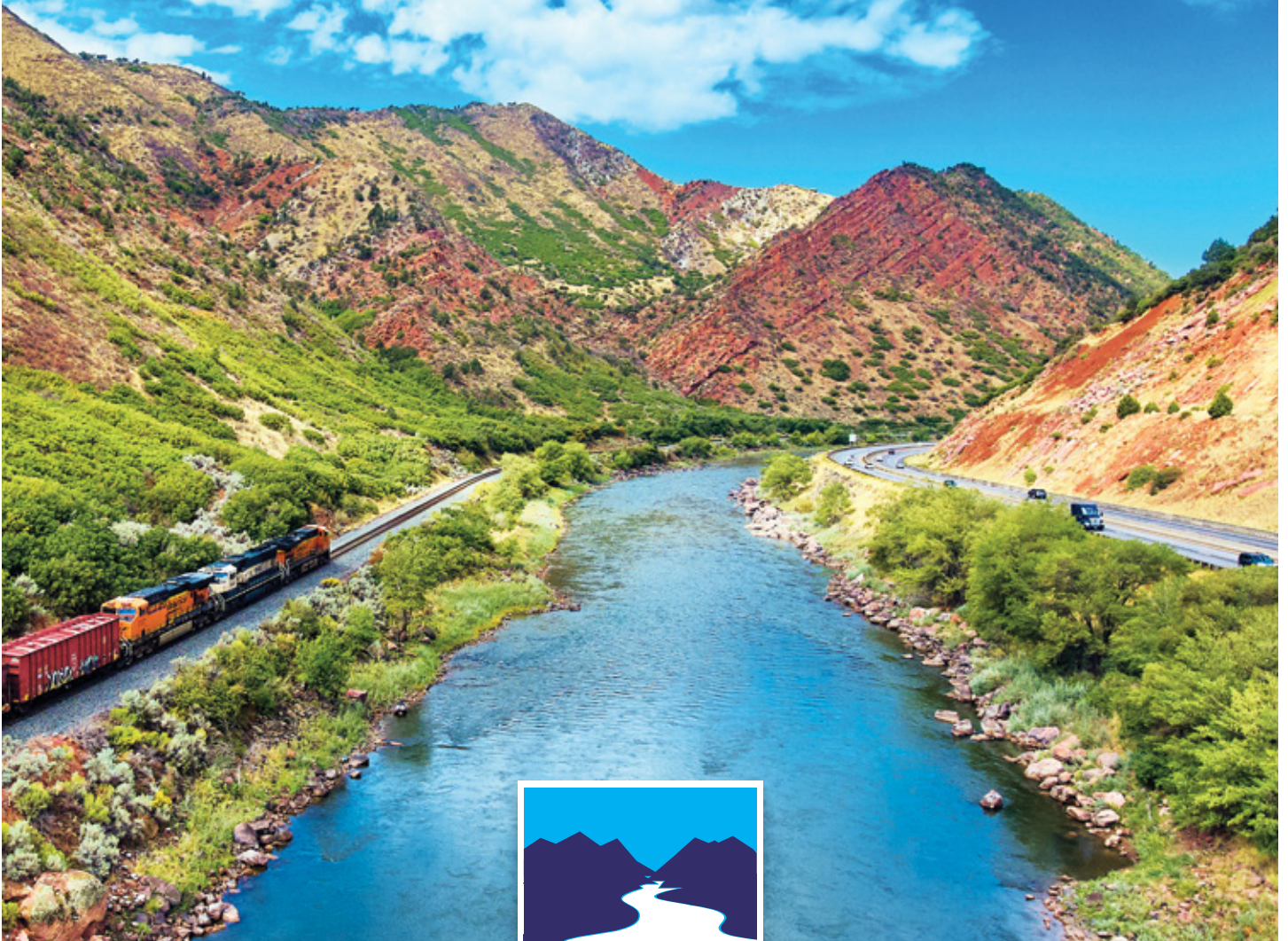


CRWUA

COLORADO RIVER WATER USERS ASSOCIATION



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO RIVER

BASIN



CRWUA

COLORADO RIVER WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

BACKGROUND

The Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization providing a forum for exchanging ideas and perspectives on Colorado River use and management with the intent of developing and advocating common objectives, initiatives and solutions.

MISSION & RESOLUTIONS

CRWUA is an organization made up of nearly 1,000 members from throughout the upper (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) and lower (Arizona, California and Nevada) basins and serves as an annual forum for openly discussing important issues on the river. The cooperative efforts that emerge from these meetings reflect the successful history of CRWUA members working together to create solutions for Colorado River challenges. CRWUA annually updates and adopts a comprehensive set of resolutions addressing the major issues affecting the sharing, use and further development of the Colorado River Basin's water supply. Resolutions can be viewed at [CRWUA.org/resolutions](https://www.crwua.org/resolutions).



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In early 2024, the Colorado River Basin held its collective breath in anticipation of a runoff that we hoped would mirror that of the 2023 water year. While 2024 was a good year, it paled in comparison to the bounty of 2023. It was also a reminder that we are beholden to Mother Nature—and some years she provides more than others. This has always been the story of the river, but the variability of supply has been even more pronounced since the current drought of record began in 2000, with far more below-average than above-average years.



Drying hydrology combined with historically low reservoir elevations have conspired to make the ongoing negotiation over the operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead once the current criteria expire in 2026 more complicated than ever. The seven Basin States have historically approached interstate negotiations through consensus-based solutions. This negotiation is no exception. However, finding common ground on what it means to have a sustainable Colorado River system while ensuring that key interests are recognized, including those of the Colorado River Tribes and the Republic of Mexico, has been particularly challenging.

In reflecting on some of the difficult conversations in 2024 and in anticipation of hard discussions to come, I was reminded of the purpose of the Colorado River Water Users Association. Since 1945, the organization has been a forum for members from throughout the Colorado River Basin to develop personal relationships and to allow frank discussions on the many issues involving the Colorado River. The opportunity for relationship building, fellowship and the honest exchange of ideas is critical if we hope to craft a solution that will ensure a sustainable Colorado River for current and future generations. The Colorado River Water Users Association provides such an opportunity.

History has shown us that the most durable solutions on the Colorado River are ones that are developed collaboratively. I am confident that our commitment to consensus-based, sustainable solutions can withstand the strongest challenges but only if we stand together.

Gene Shawcroft

Utah

CRWUA President



OFFICERS & TRUSTEES

OFFICERS

President

Gene Shawcroft

Vice President

Keith Burron

Secretary-Treasurer

Lisa Anderson

Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Mitch Bishop

TRUSTEES

Arizona

Brenda Burman
Elston Grubaugh
Leslie Meyers

Utah

William Merkley
Zach Renstrom
Gene Shawcroft

California

Bart Fisher
Glen Peterson
John Powell

Wyoming

Keith Burron
Aaron Reichl
Bryan Seppie

Colorado

Jim Broderick
Stanley Cazier
Steve Wolff

Ten Tribes Partnership

Amelia Flores
Crystal Tulley-Cordova
Lisa Yellow Eagle

Nevada

Priscilla Howell
Sara Price
Greg Walch

Immediate Past President

Aaron Chavez, New Mexico

New Mexico

Aaron Chavez
Steve Lanier
Aaron Lee

COMMITTEES

Audit

Glen Peterson, California – Chair

Andy Belanger, Nevada
Richard Mathey, Wyoming

Budget

Bryan Seppie, Wyoming – Chair

Andy Belanger, Nevada
Jim Broderick, Colorado
John Powell, California
Leslie Meyers, Arizona

Exhibits

Greg Gould, Nevada – Chair

Kevin Bergschneider, Colorado
Mark Davidson, Wyoming

Housing and Arrangements

Andy Belanger, Nevada – Chair

Aaron Chavez, New Mexico
Katie Horn, Nevada

Membership

Jim Broderick, Colorado – Chair

Jacqueline Allcorn, New Mexico

Nominations

Leslie Meyers, Arizona – Chair

Andy Belanger, Nevada
Charles Blassingame, New Mexico
Stanley Cazier, Colorado

Program

Bart Leeftang, Utah – Chair

Lisa Anderson, Utah
Mitch Basefsky, Arizona
Mitch Bishop, Nevada
Jordan Bunker, Nevada

Keith Burron, Wyoming

Aaron Chavez, New Mexico

Amelia Flores, Ten Tribes
Partnership

Edalin Koziol, Colorado

Steve Lanier, New Mexico

Carrie Scott, California

Seth Shanahan, Nevada

Tony Staffaroni, Arizona

Crystal Tulley-Cordova, Ten Tribes
Partnership

Kirin Vicenti, Ten Tribes Partnership

Meena Westford, California

Steve Wolff, Colorado

Public Affairs

Crystal Thompson, Arizona – Chair

Becki Bryant, Bureau of
Reclamation

Lindsay DeFrates, Colorado

Michelle Helms, Bureau of
Reclamation

Scott Huntley, Nevada

Robert Kirk, Ten Tribes Partnership

Patty Likens, Arizona

Bob Muir, California

Karry Rathje, Utah

Bryan Seppie, Wyoming

Jeff Stahla, Colorado

Teresa Stevens, New Mexico

Resolutions

Wade Noble, Arizona – Chair

Steven Anderson, Nevada

Nathan S. Bracken, Utah

Aaron Chavez, New Mexico

Joanne Curry, Ten Tribes
Partnership

Morgan Drake, Utah

Sandy Fabritz, Arizona

Charlie Ferrantelli, Wyoming

Jeff Gray, Arizona

Jared D. Hansen, Utah

Gary Hathorn, New Mexico

Laura Lamdin, California

Rosa Long, Arizona & Ten Tribes
Partnership

Tom Maher, Nevada

Lee E. Miller, Colorado

John Morris, California

Jessica Newland, Arizona

Zach Renstrom, Utah

Bridget Schwartz-Manock, Arizona

Meghan C. Scott, Arizona

Liz Taylor, New Mexico

Lisa Yellow Eagle, Ten Tribes
Partnership



Profit & Loss

April 2023 through March 2024

ORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE

INCOME

Interest Income	\$ 14,654.95
Program Income	
Conference Registrations	706,755.00
Exhibits-Conference	47,700.00
Membership Dues	44,850.00
Sponsorship	42,000.00
Total Program Income	<u>841,305.00</u>

Total Income **855,959.95**

EXPENSE

Contract Services	
Admin Fees	<u>64,635.99</u>
Total Contract Services	<u>64,635.99</u>

Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	719,670.76
Exhibits Committee	29,711.03
Program Committee	16,096.10
Public Affairs Committee	11,957.87
Spouses Program Committee	1,500.00
Total Travel and Meetings	<u>778,935.76</u>

Total Expense **843,571.75**

Net Income **\$ 12,388.20**

Balance Sheet

As of March 31, 2024

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings	
US BANK	\$ 339,451.21
Total Current Assets	<u>339,451.21</u>

Other Assets

TRONA VALLEY FCU CD	371,037.02
Total Other Assets	<u>371,037.02</u>

Total Assets	710,488.23
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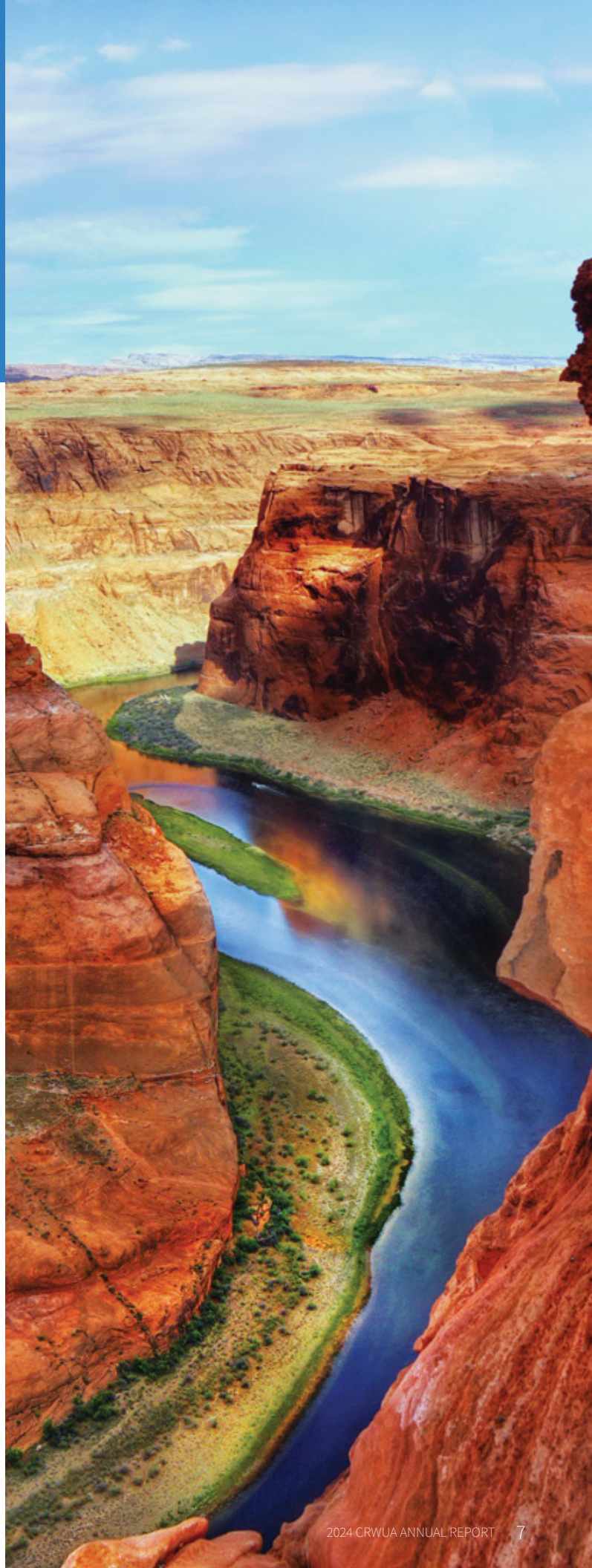
LIABILITIES & EQUITY

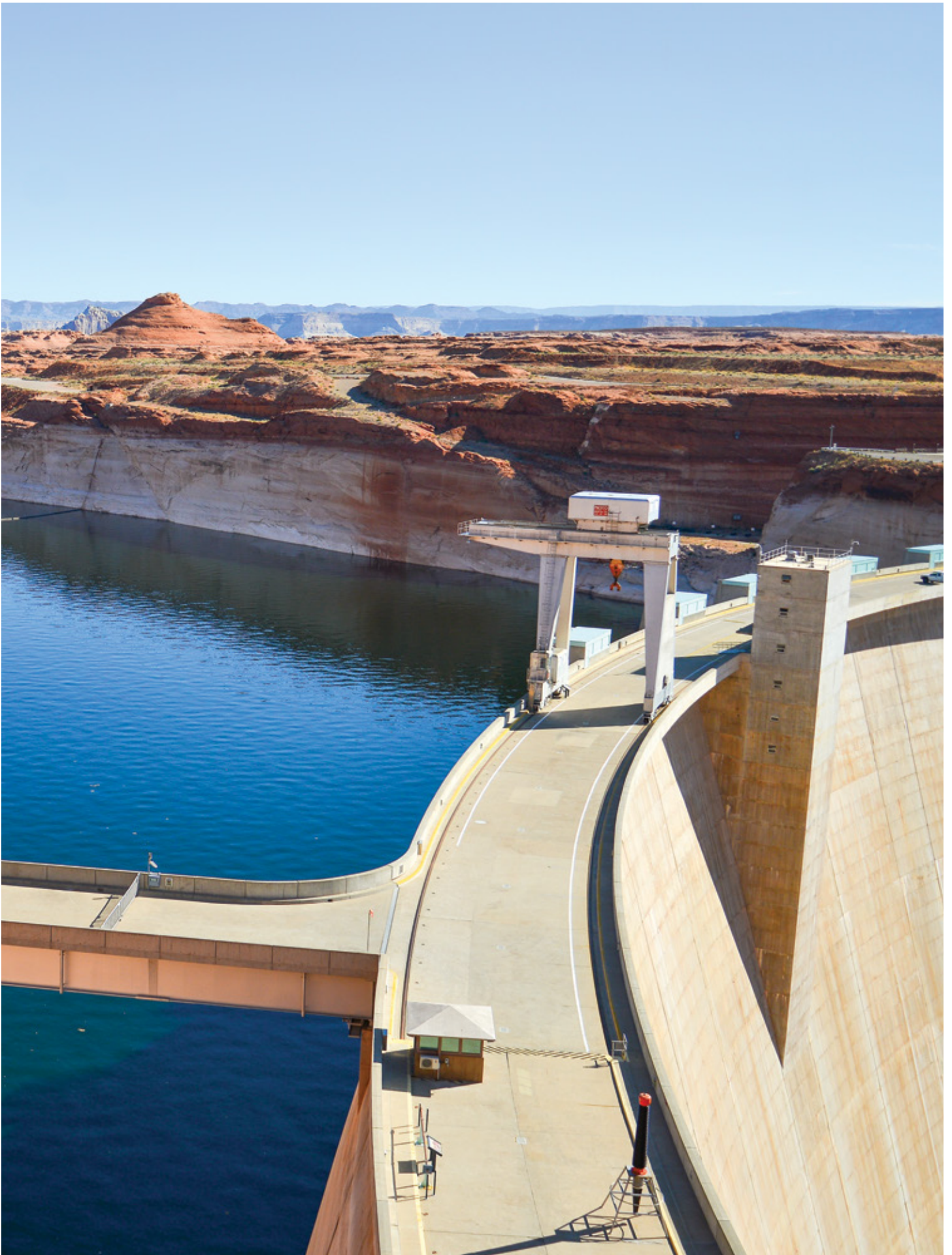
Equity

Opening Balance Equity	448,383.61
Unrestricted Net Assets	249,716.42
Net Income	<u>12,388.20</u>

Total Equity	710,488.23
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Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 710,488.23
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RECLAMATION

Just a few years ago, the Colorado River was on the brink of failure. Years of prolonged drought, a changing climate and unsustainable water use pushed this vital resource to new lows, threatening agricultural, urban and ecological needs. As the basin grappled with the implications, urgent action was crucial to ensure the river's survival and to safeguard the livelihoods that depend on it.

Over the past two years, the Bureau of Reclamation has made significant strides in protecting the Colorado River System by creating innovative strategies to address water shortages and promote sustainable water management. By engaging with Colorado River Tribes, the seven basin states, water managers, farmers and other stakeholders, Reclamation fostered a consensus on current water management. This



Colorado River near Hoover Dam

collaboration led to an agreement for near-term operations through 2026, providing short-term system stability.

Though conditions have improved, work on the long-term sustainability of the Colorado River System must continue. Reclamation is continuing its collaboration with Colorado River Tribes, the states and other key stakeholders to craft a long-term agreement that will govern operational rules for Lake Powell and Lake Mead beginning in 2027. This agreement will impact how much water will be available for cities to use and how much water will be available for farmers to apply to their crops. It is no small feat to get to consensus, but Reclamation is committed to getting there.

For more than 122 years, Reclamation has proven great things can be accomplished when everyone works together. With the unprecedented resources available now, the basin is positioned to build on those successes.

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act have provided a significant investment for the Colorado River. Together, they have provided Reclamation with more than \$1.5 billion for almost 200 projects in the Colorado River Basin, and more than \$3 billion for 368 projects in the Colorado River Basin states. These investments have helped us meet our conservation goal of 3 million acre-feet of water by 2026, with approximately 1.9 maf of this additional conserved water occurring in 2023 and 2024.

Reclamation's system conservation and efficiency programs in both the Upper and Lower Colorado Basin regions are part of the commitment made by the Department of the Interior to address the drought crisis with prompt and responsive actions and investments to ensure the entire Colorado River Basin can function and support all who rely on it.



Colorado River, Colorado



Davis Dam, Nevada

In the Lower Basin, Reclamation has executed 25 short-term System Conservation Implementation Agreements that are projected to conserve more than 2.28 maf of water through 2026.

An initial \$700 million investment from the Inflation Reduction Act was announced in June to support long-term conservation in the system. Reclamation recently signed agreements with the Gila River Indian Community to invest in water-saving projects to conserve more than 73,000 acre-feet in the next 10 years. Reclamation is also working with water entities in Southern Nevada, Arizona and Southern California to reach agreements for investments in additional projects that will contribute to the health of the Colorado River System for years to come. Overall, the funding for long-term water conservation initiatives in the Lower Basin is expected to save more than 1 maf of water.

In addition, the United States and Mexico signed Minute 330 in March establishing a commitment for Mexico to conserve 400,000 acre-feet of water through December 2026 in addition to the water conservation measures agreed to in Minute 323. The U.S. is providing \$65 million to

fund conservation activities in Mexico to generate 250,000 acre-feet of water for the Colorado River System. In addition, Mexico will defer delivery of 150,000 acre-feet as Mexico's Water Reserve, available for delivery after 2026.

In the Upper Basin, the System Conservation and Efficiency Program funded the System Conservation Pilot Program for a second year, almost doubling the amount of conserved water from the previous year. The bulk of funding in the Upper Basin will be awarded in 2025 for ecosystem/habitat rehabilitation and water conservation projects. These projects are intended to help provide stability to the Colorado River Basin.

Moving forward, Reclamation continues to use the best available science to ensure future operating guidelines are robust and can adapt to withstand the impacts of drought and a changing climate. Every viable option is being explored as we seek solutions that address the diverse needs of all that depend on the basin.



ARIZONA

Lake Mead Conservation

As has been true for many years, Arizona's most urgent duty in 2024 has been to help stabilize the Colorado River system and to prepare the way for the Post-2026 Operating Guidelines. In partnership with the Lower Basin states of California and Nevada, Arizona committed to conserving an additional 3 million acre-feet in the system by the end of 2026, representing a substantial commitment to the stability of the river system.

Through the interim period, Arizona has executed conservation agreements totaling 980,578 acre-feet, not including mandatory reductions in use—512,000 acre-feet in 2024 for the Tier 1 shortage reduction.

Post-2026 Operations

The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and Central Arizona Project (CAP) have been meeting with the Arizona Reconsultation Committee (ARC) since 2020. This committee is made up of representatives from Arizona's major water stakeholder groups. On March 6, 2024, ARC heard a presentation on the Lower Basin Alternative, which was submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation to achieve a sustainable volume of water in system storage. The goal is to protect infrastructure and habitat and provide predictability for water users.

The Lower Basin Alternative represents a compilation of strategies based on the lessons learned from the 2007 Interim Guidelines as well



Lake Mead

as hydrologic supply and demand information gleaned over recent decades. The alternative reflects a new and more holistic approach to Colorado River management, in which required reductions are based on the health of seven major system reservoirs. As part of the alternative, users at and downstream of Lake Mead would reduce uses of Colorado River water by 1.5 million acre-feet each year under a broad range of conditions to address the structural deficit and future aridification.

Tribal Water Settlements

In May, Arizona concluded its role in the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement, settling decades of negotiations with the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe and the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe. If funded by Congress, the Settlement Agreement will provide water supply certainty in the Colorado River and Little Colorado River watersheds in relation to tribal water-rights claims. It will also fund the infrastructure needed to provide drinking water supplies to members of the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe and San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe.

Arizona also concluded its role in the settlement of the Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024, which will settle the water-rights claims of the Yavapai-Apache Nation of north-central Arizona.

As a result of the historic progress in tribal water settlements, Arizona now has reached water-rights agreement or partial agreement with 15 of its 22 Native American tribes, a huge step toward greater stability in the allocation of water resources throughout the state, notably in its Colorado River supplies.

Arizona's progress with tribal water settlements did not stop there, however. In April, Arizona's



Governor Katie Hobbs and ADWR Director Tom Buschatzke joined with the Colorado River Indian Tribes and top federal officials in signing documents implementing an agreement allowing the tribes to market portions of their Colorado River allocation to water users off-reservation. The signing event represents a critical step to implement the Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2022.

Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment (CAGR) 2025 Plan of Operation

CAGR is a special function of CAP that was created by the Arizona State Legislature in 1993 to help water providers and landowners comply with the state's groundwater laws. CAGR plays an important role in central Arizona's groundwater management by replenishing groundwater pumped by its members.

Every 10 years, CAGR is required by law to submit a Plan of Operation to the ADWR director

as it has now done for the 2025 Plan. The Plan outlines the replenishment activities proposed in the Phoenix, Pinal and Tucson Active Management Areas during the next 100 years, based on CAGR membership activity through 2034. The Plan also includes an overview on where the water is coming from, based on CAGR's Water Supply Portfolio.

CAP Water Education Center

CAP is currently in the design phase for a Water Education Center that would inform and educate stakeholders and the public on CAP and water issues in Arizona. If approved for construction next year by the Central Arizona Water Conservation District Board, it would open in late 2026.

Multi-Species Conservation Program

In 2024, Arizona parties to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) collaborated with Reclamation and other Lower Basin parties to facilitate the issuance of a Biological Opinion (BO) for the 2023 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for Near-term Colorado River Operations. The BO provides coverage for water-use reductions under the SEIS through additional

actions including the creation of 41 acres of marsh habitat and 109 acres of disconnected backwater habitat, and an increase in data collection on critical species and habitat on the Colorado River. Further, the Arizona parties supported Reclamation and California parties on a purchase of 1,931 acres in Blythe, Calif., as an expansion to the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve. This expansion makes available additional acreage to aid in the MSCP's activities, including potential habitat creation, moving forward.

Salt River Project (SRP) – Salt & Verde River System: Water Year 2024

After a banner snowfall season in 2023, SRP's 13,000-square-mile watershed experienced near-average conditions this winter. While the previous two productive winters and monsoon moisture have maintained the SRP reservoir system at near-full levels, SRP remains committed to drought-conscious management and educating customers on the importance of conservation in our arid environment.

Because many factors can impact SRP's water supply, SRP analysts and engineers use state-of-the-art technology and tools to garner insightful data, such as elevation-calibrated snow depth

and projected reservoir inflows, which help predict how much water will flow through the Salt and Verde River systems and provide valuable information to help SRP plan and manage its future water supply.

Expanding storage

Reclamation, SRP and 23 non-federal partners (including CAP) are currently conducting a feasibility study to analyze restoring Verde reservoir



CAP Canal



Theodore Roosevelt Dam

storage capacity lost to sedimentation and improving sediment management practices. One potential solution includes an expansion of Bartlett Dam and Reservoir, which would not only recover lost capacity but also increase Verde storage capacity by about 350,000 acre-feet.

In addition, SRP, the Army Corps of Engineers, Reclamation and 14 partners finalized a temporary modification of flood control space (FCS) operations at Theodore Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River. The project extends the FCS evacuation period from 20 to 120 days for the first 5 feet of FCS for a period of five years, providing an opportunity to beneficially use roughly 110,000 acre-feet of Salt River floodwaters both inside and outside of SRP's water service area.

Yuma Mesa Division, Gila Project Arizona

There are three districts in the Gila Project Yuma Mesa Division: Yuma Mesa Irrigation and Drainage District (YMIDD); Yuma Irrigation District (YID); and North Gila Valley Irrigation and Drainage District (NGVIDD). The Division irrigates lands on the Yuma Mesa and along the Gila River up to where it joins the Colorado River with entitlements diverted at Imperial Dam through

the Gila Gravity Main Canal. The three districts share a 250,000 acre-foot entitlement of Priority 3 water. A significant percentage of the entitlement is left in the river.

YMIDD irrigates around 16,000 acres on the Yuma Mesa. The District has a conservation agreement for 2023 through 2025. Water conserved in 2023 was 47,211.01 acre-feet and in 2024 was 41,764.03 acre-feet, for a total of 88,974.04 acre-feet.

YID and NGVIDD irrigate the Gila Valley lands on the north and south sides of the Gila River extending from the west end of the Wellton Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District to the Colorado River. The valley lands support produce crops, and during the winter produce season the two districts contribute to the unique area supply of 90% of the winter produce on the tables in the United States and Canada. The two districts are continuing their annual on-farm conservation practices such as annual laser leveling of each field at significant costs and all methods of irrigation, including drip irrigation to achieve an annual average water saved to the river of over 50,000 acre-feet. In the 40 years since 1983, they have conserved in excess of 2 million acre-feet of water.

YID's contract authorized acreage is 10,600 acres and North Gila is allowed 6,500 acres, for a total of 17,100 acres. Both districts are irrigating about 90% of their contract acreage. In 1983, YID's consumptive use was 63,374 ac/ft or more than 6 acre-feet per acre. North Gila's consumptive use that year was 29,305 acre-feet or nearly 5 acre-feet per acre. YID's consumptive use in 2023 was 31,908 acre-feet or less than 3.25 acre-feet per acre. North Gila's consumptive use was 8,335 acre-feet, which is under 2 acre-feet per acre.





CALIFORNIA

California continued doing its part to help stabilize the Colorado River system in the immediate-term by leaving an estimated 500,000 acre-feet of conserved water in Lake Mead in 2024—boosting the reservoir’s level by 7 feet. When combined with the 700,000 acre-feet the state contributed in 2023, California has in just two years fulfilled 75 percent of its commitment to leave 1.6 million acre-feet in Lake Mead by 2026, a commitment made under the Lower Basin Plan for short-term Colorado River operations.

Much of that conserved water was made available through short-term agreements between California water agencies and the Bureau of Reclamation to federally fund fallowing and other water-saving efforts, under the Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program. The last three of California’s seven agreements with Reclamation were signed in 2024.

With Lake Mead stabilized in the short-term, agricultural and urban water agencies in the state have turned their attention to developing new long-term Colorado River operational guidelines. In March, California, Arizona and Nevada submitted a proposed alternative for long-term operations under the federal environmental review process. The Lower Basin Alternative, designed to provide for sustainable management of the Colorado River through evolving challenges ahead, such as climate change, was one of several alternatives submitted for Reclamation’s

consideration. Under the alternative, users at and downstream of Lake Mead would reduce use of Colorado River water by 1.5 million acre-feet each year under a broad range of conditions to address the structural deficit and future aridification.

In August, the Colorado River Board of California saw a major change in its management with the retirement of long-time Executive Director Chris Harris. The River Board is conducting a search for a new executive director.

Imperial Irrigation District

In August, Imperial Irrigation District approved a landmark agreement with Reclamation to leave up to 300,000 acre-feet per year of conserved water in Lake Mead, in addition to IID’s existing water conservation obligations that total nearly 500,000 acre-feet per year. The agreement is the largest contract under the Lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency Program and provides funding for on-farm conservation programs that are projected to create 700,000 acre-feet of conservation from 2024-2026. The measures also unlock the balance of nearly \$250 million in federal funds to aid Salton Sea projects.

IID was also notified of a \$7 million federal grant for its proposed Upstream Operational Reservoir Project, which increases the total federal support of this 2,100-acre-foot project to \$16.5 million.

Palo Verde Irrigation District

Palo Verde Irrigation District in 2024 continued its conservation agreement with Reclamation and Metropolitan Water District, signed at the end of 2023 as part of Reclamation's short-term system conservation program. Under the agreement, water is conserved through the PVID-Metropolitan fallowing program, by which farmers are paid to refrain from irrigating a portion of their land. A total of 25,947 acres of farmland are being fallowed by landowners in the Palo Verde Valley, for an estimated water savings of 117,021 acre-feet a year—a total of 351,063 acre-feet for the three-year program. Like Reclamation's other short-term conservation agreements, the conserved water is left in Lake Mead.



Bard Water District

Bard Water District

Bard Water District in 2024 entered a seasonal land fallowing agreement with Reclamation and Metropolitan, also part of federal short-term system conservation. Under the agreement, based on an earlier program with Metropolitan,

growers forgo planting lower-value, water-intensive crops during the summer in exchange for financial incentives, while continuing to grow their higher-value winter vegetable crop. The program is expected to save up to 5,700 acre-feet per year, 2024-2026.

Under the agreement, Bard Water District receives 25 percent of the financial incentives to fund infrastructure improvements in the district. Bard uses the funds to improve water efficiency and water metering accuracy.

Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe

In 2024, the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe continued its agreement with Metropolitan to not fully use its available water supplies. For 2024-2026, the water—totaling 13,000 acre-feet annually—will be left in Lake Mead as system water, as part of Reclamation's short-term conservation agreements. Additionally, the Tribe continued its seasonal land fallowing program with Metropolitan. Similar in structure to the Bard Water District agreement, the program is expected to save up to 3,000 acre-feet of water this year.

Coachella Valley Water District

Coachella Valley Water District continued to save Colorado River water through Reclamation's short-term system conservation program by curtailing replenishment at its Thomas E. Levy Facility for three years (2023-2025), saving 35,000 acre-feet annually, and through a voluntary program for agricultural customers to conserve up to 10,000 acre-feet annually or up to 30,000 acre-feet total (2024-2026).

In addition, CVWD's \$7.5 million Mid-Canal Storage Project, completed in the summer, made critical storage and operational efficiency upgrades to the 123-mile Coachella Canal.



Coachella Valley

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Metropolitan Water District managed with less Colorado River water in 2024, after turning over to Reclamation three of its conservation programs with agricultural partners in California. Normally, Metropolitan funds these fallowing programs and the conserved water is transferred to the agency for urban use. But in support of the effort to stabilize Lake Mead, Metropolitan turned these programs over to Reclamation through 2026.

Metropolitan also continued efforts in 2024 to reduce its long-term reliance on the Colorado River, by investing in local resources and

urban water efficiency. In April, Metropolitan committed \$250 million to new local water supply projects that will together annually produce more than 33,000 acre-feet. And in July, the agency increased its incentive for businesses that replace their grass with water-efficient landscaping. In addition, Reclamation announced a \$99.2 million grant for Metropolitan's Pure Water Southern California water recycling project, which will purify cleaned wastewater to produce a new climate-resilient water supply for Southern California.



COLORADO

Summary

In 2024, Colorado water officials celebrated the advancement of projects that have been years, if not decades, in the making with the prospect for more successes on the horizon. On the statewide policy front, the Colorado General Assembly proactively addressed the regulatory gap left by the reversal of Sackett v. EPA with the passage of HB24-1379. A robust rule-making process is currently underway to codify protections for wetlands throughout the state, making Colorado a leader in the national conversation on how to balance the needs of ecosystems and water users in the post-Sackett era.

Arkansas Valley Conduit

Construction continues to move ahead on the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC), a feature of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project being constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District. The federal government has appropriated more than \$320 million toward the AVC Project in the past four years, while state and local commitment is more than \$125 million. When completed, the AVC will bring clean drinking water to 39 water systems serving 50,000 people in Southern Colorado.

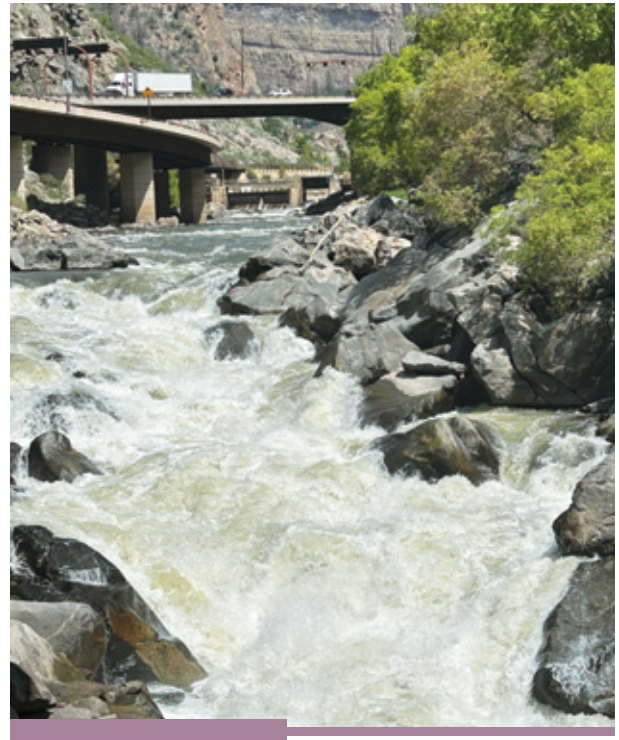


This year, Southeastern District also welcomed Leann Noga as the new executive director following Jim Broderick's retirement in March. Noga brings more than 20 years of experience with the district and is eager to continue the mission of water stewardship for the people of the Arkansas River and Colorado River basins.

Colorado River Connectivity Channel

In the Colorado River headwaters, a project to reconnect two sections of the Colorado River reached completion after a decade of planning and two years of construction.

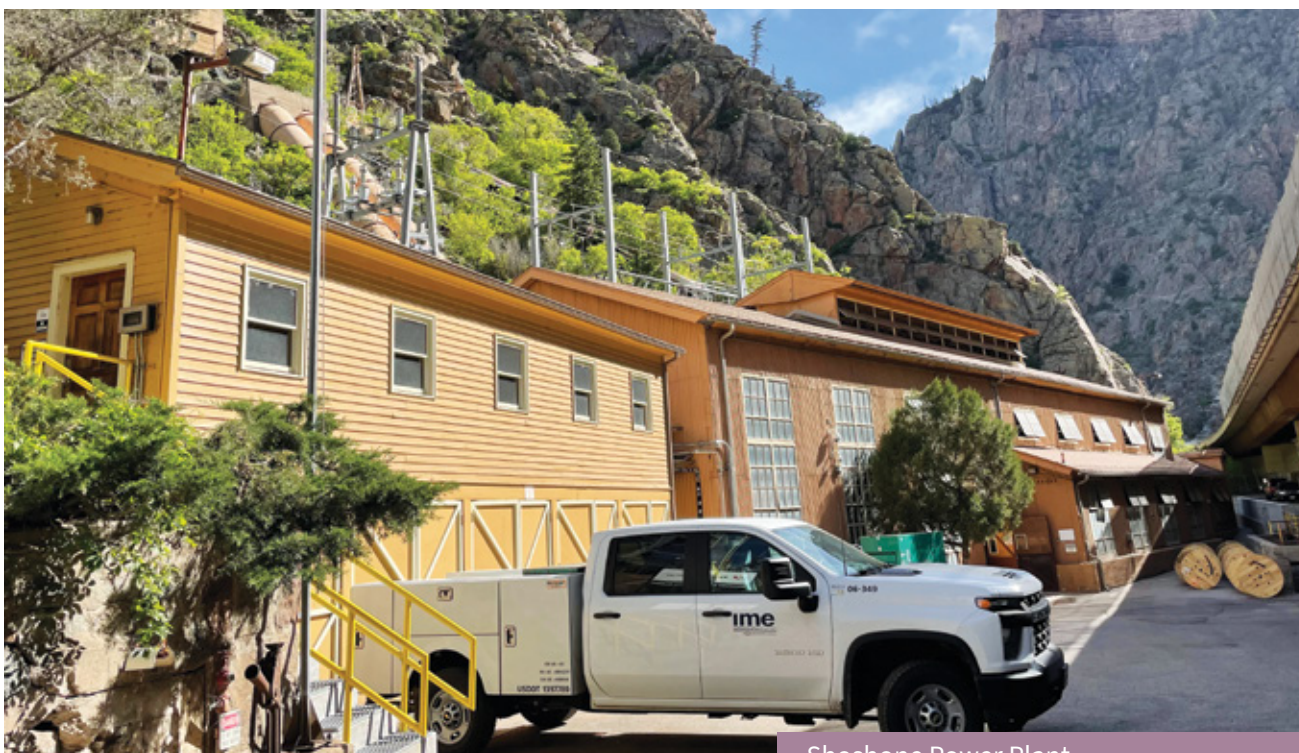
The Colorado River Connectivity Channel is a new waterway that was designed to reconnect the flows of the river around Windy Gap Dam during most months of the year. Just west of Granby, Colo., Windy Gap Dam was dedicated in 1985 as part of the Windy Gap Project—a water supply project commissioned by the Municipal Subdistrict for the growing communities of the north Front Range. In October 2023, water first started flowing through the new channel, and



almost immediately wildlife officials observed fish using the channel to move upstream and downstream. In 2024, insect hatches were noted in the channel, providing a vital food source for the fishery.



Colorado River Connectivity Channel, west of Granby



Shoshone Power Plant

Work will continue in coming years to ensure the establishment of riparian plants and to allow public access to the new channel. The \$30 million project includes funding from the Municipal Subdistrict, Northern Water, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Colorado River Water Conservation District (Colorado River District) and many other entities. The project is a partner to the Chimney Hollow Reservoir Project being built northwest of Denver to firm the Windy Gap Project.

Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition

In late 2023, the Colorado River Water Conservation District entered into an historic agreement with Public Service Company of Colorado (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy) to purchase the water rights associated with the Shoshone Hydropower plant in Glenwood Canyon for \$99 million. Some of the largest and most senior on the mainstem of the Colorado River, the Shoshone water rights are

non-consumptive and play a foundational role in water management throughout the state. The call supports agriculture, native fish species habitat, drinking water and recreational economies from the Continental Divide to the Colorado-Utah border.

To ensure that the flows supported by these rights continue regardless of the status of power production at the century-old power plant, the district is working closely with the State of Colorado to develop an instream flow agreement. This agreement must then proceed through a change case via Colorado's water court process. Fundraising efforts to date have secured almost \$16 million from local governments and water entities, \$20 million from the state of Colorado and \$20 million from CRWCD's grant program. The district submitted an application for further funds through the Inflation Reduction Act's "B2E" bucket with award determinations in spring 2025.



NEVADA

Nevadans demonstrated their ongoing resilience and commitment to conservation, saving more than 5 billion gallons of water over the last year compared to the previous three-year consumptive average. Southern Nevada ultimately used less than our Colorado River annual allocation, even as a federally declared Tier 1 shortage remained in effect throughout 2024 and continues into 2025. Increased temperatures and decreased runoff along the Colorado River Basin present the most significant environmental factors affecting

our region. With uncertainty surrounding climate change and the availability of future water resources, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) enhanced its world-renowned conservation programming to further drive down current water use as well as shepherd future sustainability for our region. From increased incentives to new offerings to help boost local tree canopy coverage to program changes that streamline the application process, the SNWA continues to partner with the community on its conservation journey.



Lake Mead



Colorado River near Davis Dam

Chief among the new initiatives is a series of programs to help single-family homeowners identify and repair property leaks. Residents receive online tutorials and professional referrals through the Water Smart Plumbers program, as well as financial assistance to lower the cost of a utility bill associated with a leak. Thanks to Advanced Metering Infrastructure, installed by SNWA member agencies, customers in these areas can receive real-time notifications related to suspected leaks for faster resolution.

The SNWA's hallmark Water Smart Landscapes Rebate Program continues to experience robust participation—homeowners converted more than 3 million square feet of turf in 2024, saving more than 162 million gallons of water annually. The SNWA Board approved an extension of the \$5 per sq. ft. turf-conversion rebate, allowing applicants all of 2025 to complete their conversions and still qualify for the temporary, increased incentive.

To further incentivize commercial conservation, the evaporative cooling rebate program was

expanded to provide additional incentives for a variety of water-efficient units adaptable to the diverse cooling needs of Las Vegas business and industry. The hybrid conversions will realize significant overall water savings—given traditional evaporative cooling represents our region's second largest use of water—thanks to early adoption of facilities such as World Market Center (projected to save 3.6 million gallons), Clark

County Library District and MGM Resorts, which has already saved 14 billion gallons of water as part of its ongoing commitment to a multitude of conservation initiatives.

Moratoriums on evaporative cooling and grass are already in place for new development. A state law prohibiting the use of Colorado River water



Residential Landscape Conversion



Low Lake Level Pumping Station

to irrigate nonfunctional turf takes effect in less than 3 years.

As part of its Capital Improvement Plan, the SNWA is investing over \$165 million in new reservoirs and pumping stations, solar-generating stations and ozonation upgrades. In addition, the SNWA created a financial assistance program to fund the conversion of septic systems and connection to the municipal sewer system. The voluntary program will allow hundreds of millions of gallons of water to be captured, recycled and reused annually in the Las Vegas Valley.

The SNWA partnered with nonprofit Impact Nevada to plant trees in underserved areas of the valley that are located near the urban core. The tree canopy initiative is available to

the larger community, as well, as an added incentive for participants in the Water Smart Landscapes Rebate Program who plant trees in their new landscape. Trees are carefully screened and selected to meet canopy coverage and water-efficiency requirements while also demonstrating the durability to survive our often harsh and changing climate.

These progressive water conservation strategies, along with water banking and other adaptive management strategies outlined in the SNWA Water Resource Plan, will continue to be critical as climate change and reduced flows along the Colorado River impact our region's water supplies into the foreseeable future.

NEW MEXICO

We would like to start with congratulating Aaron Chavez on his term as president of CRWUA. It is an honor for New Mexico to be represented. Also, congratulations are in order for Elizabeth Anderson, as she has been appointed as the new New Mexico State Engineer.

Inflows for Water Year 2024 have been below average. For Navajo Reservoir in particular, the April through July modified unregulated inflow was 71% of average.

- The reservoir peaked on July 4 with a pool elevation of 6,053.46 feet, approximately 10 feet below the average peak.
- The reservoir is expected to end the water year (September 30) between 6,039 and 6,049 feet (between 63 and 70% full).
- The models for the next six months show above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation, which is consistent with La Niña conditions.
- Most basins got to average snow water equivalent, but the low soil moisture, in part, led to below-average runoff volumes.
- The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are requesting a release



San Juan River near Navajo Dam



Middle Fork Gila River

of 10,000 acre-feet of their subcontracted water from the Jicarilla Apache Nation (JAN) in early winter to study the effects of backwater habitats on species in the San Juan River.

Operations for WY2024 and current conditions in basin

Releases are made for the authorized purposes of the Navajo Unit, and to attempt to maintain a target base flow through the endangered fish critical habitat reach of the San Juan River (Farmington to Lake Powell). The San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP) recommends a target base flow of between 500 cfs and 1,000 cfs through the critical habitat area. The target base flow is calculated as the weekly average of gaged flows throughout the critical

habitat area. The target baseflow has been maintained consistently throughout WY2024. Pool elevation at Navajo Reservoir has been below average, remaining in the 70th percentile throughout WY2024.

Pool elevation at Navajo Reservoir has been below average, remaining in the 70th percentile throughout WY2024.

San Juan-Chama Project:

- The San Juan-Project contractors have had shortages caused by mother nature in 6 of the last 10 years, and 7 of the last 11
- Construction of trans basin facilities completed in 1971
- Operated and maintained by Bureau of Reclamation
- Project works include three diversion dams, three tunnels, Heron Dam and Reservoir, Nambé Falls Dam and Reservoir
- Provides water for municipal, industrial, domestic, recreation, and fish and wildlife purposes, as well as supplemental water for irrigation

El Vado Construction - Alternative Storage in Abiquiu:

- USACE updated Water Control Plan April 2024 allowing native storage in Abiquiu (previously only San Juan-Chama was allowed)
- Need to acquire storage space from the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority (ABCWUA)
- Through 2024- Prior & Paramount approved and restricted to 20kaf

2025 through construction - Reclamation negotiating for:

- Unrestricted Prior & Paramount operations
- Storage for Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (negotiation range 100kaf-200kaf)
- Exchanges of water in Abiquiu up to Heron (includes other SJC contractors) to open storage space for MRGCD
- Will need USACE approval of final Abiquiu storage negotiated deal(s)

El Vado Dam Safety of Dams Modification Project:

- Need For Action
 - Bulging of the steel liner and Apparent grout leakage
- Current Project status
 - Outlet Works Issues

- High Snowpack, High Spring snowmelt and runoff
- Debris in the Reservoir at intake Structure
- Mechanical Rumbling in Outlet Works

Water Year 2024 runoff review

The current water year started with below average soil moisture last fall. All areas in the San Juan Basin were between 30 and 100% of average soil moisture, with most areas in the 50 to 70% range. Below-average conditions like this predictably led to decreased runoff efficiency, which is exactly what we saw. For most basins in this area, late winter and spring storms got us up to an average or slight above-average snow water equivalent (SWE), with similar timing to the average peak, as well. Despite being near-normal, the snow melted at a slightly faster than normal rate, and the low soil moisture led to below-average runoff volumes across the entire basin.



San Juan River



Proposed operations for remainder of WY 2024

For the remainder of summer and early fall, releases from Navajo are expected to stay between 500 and 700 cfs. Pool elevation at the end of the water year (September 30) will most likely be between 6039 and 6049 ft (between 63 and 70% full).

As mentioned earlier, there will be a second 10,000 af release for the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to support endangered species and support compact requirements. Colleen Cunningham, NMISC, described the release further. This release is scheduled for early winter and will look at the backwater habitats to see what other fish species use those areas and help determine the difference in transit losses (evapotranspiration) between late summer and early winter. As with the recent release, it will be a 15-day release period, and the additional

flows will be added to the baseflow. The release will be structured in the following way: 5 days of adding 250cfs, 5 days of adding 500cfs, and finally another 5 days adding 250cfs. The water being released is subcontracted from the Jicarilla Apache Nation and will likely lead to a peak around 900cfs released from the dam; the average winter baseflow release will likely be 400cfs.

Currently, forecasts for water year 2025 include a 40% chance of having a spring release

from Navajo. This forecast considers current storage and baseflow conditions, and a range of historical hydrology between 1991 and 2020. The January 2025 meeting will have a slightly more precise estimate of how likely a spring release will be, so stay tuned.

Drilling update (Kelsey Deckert, O&M Group Chief): Exploratory drilling has been happening on the dam and will continue through 2025, but the roads will be open for another few weeks. Starting on September 11, the road across the crest of the dam, NM 539, will close for an extended period. After this work is completed, the road across the face of the dam, NM 511, will have a single-lane closure. The road impacts are currently scheduled through May 2025 and are subject to change. See the Navajo Dam Water Operations webpage <https://www.usbr.gov/uc/water/crsp/cs/nvd.html> for the most current information.





UTAH

In 2024, Utah was ranked as the state with the best economic outlook for the 17th consecutive year and best state for the second consecutive year. State leaders know that Utah's powerhouse positioning is directly correlated to its ability to protect, conserve, use and develop its water resources. Utah remains committed to ensuring the Colorado River remains a viable resource for the current and future generations who depend on its water.

About a quarter of the water used in Utah comes from the Colorado River. Utah is allocated 23% of the Upper Basin's available supply.

Most of Utah's Colorado River water is used to support agricultural interests. To proactively plan for and respond to drought in the Colorado River Basin, the state is launching the Utah Demand Management Pilot Program to help agricultural water users reduce consumption on a temporary,



Big Sand Wash Falls



Virgin River

voluntary, compensated and protected basis. The program objectives include reducing agricultural water depletions, quantifying reductions, clarifying depletion conditions, identifying regulatory processes for credit authorizations and determining the feasibility and risks of multi-year storage.

Almost 20% of Utah's Colorado River water is currently used by tribes, including the Navajo Nation and Ute Indian Tribe. The Navajo Nation's settlement of 81,500 acre-feet of water was ratified by Congress in 2020. The Ute Indian Tribe has a right to 144,000 acre-feet and potential for an additional 115,000 acre-feet that was ratified by Congress in 1990, but the tribe has yet to ratify. Utah supports the Upper Basin Tribes deriving benefits from settled, quantified and adjudicated federal reserved tribal water rights.

Less than 10% of Utah's Colorado River water is used for municipal and industrial uses, with most of that use made possible through the Central Utah Project (CUP). The CUP is a federal water project that delivers more than 100,000 acre-feet of water annually to many of Utah's largest population centers.

Utah continues its study to improve the measurement and understanding of Colorado River water use throughout the state. The 2023 Metering and Gaging Gap Analysis identified areas that will benefit from an improved and expanded water measurement network to produce sound and transparent data. The study analyzes the measurement, hydrology, operations and drought mitigation measures to efficiently use Utah's Colorado River water amidst a prolonged drought, changing climate conditions and declining reservoir storage.

To coincide with Utah's improved measurement practices, state legislators have updated the requirements for reporting per-capita water use to be more consistent with the practices of other Colorado River Basin states. Earlier this year, water providers throughout the state submitted their first consumptive use reports to the state.

The updated consumptive use data will allow water providers to better track and monitor conservation achievements. Utah's conservation efforts include, but are not limited to:

1. Expanding programs to increase indoor and outdoor water-use efficiency
2. Reducing the quantity of nonfunctional grass through replacement with drought-resilient landscaping while maintaining vital urban landscapes and tree canopies
3. Increasing water reuse and recycling programs where feasible
4. Adopting conservation rate structures to incentivize efficiency



Colorado River



CUWCD Stillwater

5. Accelerating water loss detection programs
6. Improving coordination between land use and water planning efforts

Utah is actively involved in the development of post-2026 operational guidelines and strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Utah is committed to working with the other Colorado River Basin states, the Bureau of Reclamation, Tribes and other key stakeholders to develop a consensus alternative for consideration and evaluation. Utah is a signatory to the March 2024 Upper Division States Alternative for Post-2026 Operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, and August 2024 letter supporting the creation of a memorandum of understanding with Reclamation that would provide accounting and potential credit to the Upper Basin states for water saved through conservation programs.



WYOMING

Mountains in Wyoming's portion of the Colorado River Basin had a snowpack that was slightly above average in Water Year 2024. Even so, total runoff was less than average. Further, after the snowpack had runoff, precipitation was below average for much of the summer. Those factors contributed to Lake Powell water levels generally remaining unchanged from 2023.

Fortunately, like 2023, Drought Response Operations Agreement (DROA) releases were not

needed in 2024. Instead, DROA releases made from Flaming Gorge Reservoir in 2021 and 2022, totaling 588,000 acre-feet, were fully recovered on Feb. 28, 2024. This storage is not only significant for Wyoming's local economy, but serves as a critical buffer against dry years in the future.

Wyoming, along with the other Upper Basin States, continued to implement voluntary water conservation efforts through the System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) in 2023 and 2024. In 2023, there were 20 such projects in



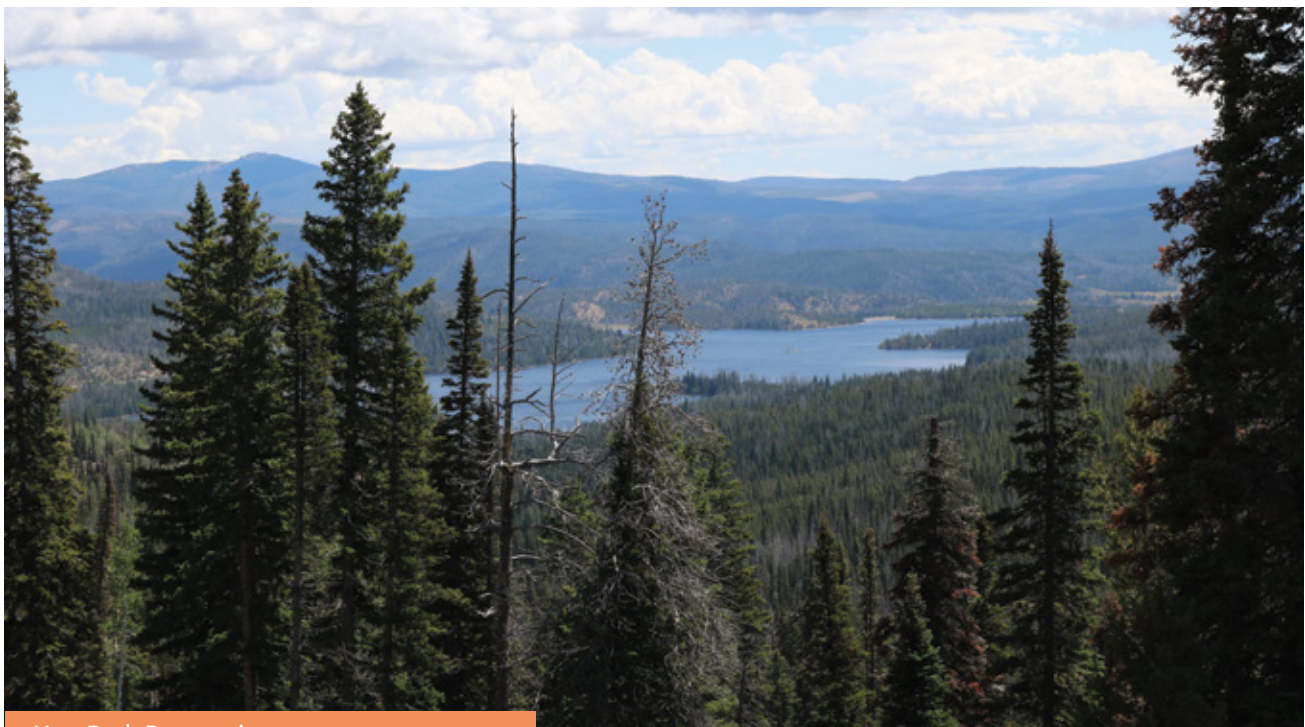
Expedition Island, Green River

Wyoming that conserved an estimated 16,000 acre-feet of water. In 2024, there were 32 projects that conserved an estimated 22,000 acre-feet of water. Wyoming also dedicated significant resources in 2024 working to implement long-term water conservation and environmental projects under “Buckets” 2E and 2W funded by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Accurately measuring water availability and water use will become increasingly critical if water supplies continue to diminish. Wyoming, again working with the other Upper Basin States, prioritized funding available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to improve our ability to measure water. In the last year, all to better understand water use in Wyoming’s portion of the basin, Wyoming has installed four eddy covariance towers, 10 stream gages, and helped fund field water balance studies. In the upcoming year there are plans to install numerous diversion measurement and telemetry devices and 20 more stream gages in Wyoming.

Additionally, BIL funding will be used to conduct reservoir evaporation studies, incidental use studies, as well as transit loss studies between Fontenelle Reservoir and Flaming Gorge Reservoir, and between Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Lake Powell.

The Wyoming Legislature has also provided significant funding to help Wyoming improve its ability to manage water supplies. Using this funding, Wyoming is currently: 1) Developing a Wyoming-specific Riverware model; 2) Constructing a data-sharing website to make up-to-date river flows, diversions and reservoir levels available; 3) Funding research into existing water conservation efforts and practices; 4) Performing additional Wyoming-specific transit losses studies; 5) Studying impacts of water availability on consumptive use, and; 6) Studying ditch conveyance losses in Wyoming.



Hog Park Reservoir





TEN TRIBES

PARTNERSHIP

The Colorado River Basin Tribes Partnership, also known as the Ten Tribes Partnership (Partnership), is an organization formed in 1992 by 10 federally recognized tribes with reserved water rights in the Colorado River Basin. The member tribes are: Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Navajo Nation, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Quechan Indian Tribe and Cocopah Indian Tribe. These tribes formed the Partnership for the purpose of strengthening tribal influence among the seven Basin States over the management and utilization of Colorado River water resources.

The Partnership assists member tribes in the development and protection of tribal water resources and addresses technical, legal, economic and practical issues related to the management and operation of the Colorado River. The Partnership formally joined the Colorado River Water Users Association in 1996 with the goal of actively participating with the seven Basin States in negotiations relating to the Colorado River. In 2018, the Partnership, along with Reclamation, completed the Tribal Water Study, which included information regarding each Partnership tribe's water rights, current water uses, future demands and likely impacts to the system of future development of tribal water. As documented in the Tribal Water Study,



Lake Powell

Partnership tribes collectively have water rights in the Upper and Lower Basin to roughly 20% of the mainstream flow.

THE TEN TRIBES PARTNERSHIP HAS DEVELOPED AND APPROVED THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ITS WORK ON RIVER POLICY GOING FORWARD:

- As indigenous people, we are closely connected to the land and natural resources and take seriously our obligation to protect and defend the Colorado River, as well as the plants, animals, people and ecosystems that rely on the river.
- Continued drought has created extreme uncertainty for users of Colorado River water and concerns about the health of the river itself.
- Insufficient water availability will have drastic consequences for our tribes, who rely heavily on the river for commercial, domestic, cultural and spiritual purposes.
- Collectively, the Ten Tribes hold rights to more than 20% of the Colorado River's current estimated flow, and tribal water, therefore, plays an important role in supply and demand.
- The Ten Tribes must be included in a meaningful way in shaping river policy going forward.
- Part of this policy must be an acknowledgment of the extent of tribal water rights, a recognition of tribes' rights to use that water, and a commitment to assist tribes in benefitting from those water rights.



- It is time to stop thinking about tribal water rights as a problem to be solved and start thinking about tribes and tribal water rights as integral to solving the basin's problems.
- For the Ten Tribes, compensated forbearance, off-reservation marketing and protection of future rights to on-reservation development, will be necessary components of any future river management system.
- We must acknowledge that the water supply in the Colorado River was overestimated to start with and is shrinking year by year.
- We must take steps to address supply/demand imbalances while protecting tribal water rights, the river, the reservoirs, and the plants, fish, birds and other species that depend on the river system for survival.

Water rights for the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, CRIT, the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, the Quechan Indian Tribe and the Cocopah Indian Tribe, whose reservations are located on the lower



Beaver Creek

reaches of the mainstream of the Colorado River, were decreed in *Arizona v. California*, 574 U.S. 150 (2006). In that case, the Supreme Court found that the Secretary of the Interior had a statutory duty to respect existing present perfected rights as of the date the Boulder Canyon Project Act was passed. Water rights of the five Indian reservations are among those present perfected rights and are entitled to priority based on the establishment date of each reservation and dates of boundary adjustments thereto.

In 2024, the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe built on its network of successful partnerships across the public, private and NGO sectors to secure funding to plan and implement important water conservation initiatives, infrastructure improvements and ecosystem restoration projects on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation (Reservation). Specifically, the Tribe implemented the third year of a seasonal fallowing program in partnership with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), the second

year of its own seasonal fallowing program, as well as the second year of its System Conservation Implementation Agreement with MWD and the Bureau of Reclamation to conserve 13,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead. The Tribe also continued to work independently and in partnership with the Bard Water District to implement efficiency improvements and other water conservation measures on the Indian Unit of the Yuma Project Reservation Division, which is located on the Reservation. It continued to steward the Yuma East Wetlands and worked to restore additional land on the Reservation to better ecological health. The Tribe has also worked intensively toward its goal of securing the designation of the Kw'tsan National Monument to protect culturally and spiritually sacred land adjacent to the Reservation.

In 2022, Arizona Senators Kelly and Sinema introduced S. 3308, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act, and it was heard by the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Chairman Grijalva included a modified version of the

legislation as Title III of the Wildfire Protection and Drought Relief Act as passed by the House. As of this writing, the CRIT legislation is being reconciled between the two houses of Congress with hopes for passage this year.

During 2022, CRIT is completing the third and final year of a multi-year system conservation agreement entered as part of the Arizona mitigation program for the Drought Contingency Plan. This program is funded with appropriated funds from the State of Arizona and by NGO and corporate partners. The 55,000 acre-feet per year left in Lake Mead required the fallowing of approximately 11,000 acres of productive farm land on the Reservation in Arizona.

The Tribal Council approved a Diversion Management Plan in 2022 to guide the water diversions and deliveries by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The CRIT also received a Reclamation Water & Science grant to work toward an integrated water ordering system among the CRIT farmers, the BIA and Reclamation. Both the DMP and the improved process for water orders should increase the efficiency of the water ordering and delivery process at CRIT.

In cooperation with the Central Arizona Project and the private company N-Drip, CRIT expanded the acreage and the types of crops using the N-Drip system as part of a pilot study to determine the effectiveness of the N-Drip system over multiple years of use. Leadership and staff of the CRIT continue to participate in

and serve on committees and councils in Arizona that are addressing the hydrologic conditions in the basin.

A portion of the Ute Indian Tribe's reserved water rights was decreed in *United States v. Cedarview Irrigation Company et al.*, No. 4427 (D. Utah 1923), and *United States v. Dry Gulch Irrigation Company, et al.*, No. 4418 (D. Utah 1923), with a senior priority date of 1861, the establishment date of the Uintah Valley Reservation, pursuant to the reserved water rights doctrine first articulated in *Winters v. United States*, 207 U.S. 564 (1908). In 1965, the United States, the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the State of Utah (by joint resolution of the Legislature) and the Ute Indian Tribe agreed to the quantification of the rest of the Tribe's reserved water rights by contractual agreement. In March 2018, the Tribe commenced litigation against the United States for the mismanagement, misappropriation and diminishment of the Tribe's reserved



Rebuilt Severo Ditch Heading



Nannice Diversion

water rights and related resources. The Tribe is seeking declaratory and injunctive relief, as well as damages, to compensate the Tribe for past harms, including mismanagement of the Uintah Indian Irrigation Project.

The 1988 Colorado Ute Settlement Act, as amended by 2000 amendments and Colorado state court consent decrees, quantified the water rights of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe in the state of Colorado. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe has been implementing rehabilitation efforts on the Pine River Indian Irrigation Project (PRIIP). Southern Ute received \$2.3 million in WaterSMART grant funding from the Bureau of Reclamation to construct six long-Crested weirs on the Pine River Canal to address a drought vulnerability. The Southern Ute Tribe also received \$651,919 in Reclamation WaterSMART funds to improve fish passage and reduce fish entrainment on the Nannice Diversion, which is on the Pine River.

The Southern Ute's Water Use Option Team continued meeting in 2024 to learn about the Tribe's water resources, with the long-term goal of developing options to use the Tribe's water resources.

Since the creation of The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Water Resource Committee (WRC) in 2021, the primary goals of the WRC were to create a Water Resource Department and develop a strategic plan for the management, protection and development of the Tribe's water rights and water resources. The first goal, to establish a Water Resources Department, was completed in spring 2023 with the hiring of a Water Resource Director with an additional Technician position to be filled by November. This accomplishment couldn't have been met without the financial assistance from the Walton Family Foundation, New Venture Fund and The Nature Conservancy. The 2023 year also provided a full water supply for the 7,700-acre Ute Mountain Ute Farm and

Ranch Enterprise (FRE). The FRE was able to return to production 80% of the fallowed acres from the drought in 2021. Bureau of Reclamation provided much-needed drought relief funding to cover expenses to treat the 6,000 fallowed acres that were returned to production. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Southern Ute Indian Tribe have been active participants in the Colorado legislature-created Drought Task Force addressing drought in the Colorado River Basin and Sub Task Force studying tribal matters in the latter half of 2023.

The 1992 Jicarilla Apache Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act resolved future-use water-rights claims of the Jicarilla Apache Nation in the Colorado River system. Since 1992, the Jicarilla Apache Nation has been actively engaged in efforts to put this water to use. The Jicarilla Apache Nation currently subleases a portion of its settlement water to support residential communities, endangered species and resource development. In 2022, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and The Nature Conservancy entered into an innovative water transaction that allows the State of New Mexico to lease up to 20,000 acre-feet of water from the Jicarilla Apache Nation each year to benefit threatened and endangered fish and wildlife and provide water security for communities. In 2023, 20,000 acre-feet of water was ordered and released pursuant to this transaction. This project demonstrates how tribal and state governments and conservation organizations can work together to find collaborative solutions that benefit multiple interests and users. The Jicarilla Apache Nation, along with the Navajo Nation, is also a project participant for the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project, which will deliver treated drinking water to the southern portion of the Jicarilla Apache Nation's reservation in late 2023 or early 2024.



San Juan River

In 2009, Congress ratified the Navajo Nation – New Mexico Water Rights Settlement Agreement for the San Juan River Basin. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) authorized the construction of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP). On June 8, 2023, Senators Ben Ray Lujan and Martin Heinrich introduced S. 1898, a bill to amend the Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects Act (P.L. 111-11), also known as the NGWSP Amendments Act of 2023. This bill is needed to authorize additional time and resources to complete the project and for its long-term, sustainable operations and maintenance.

One in three Navajo households haul water to meet their daily water needs. The Navajo Nation is benefiting from NGWSP Cutter Lateral completion on the far eastern side of the Navajo Nation where over 1,500 households with a population of over 6,200 have been receiving clean, safe drinking-water access since 2020. There are two laterals, the San Juan Lateral and the Cutter Lateral. The San Juan Lateral is still under construction. On Aug. 30, 2024, BOR awarded a \$267 million contract to JACOBS Project Management for design and build of the

San Juan Lateral Water Treatment Plant. The plant is the largest and most important feature of the NGWSP. The Beacon Bisti N-9 Sublateral had a groundbreaking ceremony on Oct. 25, 2024. On Sept. 20, 2024, Secretary Deb Haaland provided official notice to the Navajo Nation and to the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission approving a 5-year extension to the completion dates for three projects specified in Public Law 111-11 the Northwestern New Mexico Water Projects Act. The three projects that are part of the Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Agreement on the San Juan River Basin include 1) the Fruitland-Cambridge Irrigation Project; 2) the Hogback-Cudei Irrigation Project; and 3) the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

In 2023 and 2024, the Navajo Nation was engaged with 38 parties, including the Hopi Tribe and San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, and negotiated the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement, a comprehensive settlement including Upper Colorado River, mainstem Lower Colorado River and Little Colorado River water rights claims. On May 23, 2024, the 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved the Northeastern Arizona

Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement, and less than 24 hours later President Buu Nygren signed the legislation into law. On July 8, 2024, Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and co-sponsored by Senator Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) introduced S. 4633, the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024. A companion House bill H.R. 8940 was introduced by Representative Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ-06) and co-sponsored by Representatives Greg Stanton (D-AZ-04), David Schweikert (R-AZ-01), and Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-07).

From 2022 to 2024, the Navajo Nation actively negotiated terms of the Navajo Nation Rio San José Basin Stream System Water Rights Settlement Agreement with the Pueblos of Acoma and Laguna, N.M., the Village of Milan, City of Grants and nine individual acequias and community ditches. In July 2024, formal agreement was reached by the parties. On May 23, 2024, the Rio San José Basin Stream System Water Rights Settlement Agreement, namely CMY-25-24, was approved by the 25th Navajo Nation Council. On May 24, 2024, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed CMY-25-24 into law. Representative Teresa Ledger-Fernandez



San Juan River

(D-NM) introduced H.R. 8945, Navajo Nation Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024 on July 9, 2024. On Sept. 9, 2024, a companion bill, S. 4998, to H.R. 8945 was introduced by Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Ben Ray Luján (D-NM).

On July 23, 2024, President Buu Nygren provided testimony at a House Committee on

Natural Resources legislative hearing on H.R. 8940 Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024 and H.R. 8945 Navajo Nation Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024. On Sept. 25, 2024, President Buu Nygren provided testimony before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for S. 4633, the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024 and S. 4998, Navajo Nation Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Act of 2024. These settlements will ensure a safe, secure and sustainable water supply accessible to tens of thousands of Navajo People now and for future generations.

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Amendments Act, Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act, Navajo Nation Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Act will provide certainty for the Navajo Nation's permanent homeland's future and an equal opportunity for health and prosperity for the Navajo people.

The Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement Act was included as Section 1102 of the



Foundation construction for Tsé Da'azkání Pumping Plant

Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-260), approved by Congress on Dec. 21, 2020, and signed by President Donald Trump on Dec. 27, 2020. The Navajo Utah Water Rights Implementation Team is working on required tasks before implementation of water projects. The Navajo Nation is working to secure its water rights in the Little Colorado River Basin in New Mexico.

Among the Partnership's key goals are ensuring that, within the next decade, each Partnership tribe: has been able to successfully settle or otherwise resolve its reserved water rights claims; has the ability to maximize its on-reservation use of water as well as the flexibility to explore, facilitate and implement off reservation use and transfers; can benefit from water infrastructure projects promised or obtained through settlements or negotiations with state and federal governments and other partners in a timely fashion; and is fully supported by the United States' exercise of its trust responsibilities to protect the tribes' water rights in all of its management.



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