



# Colorado River: Law and Governance

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Colorado Water Center

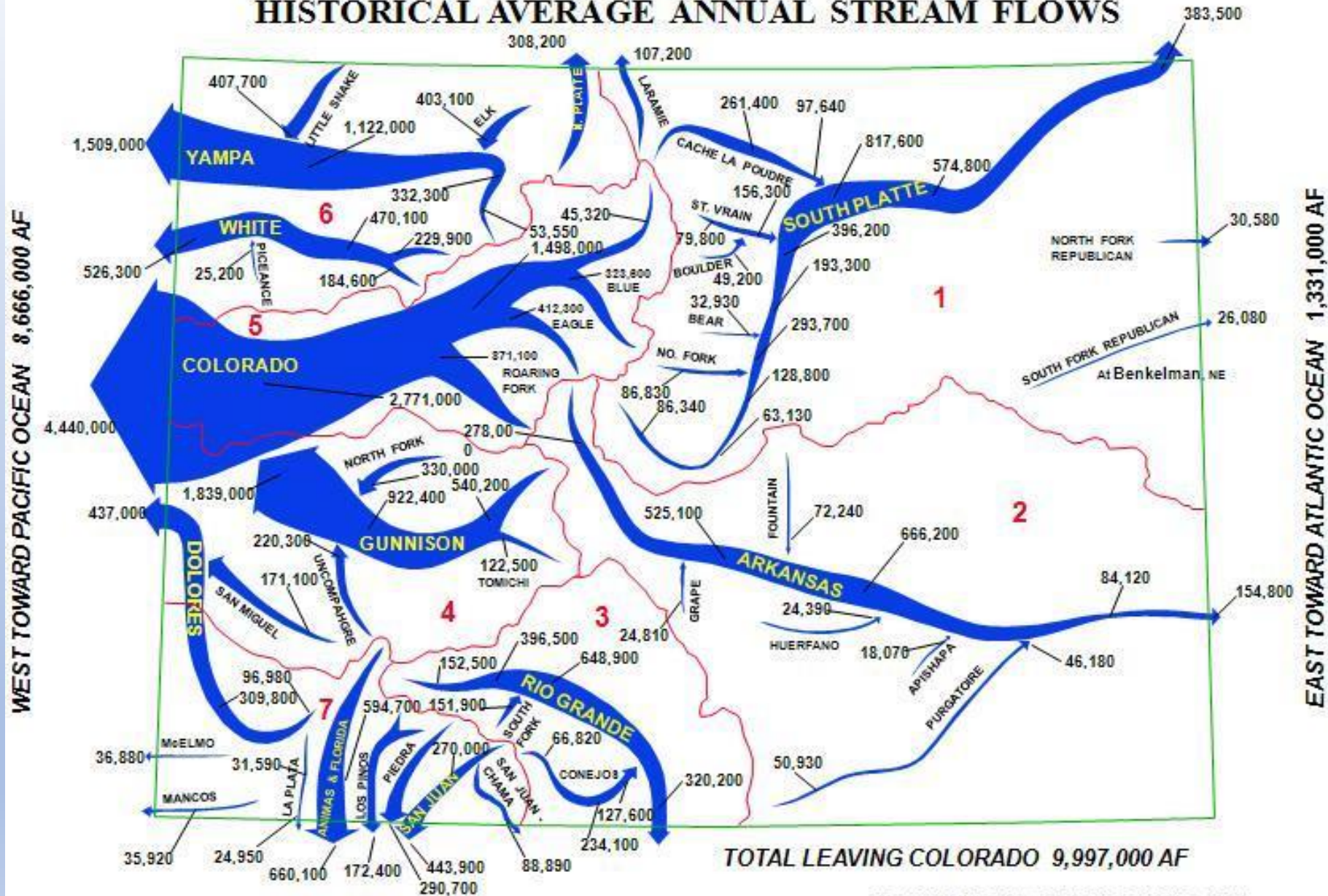
October 11, 2023

Water Literate

Headwaters of the Colorado River, USGS

# COLORADO

## HISTORICAL AVERAGE ANNUAL STREAM FLOWS

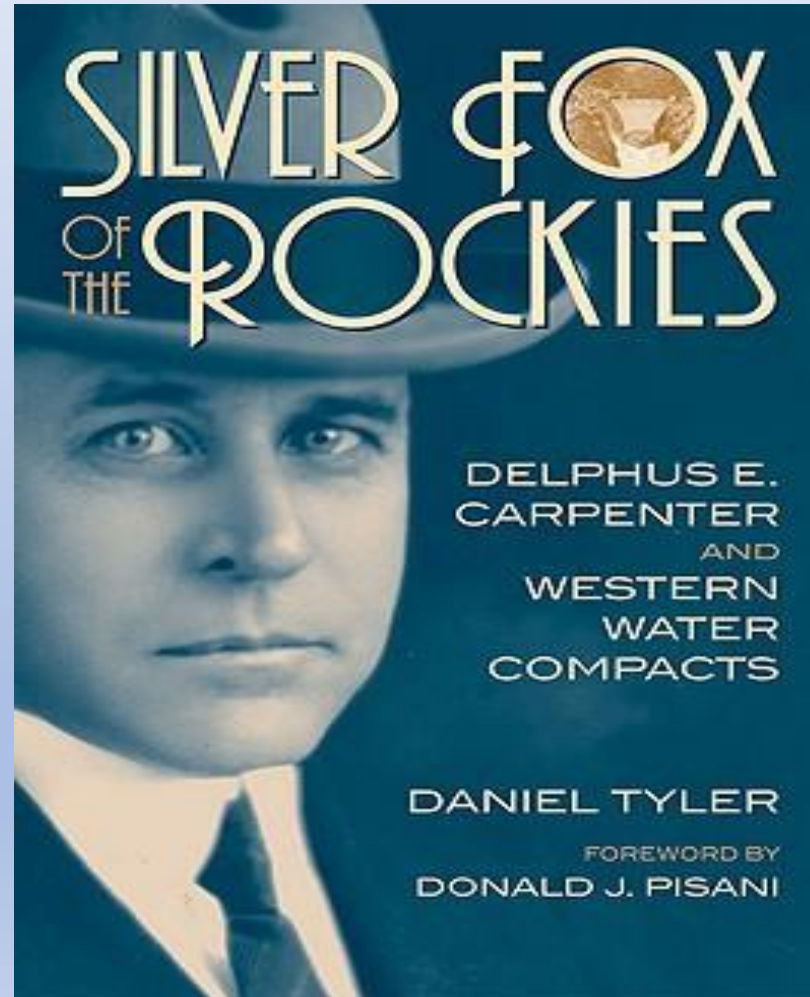


# Sharing Colorado's Rivers

# Whiskey's for Drinking Water's for Fighting



# Delphus E. Carpenter Father of Interstate Compacts





# Upper Colorado River Compact, 1948

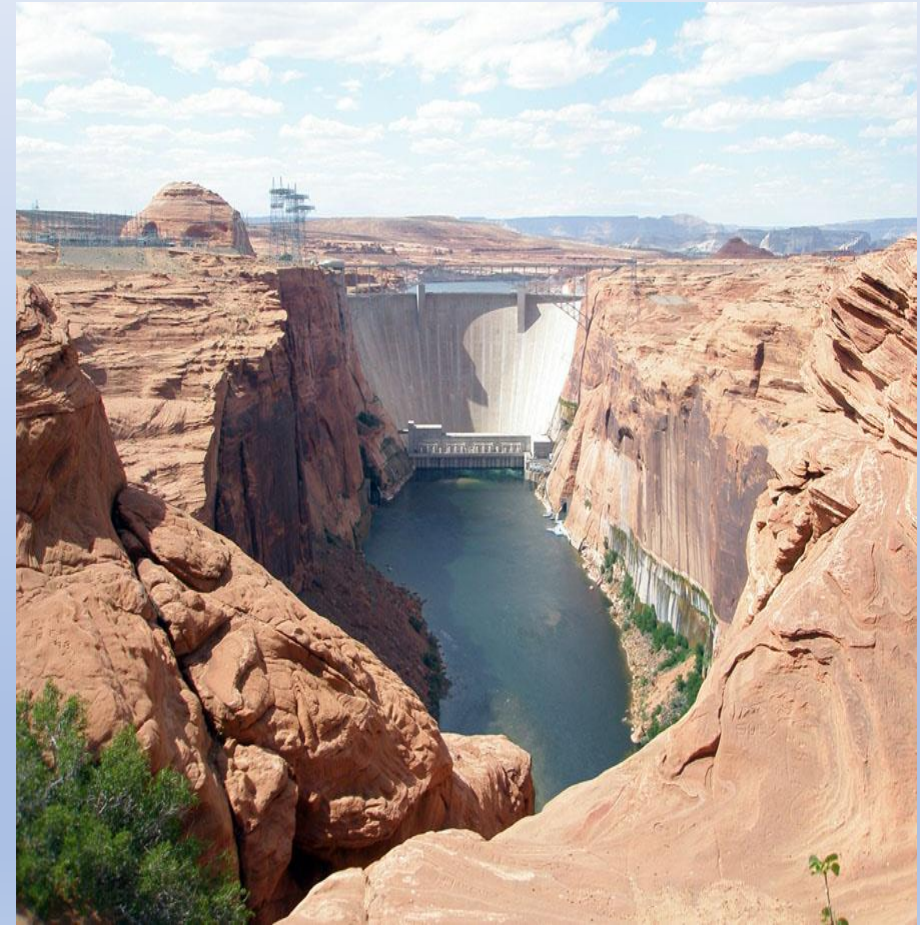
- % Apportionments to CO, NM, UT, WY & 50k maf/yr to AZ
- Process for curtailment of use to comply with Colorado River Compact
- Established Upper Colorado River Commission



# State Apportionments



# Hoover Dam and Glen Canyon Dam





# Law of the River

- Colorado River Compact, 1922
- Boulder Canyon Project Act of 1928
- California Seven Party Agreement
- Mexican Water Treaty, 1944
- Upper Colorado River Basin Compact, 1948
- Colorado River Storage Protection Act of 1956
- Arizona v. California, 1964
- Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968
- Long Range Operating Criteria, 1970
- Interim Surplus Criteria, 2002
- Interim Guidelines for LB Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, 2007
- Drought Contingency Plans 2019

**FIGURE 1B-A**  
Map of Federally Recognized Tribes in the Colorado River Basin



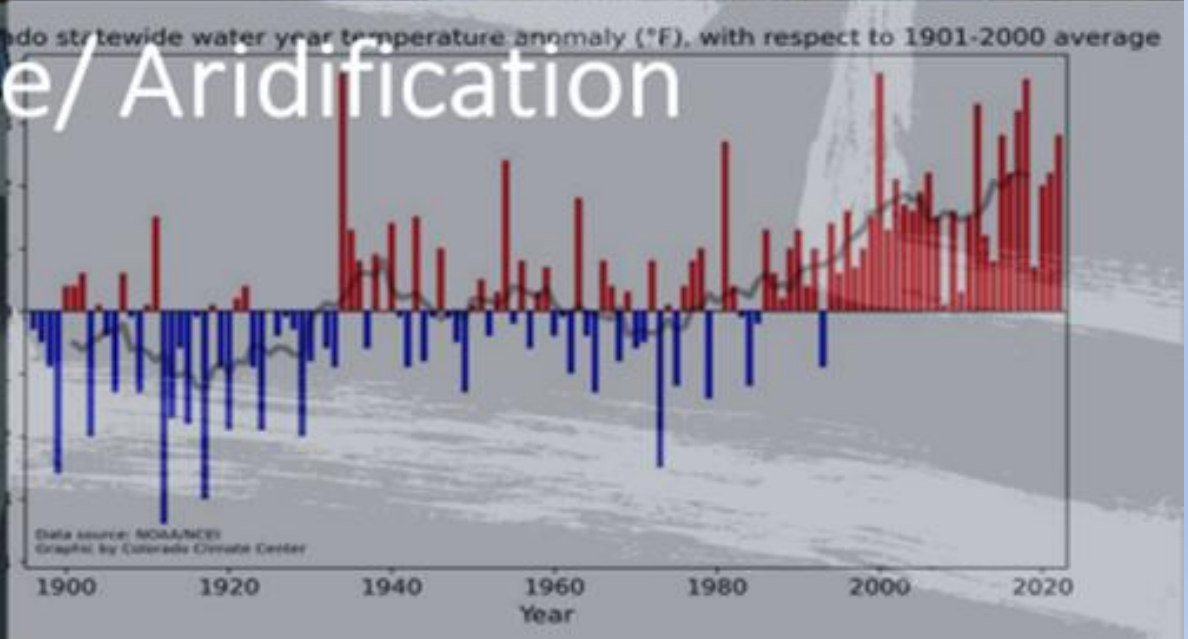
ID	Tribe Name	ID	Tribe Name	ID	Tribe Name	ID	Tribe Name
1	Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation	9	Havasupai Tribe	15	Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	23	Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
2	Southern Ute Indian Tribe	10	Hualapai Indian Tribe	16	Colorado River Indian Tribes	24	Gila River Indian Community
3	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	11	Shivwits Band of Paiute Indian Tribe	17	Yavapai-Apache Nation	25	Ak-Chin Indian Community
4	Jicarilla Apache Nation	12	Moapa Band of Paiute Indians	18	Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe	26	Quechan Indian Tribe
5	Navajo Nation	13	Las Vegas Tribe of Paiute Indians	19	Tonto Apache Tribe	27	Cocopah Indian Tribe
6	Zuni Tribe	14	Fort Mojave Indian Tribe	20	White Mountain Apache Tribe	28	Tohono O'odham Nation
7	Hopi Tribe			21	San Carlos Apache Tribe	29	Pascua Yaqui Tribe
8	Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians			22	Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation		

# From Drought to Aridification





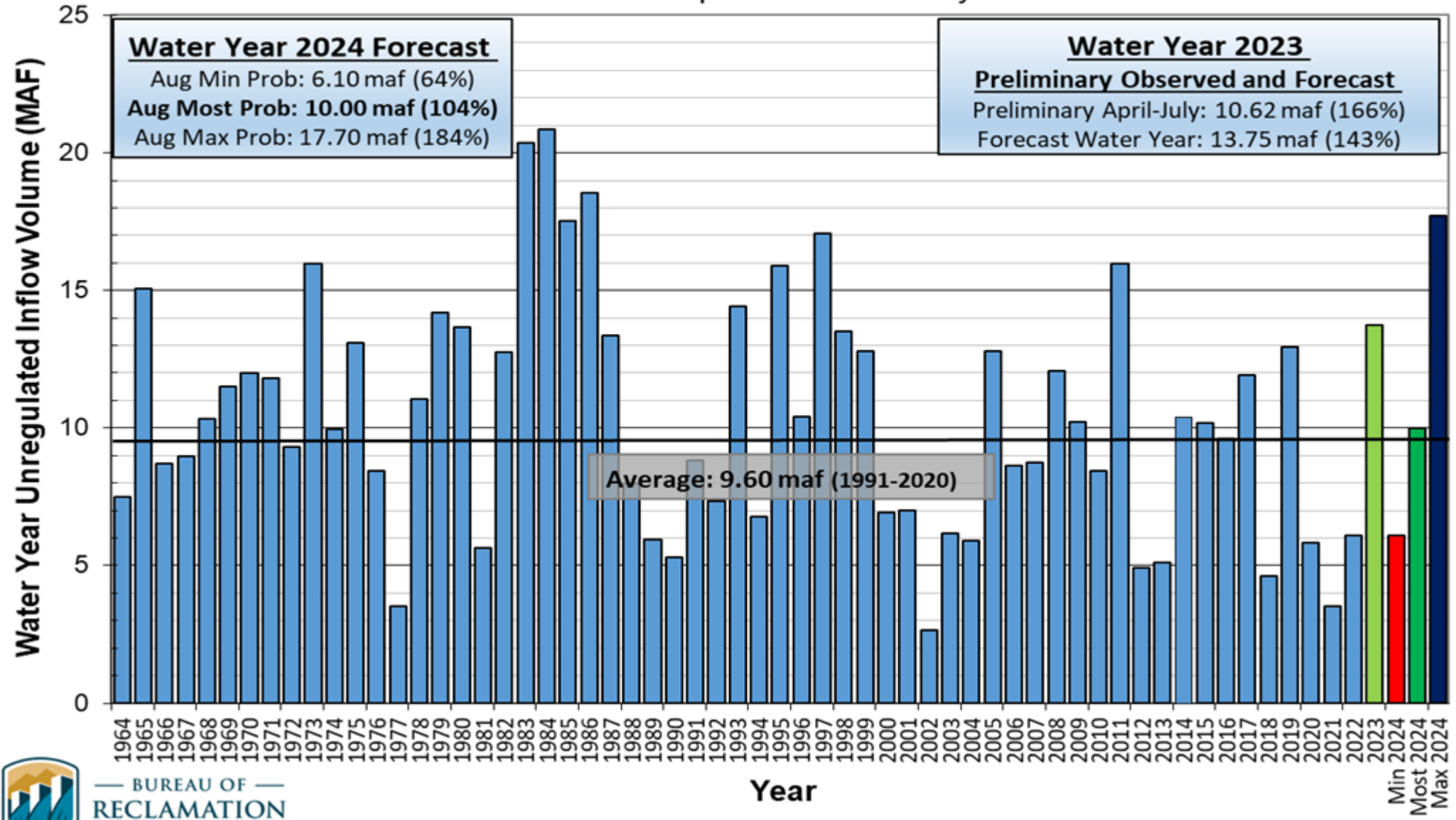
# Climate Change/ Aridification



# Lake Powell Unregulated Inflow

## Water Year 2023 and 2024 Forecast *(issued August 1)*

### Comparison with History



# Short-term: Managing the Colorado River During Drought until 2026

- 2007 Interim Guidelines
- 2019 Drought Contingency Plans
- Mexico Accepts Shortages
- LB 500+ Plan



# Secretary Declares Shortages for Lower Basin



In 2022 Arizona, Nevada and Mexico saw cuts to water deliveries by 613,000 acre-feet

## **The Washington Post**

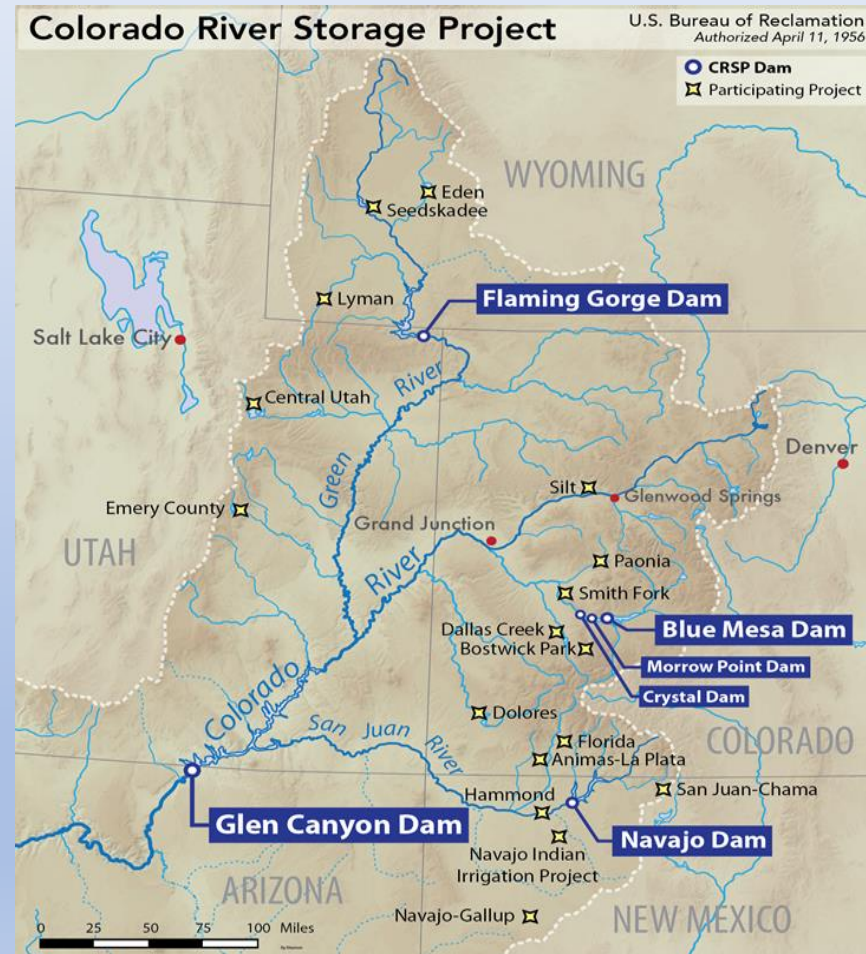
In 2023, deeper cuts of 721,000 acre-feet

**U.S. announces more water cuts as Colorado River hits dire lows**

# Drought Operation Releases



Blue Mesa, cpr.org





# Colorado/ Upper Basin Efforts

- System Conservation Pilot Program
- Demand Management Discussions
- Colorado River Drought Task Force



[www.ucrcommission.com](http://www.ucrcommission.com)



Demand Management Workgroup Members  
brainstorm potential program. [cwcb.colorado.gov](http://cwcb.colorado.gov)



[crdroughttaskforce.com](http://crdroughttaskforce.com)

# Long-term Planning

- All agreements expire end of 2026



The screenshot shows the Bureau of Reclamation website. The header includes the Bureau of Reclamation logo and name, social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, and a search bar. The navigation menu includes: Water & Power, Resources & Research, About Us, Recreation & Public Use, and News & Multimedia. The main content area features a large image of a canyon with the text "Colorado River Basin" and a description: "The Colorado River is a critical resource in the West. Seven U.S. states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—and Mexico." Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "Reclamation / Colorado River Basin / Colorado River Post 2026 Operations / Colorado River Post 2026 Operations — Pre-Scoping". A sidebar on the left lists "COLORADO RIVER BASIN" with sub-links for "Colorado River Basin", "Hydrology", "Annual Operating Plans", and "Plans". The main content area displays the title "Pre-Scoping – Colorado River Post 2026 Operations" and the subtitle "June 2022 Federal Register Notice Request for Input".

- Lessons learned
- New modeling
- Structural deficit

# Congress to the Rescue!

Money

to

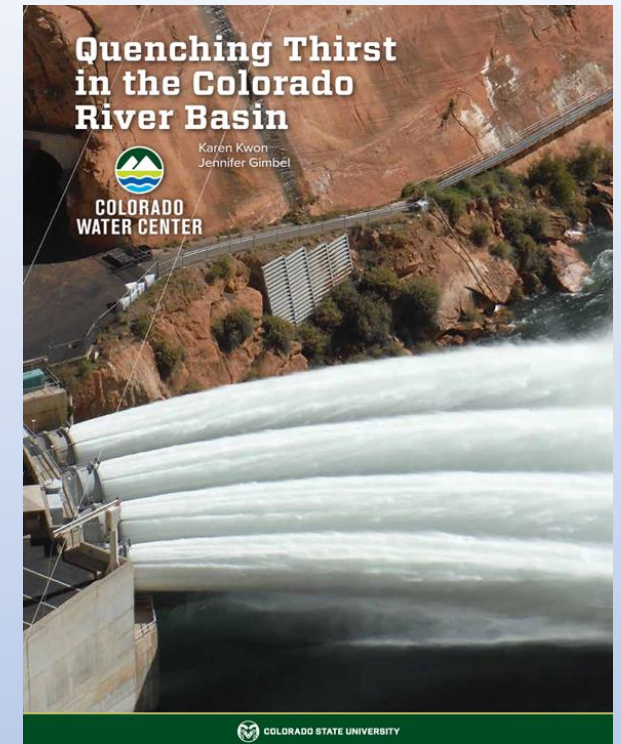
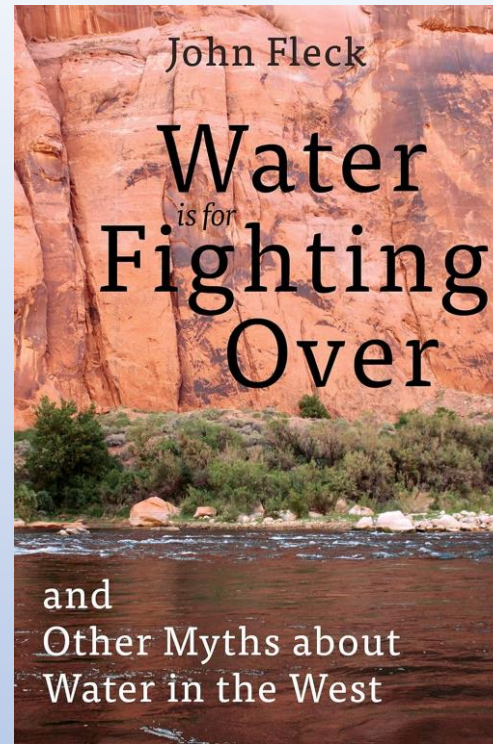
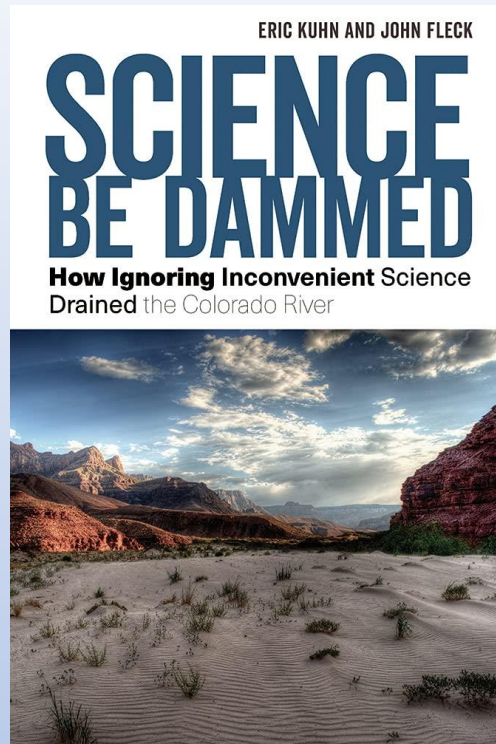
Uphill

Flows

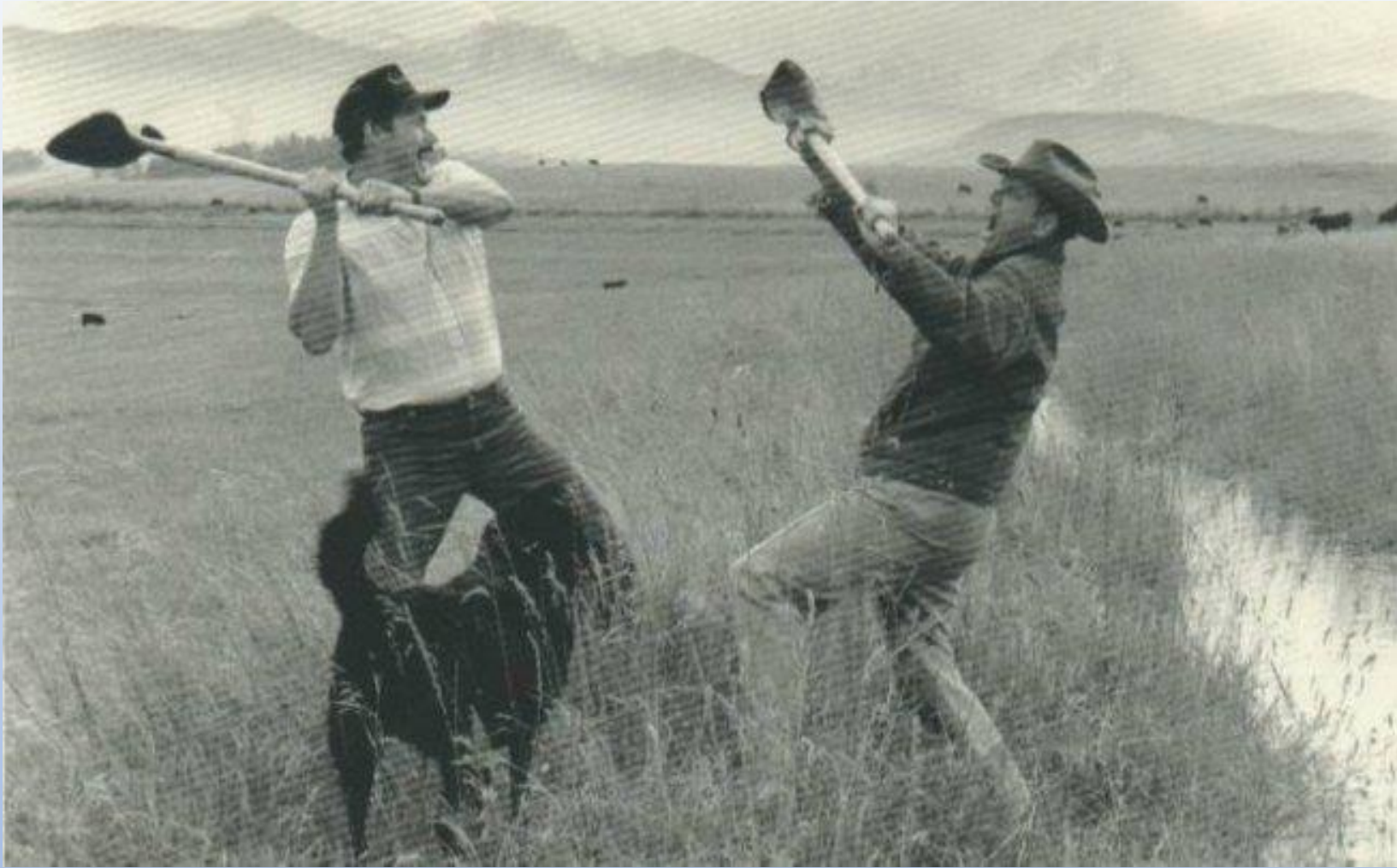
Water



\$4 billion of drought relief with priority to  
Colorado River



# Resources on Colorado River



Questions?