



# COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT

PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **River District Responds to Bureau 24-Month Study**

*The fate of the Colorado River Basin relies on stronger federal leadership in the Lower Basin.*

**Glenwood Springs, Colorado** — Today, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released its [Colorado River Basin August 2022 24-Month Study](#), outlining operations for Lakes Powell and Mead in the upcoming 2023 Water Year. Unfortunately, neither the study nor the Bureau’s public statements provided any new, actionable plan to address the accelerating crisis on the Colorado River. Below is a statement from Colorado River District General Manager Andy Mueller:

“The Bureau of Reclamation declared two months ago that to keep the Colorado River Basin functioning, two-to-four-million-acre feet of water would need to be conserved, and quickly. With this we agree, but we believe the easiest and most logical place for the Bureau to implement these cuts is in the assessment of system losses in the Lower Basin.

In the Upper Basin, our states are assessed for the evaporation from our system reservoirs, counting towards our official annual consumptive use. In the Lower Basin, however, the Bureau has not historically implemented the same simple and accurate accounting standards. This has resulted in an annual 1.2-million-acre foot overuse of water in the Lower Basin, which during the last 22 years of drought, has resulted in the improper release of over 25-million-acre feet, enough to fill Lake Powell and then some.

In its statement today, the Bureau said it would ‘Prioritize and prepare for additional administrative initiatives . . . and address evaporation, seepage and other system losses in the Lower Basin.’ Our federal leadership needs to fix this broken system now, in Water Year 2023, if they want to bring the system back into balance. This is the time for action, not additional study. The Bureau must assess these losses against every contractor in the Lower Basin immediately. [Even Nevada has called for this fix.](#)

If the Colorado River and the 40 million people who rely on its waters are to survive this hotter, drier reality, we need federal leadership to decisively act where the demand for water has most outweighed the supply.”

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