



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO THE
COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**

September 11, 2024

COLORADO RIVER BASIN WATER SUPPLY CONDITIONS REPORT

As of September 9th, the water surface elevation of Lake Powell was 3,580.21 feet with nearly 9.31 million-acre feet (MAF) of storage, or 40% of capacity. The water surface elevation of Lake Mead was 1,063.64 feet with 8.70 MAF of storage, or 33% of capacity. As of September 8th, the total System storage was 25.51 MAF, or 44% of capacity, which is about 64 KAF less than the total System storage at this time last year.

As of September 3rd, storage in the Upper Basin reservoirs, excluding Lake Powell, included the following volumes: 78% of capacity at Fontenelle Reservoir in Wyoming; 87% of capacity at Flaming Gorge Reservoir in Wyoming and Utah; 96% of capacity at Morrow Point 71% of capacity at Blue Mesa Reservoir in Colorado; and 68% of capacity at Navajo Reservoir in New Mexico.

As of September 3rd, August observed inflow into Lake Powell was 0.34 MAF (89% of normal) and the September inflow forecast is 0.31 MAF (88% of normal). The forecasted inflow into Lake Powell for WY-2024 is 8.10 MAF (84% of normal). The forecasted April through July 2024 unregulated inflow into Lake Powell was 5.33 MAF (80% of normal). The precipitation to date is 103% of normal.

August 24-Month Study

On August 15th, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) hosted a webinar to roll-out the results of the August 2024 24-Month Study. Pursuant to the 2007 Interim Guidelines, the August 2024 24-Month Study projections for January 1, 2025, system storage and reservoir water surface elevations are utilized in determining the operational tiers for the coordinated operations of Lakes Powell and Mead during 2025.

The Study projects Lake Powell's January 1, 2025, elevation to be 3,568.99 feet based on 8.23 MAF release from Glen Canyon Dam. Lake Powell's operations in WY-2025 will be governed by the Mid-Elevation Release Tier with a projected water year release volume of 7.48 MAF.

The Study projects Lake Mead’s January 1, 2025, elevation to be 1,062.32 feet. Consistent with Section 2.D.1 of the Interim Guidelines, a Level 1 Shortage Condition consistent with Section 2.D.1.b will govern the operation of Lake Mead for calendar year 2025. In addition, Section III.B of Exhibit 1 to the Lower Basin DCP Agreement will govern the operation of Lake Mead for 2025. Arizona and Nevada will implement 533 KAF in water savings in CY-2025 under the 2007 Interim Guidelines and Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan. California is not required to implement water savings actions under the Guidelines or DCP in 2025. Mexico will implement 80 KAF of water savings under Minute 323 Delivery Reductions and the Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan. The total contribution from the Lower Basin and Mexico is 613 KAF. The modeling assumptions used in the Study include conservation actions under the SEIS ROD and the Lower Colorado Conservation program.

Figures 1 and 2 show the projected elevations for Lakes Powell and Mead through July 2026 from the August 24-Month Study.

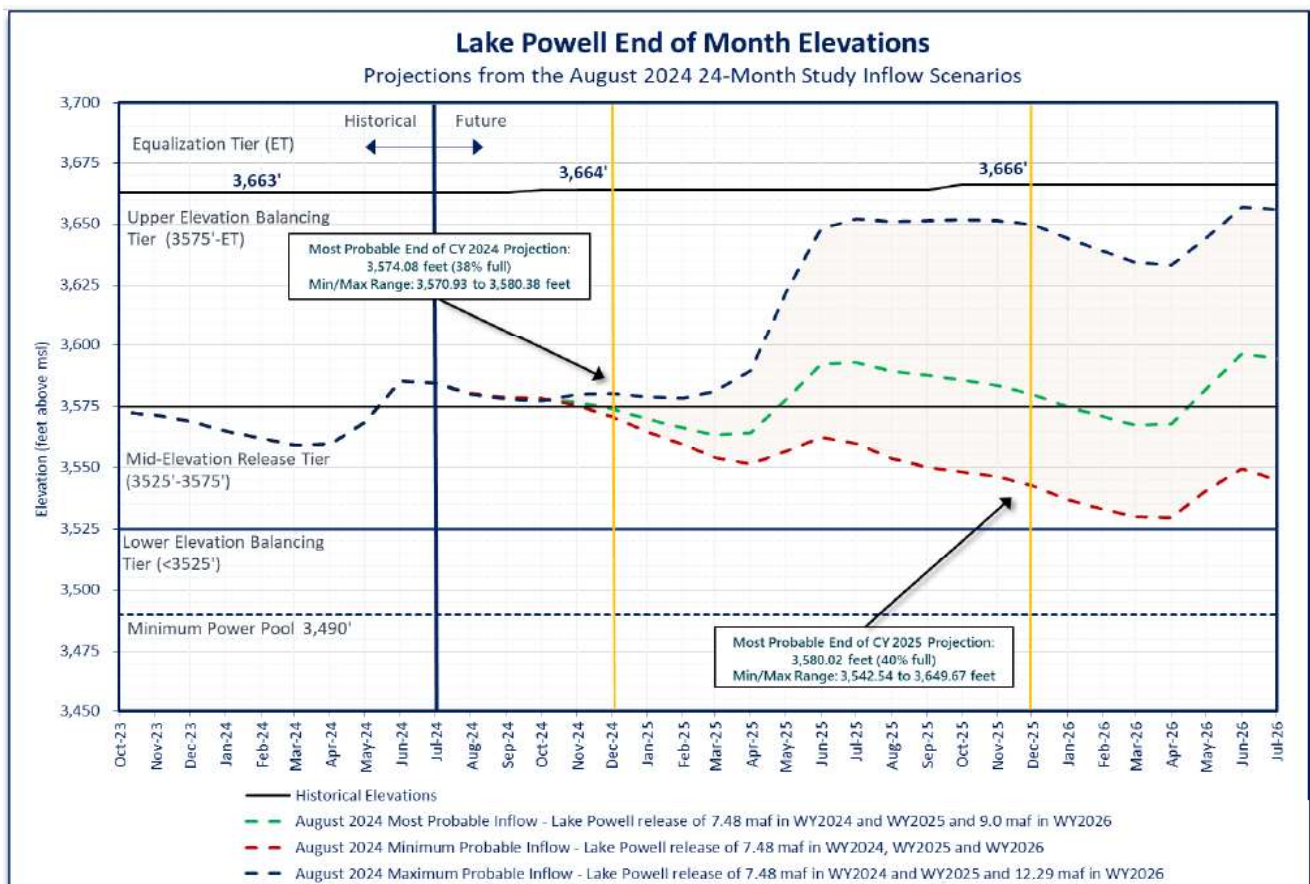


Figure 1-Lake Powell projections from August 2024 24-Month Study

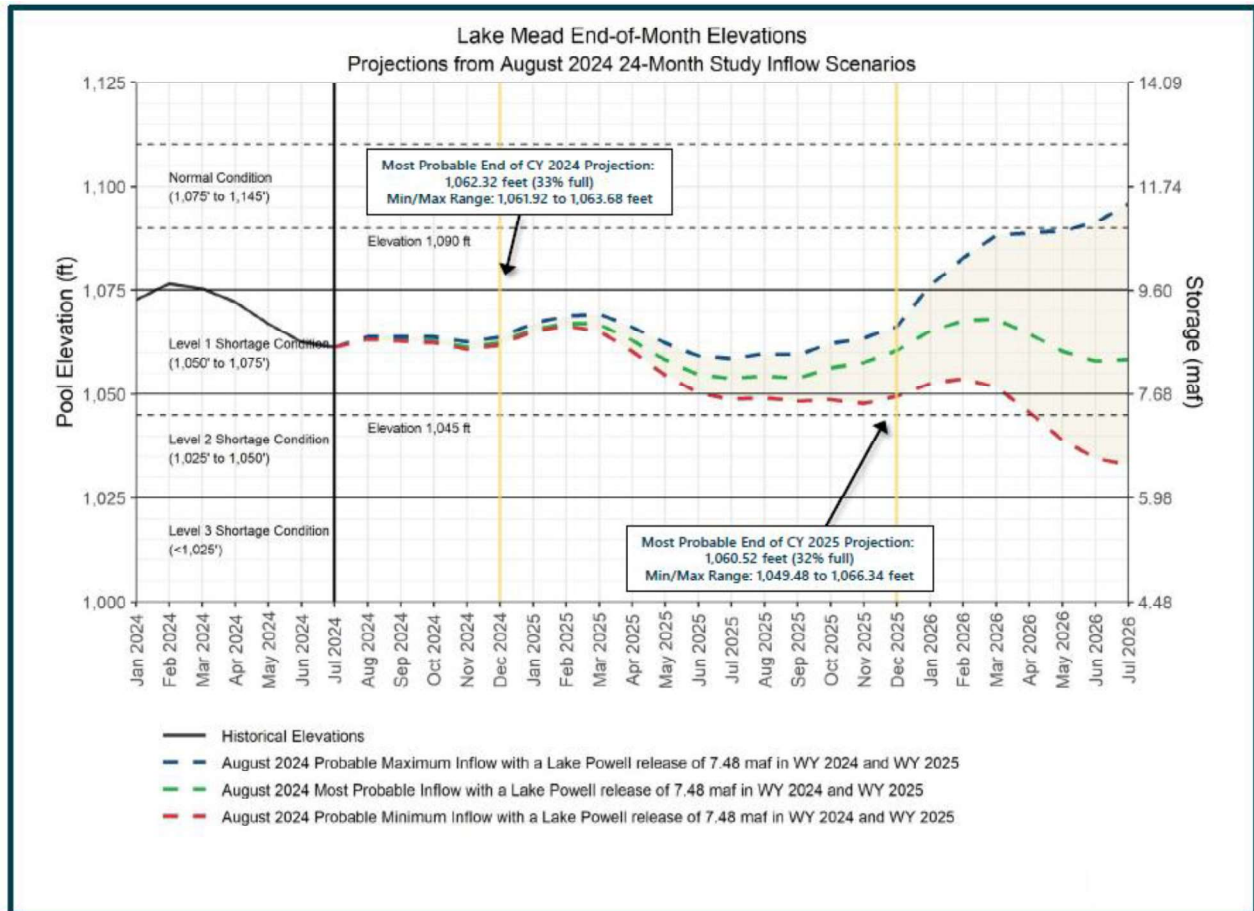


Figure 2-Lake Mead projections from August 2024 24-Month Study

COLORADO RIVER BASIN PROGRAM UPDATES

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program

The proposed salinity fix legislation remains under consideration by Congress. A memo conveying a brief update on the potential pathways this legislation may move forward is included in the Board packet.

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

The Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program (GCDAMP) met August 21 – 22 in Grand Canyon National Park.

The AMWG received updates on the ongoing implementation of experimental flows designed to prevent the establishment of smallmouth bass below Glen Canyon Dam. So far in 2024, 183

smallmouth bass have been captured, but there is no evidence of smallmouth bass spawning has currently been identified in 2024. The furthest downstream capture of a smallmouth bass in 2024 was at river mile 6.9. As a result, the National Park Service does not foresee a need for a chemical treatment similar to those utilized in recent years in an attempt to remove smallmouth bass from potential spawning habitat.

The AMWG received a report that Reclamation is currently in the process of relining Glen Canyon Dam's river outlet works. The project includes removing the original lining and replacing it with an epoxy primer and polysiloxane topcoat. This repair work as well as ongoing research efforts regarding potential sediment scour below the dam and research regarding reducing potential future cavitation in the outlet works are not anticipated to affect the current smallmouth bass flow experiment. A press release regarding the relining project is available on Reclamation's [website](#).

The GDCAMP is preparing for a programmatic review required by the Long Term Experimental and Management Plan (LTEMP) to be completed by the U.S. Department of the Interior after October 1, 2027. This review is part of the adaptive management process and is intended to evaluate what has been learned from the experimental studies and an evaluation of resource conditions after 10 years of LTEMP operational experience.

The AMWG passed a motion recommending a triennial budget and workplan for FY 2025-2027 to the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary). Once a work plan and budget is finalized by the Secretary, the AMWG will conduct yearly reviews and make recommendations to the Secretary regarding potential minor adjustments as the work plan is implemented.

The AMWG received a report from the National Park Service (NPS) regarding potential modification of a slough located 12 miles above Lees Ferry. The slough is a known hotspot for breeding of non-native fish including smallmouth bass. The proposed modification would enable more flow of water through the slough from the main river channel with the goal of making the habitat less desirable for fish spawning. NPS is developing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The NPS is anticipating releasing a draft EA for public comment by September 23, 2024.

The AWMG received a report that Reclamation is continuing to evaluate long term options to prevent smallmouth bass establishment below Glen Canyon Dam. Options currently under evaluation are intended to prevent fish passage from Lake Powell through Glen Canyon Dam as well as to provide temperature control below Glen Canyon Dam. Reclamation is evaluating potential installation of a thermal curtain above Glen Canyon Dam. The next steps being taken

by Reclamation include a value planning study, biofouling study, hydrologic modeling, and design considerations.

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

On September 11th, Senator Padilla (D-CA) is introducing a bill to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources that would authorize establishment of an interest-bearing account with the U.S. Treasury for funds collected by the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP). The LCR MSCP is funded through a cost-sharing agreement between the federal government and state water and power users. The federal participants to the program contribute 50% of the funding and the state participants provide 50% of the funding (25% California, 12.5% Arizona, 12.5% Nevada).

Non-federal funds contributed to the LCR MSCP are retained in federal accounts until expended. The funding contributed has exceeded expenditures in the near term, resulting in over \$60 million being held in the accounts. These funds will be needed by the program; however, they are depreciating in value as they are not earning interest or any investment return while future expenditures are subject to inflation and increased costs.

The bill will be introduced in the House by Representative Calvert (D-CA). A white paper with additional background and a draft of the bill are included in the Board packet.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Salton Sea

The California Legislature has passed Senate Bill 583 to create the Salton Sea Conservancy. The bill would establish a Salton Sea Conservancy within the California Natural Resources Agency. If the bill is signed into law, a Salton Sea Conservancy would, in consultation and coordination with the Salton Sea Authority, support implementation of restoration projects; oversee the operation, maintenance, and management of projects completed pursuant to the Salton Sea Management Program Phase I: 10-Year Plan, the Long-Range Plan, the final Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study, and any future restoration plans; support and promote projects that benefit the surrounding communities and complement the current and planned projects in the Salton Sea Management Program Phase I: 10-Year Plan, the Long-Range Plan, the final Imperial Streams Salton Sea and Tributaries Feasibility Study, and any future restoration plans; and coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies that are responsible for the mitigation of environmental impacts associated with the Quantification Settlement Agreement.

Washington, D.C. Report

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Hearing on Water Legislation

On Wednesday, September 11th, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power will hold a [hearing](#) on pending legislation. Of note, Senator Padilla's [bill](#) to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program will be discussed. Other bills under discussion include extension of the Upper Basin System Conservation Pilot Program (Senator Hickenlooper, D-CO), and the Help Hoover Dam Act (Senator Sinema, I-AZ). BOR Commissioner Camille Touton will testify.

House Natural Resources Hearing on Water Abundance

On Friday, September 6th, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held an oversight field [hearing](#) titled "Water Abundance: Opportunities and Challenges in California." The hearing examined California's water supply, including the challenges faced through federal regulations, and connection to our nation's food security. NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, and FWS Director Martha Williams were invited to testify.

Post-Wildfire Debris Flows in California

U.S. Geological Survey researchers contributed to a [study](#) that assessed what happens in watersheds after a destructive wildfire. The statewide study encompassed all fires in California larger than 100 square kilometers from 1984 to 2021. Study findings included that post-fire erosion generally occurred upstream of reservoirs, potentially diminishing reservoir storage capacity.

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