




Our Water, Our Future on the West Slope

*Andy Mueller, General Manager
Colorado River District*





The Colorado River District was formed in 1937 to protect West Slope water users AND to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which the state is entitled.





Roadmap

- I. The Colorado River Crisis – Yes, we all know there's still a crisis
- II. Solutions & Unintended Consequences
- III. Protect Western Colorado





West Slope Residents Paying Attention



- 
- **83%** of likely voters are concerned about water levels in the Colorado River – this high-level of interest is reflected across party lines
 - **92%** of voters agree that the Colorado River Basin and streams are important to the economy on the Western Slope
 - **97%** feel that out-of-state water interests like California pose a threat
 - **98%** are concerned about investment firms purchasing water rights on the Western Slope

A System in Crisis and the Headlines to Prove it

More bad news for the Colorado River MONTROSE DAILY PRESS

The Search for Solutions to Colorado's Water Crisis 5280

Get Wall Street out of our water THE DAILY SENTINEL
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

Conferees told Colorado River action 'absolutely critical' AP AP NEWS



The Colorado River Basin





West Slope Residents Paying Attention



97%

of West Slope water users feel that out-of-state water interests like California pose a threat.

Reclamation official tells Colorado River states to conserve up to 4 million acre-feet of water

June 15, 2022

*Marianne Goodland, Colorado Politics.
Updated Aug. 17, 2022*

Promises to use 'unilateral power' to bring the river back into balance if states cannot come to an agreement.

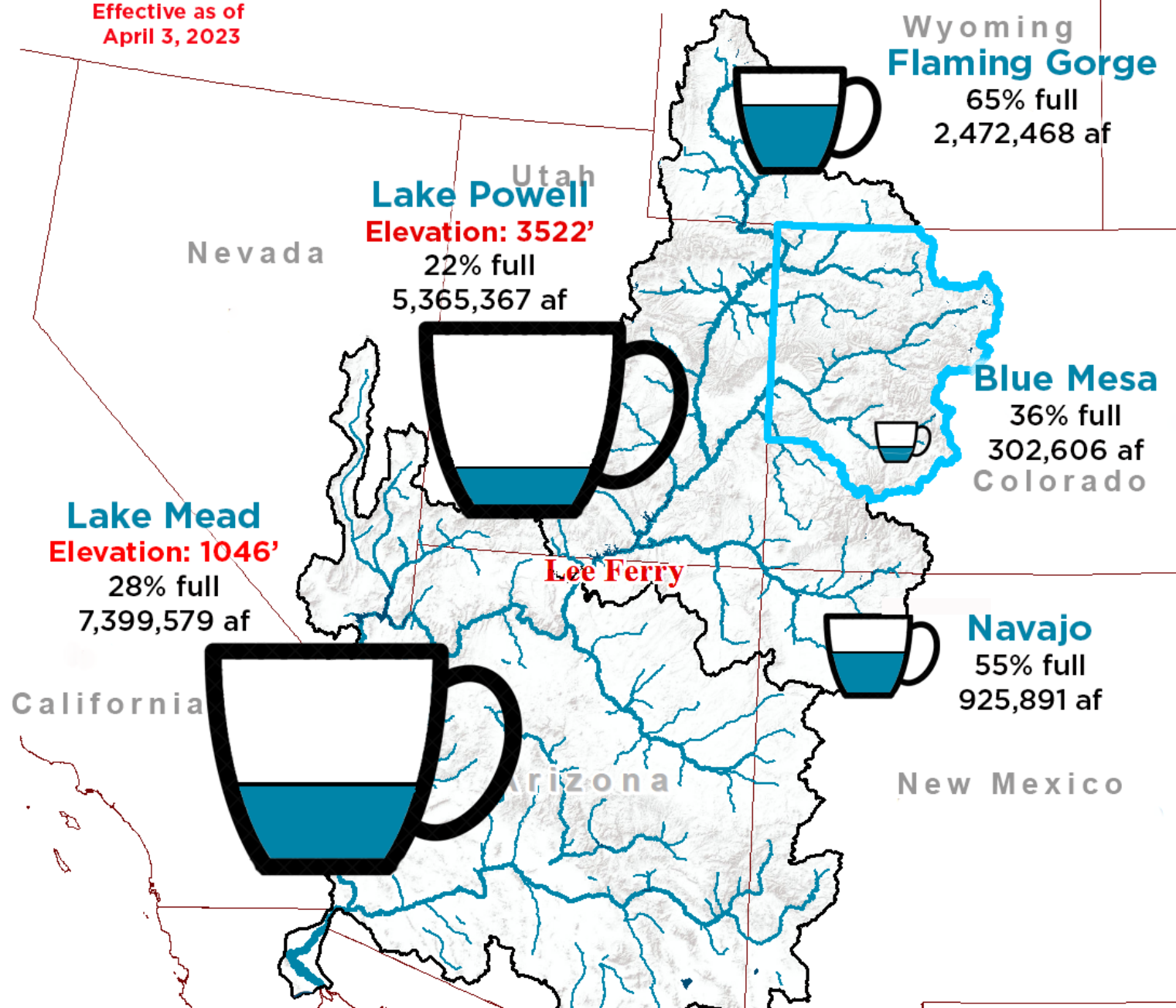


System Storage as of April 3, 2023

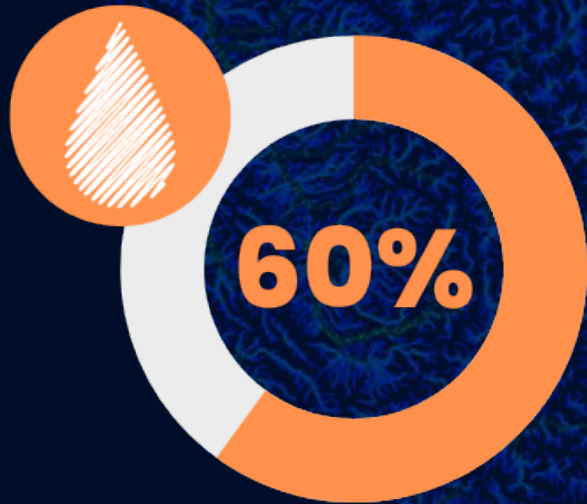


Colorado River Basin

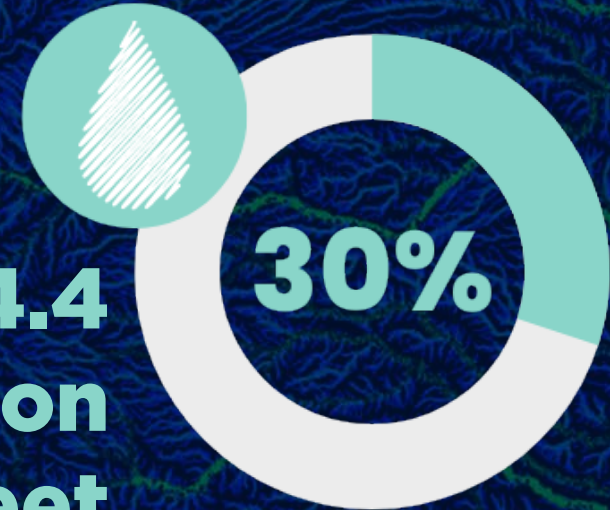
Effective as of
April 3, 2023



2011-2022 Average Use



8.8
Million
Acre Feet



4.4
Million
Acre Feet

+ 1.5 Million Acre Feet to Mexico



14.7 Million
Acre Feet Total

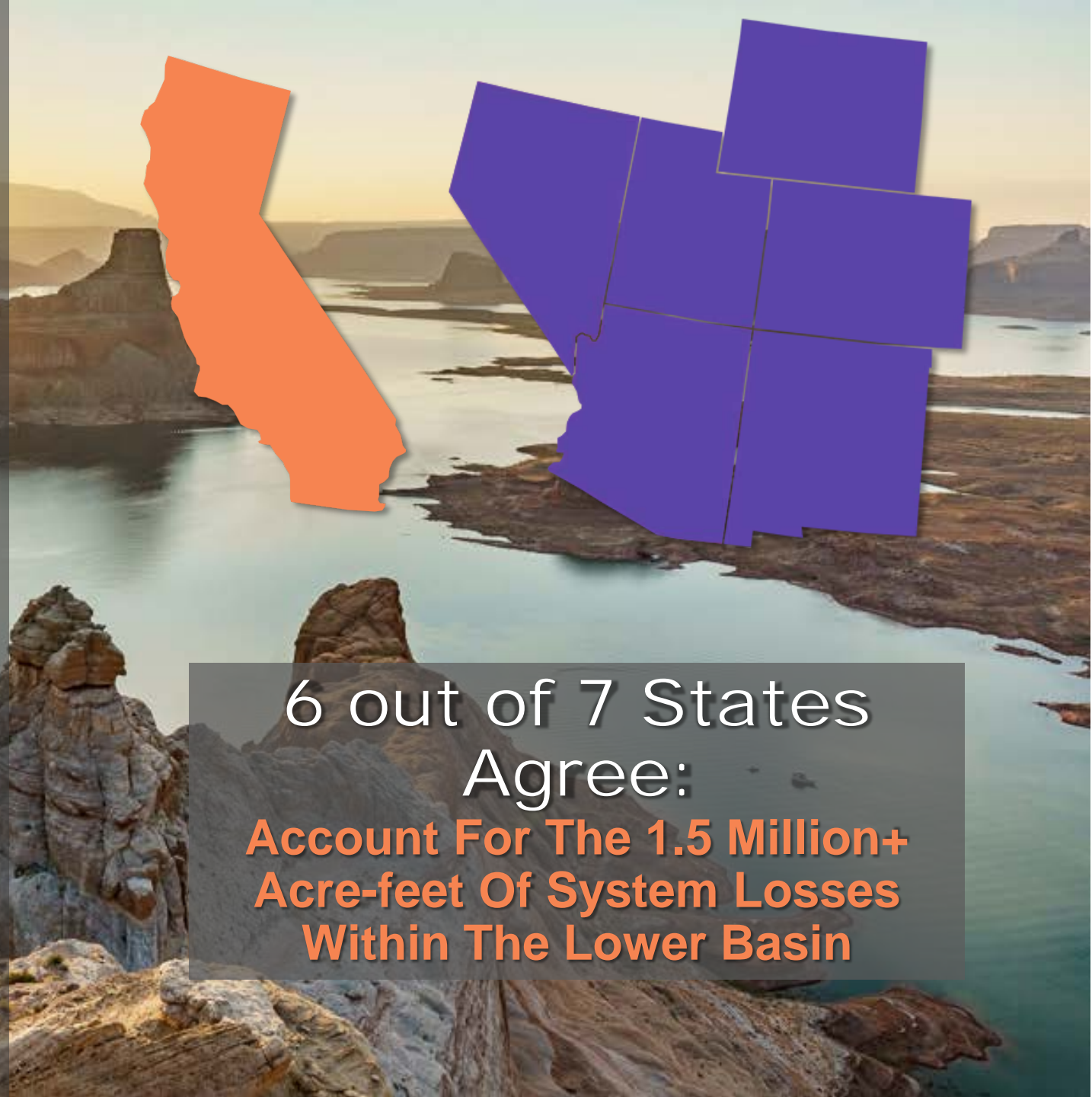
**And
Transit
Losses**





The 6-State Solution: Consensus-Based Modeling

- Submitted to the Department of Interior on January 31, 2023
- Adjustments to Lower Basin contributions required under Drought Contingency Plan
- Account for hydrologic shortages in the Upper Division States



**6 out of 7 States Agree:
Account For The 1.5 Million+
Acre-feet Of System Losses
Within The Lower Basin**



The Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)

- Draft shared by the Bureau of Reclamation on April 11, 2023
- 45-day NEPA public comment period
- The River District is working directly with Commissioner Mitchell to look at the ramifications of the proposed actions



Purpose

- Primarily addresses BOR's water management in the Lower Basin, where they are water masters
- Allows the Bureau greater flexibility when trying to balance the system between 2024 and 2026
- Prevent further crisis while stakeholders develop a long-term consensus solution to implement in 2026



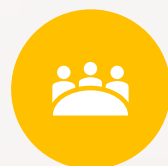
River District in the Big River Conversation



Provide up-to-date
science, data, modeling



Build and maintain
relationships with
policy makers



Driving the
conversation in
Interstate & Federal
discussions



Call for Lower Basin
evaporation and transit
loss accounting



West Slope Residents Paying Attention



94%

of voters think the loss of farmlands, ranches and orchards and the availability of water for agriculture are serious issues.

98%

are concerned about investment firms purchasing water rights on the Western Slope.

UPPER COLORADO RIVER COMMISSION



1 REAUTHORIZE SYSTEM
CONSERVATION PILOT
PROJECT

2 DROUGHT
OPERATIONS
RESPONSE PLAN

3 UPPER BASIN DEMAND
MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM

4 FUND IMPROVED
WATER MANAGEMENT
TOOLS

5 STATE ADMINISTRATION
OF AVAILABLE WATER
SUPPLY



System Conservation (Pilot) Program vs. Demand Management



Water NOT
measured or
shepherded

Water sent
downstream
without Compact
credit

BOTH

Voluntary, Temporary,
Compensated

NOT a Free Market
Program

Potential long-term
consequences for local
ag

Address system
shortages which
threaten infrastructure



DEMAND
MANAGEMENT

Water amounts
measured and
shepherded into
Upper Basin
reservoirs

Water accounted for
Compact credit



Protect Western Colorado



SIGN UP

- Sign up for our News Drop, follow us on social media

JOIN IN

- Join in local water conservation discussions

TALK TO US

- We're listening
- Community Funding Partnership
- Other project funding opportunities



COLORADORIVERDISTRICT.ORG



Colorado River District



@ColoradoWater



ColoradoRiverDistrict



COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT

COMMUNITY FUNDING PARTNERSHIP



High-Impact Projects
And Investments For
West Slope Water

\$4.2 MILLION ANNUALLY





Community Funding Partnership

Over \$7 million

80+ projects

Leveraging over
\$63 million
For West Slope Water



West Slope Growing Water Smart Workshop

Growing Water Smart is a Training & Assistance Program that empowers local leaders to implement plans and policies that support community and regional water security.

When: October 11-13, Grand Junction
(*Tentatively*)

Applications: Due July 21, 2023

More info: growingwatersmart.org





Why Growing Water Smart?

- Focus on water/land use with a cross-departmental team
- Learn from state experts on integrating water and land use
- Professionally facilitated action-oriented workshop
- Leave with an Action Plan
 - Technical assistance grant eligibility
 - Peer-to-peer network



Grand Valley Roller Dam Headworks Replacement Project

- Accelerator Award Amount: \$18,000
- Headgate structure replacement; SCADA; transition zone lining
- Grant writing support for state/federal funding
- Currently in progress

