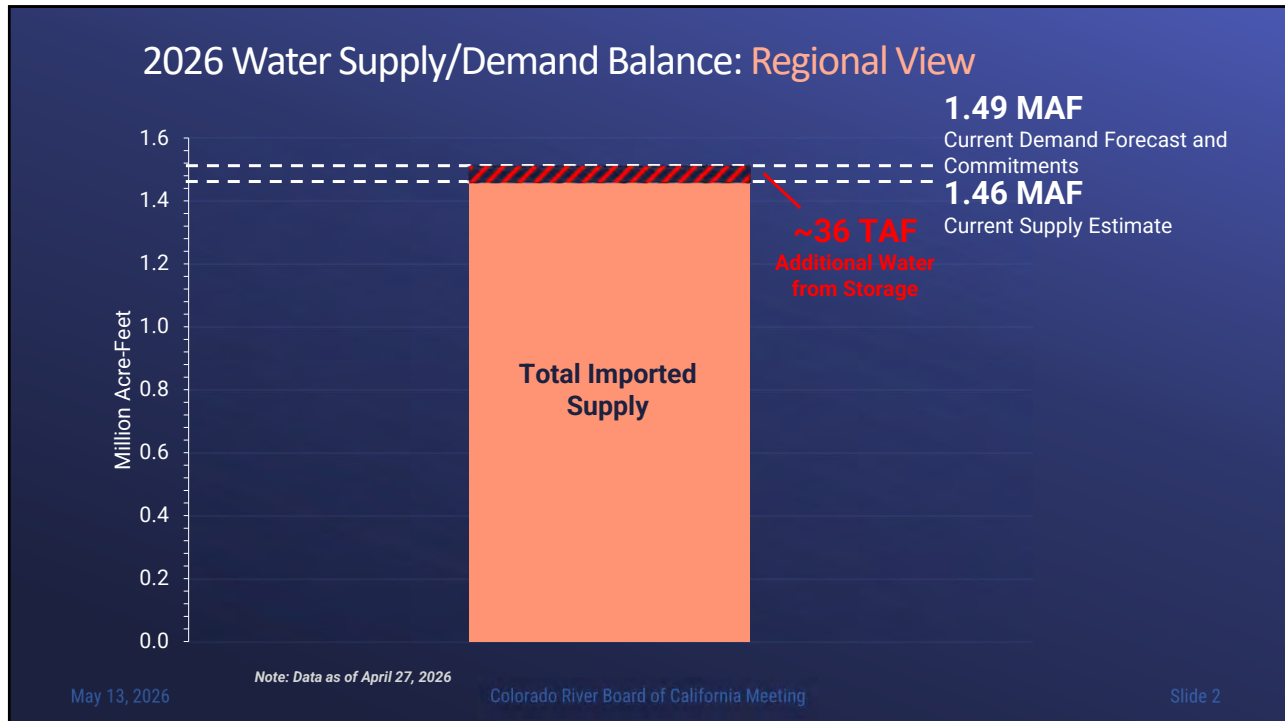


(XYZ) = CDEC Station ID

Date Created: 05/01/2026

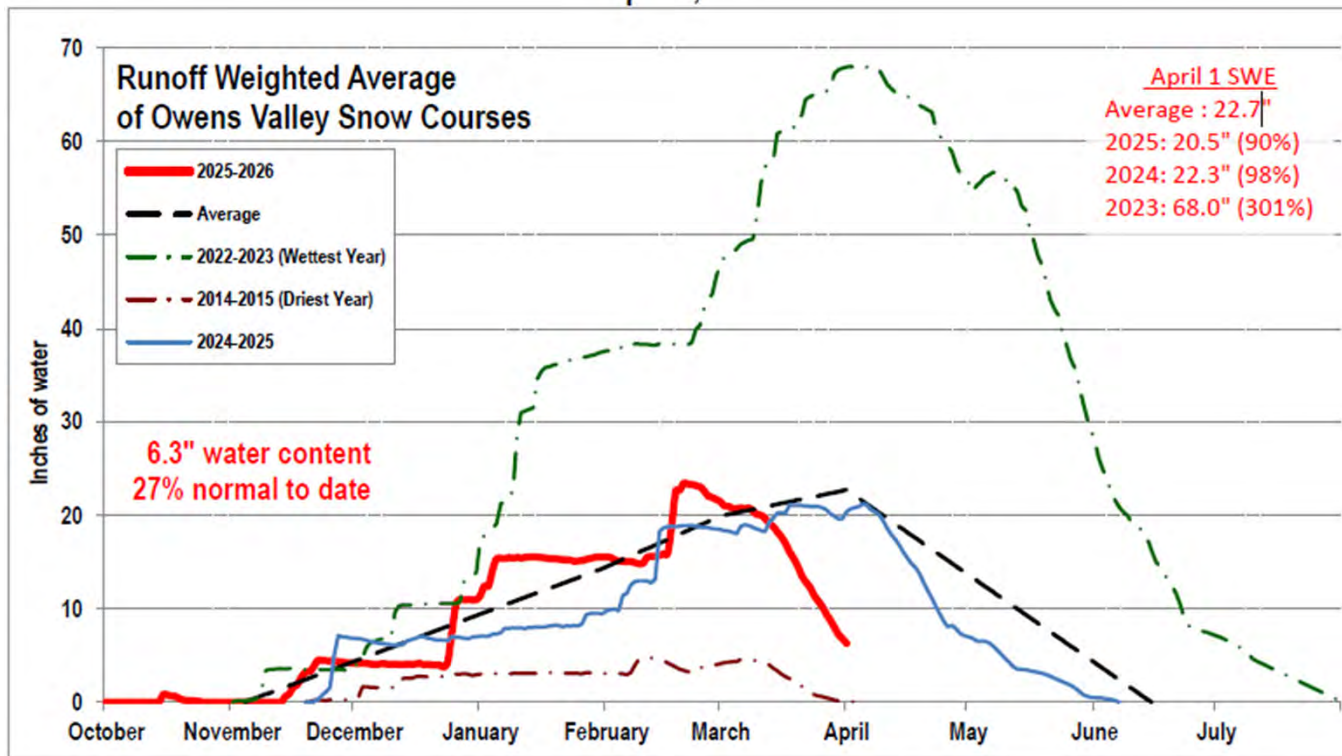


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# Eastern Sierra Conditions (4/1/26)





## **COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAMS REPORT**

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### **Highlights**

- The Secretary of the Interior is considering whether or not to recommend two potential experiments for implementation at Glen Canyon Dam: a Spring High Flow Experiment (HFE) and Cool Mix Flows.
- The Bureau of Reclamation has prepared a “*Draft Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2027 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2025 Accomplishment Report*” for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. The draft report is available online for review.
- The 2026 Triennial Review for salinity standards in the Colorado River has been drafted and will be presented to the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum spring meeting on May 13 for approval to proceed to public review.

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### **Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program**

The Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) convened a knowledge workshop regarding fish April 7-8 and held a Technical Work Group (TWG) meeting on April 9. Both the workshop and the TWG meeting were hybrid meetings with in-person attendance in Flagstaff, AZ.

#### *10-Year Program Review*

The GCDAMP is preparing for a 10-year program review as required by the 2016 Long-Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP). As part of this review, the GCDAMP is holding knowledge workshops throughout 2026 to review what has been learned during the first 10 years of LTEMP and to guide future adaptive management efforts.

#### ***Fish Knowledge Workshop***

Topics discussed at the Fish Knowledge Workshop included pre- and post-dam conditions, Endangered Species Act compliance, tribal perspectives, Upper Basin fish

programs, current monitoring and research to address uncertainties in the status of non-native aquatic species, as well as future environmental and hydrological considerations.

After considering the presentations and discussion from the Knowledge Workshop, the TWG recommend the following steps: re-engaging the Small Bass Ad Hoc Group to consider potential additional short-term management actions convening a science panel to include experts from outside the GCDAMP.

A recurring theme throughout the workshop and TWG discussions was the need to plan for long-term management of high-risk non-native fish, including entrainment through Glen Canyon Dam.

### ***Hydropower Workshop***

The TWG evaluated the Hydropower Knowledge Workshop held last fall. The Western Area Power Administration has expressed concern for a number of years regarding the impact of flow experiments on the Basin Fund. One outcome of the workshop and follow-up discussions has been recognition that consideration is needed regarding potential alternative funding for experiments conducted at Glen Canyon Dam.

### **Potential 2026 Experiments**

The GCDAMP's Planning and Implementation Team considered potential experiments for implementation at Glen Canyon Dam in 2026. Two potential experiments are currently under consideration: a Spring High Flow Experiment (HFE) and Cool Mix Flows.

High Flow Experiments are intended to redistribute sediment for beach building and contribute to maintaining the ecological integrity of the ecosystem below Glen Canyon Dam. The trigger for a Spring HFE has been met, indicating that there is sufficient sediment in the system for an experiment to accomplish sediment distribution goals. The HFE being considered for spring 2026 would be initiated on June 23rd for a duration of 12 hours with a magnitude of 32,400 cfs and total volume of 59,165 acre-feet. If conducted, a 2026 Spring HFE would be the shortest HFE conducted at Glen Canyon Dam to date.

Cool Mix Flow experiments are designed to release cold water through the bypass tubes of Glen Canyon Dam in order to reduce the likelihood of smallmouth bass and other high risk invasive fish from spawning. These efforts are intended to protect the threatened humpback chub. Warm temperatures and low reservoir levels create ideal temperatures for smallmouth bass to spawn; however, these conditions also make a potential experiment this year costly due to the amount of cooler water that would need to pass

through the bypass tubes to achieve desired temperatures, resulting in lost hydropower production.

The Secretary of the Interior will issue a final decision regarding whether or not to conduct an HFE and/or a Cool Mix Flow experiment.

### Budget

The GCDAMP develops budgets and work plans on a triennial basis, making minor modifications as needed to the second and third years of the plan as needed. The current Triennial Work Plan (TWP) and Budget guides the GCDAMPs efforts for Federal Fiscal Years (FYs) 2025–2027.

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) reported that the GCDAMP received \$10.6 million for FY 2026 (\$2.1 million for Reclamation and \$8.5 million for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)). This represents an approximately 15% reduction from the funding anticipated in the FY 2026 TWP. Reclamation and USGS are adjusting activities for the remainder of FY 2026 to align with budget reductions.

The GCDAMP's Budget Ad Hoc Group is working with the Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center and Reclamation to consider implementation of further budget reductions likely to be implemented in the FY 2027 GCDAMP budget.

The GDDAMP is scheduled to hold a knowledge workshop and TWG meeting June 9 – 11 in Flagstaff, AZ. Resources anticipated to be discussed at the Knowledge Workshop include: cultural and archaeological, recreation (Whitewater), sediment and vegetation resources.

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## **Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program**

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) Technical Work Group held a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance in San Diego, CA from May 5-6. The purpose of the meeting was to review the *Draft Implementation Report, Fiscal Year 2027 Work Plan and Budget, Fiscal Year 2025 Accomplishment Report*. The draft report is available [online](#). A report on this meeting will be provided for the June Board meeting.

The LCR MSCP Technical Work Group is scheduled to hold a virtual meeting on May 20.

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## **Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program**

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) Work Group (Work Group) held a hybrid meeting April 15-16 with in-person attendance in Salt Lake City, UT.

The Work Group received updates from federal agency representatives on a range of topics related to salinity control in the Colorado River Basin, including scientific studies, federal staffing, and various program implementation details.

### *Paradox Valley Updates*

Reclamation staff reported that as of the Work Group meeting date, the Paradox Valley Unit (PVU) continued to operate at a target injection rate of 115 gpm and a year-to-date average injection rate of approximately 113 gpm. The injection pressure was approximately 4,320 psi. Approximately 18,513 tons of salt have been disposed of at PVU in 2026.

Reclamation staff presented a history of PVU studies to inform discussions on potential future options for salinity control at PVU. The Work Group is considering a potential scope of work to identify options and key considerations for tested, ready-to-go technologies that could potentially be used to replace PVU.

USGS staff reported on progress toward better characterization of the subsurface geological structure upgradient from the Dolores River in the La Sal mountains, as part of an effort to explore the viability of capturing and removing saline groundwater further upstream than the current PVU. Staff reported that a reconnaissance-level study funded by the Program has revealed limited additional characterization, and drilling one or two wells is needed to make further progress.

### *Triennial Review*

Preparation of the 2026 Triennial Review (Review), led by the Work Group chair and supported by Work Group members, is proceeding on schedule. A draft of the Review will be presented to the Forum at its spring meeting on May 13, 2026, for approval to proceed to public review of the document, which will take place over the summer. A final draft is anticipated to be presented to the Forum during its fall meeting in October for review and approval.

### *Outside Witness Testimonies for Congressional Appropriations*

Congressional appropriations subcommittees are currently considering requests for the FY 2027 federal budget, including potential funding for the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. The Forum and the Board are submitting written Outside Witness

Testimonies in support of funding for Reclamation, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service that support the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program at levels identified by the 2023 Triennial Review and Plan of Implementation.

*Upcoming Meetings*

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program Forum and Advisory Council will meet on May 13-14 in Las Vegas, NV. The Work Group's fall meeting is currently being scheduled.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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### Highlights

- In response to poor hydrology and falling elevations at Lake Powell, Reclamation is implementing changes to the Water Year 2026 Lake Powell release and releases from the Upper Initial Units. The changes add up to 2.48 MAF of storage to Lake Powell, at the expense of approximately 25% of storage in Flaming Gorge and 20 feet of storage in Lake Mead, taking the lake to record low elevations.
- The Lower Basin States submitted a two-year proposal to Reclamation on May 1. The plan includes annual reductions of 1.25 MAF in the Lower Basin, as well as an estimated 700 KAF of additional conservation contingent on funding.
- On April 30, the seven Basin States governors sent a joint letter to Secretary of the Interior Burgum, urging the release of existing federal funding and emphasizing that durable federal funding will be essential to support a basin-wide framework post-2026.
- Interior Secretary Burgum testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on April 29, discussing Colorado River issues and negotiations with multiple Basin States senators.

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### Basin States Process

#### Water Year 2026 Operations

The April 24-Month Study, released on April 17, reflected continued deterioration in hydrologic conditions across the Basin. Forecasted inflow to Lake Powell for Water Year (WY) 2026 declined by 1 million acre-feet (MAF) between March to April due to poor hydrology and above-average temperatures. WY 2026 inflow was estimated at 3.4 MAF (35% of average). The study predicted Powell would likely fall to 3,483' by the end of September (below minimum power) and continue dropping until spring 2027, falling to 3,455' before recovering due to projected WY-2027 spring runoff. To prevent this, Reclamation is implementing two actions over the coming year to add up to 2.48 MAF of storage to Lake Powell:

- Reduce the release from Lake Powell from 7.48 MAF to 6 MAF in the remainder of WY 2026 (through September). This is an unprecedented low release, which will lower Lake Mead's projected end-of-year elevation by nearly 20 feet, to about elevation 1,040 feet. As a result, Lake Mead will almost certainly fall below elevation 1,035 feet in 2027. At that level, Hoover Dam would lose an additional 40% of hydropower generation as non-low-head turbines become inoperable.
- Release between 660 thousand acre-feet (TAF) and 1 MAF from the Upper Initial Units (UIU) above Lake Powell. The UIU currently have over 4 MAF of storage, although not all of this storage is accessible. The releases began in April 2026 and will continue through April 2027. All of the water is expected to come from Flaming Gorge reservoir, which will drop from 82% full to 59% full as a result. The Upper Colorado River Commission voted to approve the release plan on April 23.

With both proposed actions, Lake Powell is predicted to remain above elevation 3,500' for the remainder of 2026 and 2027.

### Lower Basin Proposal

On Friday, May 1, the Lower Basin finalized and submitted to Reclamation a proposal for Colorado River operations for 2026-2028. The Lower Basin has emphasized that its proposal is a package, and elements cannot be separated or incorporated into a federal hybrid proposal without Lower Basin concurrence. If accepted as the preferred alternative, implementation would require agreements among the Lower Basin states, California agencies, and Reclamation, including review and approval by boards across California. More detailed operational provisions would be resolved during agreement development. Key elements of the proposal include:

- Covers 2026-2028, with a commitment to reconult on post-2028 operations.
- UIU releases of at least 600 KAF occurring to protect Lake Powell 3,515', with upstream recovery not starting until Lake Powell has released more than 8.23 MAF in a given year.
- Operational tiers for Powell releases: 7.0 MAF if Powell is below 3,540' (with downward adjustment if projected to fall below 3,500'); 8.0 MAF if above 3,540'; and additional releases above 3,565' to make up for any releases during 2026-2028 that were less than 8.23 MAF.

- Lower Basin reductions of 1.25 MAFY, with a commitment to reconsult if projections show Lake Mead falling below 1,010’.
- Increase ICS storage by 300 KAF each for Nevada and California and by 500 KAF for Arizona, with a 10% assessment on new ICS, and no more than 600 KAF of cumulative California ICS use.
- Creation of an additional 700 KAF of system conservation, contingent upon appropriate funding and other resources, to prevent Lake Mead from dropping to critical elevations, with expected volumes of 300 KAF from Arizona, 100 KAF from Nevada, and 300 KAF from California.
- Does not include Upper Basin conservation but allows for the Upper Basin to join the proposal if it agrees to conserve water. Absent such participation, the Lower Basin would not waive Compact compliance and could pursue legal remedies.

Following the submission of the Lower Basin proposal, the Upper Colorado River Commission sent a letter to Reclamation. The letter notes that the Upper Basin has advanced several proposals since 2024, is working with Reclamation on provisional accounting for Upper Basin conservation, and supports pursuing Basin States mediation. The Upper Colorado River Commission also issued a press release on April 23 calling for Basin States mediation.

### *Basin States Governors Letter*

On April 30, the seven Basin States governors sent a joint letter to Secretary of the Interior Burgum, expressing appreciation for Interior’s intention to make \$354M available to the Lower Basin and \$100M available to the Upper Basin, and urging release of the remaining approximately \$550M of available Inflation Reduction Act funding. The letter emphasizes that durable federal funding will be essential to support a basin-wide framework post-2026.

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## **Washington, D.C. Report**

### *Secretary Burgum Testifies on Appropriations*

## **Senate Energy and Natural Resources**

On April 29, Interior Secretary Burgum testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee about the agency's FY27 budget request. Senator Padilla (D-CA) pressed Secretary Burgum to recognize California's major investments in water efficiency and water conservation in providing matching federal funding to address drought on the Colorado River and elsewhere in the West.

Sen. John Barrasso pressed Secretary Burgum on worsening water shortages in the Colorado River Basin, emphasizing that Upper and Lower Basin states still haven't reached agreement on how to manage key reservoirs like Lake Powell and Lake Mead. He warned that levels at Lake Powell could hit critical levels soon and raised concerns about plans to release large amounts of water from Flaming Gorge Reservoir, asking whether that water would be replenished. Barrasso also questioned whether the Interior Department remains committed to a collaborative, seven-state solution and urged engagement with Upper Basin states.

Secretary Burgum responded by pointing to long-term structural problems with the Colorado River Compact, arguing it was based on overly optimistic assumptions about water supply and didn't anticipate today's population demands. He acknowledged ongoing negotiations, including recent meetings with Lower Basin states, and signaled continued support for a basin-wide agreement.

### **House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee**

On April 20, the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) on the Department of the Interior's budget, featuring Secretary Burgum, centered on the growing strain on Western water systems, especially the Colorado River, and the broader challenge of balancing limited resources and competing state demands. Lawmakers from both parties underscored that the basin remains in crisis, with no agreement yet between Upper and Lower Basin states on how to manage shrinking supplies and key reservoirs.

A major theme was the structural mismatch between water supply and demand. Secretary Burgum and some members pointed to the Colorado River Compact as fundamentally flawed, having been based on unusually wet historical data and unable to account for today's population growth and long-term drought. Some members stressed that without reform or a new agreement, uncertainty will continue to threaten agriculture, cities, and energy production across the West.

The discussion also focused on near-term emergency actions. Members raised concerns about declining levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, including projections that critical thresholds could be reached soon. Secretary Burgum acknowledged that the

Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, may need to continue interventions like moving water between reservoirs to stabilize the system.

### Wildfire Report

The National Interagency Fire Center [reports](#) that wildfire risk over the next four months will be highest in the Southeast and the West, where conditions are already dry and active fires are occurring. In the West, Arizona, New Mexico, and the Four Corners face elevated risk through June before monsoon rains reduce fire danger. By July, wildfire risk transitions to the Pacific Northwest as that region becomes drier.

### One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB)

On March 17, the Department of the Interior announced the allocation of \$889 million in funding from the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) to support federally owned water storage and conveyance infrastructure across the western United States. The legislation provides \$1 billion to the Bureau of Reclamation through 2034 to modernize aging facilities, expand storage capacity, and improve the reliability of water delivery systems critical to agricultural production and growing communities.

### **Funding allocations in Basin States:**

- **California – \$540 million total:**
  - Delta-Mendota Canal — \$235 million for canal rehabilitation, including embankment improvements and structural repairs
  - Friant-Kern Canal — \$200 million for subsidence correction
  - San Luis Canal — \$50 million to address subsidence and restore delivery reliability
  - Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority Pumping Plant — \$15 million to increase flow capacity and improve system performance
  - Shasta Dam — \$40 million for planning and preconstruction activities associated with a dam raise to expand storage capacity
- **Utah — \$100 million:** Replacement of the Highline Canal with an enclosed pipeline to improve safety and efficiency
- **Wyoming — \$100 million:** Long-term repairs to the Fort Laramie Tunnels to reduce the risk of system failures

### Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Passes House

On March 16, the House passed Congressman Calvert's [H.R. 831](#), Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025. Senator Padilla has a Senate companion bill, which passed out of Committee of February 4 and now awaits action from the full Senate.

The bill would increase the funding available for species conservation by creating an interest-bearing account at the Department of the Treasury for funds that the Colorado River Lower Basin states and the federal government contribute to the LCR MSCP.

### Bureau of Reclamation Funding

After months of delays, pauses, and minimal public activity surrounding federal water funding, the Bureau of Reclamation has recently begun advancing the release and distribution of previously appropriated funds, including those from the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and core programs like WaterSMART.

Earlier in 2025 and into early 2026, many grant opportunities and funding announcements were delayed, paused, or slow to emerge, with some solicitations temporarily put on hold and little clarity on award timelines. More recently, however, new announcements suggest Reclamation is moving forward—issuing grant solicitations, finalizing awards, and obligating funds for projects focused on water recycling, drought resilience, and infrastructure modernization across the West.

###

*The prolonged drought combined with the lowest winter snowpack on record is requiring swift actions to protect this vital water system*

Media Contact: [Communications@usbr.gov](mailto:Communications@usbr.gov)  
For Release: Apr 17, 2026



The Colorado River flows through seven states and provides water to 40 million people.

**WASHINGTON** — Long-term drought has reduced Colorado River system storage to about 36 percent of capacity, and the combination of the lowest snowpack on record and record-breaking March heat has further intensified drought conditions across the Basin. These compounding factors are creating elevated risks to essential water and power infrastructure that supply water to more than 40 million people, underscoring the need for immediate action.

Lake Powell's water year minimum probable inflow is forecasted at just 2.78 million acre-feet—29% of historical average and one of the lowest on record. Reclamation's April "[24 Month Study](#)" projects Lake Powell may decline to below 3,490 feet—the minimum power pool level—by August 2026 without major

intervention. If Glen Canyon Dam declines below 3,490 feet, water releases would be only through the river outlet works, which could cause operational issues, uncertainty for users, downstream impacts, instability in regional power and water supplies, and a reduction in power generation.

Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum met with Governors for the seven basin states, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, and their designees again today to discuss the concerning hydrology and plans for operations.

“I am grateful for the Governors and their teams working diligently to find a solution to the complex challenges created by these unprecedented drought conditions which require immediate action,” said **Interior Secretary Doug Burgum**. “Interior and Reclamation continue to coordinate with the basin states, tribes, Mexico and basin stakeholders as we make the decisions necessary to operate and protect the system.”

To stabilize the system, Reclamation is moving quickly and initial plans include adding up to about 2.48 maf of water to Lake Powell by moving water from the upstream Flaming Gorge Reservoir and by reducing releases from Lake Powell.

Through the 2019 Drought Response Operating Agreements, Reclamation is intending to release 660,000 acre-feet to 1 maf from Flaming Gorge Reservoir from April 2026 through April 2027. In addition, Reclamation is intending to reduce the annual release volume from Lake Powell to Lake Mead by 1.48 maf—from 7.48 maf to 6.0 maf—through September 2026 by utilizing section 6E of the Record of Decision from the final 2024 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for near-term Colorado River Operations.

Together, these actions are expected to increase Lake Powell’s elevation by approximately 54 ft to at least elevation 3500 feet by April 2027. Through the current, ongoing DROA process, the basin states, tribes and partners continue to provide feedback related to the proposed releases. A final decision will be coming next week.

Flaming Gorge Reservoir now holds about 3.1 maf of water, which is 83% full. These actions are expected to lower the reservoir’s elevation by roughly 35 feet over the next year to approximately 59% of capacity. This will have no effect on contracted water rights at Flaming Gorge or Lake Powell. No additional releases from the other upstream initial units of the Colorado River Storage Project Act—Blue Mesa and Navajo reservoirs—are planned at this time, due to their low water levels and poor forecasted inflows.

“Given the severity of the risks facing the Colorado River system, it is imperative that we take action quickly to protect a resource that supplies water to 40 million people and supports vital agricultural, hydropower production, tribal, wildlife, and recreational uses across the region,” said **Assistant Secretary - Water and Science Andrea Travnicek**. “As we weigh current conditions and prepare for future operations by working with states, tribal nations and stakeholders, the Department of the Interior and Reclamation remain fully committed to taking the actions necessary to reduce impacts on water deliveries, safeguard critical infrastructure, and preserve as much operational flexibility as possible.”

### **Basin-wide impacts**

Reclamation acknowledges that the proposed reduced releases from Lake Powell will accelerate the downstream decline of Lake Mead, with the potential for up to an additional 40% reduction to Hoover Dam’s hydropower generating capacity as early as this fall. Reclamation and its lower basin partners are collaborating to conserve water in Lake Mead and maintain its water levels, even as releases from Lake Powell are planned to decrease.

The initial proposed drought response actions may also impact recreation across multiple sites. At upstream reservoirs, boating access may be reduced earlier in the season than normal. In the Grand Canyon, lower flow rates will affect rafting conditions, and fishing may be more challenging. At Lake Mead National Recreation Area, reduced water levels may further limit boating access. Reclamation is working with reservoir recreation management partners now and as the summer progresses.

The 2026 operational challenges come at a time of transition as the existing agreements that guided the operations of the Colorado River for the last two decades are set to expire at the end of the year. As we approach the new water year on October 1, the seven basin states have not reached consensus on a new operating framework. With time running out, there is a need for extraordinary collaboration for 2027 and beyond. In the absence of a consensus and following the completion of the NEPA process, the Interior Department will be prepared to determine operations for Post 2026 later this summer to provide certainty and stability for the Colorado River Basin.

To learn more about the Interior Department's or Reclamation's activities around the Colorado River, please visit the [Colorado River Basin website](#).



## Colorado River Basin States Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada

April 20, 2026

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Upper Colorado River Region  
Via email: [bor-sha-ucb-droa@usbr.gov](mailto:bor-sha-ucb-droa@usbr.gov)

SUBJECT: Lower Basin Comments on Draft Drought Response Operations Plan

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your email soliciting Lower Basin comments on the Draft Drought Response Operations Plan (DDROP) that was previewed for us by webinar Tuesday April 14, 2026. While we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on materials for which you provided links in your email, in particular the DROA Framework document and Attachments A (Plan Summary), B (Glen Canyon Dam Operations), C (Flaming Gorge Operations), and E (Navajo Reservoir Operations), the compressed time frame for comments – approximately three working days – necessitates that we reserve our right to provide further comments as the documents are evaluated internally. We assume the omitted Attachment D would have covered the Aspinall Unit, but that it was not included for reasons stated during our Upper Initial Unit webinar on Tuesday; specifically, that contracted for deliveries or storage exhaust all the available live storage at current or projected elevations. We address this matter below.

Our principal concern with the DDROP is that the May 20, 2019, Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA) does not inform or govern in any way the release of the proposed additional Upper Initial Unit (UIU) water between April 2026 and April 2027 as discussed therein. The DROA, including the elevation triggers, limitations, and conditions of water releases from the UIU and the recovery of the volume of such releases, expired by its own terms on December 31, 2025. See DROA Sections II.A.6 and II.B.2. Accordingly, such releases should be treated purely as system water subject only to any future agreement by the basin states and Reclamation on recovery.

Additionally, the DDROP suggests that no water from Navajo is available for release below elevation 5990 because “contract deliveries can no longer be made [below elevation 5990].” See DDROP Section 3. During the webinar discussion Tuesday April 14, 2026, we were advised similar limitations prohibit any releases from the Blue Mesa/Aspinall Unit for the same reasons and because of existing storage contracts. We cannot, however, agree that any of the referred to contracts for delivery or storage in Navajo or Blue Mesa/Aspinall Unit reservoirs limit the ability of Reclamation to release additional water therefrom because they cannot pre-date the existence of the Colorado River Compact of 1922 (1922 Compact) and the Upper Basin’s obligations to Mexico or the Lower Basin thereunder. See 1922 Compact Sections III.C. and III.D. Construction of UIU reservoirs was authorized pursuant to Section I of the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956 (Storage Project Act), more than thirty years after the 1922 Compact. Moreover, the Storage Project Act specifically subordinates such contracts and storage within the UIUs to Lower Basin and Mexico rights and Upper Basin obligations under the 1922 Compact and 1944 Treaty with Mexico. See

Storage Project Act Section 4. Only when such rights are fully satisfied and such obligations fully discharged can the independent rights to delivery from and storage within the UIUs serve as a limit to UIU releases.

And while we appreciate the desire to document a robust framework for coordinating UIU release activities, poor basin hydrology has been apparent for months and the additional releases should have been initiated some time ago to protect Glen Canyon Dam infrastructure and to facilitate releases from Lake Powell sufficient to satisfy the Lower Basin and Republic of Mexico rights discussed above (or even the diminished releases contemplated for Water Year 2026). We strongly encourage Reclamation to expedite contemplated UIU releases while keeping stakeholders fully informed, and we strongly discourage enabling inapplicable DROA requirements and process to delay actions manifestly needed to protect the system.

Finally, DDROP Attachment B (Glen Canyon Dam Operations) makes a passing reference to a Secretarial determination under 6E of the 2024 SEIS to adjust the Lake Powell release down to 6.0 maf for Water Year 2026. We are constrained to note that a release volume at that level will cause a deficiency under 1922 Compact Articles III(C) and III(D), which requires that 82.5 maf be delivered over every ten-year period, object to any DDROP or DROA provision that undermines Lower Basin rights, and specifically do not waive any rights relating to such deficiency.

As noted above, there may be individual or group technical comments, in addition to the foundational Law of the River comments set forth herein, after we've had time to evaluate the DDROP more fully. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding these comments.

Respectfully submitted,



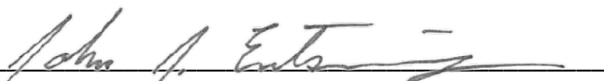
Thomas Buschatzke  
Governor's Representative for the State of Arizona



Brenda Burman, General Manager  
Central Arizona Project



J.B. Hamby, Chairman - Colorado River Board of California  
Governor's Representative for the State of California



John J. Entsminger  
Governor's Representative for the State of Nevada



Eric P. Witkoski, Executive Director  
Colorado River Commission of Nevada



May 1, 2026

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Lower Basin States Advance Plan to Deliver up to 3.2 Million Acre-Feet Through 2028 to Protect Colorado River**

***~ Proposal adds up to a million-acre-feet of conservation on top of the 1.25 million-acre-feet annual Lower Basin reductions proposed earlier ~***

The Lower Basin States of Arizona, California, and Nevada today advanced a plan to stabilize the Colorado River through 2028, responding to declining reservoir levels, record low inflows to Lake Powell, and increasing risk of reaching critical elevations at both Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Earlier in the post-2026 process, the Lower Basin took a significant step by proposing 1.25 million acre-feet in annual reductions, with an additional 250,000 acre-feet from Mexico, totaling approximately 1.5 million acre-feet per year.

This proposal builds on that foundation with an expanded system conservation program across the Lower Basin with an estimated contribution of at least 700,000 acre-feet. In total, the plan identifies up to 3.2 million acre-feet of water savings to the system through 2028.

The proposal is an integrated package addressing Lake Powell releases, Upper Initial Unit operations, Lower Basin reductions, additional conservation, use of Intentionally Created Surplus, and system infrastructure improvements. Lower Basin contributions are contingent on these coordinated operations to ensure system stability as well as appropriate funding.

“With this proposal, the Lower Basin is putting forth real action to stabilize water supply along the Colorado River. We’re putting forward additional measurable water contributions for the system. Without that, the system will continue to decline,” said JB Hamby

“This proposal is about moving from ideas to implementation,” said John Entsminger. “It pairs real measurable water contributions with sensible dry-condition operations at Lake

Powell and across the Upper Initial Units. Now is the time for every water user in the Basin to double down on water conservation as we face historically dry hydrology."

"This proposal reflects the creativity and commitment of water users across the Lower Basin who continue to step forward with solutions that support the river," said Tom Buschatzke. "We have shown that collaborative, voluntary efforts and reductions that are certain can produce meaningful water savings."

The Lower Basin states recognize the Upper Basin's call for mediation and are open to that process. However, current conditions require immediate, measurable water reductions from every state. The Lower Basin states stand ready to engage in a meaningful process for long-term solutions while encouraging the Upper Basin to step forward now with verifiable water contributions to help stabilize the system and support a near-term, seven-state bridge.

The Lower Basin states confirmed that the proposal preserves legal accountability under the Colorado River Compact, including Upper Basin delivery obligations, while maintaining a clear path toward a broader agreement among all seven Basin States.

The plan has been advanced to the federal government for consideration as part of the ongoing post-2026 planning process and is intended to provide a near-term bridge through 2028 while long-term operating guidelines are finalized.

Implementation of key elements of the proposal, including expanded system conservation, will require federal partnership. The proposal remains subject to approval by the Arizona Legislature and relevant California and Nevada water agency governing boards.

**Press Contacts:**

**Arizona:** Doug MacEachern, [dmaceachern@azwater.gov](mailto:dmaceachern@azwater.gov)

**Nevada:** Bronson Mack, [bronson.mack@snwa.com](mailto:bronson.mack@snwa.com)

**California:** Fernando Castro-Alvarez, [fscastro@iid.com](mailto:fscastro@iid.com)

###

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**Subject:** Lower Division States' Proposal for 2026–2028 Colorado River Operations  
**Date:** Friday, May 1, 2026 at 4:52:35PM Pacific Daylight Time  
**From:** John Entsminger  
**To:** Andrea Travnicek  
**CC:** Scott Cameron, David Palumbo, Carly Jerla, Tom Buschatzke, JB Hamby, Gene Shawcroft, Brandon Gebhart, Estevan Lopez, Rebecca Mitchell

Assistant Secretary Travnicek,

The Lower Division States of Arizona, California, and Nevada have again come together to submit the attached proposal to address the deteriorating hydrologic conditions in the Colorado River system. With inflow to Lake Powell trending toward record lows and exacerbating the near-term risk of breaching critical elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, quick and decisive action is urgently required. The Lower Basin proposal provides just that, including 3.2 million acre-feet of savings by water users across the Lower Basin through 2028, which builds on our conservation record of over 11 million-acre-feet of contributions to the system since 2003. It is an ambitious and far-reaching plan that benefits the entire Colorado River Basin and requires the continued leadership of the Department of Interior in partnering with the Lower Basin states to bring its benefits to fruition. We appreciate the Department's encouragement and consultation on this proposal, as well as its rapid consideration.

This proposal is an integrated, non-severable package that addresses:

- Lake Powell Releases;
- Upper Initial Units Operations;
- Lower Basin reductions by state of 1.25 million acre-feet annually;
- Additional Lower Basin Conservation;
- Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS);
- Establishment of a Tribal Pool; and
- Infrastructure Improvements, including to Glen Canyon Dam, as well as development of system projects.

The Lower Division States' Proposal is structured as a unified package. Its components are not independent and should not be evaluated or modified in isolation. The operational elements governing Lake Powell releases and the use of the Upper Initial Units are foundational as the Lower Basin reductions and proposed contributions are directly dependent on these operational parameters. Consistent with the Law of the River, the Department of the Interior does not have the authority to implement these Lower Basin reductions and conservation activities as proposed, nor to require Tribal pool contributions, in the absence of an agreement with the Lower Division States.

The term of this proposal has been intentionally shortened to reflect rapidly changing hydrologic

conditions, with a commitment to develop additional provisions in the coming years. This approach provides a necessary bridge to stabilize the system in the face of deteriorating hydrology, while preserving the opportunity to build towards a comprehensive seven-state solution both for the near-term and for the longer-term.

This proposal builds on the Lower Basin's demonstrated record of supporting the Colorado River System with significant water use reductions, including our earlier proposal for annual reductions of 1.5 million acre-feet in coordination with Mexico, and a new expanded effort to implement additional Lower Basin conservation of at least 700,000 acre-feet of conserved water (and a target of 1 million acre-feet) as well as a Tribal Pool. The implementation of these water contributions is contingent on the availability of federal and other funding at a sufficient scale. The Lower Division States anticipate a cost-sharing approach with the Federal government, reflecting our continued commitment to partnership solutions.

Additional work is required to implement this proposal. The Lower Division States are committed to continuing to work on intrastate commitments and implementation agreements in the coming weeks, and to work collaboratively with the Department to finalize proposal elements. The final package will require approval of necessary governing bodies such as California water agency boards and the Arizona legislature.

Reclamation should work with the U.S. Department of State, the Lower Division States, and the Republic of Mexico to provide parity in reductions and methods for satisfying reductions consistent with the Lower Division States.

Finally, the Lower Division States commit to continuing consultation to evaluate and develop long-term operations based on system conditions and available resources.

The proposal preserves legal accountability of the Upper Division States consistent with the Colorado River Compact, including Upper Division States delivery obligations to the Lower Division States under Articles III(C) and III(D). At the same time, the Lower Division States remain committed to a basin-wide solution. Achieving sustainable operations will require net reductions in use across all Basin States. The impediment to a seven-state deal has been the Upper Division States' refusal to commit to water use reductions to protect the system. Yet again, the Lower Division States invite the Upper Division States to join the proposal with verifiable water contributions of their own for 2027 and 2028 so that we can collectively provide a bridge that protects the system while we develop long-term operations together.

The objective of this proposal is to build resilience in the Colorado River system and provide a bridge to long-term operations. The Lower Division States remain committed to constructive engagement with the Department and all Basin partners to achieve a sustainable and legally sound path forward.

Sincerely,

Tom Buschatzke  
Director, Arizona Department of Water Resources

JB Hamby

Chair, Colorado River Board of California

John J. Entsminger  
General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority



# UPPER COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION

50 S. 600 E. Ste #100 • Salt Lake City, UT 84102 • 801-531-1150 • [www.ucrccommission.com](http://www.ucrccommission.com)

May 1, 2026

Andrea Travnicek  
Assistant Secretary of Water and Science  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

*Submitted to [andrea\\_travnicek@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrea_travnicek@ios.doi.gov)*

Dear Assistant Secretary Travnicek,

On Friday, April 24, 2026, you invited the Colorado River Basin States to provide additional input on the Post-2026 operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead (Post-2026 NEPA process). On April 29, 2026, Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), David Palumbo, in his email to the seven Governors' representatives, noted that Reclamation would provide the Upper Division States (UDS) with further opportunity to respond to any ideas or concepts that may be shared pursuant to that invitation. The UDS, acting through the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC), maintain that absent a seven Basin States consensus agreement, Reclamation must select its Preferred Alternative and issue a Record of Decision consistent with the ongoing Post-2026 NEPA process. Any additional input on the Post-2026 NEPA process, including a Preferred Alternative selected by Reclamation, must adhere to the geographic scope described in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and must be limited to the existing authorities of the Secretary of Interior and Reclamation.

The UDS have consistently advocated for Post-2026 operations that address current and future risks to the system caused by climate change and current water demands on Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Since 2000, there has been a growing imbalance with water use exceeding supply. As a result, storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead has been significantly depleted. Climate science and Reclamation's projections indicate the Colorado River Basin should expect continued long-term and sustained drought, increasing temperatures, low soil moisture, and low runoff conditions. Post-2026 operations must sustain Lake Powell and Lake Mead into the future through a wide range of water supply conditions. Demand-driven operations cannot be sustained.

Over the course of the Post-2026 NEPA process, the UDS have provided input designed to address the purpose and need identified in the Federal Register Doc. 2023–23127, filed October 19, 2023.

On March 5, 2024, the UDS submitted a proposed alternative for consideration by Reclamation in the Post-2026 NEPA process and subsequently submitted a refined alternative on December 31, 2024. This refined UDS alternative included operational rules that effectively respond to actual hydrologic conditions, appropriately coordinate Lake Powell and Lake Mead operations while managing risks, and rebuild storage within existing legal authorities. Neither the original nor the refined UDS alternative was selected by Reclamation for analysis as a proposed alternative in the Post-2026 NEPA process. Finally, on March 2, 2026, the UDS, both individually and collectively through the UCRC, submitted comments on the DEIS.

On a separate but parallel track, in the context of negotiations among the seven Basin States to try to reach a consensus agreement on post-2026 operations, the UDS offered numerous compromise proposals. These compromises for both short-term and longer-term operations were offered as consideration for a Basin States consensus agreement in advance of the Reclamation-imposed February 14, 2026, deadline. Even though our proposals were dismissed, we remain willing to engage in negotiations on a consensus agreement, including for shorter-term operations.

Additionally, throughout the entire negotiation process, the UDS have committed to actions in the Upper Basin that are beyond the scope of the Post-2026 NEPA process but will complement those operations. Current and projected hydrology warrants complementary actions to support Lake Powell, and the UDS have demonstrated their commitment to such actions. On April 21, 2026, the UDS approved the release of up to 1 million acre-feet from Flaming Gorge under the 2026 Drought Response Operations Plan. Pursuant to the December 2, 2024, Memorandum of Understanding between the UDS and Reclamation, the UDS are also implementing Provisional Accounting projects that contribute additional water to Lake Powell and the Upper Initial Units (UIU). These projects are a precursor to an agreement between the UDS and Reclamation which properly recognizes and accounts for the water contributed. The UDS look forward to working with Reclamation to develop agreements, outside of the Post-2026 NEPA process, regarding the operation of the UIUs and contribution activities that support Lake Powell operations.

Given the current impasse between the Upper and Lower Basins, on April 23, 2026, the UDS proposed mediation. We remain committed to exhausting all possibilities for a consensus solution even at this late hour and believe there is merit in neutral mediation. Accordingly, we will continue to pursue mediation as a path forward.

The UDS continue to believe that a consensus Basin States agreement is the optimal outcome for each Basin State and the Colorado River system as a whole. In the absence of consensus, the Preferred Alternative must adhere to the scope of the Post-2026 NEPA process and must fit squarely within existing federal authorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Cullom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles Cullom  
Executive Director  
Upper Colorado River Commission



Upper Colorado  
River Commission

## **Upper Colorado River Commissioners Call for Immediate Return to Negotiating Table** *Upper Basin proposes mediation to advance a seven-state consensus on Colorado River operations*

**SALT LAKE CITY — April 23, 2026 —** At the 316<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Upper Colorado River Commission on April 21, the Upper Division States called for all parties to return to the Colorado River negotiating table and advance a path toward a seven-state consensus.

While time is short, the Commissioners expressed confidence that a consensus agreement for both near-term and long-term operations remains within reach. To advance this effort, the Commissioners proposed immediate mediation among the seven Basin States and the U.S. Department of the Interior/ Bureau of Reclamation.

Given the federal timeline, the Upper Division States today proposed starting the mediation process immediately.

The proposal for mediation attempts to address the current deadlock between Upper Basin and Lower Basin approaches and begin to deal with the Basin's dire hydrologic conditions. The Commissioners believe a structured mediation process can support authentic negotiations and collective action to address the Basin's operational challenges.

The Commissioners identified three focus areas for potential mediation:

- **Operations**
- **Federal funding**
- **Creative and flexible programs**

The Commissioners noted that previously all seven State principals, individually and collectively have advocated for a seven-state consensus framework. Consistent with that sentiment, the Upper Division States are proposing renewed engagement towards collective progress.

The Commissioners of the Upper Division States provided the following statements:

### UCRC Chair and Colorado Commissioner, Becky Mitchell

"The time is now to solve the math problem of the Colorado River. Litigation will not generate any new water in this basin. We must stay at the table and work together on real solutions that reflect today's hydrology."

### New Mexico Commissioner, Estevan Lopez

"Time is short, but structured negotiations through mediation offer a new path for authentic discussions. Even at this late stage, we should pursue every opportunity to reach a workable agreement."

### Utah Commissioner, Gene Shawcroft

"The hydrology is dire and it demands that we collectively develop new solutions. Those solutions must work for both the Upper Basin and Lower Basin if we are going to protect the Colorado River system."

### Wyoming Commissioner, Brandon Gebhart

"We still have an opportunity and an obligation to continue to work together, and we should. Wyoming is committed to being part of the solution, and we are willing to work hard alongside our partners to get there. Durable outcomes will require all of us to stay engaged and focused on results."



Upper Colorado  
River Commission

**About the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC):**

The UCRC is an interstate administrative agency made up of duly appointed representatives from the four Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

###

**UCRC Media Contacts:**

Matt Moseley  
mmoseley@ignitionstrategygroup.com  
303-887-0826

Kendra Westerkamp  
Kendra@C4Spark.com  
720-261-2300



**Colorado River Basin States Governors of  
Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming**

April 30, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
United States Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Urgent federal investment in Colorado River Basin-wide Solutions

Secretary Burgum,

Thank you for your leadership as we work collectively to navigate unprecedented challenges across the Colorado River Basin. As you know, the water and power generated by the Colorado River enrich America. The river supplies 40 million people directly, irrigates crops that feed the nation, and supports industries including aerospace, defense, and technology.

We recognize our hotter and drier hydrologic reality. Drought has gripped the basin since at least 2000. Average temperatures are rising. We agree that a shared solution is the best way to maintain the vitality of communities large and small across the basin.

Most urgently, we agree on the need to stabilize and protect critical elevations at Lake Powell. We appreciate the ongoing coordination with the Department of the Interior to ensure power generation and water deliveries from Lake Powell and Lake Mead can occur despite challenging hydrology and a winter of record-low snowpack.

We appreciate hearing that Interior has released \$100 million to the Upper Colorado River Commission and \$354 million for projects in the Lower Basin. We urge you to coordinate with the Office of Management and Budget to facilitate release of the remaining \$550 million of available Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding that Congress appropriated to address drought conditions across the Basin. Stabilizing reservoir storage and mitigating drought impacts demands actions supported by and coordinated with each Basin State. Federal funding released by the Department of the Interior for our states must be made available as quickly as possible and distributed across both the Upper and Lower Basins so

that our state, Tribal, regional and local water agencies may incentivize conservation and other efficiency measures that mitigate local or regional impacts of drought.

Distributed across the Basin, the remaining IRA funding will help buffer local economies from water supply reductions from near-term operational changes and driven by future needs.

With strong partnerships, we can stretch the available supplies with water sharing agreements, water recycling, augmentation, and water use efficiency improvements. At the requisite scale, these solutions will require significant federal funding to match our state investments. Funding should be deployed in a manner that respects the direction and approval of the respective Basin States, while advancing shared objectives to address regional conditions. Across the Basin, funding decisions should incentivize demonstrated progress, transparency, and accountability, and should support activities that enhance cooperative, good-faith efforts among the Basin States. This funding enables the collaborative approach that we are undertaking to avoid costly litigation among our states.

As our seven states continue to work toward an agreement to minimize conflict and address the reality of reduced water supplies through a post-2026 framework, unprecedented amounts of shared federal and state investment will be required. That is why we write to express the urgency of federal funding without preempting or endorsing particular proposals or positions taken by our undersigned states. Our collective efforts will reduce pressure on Lake Powell and Lake Mead and build water supply resilience throughout the basin.

Looking to the future, additional sources of durable federal funding will be essential to support the basin-wide framework our state negotiators are working to achieve through a post-2026 seven-state consensus plan that includes options for investments in conservation and additional resilience-building strategies. Over the long term, our states will need to work together with the federal agencies to invest in infrastructure, deploy technology, and create operational flexibility so that we can capture water when it arrives in this increasingly warm world of weather whiplash.

We look forward to hearing from you on near-term next steps and answering your call to demonstrate how federal investments will support key economic sectors across our region that are critical to our nation's future. Working together, we can sustain a prosperous future.

Sincerely,



Katie Hobbs  
Governor, State of Arizona



Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California



Jared Polis  
Governor, State of Colorado



Joe Lombardo  
Governor, State of Nevada



Michelle Lujan-Grisham  
Governor, State of New Mexico



Spencer Cox  
Governor, State of Utah



Mark Gordon  
Governor, State of Wyoming



MINUTES OF MEETING  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Friday, January 9, 2026

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Friday, January 9, 2026, at Orion Room of Classic Club, 75200 Classic Club Blvd, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Thomas Gibson (DWR Designee)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Dana Fisher, Jr (PVID)	

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Jessica Neuwerth
Fernando Castro-Alvarez	John Powell
Robert Cheng	Shana Rapoport
Dennis Davis	Alexi Schnell
JR Echard	Tina Shields
Steve Grasha	Joseph Vanderhorst
Eric Katz	Petya Vasileva
Laura Landin	Chance Wilcox
Yuanyuan Myint	Jerry Zimmerman

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

## **NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Chairman Hamby swore in Thomas Gibson, the new designee board member representing the California Department of Water Resources.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Chairman Hamby invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board.

Chance Wilcox, California Desert Program Manager of the National Parks Conservation Association, made a comment to the Board.

Member Nelson introduced Steve Grasha, Director of the Desert Water Agency.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Hamby moved on to the next item on the agenda.

## **REPORTS**

### **Water Supply and Operations Report**

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that precipitation conditions over the last few months have been a mixed bag but overall, there has been poor snow accumulation. She stated that conditions in the Colorado River Basin in November and December were very dry, with wetter conditions in October. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that during the first few days of January the Colorado River Basin experienced wet conditions due to storm activity. She explained that Basin wide precipitation conditions are near or above normal, noting precipitation was 103% of normal in the Upper Basin and 150% of normal in the Lower Basin. However, the Upper and Lower Basin snowpack was below average due to above normal temperatures. She explained that the poor snowpack has impacted spring runoff into Lake Powell and runoff is projected to be 70% of average. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that it is still early in the winter season and overall precipitation and snowpack conditions could improve.

## Colorado River Basin Programs Report

Staff Member Rapoport reported on highlights from a memo included in the meeting packet that provides a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin.

### ***Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program***

Staff Member Rapoport reported that in 2026 the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program is going to be focusing on a triennial review of water quality standards. Every three years, as required by the Clean Water Act, water quality standards need to be reviewed. The salinity standard for the Colorado River hasn't changed since it was put into place; however, it needs to be reviewed and will be accompanied by an implementation plan. That work will be coming through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum.

### ***Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program***

Staff Member Rapoport reported that one of the priorities in 2026 for the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program is to make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior regarding potential experiments through Glen Canyon Dam. Staff Member Rapoport stated that the two potential experiments that are likely to be the hot topics for this year are Cool Mix Flows and a High Flow Experiment.

Staff Member Rapoport stated that Cool Mix Flow experiments were conducted last year and the year before and involve Reclamation releasing cooler water through the bypass tubes at Glen Canyon Dam to try and cool down the water to prevent high-risk invasive species, primarily smallmouth bass, from breeding below the dam in an effort to protect the humpback chub. Staff Member Rapoport added that Cool Mix Flows have been successful in the last couple of years but at great expense to hydropower. The 2026 experiment, because of the hydrological conditions, would be a costly experiment.

Staff Member Rapoport reported that the other experiment on the table is a High Flow Experiment to try and push sediment downstream. There was enough sediment to conduct an experiment in the fall; however, the Secretary of the Interior deferred a potential experiment to the spring due to the federal government shutdown.

### ***Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program***

Staff Member Rapoport reported that in 2026 the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program will be focused on making sure that compliance is in place for post-2026 guidelines. Staff Member Rapoport stated that the California permittees are working very closely with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on the California permit, as well as with the federal agencies on the federal permit.

## Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Board had been provided with a written memo summarizing recent Basin States activities. She stated that the states were unable to reach agreement by the federal government's November 11 deadline to submit a consensus proposal, and a deadline of February 14 had been set. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that further discussion would occur later in the meeting.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### Member Agency and Public Member Reports

#### ***Imperial Irrigation District (IID)***

IID Water Department Manager Tina Shields reported on IID's efforts related to the potential listing of the western burrowing owl as protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) by the California Fish and Wildlife Commission (CFCW). She noted that such listing would complicate operations and maintenance (O&M) activities in the IID's water system. Ms. Shields reported that IID commissioned a survey of burrowing owls earlier in the year (2025), and that the survey found over 7,000 breeding pairs in the Imperial Valley and over 300 in the Coachella Valley, noting that these are significantly higher than in previous years. She reported that IID created a summary report of the survey findings and submitted it to the CFCW for consideration. She stated that they expect an initial response from CFCW staff in April. She anticipated that the CFCW would make a decision on listing later in the summer and expressed hope that if they do choose to list the western burrowing owl, they will exclude the Imperial and Coachella Valley populations. Ms. Shields concluded by noting that she would keep the Board posted in case additional comment letters to support the non-listing of the species are needed after the staff-level report is released.

Member Nelson asked whether the lack of owl counts in Coachella Valley prior to 2025 indicated zero owls or no data. Ms. Shields clarified that it meant no data, and that there is historical data in the Imperial Valley due to periodic studies and surveys connected to Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) environmental permitting. She further noted that IID already has had various mitigation measures in place, including both education and physical measures.

#### ***Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)***

Member Cordero reported that MWD has increased its public outreach related to the Colorado River negotiations on social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram.

Member Cordero reported on additional funding that MWD has received to allow it to increase its commercial and public agency turf replacement program to a record \$7 per square foot. She noted that this has increased the participation by commercial areas by tenfold. She further reported that homeowners' associations (HOAs) are also now able to participate, for which MWD has received some local interest. She noted that while this has increased turf replacement, MWD does not have the funds to cover all the increased interest. She stated that MWD does have funds to cover \$4 per square foot with \$96 million from Reclamation's Lower Colorado Basin System Conservation and Efficiency Program and will be pursuing that for the increased demand.

Member Cordero reported that in December Governor Newsom certified that under Senate Bill 149, the Infrastructure Streamlining Program, the Pure Water project would receive expedited judicial review if the Environmental Impact Report faces any legal challenges. She reported that the MWD Board will consider its Final Impact Report for Pure Water in its February meeting, noting that after the Final Impact Report is complete MWD will consider whether to move forward with the next funding steps for the program.

### ***San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)***

Vicie Chairman Madaffer reported on SDCWA's Permanent Special Agricultural Water Rate Program. He noted that SDCWA's board recently renewed this program, which ensures that they give discounted water rates to farmers in support of the region's agricultural industry. Vice Chairman Madaffer summarized the agricultural industry in San Diego County, noting that there are over 5,000 farmers that utilize about 250,000 acres and produce about \$1.7 billion in commodities per year. He noted that the discounted rate program started in 2008, with its current form starting in 2020, and that it has been extended with the backing of the Farm Bureau in San Diego County. Vice Chairman Madaffer described the program generally, noting that it provides discounted water rates in exchange for an interruptible lower level of service during supply shortages. He stated that the discount is \$800 per acre-foot.

### ***California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)***

Member Vigil reported on CDFW efforts to monitor, map and control the golden mussel, a recent invasive species in California, noting that it was first found a year ago in the San Joaquin Sacramento Delta area and that it is migrating with the flow in the California Aqueduct. He reported that CDFW now has an active map on their website to show where they have been detected in real-time. He discussed CDFW's experience with the quagga mussel, noting that it has been almost 20 years since it was introduced and that it has been relatively controlled through collaboration with water agencies and inspections and decontamination efforts. He reported that CDFW is now in the process of training trainers on inspection and decontamination of watercraft and will offer training a couple times per year. He also noted that CDFW is working with LADWP to do training

in the Eastern Sierra Nevada with local regional scientists there. He discussed the general state-wide strategy to control the golden mussel, including developing and updating control and response plans for water agencies. He concluded by noting that there will be more work in the upper part of the state compared to that of the quagga mussel in Southern California.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Hamby reported that Reclamation has set a February 14 deadline for Basin States agreement on Post-2026 operations. Chairman Hamby noted that the Lower Basin developed a proposal in 2024 that shared 1.5 MAF of near-annual reductions among the Lower Basin states and Mexico and would share additional reductions 50-50 between the Upper and Lower Basins. This proposal included several major compromises from long-standing Lower Basin positions, but conversations between the basins on the proposal stalled in 2024.

Chairman Hamby reported that in 2025, Basin dialogue was reinvigorated by discussion of a natural flow proposal, which would simplify required deal points and adapt to hydrology. If the river's natural flow were allocated 65% to the Lower Basin and 35% to the Upper Basin, both basins would have to adapt their uses to live within that volume, however much or little hydrology provided. However, several of the Upper Basin states rejected the proposal. The Basin states returned to a framework similar to the 2024 proposals and established workgroups in an attempt to make progress on key issues. However, major policy disagreement between the Basins remains, related primarily to Powell-to-Mead releases, the use of reservoirs above Lake Powell, and reductions above 1.5 MAF.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Lower Basin has provided numerous proposals, worked to maintain creativity and flexibility, and met with Upper Basin states individually and together to better understand their positions. However, the Upper Basin has been consistently unwilling to commit to reduce its use, and this position has halted progress toward Basin States agreement.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Reclamation is expected to release a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) today. The EIS alternatives were expected to be similar to those proposed by Reclamation in January 2025, with the exception of the Basin States Hybrid alternative. The Basin States Hybrid alternative was modified into a natural flow proposal, reflecting the status of Basin States discussions in summer of 2025.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman Madaffer, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the EIS will likely show reductions of as much as 4 MAF to the Lower Basin under some alternatives. Member Nelson asked whether use of the Upper

Initial Units to bolster Lake Powell would be included in any of the EIS alternatives; Executive Director Neuwerth reported that it was included in two.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that although the Basin States had initially hoped to reach agreement for twenty years, recent discussions have focused on a five-year agreement, in hopes that a shorter term could narrow the points of disagreement. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that during a five-year agreement, the Upper Basin could commit to build conservation capacity, making it easier for them to make binding conservation commitments in a future agreement. Member Ruiz stated that a short-term deal may be the best option given the current landscape.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that in order for Reclamation to publish a final EIS with a preferred alternative no later than summer 2026, the Basin States would need to reach agreement by approximately February or March.

In response to a question from Vice Chairman Madaffer, Chairman Hamby reported that there has been limited discussion so far about the availability of federal funding to help materialize the provisions of a Basin States deal. Some funding is still available under the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which helped materialize over 3.7 MAF of Lower Basin conservation in recent years, but the remaining funding is likely not adequate.

Chairman Hamby reported on several upcoming meetings. The Basin States plan to meet the following week in an attempt to reach agreement on a five-year agreement. The seven Basin States governors and Basin States principals were invited to a meeting with Secretary of the Interior Burgum at the end of January. Finally, the California agencies and Colorado River Board staff met with California Natural Resource Agency and Governor's Office staff in Sacramento earlier in the week. Member Gibson reported that the meeting reflected the importance of the Colorado River negotiations to the state of California.

Vice Chairman Madaffer stated that he was encouraged that the agencies had met with Governor's Office staff and noted that it is important for California to tell its story on the conservation and stewardship occurring within the state. Member Cordero agreed, noting that access to water is critical for health and safety, agriculture, and the economy in Southern California. Member Kwan also emphasized the importance of telling California's story, noting that LADWP has made major investments in local water supply projects.

Member Nelson stated that California has significantly reduced its use of the Colorado River and can serve as an example of what is possible for other Basin States. Member Nelson shared appreciation for the proposals put forward by the Lower Basin states, which seek binding commitments to reduce water use from the Upper Basin.

Member Robinson urged caution in putting additional Lower Basin conservation on the table, noting the impacts that the Lower Basin's extensive conservation can have on agricultural districts.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Hamby moved a motion to enter Executive Session, seconded by Member Cordero. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

The Board entered Executive Session at 11:38 a.m.

Pursuant to Section 12519 of Water Code, an Executive Session was held to discuss interstate claims to the use of Colorado River system waters in judicial proceedings, administrative proceedings, and/or negotiations with representatives from the other Basin states of federal government.

### **REGULAR SESSION**

The Board resumed the regular session at 12:00 p.m. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.



MINUTES OF MEETING  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at Sycamore Room of DoubleTree by Hilton Claremont, 555 West Foothill Blvd, Claremont, CA 91711.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
Dana Fisher, Jr (PVID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Thomas Gibson (DWR Designee)	Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Travis Moore
Fernando Castro-Alvarez	Yuanyuan Myint
Dennis Davis	Jessica Neuwerth
JR Echard	Jason Rollo
Steve Grasha	Shanti Rosset
Christopher Harris	Alexi Schnell
Eric Katz	Joseph Vanderhorst
Laura Landin	Jerry Zimmerman
Dwight Lomayesva	

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Chairman Hamby invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

## **REPORTS**

### **Water Supply and Operations Report**

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Upper Basin precipitation is currently 84% of normal with snowpack at just 58% of normal. She reported that the Basin has experienced an unusually warm winter to date, adding that the Colorado River snowpack, as well as within California is very low. She added that the Water Year 2026 (WY-2026) projected runoff to Lake Powell is 52% of average, which is drier than the previous year and approaching the lowest projected runoff in the last 25 years. She stated that there is a disparity between Basin precipitation and snowpack, and this disparity has impacted the runoff models as they are calibrated with snowpack data. She stated that over the last few months, runoff projections have steadily decreased as the Basin continues to receive below average snowpack.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) February 24-month study Most Probable projection shows Lake Powell dropping below 3,500 feet before September of WY-2026. She explained that 3,500 feet is the protection elevation that Reclamation has chosen as a buffer to 3,490 feet, the minimum power pool for Lake Powell. She stated that below 3,490 feet there is a loss of power production at Glen Canyon dam. She stated that water can still be released but it would be routed through the outlet works and not through the power plant, adding that the outlets work are used regularly for experiments and not meant for supply release of 7 MAF of water over a year. She added that Reclamation is concerned about safely releasing water through the outlet works.

Executive Director Neuwerth added that the February 24-month study does include the impacts of the storm system the Basin experienced last week and does not include response actions such as releases from Upper Basin reservoirs. She stated these reservoirs include Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa, and Navajo and that releases may start in May to protect Lake Powell's elevation of 3,500 feet. In addition, Reclamation is also working on making an adjustment to releases from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, called a

6E adjustment. She explained that under the 2024 Supplemental EIS to the 2007 Guidelines, Reclamation can reduce the Lake Powell release to as low as 6 MAF in any year to protect elevation 3,500 feet. She stated that the current planned release in WY-2026 is 7.48 MAF, and Reclamation's action would reduce the release by as much as 1.48 MAF to protect elevation 3,500 feet. . Reclamation will provide clarity on the reduced releases over the next few weeks. She reported that the February 24-Month study shows Lake Mead's elevation is around 1,060 feet and is projected to end the year at 1,050 feet. However, if releases are curtailed, Lake Mead's elevation could drop to 1,040 feet or 1,030 feet.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that California precipitation conditions to date are 110% of average, but snowpack is only 54% of average, a disparity that the Colorado River Basin is also experiencing. She stated that higher than normal temperatures are the main factor, stating that it has been exceptionally warm throughout the fall and into the early winter months, impacting snowpack accumulation. She stated that overall precipitation volume is not as dire as snowpack, but precipitation is not translating into runoff. She added that there are few good months of snow accumulation ahead, so we are waiting to see if conditions improve.

Member Fisher asked if there was a possibility that the power pool may not be maintained despite additional releases from the Upper reservoirs. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that 24-Month minimum probable projection shows Lake Powell dropping to 3,450 feet. She added that it is possible that the "hole" in Lake Powell might not be filled with the combination of releases from the Upper Initial Units (UIU) and reducing downstream releases this year.

Member Fisher asked whether the Basin States have come together to demand that Reclamation fix the issues with Glen Canyon Dam. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Upper Basin does not want their UIU storage to be depleted for the sake of Lake Powell and similarly, the Lower Basin does not want Lake Mead depleted. She reported that both Basins believe that Reclamation needs to resolve the issues with Glen Canyon Dam. She stated that Glen Canyon Dam requires significant funding and infrastructure changes to allow it to operate below the minimum power pool.

Chairman Hamby stated that the Lower Basin has consistently advocated for Reclamation to make the necessary fixes to Glen Canyon Dam. He added that Scott Cameron, Reclamation's Acting Commissioner, is aware of the concerns and has stated that fixes to Glen Canyon Dam would be expensive. He added that the Upper Basin Reclamation staff have released new technical information that determined that using the low elevation outlet works may not be as harmful to the dam as originally thought. In addition, Chairman Hamby stated that the amount of water below deadpool in Lake Powell's exceeds storage in California's largest reservoir, Lake Shasta.

## Colorado River Basin Programs Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported on highlights from a memo included in the meeting packet that provides a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin.

### ***Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum's (Forum) Work Group is meeting right now in Orange County and that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council (Advisory Council) held a meeting last month.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the only update from that meeting is that the members of the Advisory Council are continuing to push Reclamation on a solution in the Paradox Valley. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the Paradox Valley is a point source for a lot of salinity and there is an aging deep-injection well there that is collecting saline runoff prior to it intersecting the Dolores River. Executive Director Neuwerth added that the well has been showing signs of decline for about a decade. Reclamation produced an Environmental Impact Statement five or six years ago and selected the "No Action Alternative" as no optimal alternatives were identified. Pressure has been growing from the Advisory Council and the Forum, asking Reclamation to continue exploring options that could control salinity in the area. The Forum and the States are also considering exploring options. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that during the meeting the Advisory Council heard from Wayne Pullan, the Upper Colorado lead for Reclamation, that they are moving forward with a list of different options and starting to gather more information to help identify potential solutions.

### ***Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program held its Annual Reporting Meeting and pointed to a write-up in the Program's Memo with the highlights from the meeting. The humpback chub, which is the main species of concern in the Grand Canyon reach, seems to be doing pretty well. The numbers are going up because the water temperature has been high because the reservoir is low.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that there is a link in the memo to a video that the Navajo Nation put together called "River as Teacher."

### ***Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) is continuing to meet regularly, including today.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the LCR MSCP permittees are preparing to modify that program to match what is needed post-2026.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the LCR MSCP provides what is referred to as change in flow coverage. In the Lower Basin, if water is transferred or left behind in Lake Mead, those are actions that need Endangered Species Act (ESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA) coverage. The LCR MSCP covers those actions. If larger changes in flow actions are contemplated in the future, there might need to be changes to the LCR MSCP to cover those actions. This would be a multi-year process. The LCR MSCP includes interim coverage for up to 3 million acre-feet of change in flow through 2028, providing a bit of a longer for this process than is available for the post-2026 guidelines in general.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Reclamation is working on an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for post-2028 changes to the LCR MSCP, with an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) being managed by three California co-lead agencies. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that scoping on the EIS/EIR has not yet started because the Post-2026 Guidelines, which will inform you about future changes in flow, remain so unresolved.

#### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Reclamation had released its draft EIS for Post-2026 operations in January. The EIS alternatives were generally similar to those proposed by Reclamation in January 2025, with the exception of the Basin States Hybrid alternative. The Basin States Hybrid alternative was modified into a natural flow proposal, reflecting the status of Basin States discussions in summer of 2025. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that the updated Basin States Hybrid is generally acceptable to the Lower Basin but has been rejected by the Upper Basin. Several Board members commented on the natural flow proposal. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that many of the other alternatives have drastic negative outcomes in the Lower Basin. Comments are due on the EIS by March 2, and the Board is working to finalize a comment letter.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Basin States missed a February 14 deadline for a consensus agreement, the second missed deadline in the past three months. Reclamation has not yet shared their next steps or whether there are any expected consequences for the failure to meet the deadline.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported legislation creating an interest-bearing account for non-federal contributions to the LCR MSCP passed the Senate last month. In addition, Senator Padilla has introduced two new bills meant to explore innovative programs for on-farm activities and water conservation. In response to a question from Member Nelson, she noted that the scope and associated funding for the bills were

relatively small scale. Some funding for Lower Basin conservation is still available through the Inflation Reduction Act, although it would need to be obligated before the end of September.

Member Madaffer asked whether it would be possible to extend the 2007 Guidelines for five years. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there would be both challenges and benefits to extending the guidelines, but that extending the current framework would require some careful construction and would likely be opposed by the Upper Basin.

Member Fisher noted that there is a need for augmentation across the Basin, which could help ensure sufficient storage to meet water needs and generate hydropower, and the political climate may be friendlier to pipeline or desalination projects than in the past.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **Consideration and Approval of Meeting Minutes of the October 15, 2025 Board Meeting**

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the October 15, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Madaffer moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Cordero. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

### **Consideration and Approval of Meeting Minutes of the December 16, 2025 Board Meeting**

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the October 15, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Madaffer moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Cordero. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

### **Member Agency and Public Member Reports**

#### ***Imperial Irrigation District (IID)***

Member Gina Dockstader reported that IID has a new water master, Elise Rojas. Ms. Dockstader noted that the water master manages IID's annual diversion of Colorado River water of 2.6 million acre-feet and releases from Brock Reservoir and operates IID's main canals and regulating and interceptor reservoirs. She further elaborated on the roles and responsibilities of the water master position, noting in particular how skilled they are in anticipating farmers' actual daily water needs based on a variety of factors such as weather and holidays.

## ***Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)***

Member Cordero reported on MWD's Pure Water Southern California (Pure Water) facility, noting that last week the MWD Board voted unanimously to certify the Final Environmental Impact Review (EIR) report for the program, thereby completing the legally required review. She reported that this certification clears the way for future implementation decisions, including phasing, funding, design and construction. She stated that this project is part of MWD's Climate Adaptation Management Plan and a larger discussion on the biennial budget, which, she noted, started at the same meeting last week. She reported that the proposed budget will include the funding, design, permitting and other pre-construction activities for stage one level of 45 million gallons per day. She further noted that a series of budget hearings began last week, and that the budget will be reviewed and adopted during MWD's Board meeting in April.

Member Cordero also reported on the broad support that MWD has received for Pure Water from the water sector and the community, noting the support from Los Angeles County Sanitation, Central Arizona Project, and Southern Nevada Water Authority in the weeks leading up to the approval of the EIR. She concluded by noting that there are still important decisions to be made about Pure Water and that CRB input and engagement is welcome.

## ***San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)***

Member Madaffer reported that SDCWA just adopted its 2026 Long-Range Financing Plan, noting that it is a ten-year demand forecast that guides SDCWA's capital improvement projects and other SDCWA activities. He reported on the challenge of over-conserving water users, which he noted reduces water sales and makes debt management more difficult. He noted that the new plan includes items that will help SDCWA adjust.

Member Madaffer reported that SDCWA unanimously elected Teresa Acosta as its Board Secretary, noting that she is a Council Member for the City of Carlsbad and that starting in September of this year she will be President of the League of California Cities. He expressed admiration for her and anticipated that she may eventually become SDCWA Board Chair.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Hamby provided an overview of current Basin States negotiations and the issues preventing consensus. He stated that the Upper Basin States have an obligation to provide 75 MAF over every ten-year period, plus half of the treaty delivery to Mexico. With projected releases of 6 MAF from Lake Powell in 2026, Lee Ferry flows are projected to fall below the volume require by the Compact. Although the Lower Basin has

been willing to offer more flexible options to the Upper Basin in negotiations, this flexibility is contingent upon meaningful, binding commitments from the Upper Basin to use less water.

Chairman Hamby reported that, on average, the Upper Basin uses about the same amount of water as California, with an average of about 4.3 MAF, swinging to as low as 3.5 MAF or as high as 4.7 MAF. However, in general, their water use is slowly increasing and rarely drops below 3.9 MAF even in dry years. Chairman Hamby noted that Lake Powell and the Upper Initial Units (UIUs) above it were created to allow the Upper Basin to use stored water to meet their obligation in dry years, rather than curtailing uses. If water is not being released from those facilities when needed to maintain Compact compliance, additional shortages are being forced on the Lower Basin.

Chairman Hamby stated that the Secretary of the Interior Burgum had invited the seven Basin States governors to a meeting on January 30. He reported that the meeting was generally positive in tone. Chairman Hamby noted that the Basin States missed a February 14 deadline for agreement, and next steps remain unclear. He reported that the Basin States were discussing a short-term deal, but without Upper Basin commitments and actions, no Compact waiver could be offered. Given the Upper Basin's position, a deal between the Lower Basin and federal government may be the best achievable option.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Basin had started discussing options for a two-year proposal, given that both twenty-year and five-year proposals have failed due to disagreement between the basins. She reported that the Upper Basin has been very consistent and that they will not offer more than voluntary conservation. In response to a question from Member Fisher, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that, although the federal team clearly prefers a long-term agreement, they may be willing to accept a two- to three-year agreement out of necessity.

Member Fisher stated that Reclamation is protecting Lake Powell at the expense of Lake Mead, and the spirit of collaboration and shared sacrifice seen in the 2007 Guidelines is no longer in place. Member Fisher noted that the incentives and disincentives currently in place are not motivating the Upper Basin to compromise. Chairman Hamby noted that Utah's legislature has been spending money to conserve water, and there are conservation activities in Wyoming and New Mexico, but not every state is participating. He reported that Reclamation has authority in the Upper Basin, specifically through the operation of the Upper Initial Units of the Colorado River Storage Project.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that access to banked conservation remains a priority for California, as the state which has created the most Intentionally Created

Surplus. She reported that modifying existing rules for creation, storage, and recovery are under discussion as part of a short-term deal.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.



MINUTES OF MEETING  
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA  
Wednesday, March 11, 2026

A meeting of the Colorado River Board of California (CRB or Board) was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at Orion Room of Classic Club, 75200 Classic Club Blvd, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Board Members and Alternates Present:

Gloria Cordero (MWD)	Eric Heidemann (SDCWA Alternate)
Gina Dockstader (IID Alternate)	Jordan Joaquin (Public Member)
Castulo Estrada (CVWD Alternate)	Peter Nelson (CVWD)
Dana Fisher, Jr (PVID)	David R. Pettijohn (LADWP)
Thomas Gibson (DWR Designee)	Frank Ruiz (Public Member)
John B. Hamby, Chairman (IID)	David Vigil (DFW Alternate Designee)

Board Members and Alternates Absent:

Michael Camacho (MWD Alternate)	Jim Madaffer, Vice Chairman (SDCWA)
Christopher Hayes (DFW Designee)	Brad Robinson (PVID Alternate)
Delon Kwan (LADWP Alternate)	

Others Present:

Steve Abbott	Christopher Harris
Jim Barrett	Jeanine Jones
Dennis Davis	Laura Landin
JR Echard	Travis Moore
Andrew Fisher	Yuanyuan Myint
Susan Fisher	Jessica Newerth
Rosalyn Fleming	David Rheiheimer
Steve Grasha	Alexi Schnell
Bill Hasencamp	Joseph Vanderhorst

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hamby announced the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Chairman Hamby invited members of the audience to address the Board on items on the agenda or matters related to the Board. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item on the agenda.

## **RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF JEANINE JONES**

### **Consideration and approval of Board Resolution honoring Ms. Jeanine Jones for her service as Colorado River Board member**

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that Ms. Jeanine Jones had been on the Board since the late 1990s and welcomed everyone to give comments.

Member Pettijohn stated that Ms. Jones is brilliant, open-minded, and very knowledgeable about hydrology. He also mentioned that he shares interest with Ms. Jones about rock.

Member Cordero thanked Ms. Jones and stated she had learned a lot from Mr. Jones.

Member Nelson stated that he always appreciated Ms. Jones' extensive knowledge about geology, hydrology, and forecasting.

Member Fisher thanked Ms. Jones and stated that Ms. Jones had broad knowledge of hydrology and weather modification.

Member Gibson thanked Ms. Jones's services to the Board and the Department of Water Resources. Member Gibson appreciated Ms. Jones' knowledge about Colorado River.

Member Joaquin thanked Ms. Jones's services to the Board.

Mr. Chris Harris, prior Executive Director of the Board, stated he met Mr. Jones in early 90s when he was working for the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Mr. Harris concurred other comments about Ms. Jones's knowledge of the Colorado River.

Member Dockstader appreciated Mr. Jones.

Chairman Hamby asked for a motion to approve the Resolution. Member Pettijohn moved to approve the Resolution, seconded by Member Cordero. By roll-call vote, this item was unanimously approved.

Ms. Jones thanked everyone for the kind words. She stated that she would miss the people and enjoyed the intricacies of the Colorado River and all the field trips to the Colorado River. Mr. Jones remembered the long nights at the State Capitol for the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA).

Chairman Hamby invited all Board members to take a photo with Ms. Jones.

## **REPORTS**

### **Water Supply and Operations Report**

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that poor snowpack continues to persist across the Colorado River Basin. She stated that Upper Basin precipitation was 90% of normal and snowpack is 68% of normal. The forecasted inflow to Lake Powell was 52% of normal, which was the approximate inflow for Lake Powell last year. She stated that two consecutive years of low inflow is having an impact on Lake Powell. She explained that Lake Powell's elevation will usually drop over the winter as releases are made and its elevation will rebound as long as there is adequate spring runoff. She added that there would be very little rebound this year due to the low runoff projections.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that projections for Lake Powell's elevation show it dropping to 3,497 feet by the end of this water year. She stated that without compensatory action, Lake Powell will continue to fall by the end of calendar year until March 2027, until next year's runoff season. She stated that the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is looking at options to protect Lake Powell's elevation through the end of this water year. She stated that Reclamation plans to make releases from the Upper Initial Unit reservoirs in the Upper Basin, primarily from Flaming Gorge which is about 85% full most of the time. She stated that there could also be releases from Aspinall, Blue Mesa and Navajo reservoirs to provide water to Lake Powell. Releases will occur between May 2026 to April 2027 in the amount of 500,000 AF. She reported that Reclamation also wants to conduct 6E operations. Under the 2024 SEIS, Reclamation is able to reduce the release from Lake Powell to as low as 6 MAF to protect elevation 3,500 feet. Currently, a 7.48 MAF release was planned for Lake Powell, the fourth year out of the last five with a release of 7.48 MAF or less. She stated that Reclamation has not announced the amount of the reduction to the Lake Powell release.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the ten-year running average for Lees Ferry flows required by the Colorado River Compact, adding that Lees Ferry flows are in

danger of dropping below this threshold. She stated that if this year's release drops to below 7.15 MAF, there may be a violation of the Compact. She added that she believes that Reclamation is planning to reduce the release from Lake Powell to around 6 MAF. She remarked that unfortunately the bad precipitation conditions this year are hurrying some of the issues that the Basin had hoped to resolve with a new agreement.

### Colorado River Basin Programs Report

Executive Director Neuwerth reported on highlights from a memo included in the meeting packet that provides a report on activities and updates pertaining to programs in the Colorado River Basin.

#### ***Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) Work Group (Work Group) met over the past month. The Work Group reviewed the post-2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and made recommendations for how Reclamation could improve some of the salinity modeling that was included in that document.

#### ***Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Glen Canyon Dam program is preparing for potential experiments this year. A High Flow Experiment (HFE) could be held this year, where a big slug of water is released through Glen Canyon Dam and, through the Grand Canyon, rebuilding beaches that get eroded by the steady flows through the Grand Canyon. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that a Cool Mix Flow experiment is also being considered, where the bypass tubes are used to deliver cooler water to prevent non-native fish breeding.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that channelization of a slough below Glen Canyon Dam has recently been completed and is expected to prevent establishment of nonnative fish. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that water temperature was increasing in the slough over the summer and providing an incubator for warm water non-native fish. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that one of the projects that Park Service has been working on for multiple years is channelizing the slough.

Executive Director Neuwerth showed a picture of the slough before and after channelization and described the channelization work, including that a little stream now connects the backwater to the channel so water flows through the backwater and cools down the temperature.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that significantly less warm water fish are being identified reproducing in that area now that the slough work is complete. Executive

Director Neuwerth added that the project has been performing as expected and is a non-flow option that helps control non-native fish.

Executive Director Neuwerth stated that one of the detractions of Cool Mix Flows is that they are very costly. The only way to cool down the water right now is to release from the bypass tubes, which are located lower in the reservoir than the penstocks but that results in not generating power with any of that water. Executive Director Neuwerth stated that the experiments are a significant hit to hydropower generation.

In response to a question from Member Fisher, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that HFEs require the use of the bypass tubes and a previous HFE at low reservoir elevations had resulted in minor damage to the bypass tubes. She stated that although consideration of an HFE had been triggered, this experience would likely affect the possibility of an experiment in 2026. Member Nelson asked whether chemical eradication of nonnative fish was under consideration, in addition to the channelization of the slough. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that chemical fish treatment had occurred several times at the slough, but channelization was seen as a more palatable and long-term solution.

Member Fisher stated that given the guided fishing industry below Glen Canyon Dam, it was unsurprising that nonnative fish issues were challenging. Executive Director Neuwerth agreed with Member Fisher and added that there are guided fishing trips that are very high dollar so there is always a lot of resistance to anything that changes the landscape or reduces the amount of certain non-native fish.

### ***Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program***

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Financial Work Group met last month. The MSCP reported that program spending was significantly under the budget for last year. When the MSCP is under budget, the funds are able to be rolled over for future years. Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the MSCP continues to be fiscally conservative, allowing the program to save joint state and federal funds for a future year when the money is needed.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the comment period for Reclamation Post-2026 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) closed on March 2. She reported that comments from the Lower Basin generally focused on the need for Reclamation to analyze and implement alternatives compliant with the Law of the River, when the alternatives analyzed by Reclamation shift nearly the entire burden of protecting the system onto the Lower Basin while showing the Upper Basin increasing its demands.

Comments from the Upper Basin focused on water use in the Lower Basin, stated that the Lower Basin needs to take larger reductions, and questioned the basis of Reclamation's authorities in the Upper Basin.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that Reclamation will likely not be able to make sweeping changes to its alternatives and still meet a late-summer 2026 deadline for a final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD). In response to a question from Member Fisher, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that there are only two alternatives that Reclamation could implement without additional authorities. Member Fisher stated that a return to operations under the Long-Range Operating Criteria would likely be better for California.

Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the Executive Director's memo includes some D.C. updates, including information on new National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidelines for the Department of the Interior.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION**

### **Member Agency and Public Member Reports**

#### ***Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD)***

Member Cordero reported on MWD's conservation efforts. She stated that conservation targets outdoor water uses and accounts for 75% of new water savings. She reported that MWD's Metropolitan Turf Replacement Program and rebates for residential and commercial water users has replaced more than 6 million square feet of lawn with drought-tolerant landscaping in 2024 through 2025. She reported strong demand for the rebate, noting the rebate was increased to \$7 per square foot for commercial and public agency turf replacement with funding from the Department of Water Resources and Reclamation as part of the Lower Colorado River Basin States Conservation Program. She noted that demand remained strong after the rebate was reduced to \$4 per square foot. She reported that MWD is on track to meet most of its commitment under its Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Bucket 2 Funding Agreement with Reclamation to remove 30 million square feet of turf by 2031, noting that this is ahead of schedule.

Member Cordero reported conservation in support of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP). She provided some background on the program, noting that MWD is one of the 57 permittees contributing to the MSCP for Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance and is the program's largest non-federal funding partner. She reported on the success of the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area in particular; she noted that it was established in 2019 on land owned by MWD and described its transformation, listing various species it was expected to attract. She reported that the Yellow-billed Cuckoo and other neotropical birds have been detected

and are displaying breeding behavior in the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area. She also briefly recounted who Dennis Underwood was, noting that he was an expert in western water, a Commissioner of Reclamation and a General Manager of MWD.

Chairman Hamby noted that Dennis Underwood also served as Executive Director of CRB.

Member Fisher reminisced about the dedication ceremony of the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area.

### ***Imperial Irrigation District (IID)***

Member Dockstader reported that IID's Board just approved the Funding Local Opportunities for Water (FLOW) Grant Program. She described the program as a \$7.5 million program with a 50/50 cost share to fund conservation in the Imperial Valley, with funds available to local government entities, cities, special districts, schools, and Imperial County agencies for water-related projects. She noted that this was part of IID's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

Member Dockstader reported that yesterday IID hosted a tour of the Imperial Valley for officials from the Department of Water Resources and Reclamation. She listed some tour participants and described tour highlights, including a visit to the Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) (along the southern shore of the Salton Sea) to see new nesting sites and birds.

Chairman Hamby followed up on the SCH, noting that the conservation goal is now 9,000 acres. He commended progress and listed various species that are now using the new area, including American White Pelicans and Spoonbills. He reported that in the SCH the dust suppression objective is being met and that over 200 species have been observed. He also expressed appreciation for previous collaborations on the SCH between states, local agencies, CVWD, and IID.

### ***San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA)***

Member Heidemann reported on the Water Infrastructure Program of the City of Poway, one of SDCWA's member agencies. He reported that the program is a 3-phase program that is expected to cost \$86.6 million in capital costs, noting that the program is the largest in the city's history. He described the program's phases, including a temporary bypass (Phase 1) to enable the replacement of its Clearwell water tanks (Phase 2) and a connection to treated water from SDCWA (Phase 3). He reported that the temporary bypass was completed in 2022, the new Clearwell tanks will be completed in 6 weeks, and the treated water connection is expected to be complete in 2029.

## ***Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)***

Member Nelson reported that he will be retiring from the CVWD Board as of April 15, 2026. He expressed appreciation for his time with CVWD and reminisced about various Colorado River work he was involved in, including the 2004 Quantification Settlement Agreement. He stated that he has offered to continue to represent CVWD on the CRB Board but that he will leave it up to the CVWD Board to decide, noting that the CVWD representative on the CRB Board does not need to be a CVWD Board member. He also recognized CVWD Alternate Member Castulo Estrada.

### Weather Modification Program Overview

Staff Member Rheinheimer presented an overview of the Colorado River Weather Modification Program. Executive Director Neuwerth introduced the presentation, noting that the Six Agency Committee has funded weather modification for ten to fifteen years. She stated that the Basin states are considering executing a new ten-year programmatic agreement for weather modification, and that this presentation is to provide background information to the CRB prior to that execution decision.

Noting that weather modification entails cloud seeding, Staff Member Rheinheimer provided an overview of cloud seeding science and technology, where cloud seeding operations are conducted in the Colorado River Basin, the history and nature of the Weather Modification Program funding scheme, historical cloud seeding financing/expenditures under the Weather Modification Program, the SAC's involvement in the North American Weather Modification Council, and key opportunities and decisions for the SAC for the new, 2027-2036 agreement. He presented that under the Weather Modification Program, three Lower Basin funding entities, one from each Lower Basin State, provide funding of up to \$1.5 million per year to support cloud seeding operations to increase snowfall during winter precipitation events in the Upper Basin, on an equal cost-share basis. He noted that generally only ground-based cloud seeding is funded through the program.

In highlighting policy and timeline considerations for the new proposed 2027-2036 programmatic agreement. He presented that policy considerations include whether to continue funding the program and, if so, at what funding level. He reported that initial legal review is mostly complete, that policy review should be complete at the end of April, 2026, and that the new agreement should be signed by May in preparation for review and approval of 2027 operations.

Executive Director Neuwerth followed up to summarize that the purpose of this is to give some background information for future decisions.

Staff Member Rheinheimer indicated that a key question for SAC members would be how much water we are getting for the money spent. He noted that while quantifying additional precipitation in any event remains a challenge, basic calculations indicate that it is a good investment.

Former Executive Director Harris provided a brief background of the program and also reiterated that the cost of the program represents a good deal.

Member Fisher provided some further history of the program based on his prior involvement, noting that the program also benefits Upper Basin States in meeting their delivery obligation to the Lower Basin. He also discussed the dynamics and receptiveness to weather modification in each Upper Basin state, with Utah and Colorado being particularly receptive. Executive Director Neuwerth followed up, noting that similar dynamics exist today.

Additional miscellaneous discussion followed, with Executive Director Neuwerth noting that there is no immediate decision to be made.

### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Hamby reported that the last several weeks have been focused on providing and reviewing comments on the Post-2026 Draft EIS. He noted that copies of basinwide letters have been shared with Board members, and the letters can provide insight on the legal and operational positions across the basin.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Basin States principals have not met in person since January, although several virtual meetings have occurred over the last several weeks. Chairman Hamby reported that Nevada included a proposal in its Draft EIS comment letter, which formed the basis of recent Basin States discussions. California is generally supportive of the proposal, although Arizona has raised concerns. The Upper Basin is expected to oppose the proposal. The Lower Basin is starting to work in earnest on a Lower Basin proposal, in expectation that the seven states will be unable to reach consensus.

Chairman Hamby reported that the Lower Basin proposal is expected to include the reductions of 1.5 MAF between the Lower Basin and Mexico that was negotiated in 2024. These reductions solve the chronic shortfall in the Lower Basin.

In response to a question from Member Nelson, Executive Director Neuwerth reported that the 1944 Treaty with Mexico shares shortages in parity with the U.S. water users in extraordinary drought conditions. Member Fisher shared that reaching agreement on the definition of extraordinary drought has been an issue of significant debate between the two countries in the past. Executive Director Neuwerth noted that

Mexican has taken proportional reductions in recent years, and she and Chairman Hamby have been pushing the federal team on the importance of ensuring Mexican participation continue Post-2026.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items to be brought before the Board, Chairman Hamby adjourned the meeting at 12:16 p.m.





# Colorado River Board of California

May 8, 2026  
Information

## PROPOSED FY 2026-2027 COLORADO RIVER BOARD BUDGET

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### Highlights

- The Board’s proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027 budget is \$2,859,000, a decrease of \$2,000 from FY 2025-2026.
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### Budget Overview

The Governor’s Proposed Budget, released on January 9, 2026, for the Colorado River Board of California (CRB) for FY 2026-2027 is \$2,859,000. The budget is calculated by considering the type and number of CRB’s positions and any salary or benefit adjustments expected in the coming year, as well as any changes to expected operating expenses. CRB’s budget decreased modestly in FY 2026-2027 because of adjustments to anticipated employee benefits. Below is the proposed FY 2026-2027 Budget, compared to the budget authorized in FY 2025-2026 and anticipated FY 2025-2026 expenditures.

	Authorized Budget FY 2025-26	Anticipated Expenditures FY 2025-26	<b>Proposed Budget FY 2026-27</b>
<i>Personal Services</i>	\$ 2,358,000		<b>\$ 2,356,000</b>
<i>Operating Expenses and Equipment</i>	\$ 503,000		<b>\$ 503,000</b>
<b>Colorado River Board Total Budget</b>	\$ 2,861,000	\$ 2,800,000	<b>\$ 2,859,000</b>

Unspent CRB funds are maintained in the California General Fund for one to two years to allow for payment of pending or outstanding invoices, before being reclaimed by CRB.

### 3460 Colorado River Board of California

The Colorado River Board protects California's rights and interests in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. The Board works with: other Colorado River Basin states (Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming), federal agencies, other state agencies, six local agencies (Palo Verde Irrigation District, Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, San Diego County Water Authority, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power), Congress, the courts, and Mexico. Its activities include analyses of engineering, legal and economic matters concerning the Colorado River resources of the seven basin states and the 1944 United States-Mexico Water Treaty obligation to deliver Colorado River water to Mexico.

#### 3-YEAR EXPENDITURES AND POSITIONS

	Positions			Expenditures		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2024-25*	2025-26*	2026-27*
2410 Protection of California's Colorado River Rights and Interests	7.3	13.2	13.2	\$2,101	\$2,861	\$2,859
<b>TOTALS, POSITIONS AND EXPENDITURES (All Programs)</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>		<b>2024-25*</b>	<b>2025-26*</b>	<b>2026-27*</b>		
0995 Reimbursements		\$2,101	\$2,861	\$2,859		
<b>TOTALS, EXPENDITURES, ALL FUNDS</b>		<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>		

#### LEGAL CITATIONS AND AUTHORITY

##### DEPARTMENT AUTHORITY

California Water Code, Division 6, Part 5, Sections 12500-12553.

#### DETAILED BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

	2025-26*			2026-27*		
	General Fund	Other Funds	Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Positions
<b>Workload Budget Adjustments</b>			-			-
<b>Other Workload Budget Adjustments</b>			-			-
• Other Post-Employment Benefit Adjustments	\$-	\$-34	-	\$-	\$-37	-
• Retirement Rate Adjustments	-	72	-	-	72	-
• Benefit Adjustments	-	4	-	-	5	-
• Salary Adjustments	-	-2	-	-	-2	-
<b>Totals, Other Workload Budget Adjustments</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$38</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Totals, Workload Budget Adjustments</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$38</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Totals, Budget Adjustments</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$-</b>	<b>\$38</b>	<b>-</b>

#### DETAILED EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM

		2024-25*	2025-26*	2026-27*
<b>PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</b>				
<b>2410</b>	<b>PROTECTION OF CALIFORNIA'S COLORADO RIVER RIGHTS AND INTERESTS</b>			
State Operations:				
0995	Reimbursements	2,101	2,861	2,859
	<b>Totals, State Operations</b>	<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>
<b>TOTALS, EXPENDITURES</b>				
	State Operations	2,101	2,861	2,859
	<b>Totals, Expenditures</b>	<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>

#### EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

\* Dollars in thousands, except in Salary Range. Numbers may not add or match to other statements due to rounding of budget details.

**3460 Colorado River Board of California - Continued**

1 State Operations	Positions			Expenditures		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2024-25*	2025-26*	2026-27*
PERSONAL SERVICES						
Baseline Positions	13.2	13.2	13.2	\$1,639	\$1,639	\$1,639
Other Adjustments	-5.9	-	-	-645	-2	-2
<b>Net Totals, Salaries and Wages</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>\$994</b>	<b>\$1,637</b>	<b>\$1,637</b>
Staff Benefits	-	-	-	478	721	719
<b>Totals, Personal Services</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>\$1,472</b>	<b>\$2,358</b>	<b>\$2,356</b>
OPERATING EXPENSES AND EQUIPMENT				\$629	\$503	\$503
<b>TOTALS, POSITIONS AND EXPENDITURES, ALL FUNDS (State Operations)</b>				<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>

**DETAIL OF APPROPRIATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS**

1 STATE OPERATIONS	2024-25*	2025-26*	2026-27*
0995 Reimbursements			
APPROPRIATIONS			
Reimbursements	\$2,101	\$2,861	\$2,859
<b>TOTALS, EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>
<b>Total Expenditures, All Funds, (State Operations)</b>	<b>\$2,101</b>	<b>\$2,861</b>	<b>\$2,859</b>

**CHANGES IN AUTHORIZED POSITIONS**

	Positions			Expenditures		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2024-25*	2025-26*	2026-27*
Baseline Positions	13.2	13.2	13.2	\$1,639	\$1,639	\$1,639
Salary and Other Adjustments	-5.9	-	-	-645	-2	-2
<b>Totals, Adjustments</b>	<b>-5.9</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$-645</b>	<b>\$-2</b>	<b>\$-2</b>
<b>TOTALS, SALARIES AND WAGES</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>\$994</b>	<b>\$1,637</b>	<b>\$1,637</b>

\* Dollars in thousands, except in Salary Range. Numbers may not add or match to other statements due to rounding of budget details.