Overview of the Colorado River Basin

- Operation is governed by the “Law of the River”
- 16.5 million acre-feet of water use allocated annually
- 60 million acre-feet of storage capacity
- 4,200 Megawatts of installed hydropower capacity
- 70% of all use is for agriculture
- 40% the water is exported outside of the Basin
- Aside from the pulse flow event, the river hasn’t made it to the delta in decades
Colorado River – Current Conditions (as of August 7, 2023)

- Driest 23-year period on record (2000-2022)
- Flows in 2020-2022 were 37% to 63% of average
- Lake Powell and Lake Mead are near historically low water levels
  - Lake Powell current elevation is 3,579 feet at 39% of capacity
  - Lake Mead current elevation is 1,062 feet at 33% of capacity
Water Year 2023
Precipitation & Snowpack\(^1\)
as of August 7, 2023

Upper Colorado River Basin

Precipitation - 116%
Basin Snowpack - NA%

Salt - Verde River Basin

Precipitation - 134%
Basin Snowpack - NA%

\(^1\) Percent of normal precipitation is based on an arithmetic mean, or average; percent of normal snowpack is based on the median value for a given date. Water Year statistics are based on the 30-year period from 1991-2020.
Lake Powell Water Year Unregulated Inflow
Forecast as of August 1, 2023
Comparison with History

Water Year 2023 Final Forecast:
- Aug Most Prob: 13.75 maf (143%)
- Preliminary Observed 2023 April-July Inflow: 10.61 maf (166%)

Water Year 2024 Forecast:
- August Min Prob: 6.10 maf (64.2%)
- August Most Prob: 10.00 maf (104%)
- August Max Prob: 17.70 maf (184%)

Water Year statistics are based on the 30-year period of record from 1991-2020.
Lake Powell and Lake Mead End of Water Year Storage

Water Years 1960 through 2023*

- **Maximum Combined Capacity**
- **1999 Combined**
- **Storage was 47.6 maf (92% of capacity)**
- **Projected 2023 Combined Storage**
  - 17.71 maf (35% of capacity)*

*Storage value for the end of WY 2023 is based on the July 2023 24-Month Study projection.
Most Probable End of CY 2023 Projection: 3,575.32 feet (38% full)
Min/Max Range: 3,568.76 to 3,602.99 feet

Most Probable End of CY 2024 Projection: 3,592.46 feet (44% full)
Min/Max Range: 3,551.70 to 3,627.09 feet
Most Probable End of CY 2023 Projection: 1,066.20 feet (34% full)
Min/Max Range: 1,065.49 to 1,075.31 feet

Most Probable End of CY 2024 Projection: 1,057.78 feet (32% full)
Min/Max Range: 1,048.16 to 1,077.74 feet
Questions?

More information: https://www.usbr.gov/lc/riverops.html

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