Public Scoping Meeting Agenda

- Introductory Remarks and Welcome
- Presentation
- Public Comment
- Closing Remarks
Questions about the Presentation?

How to submit a question

- Click the Q&A button
- A box will pop up
- Type your question
- Click send
- Responses to questions will appear in the Q&A box

Questions are not part of the project record
Welcome
Camille Calimlim Touton, Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
Hello, I'm Camille Calimlim Touton, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
Operational Setting

- Colorado River system provides water for 7 States, 30 Basin Tribes, and Mexico
- Dams and reservoirs on the river can store nearly 4 years' water supply and generate 4,200 megawatts of hydropower
- Two largest reservoirs in the system have the capacity to store 60 million acre-feet of water
  - Lake Powell – formed by Glen Canyon Dam
  - Lake Mead – formed by Hoover Dam
- Several operating agreements that govern the operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead expire at the end of 2026
Hydrologic Conditions

Lees Ferry Annual Natural Flow (maf)


Observed
Hydrologic Conditions

1906-2006 Avg.: **14.9 maf**
Hydrologic Conditions

1906-2006 Avg.: **14.9 maf**

2000-’23 Avg.: **12.5 maf**
Hydrologic Conditions

Long-term average when the Interim Guidelines were developed in 2007:

14.9 maf

Recent approximate 20-year average – more indicative of future conditions:

12.5 maf
System Response

Combined maximum capacity


Reservoir Storage (mil)

Percent Capacity

Lake Mead Storage

Lake Powell Storage
System Response

Current combined storage of Lakes Powell and Mead

36% Capacity

Photos: Lake Mead nears full capacity in June 1983 - Las Vegas Review-Journal

Photos: Water Levels in Lake Mead Reach Record Lows in April 2022 - The Atlantic

13 – Post-2026 Colorado River Operations Public Scoping
Operational Response to Changing Hydrologic Conditions

**Agreements Expire in 2026**

- Interim Guidelines
- Minute 323 to the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico
- Drought Contingency Plans & Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan

**Timeline**

- **2008**
  - Minute 319 to the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico
- **2014**
  - Pilot System Conservation Program
- **2015**
  - Pilot Drought Response Memo. of Understanding
- **2017**
- **2019**
- **2021**
  - Lower Basin 500+ Plan
- **2022**
  - Process to Develop Near-Term Operations (ongoing)
- **2023**
  - UC and LC System Conservation and Efficiency Programs (ongoing)

14 - Post-2026 Colorado River Operations Public Scoping
Operational Response to Changing Hydrologic Conditions

**Agreements Expire in 2026**

- **Interim Guidelines**
- **Minute 323 to the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico**
- **Drought Contingency Plans & Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan**

**Process to Develop Near-Term Operations (ongoing)**

- **Process to Develop Long-Term Operations (initiated)**

**Timeline**

- **2008**: Minute 319 to the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico
- **2012**: Pilot System Conservation Program
- **2014**: Pilot Drought Response Memo. of Understanding
- **2015**: **2017**: **2019**: **2021**: **2022**: **2023**: Lower Basin 500+ Plan
- **2023**: UC and LC System Conservation and Efficiency Programs (ongoing)

14 – Post-2026 Colorado River Operations Public Scoping
# Long-term vs. Near-term Planning Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING EFFORT</th>
<th>NEAR-TERM COLORADO RIVER OPERATIONS (SEIS)</th>
<th>LONG-TERM COLORADO RIVER OPERATIONS (POST-2026)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RANGE OF OPERATIONS</td>
<td>Limited sections of the 2007 Interim Guidelines;</td>
<td>Revisit all sections of the 2007 Interim Guidelines and other operating agreements that expire in 2026.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop the operational tools needed to address extreme drought and low water levels.</td>
<td>Public Scoping Process will help determine scope of post-2026 long-term planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURATION</td>
<td>2024 – 2026 (3 YEARS)</td>
<td>2026 AND BEYOND</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2007 Interim Guidelines

Purpose

• Improve management of the Colorado River by considering trade-offs between the frequency and magnitude of reductions of water deliveries
• Provide a greater degree of predictability with respect to the amount of annual water deliveries in future years
• Provide additional mechanisms for the storage and delivery of water supplies in Lake Mead to increase the flexibility of meeting water use needs from Lake Mead

Operational Elements

• **Shortage Guidelines** – Prescribed volumes of Lower Basin Shortages at specific Lake Mead elevations
• **Coordinated Reservoir Operations** – Guidelines for coordinated operations between Lake Powell and Lake Mead
• **Storage and Delivery of Conserved Water** – Mechanism for storage and delivery of conserved water in Lake Mead
• **Surplus Guidelines** – Guidelines to identify Surplus Conditions

Summarized from the 2007 Interim Guidelines Record of Decision
# 2007 Interim Guidelines - Operational Diagram

### Lake Powell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elevation (feet)</th>
<th>Operation According to the Interim Guidelines</th>
<th>Live Storage (maf)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>Equalization Tier: Equalize, avoid spills, or release 0.23 maf</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,616-3,666 (2000-2026)</td>
<td>Upper Elevation Balancing Tier: Release 4.21 maf if Lake Mead &lt; 1,073 feet,@include release with a min/max release of 7.0 and 9.0 maf</td>
<td>15.5-19.3 (2006-2026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,575</td>
<td>Mid-Elevation Release Tier: Release 7.48 maf if Lake Mead &lt; 1,023 feet, release 0.23 maf</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,525</td>
<td>Lower Elevation Balancing Tier: Balance contents with a min/max release of 7.0 and 9.5 maf</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,490</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,370</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lake Mead

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elevation (feet)</th>
<th>Operation According to the Interim Guidelines</th>
<th>Live Storage (maf)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>Flood Control Surplus or Quantified Surplus Condition: Deliver &gt; 7.5 maf</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,200 (approx.)</td>
<td>Domestic Surplus or ICS Surplus Condition: Deliver &gt; 7.5 maf</td>
<td>22.9 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,145</td>
<td>Normal or ICS Surplus Condition: Deliver &gt; 7.5 maf</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>Shortage Condition: Deliver 7.157 maf</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>Shortage Condition: Deliver 7.083 maf</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>Shortage Condition: Deliver 7.7 maf</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Shortage Condition: Deliver 7.9 maf</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>865</td>
<td>Further measures may be undertaken?</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Diagram not to scale. 1) Acre-foot = 325.85 cubic feet. 2) *This elevation is shown as approximate as it is determined each year by considering several factors including Lake Powell and Lake Mead storage, projected Upper Basin demands, and an assumed inflow. 3) Subject to April adjustments which may result in a release according to the Equalization Tier. 4) Of which 2.245 maf is apportioned to Arizona, 4.4 maf to California, and 0.267 maf to Nevada. 5) Of which 2.4 maf is apportioned to Arizona, 4.4 maf to California, and 0.23 maf to Nevada. 6) Of which 2.245 maf is apportioned to Arizona, 4.4 maf to California, and 0.267 maf to Nevada. 7) Whenever Lake Mead is below elevation 1,022 ft, the Secretary shall consider whether hydrologic conditions together with anticipated deliveries to the Lower Basin States and Mexico are likely to cause the elevation at Lake Mead to fall below 1,000 feet. Such consideration, in consultation with the Basin States, may result in the undertaking of further measures, consistent with applicable Federal law.*
2019 Drought Contingency Plans

- Adopted in response to changing hydrologic conditions and increased risk of reaching critically low elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead

- Key Elements:
  - Requires additional water savings contributions by Lower Basin States
  - Allows for additional flexibility for water storage and recovery to incentivize conservation
  - Provides for Drought Response Operations and Demand Management in the Upper Basin
  - Triggers Mexico’s Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan
2019 Drought Contingency Plans

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  - Triggers Mexico’s Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan
2020 Review of the 2007 Interim Guidelines

- Evaluated the effectiveness of the Guidelines and documented operational experience
- Conclusions:
  - Increasing severity of the drought necessitates additional action to reduce the risk of reaching critically low elevations in Lakes Powell and Mead
  - Considerations for enhancing future effectiveness:
    - Enhanced flexibilities and transparency for water users
    - Expanded participation in conservation and Basin-wide programs
    - Increased consideration of the linkage that occurs through coordinated reservoir operations
    - More robust measures to protect reservoir levels

Review of the Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Upper and Lower Colorado Basin Regions

U.S. Department of the Interior

December 2020
Post-2026 Colorado River Operations

• The “Post-2026 Process” is intended to develop successor domestic agreements for the long-term operations and management of the Colorado River system in 2027 and beyond
• Multi-year NEPA process to be concluded before the development of the 2027 Annual Operating Plan for Colorado River Reservoirs (anticipated to begin in mid-2026)
• Focused on domestic (U.S.) actions. Parallel process through the International Boundary and Water Commission anticipated to develop successor agreements to Minute 323 with Mexico
Post-2026 “Pre-Scoping”

- June 2022 Federal Register Notice (87 FR 37884) published to request input on the process and substantive elements for post-2026 operations
- Highlighted 3 changed circumstances in the Basin since 2007:
  - 1) Changed/changing hydrologic conditions
  - 2) Tribal engagement
  - 3) Cooperative process with Mexico
- Substantial input received from Tribes, States, water districts, NGOs, and the public
- Input summarized in Pre-Scoping Summary Report published in January 2023
Key Themes in “Pre-Scoping” Comments

**Robust and Adaptive**
Future operational guidelines must support proactive management to improve system stability. They must be capable of both withstanding a broad range of future hydrologic and operating conditions and minimizing system vulnerability.

**Holistic Approach**
Future operational guidelines should focus on the long-term sustainability of both the Basin’s population and natural environment, minimize system vulnerability, and increase system resiliency.

**Alternative Paradigms**
The current tier-based approach to coordinated operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead is one of multiple ways that the system can be managed. Alternative paradigms should be explored.
Partner, Stakeholder, and Public Engagement

• Reclamation is working to design and implement a stakeholder engagement process that is inclusive and transparent; that encourages meaningful input from Tribes, States, partners, stakeholders, and the public.

• Working to implement this commitment through:
  • Prioritizing stakeholder technical education and technical outreach
  • Creating a common technical understanding and developing new tools for engagement
  • Prioritizing outreach, leveraging existing groups, and creating new groups with the goal of enhanced tribal engagement across the Basin
Post-2026: Proposed Schedule

- **JUNE - AUGUST 2023**: Public Scoping Period - opportunity for public to provide input on scope of EIS and Purpose and Need for Proposed Action
- **FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024**: Development of EIS Operational Alternatives by Reclamation, partners, and stakeholders
- **DECEMBER 2024**: Publication of Draft EIS with public comment period to follow

- **JUNE 2023**: Reclamation publishes NOI to Prepare EIS - initiates NEPA Process - Begins public Scoping Period
- **AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2023**: Reclamation develops Scoping Summary Report with anticipated Purpose & Need
- **SPRING - FALL 2024**: Reclamation prepares Draft EIS
- **2025 - 2026**: Publication of Final EIS and Record of Decision issued

Key NEPA Process milestones - Opportunities for Tribal, State, Partner, Stakeholder, and Public engagement
Scoping Process

- Notice of Intent published on June 16, 2023 initiated the NEPA Scoping Process
- 60-day public scoping comment period ending **August 15, 2023**
- Invite all Basin partners, stakeholders, and interested members of the public to provide oral and written comments
- Scoping Report will be published after the comment period
Scoping Comments

Considerations:
- Past 15 years of operating experience
- Findings from 2020 Review of 2007 Interim Guidelines
- Themes in the Pre-Scoping Report
- Need for robust and adaptive operations

Seeking Feedback On:
- Operational guidelines and strategies
- Potential modifications to the purpose and elements of the 2007 Interim Guidelines
- Any other related issues that should be considered in the EIS

Informs:
- Proposed federal action
- Purpose and Need
- Scope of the analysis (e.g., affected area, geographic scope, time horizon/term)
Ways to Comment

60-day comment period closes
August 15, 2023

- During public scoping meetings
- Webform via the project website: www.usbr.gov/ColoradoRiverBasin/Post2026
- Send an email: crbpost2026@usbr.gov
- Telephone hotline: (602) 789-3889
- By mail to:
  Bureau of Reclamation
  Attn: Post-2026 (Mail Stop 84-55000)
  P.O. Box 25007
  Denver, CO 80225
Need Information?

- Project Website: [www.usbr.gov/ColoradoRiverBasin/Post2026](http://www.usbr.gov/ColoradoRiverBasin/Post2026)
- Send questions to: [crbpost2026@usbr.gov](mailto:crbpost2026@usbr.gov)
- Call the project telephone line: (602) 789-3889
Comment Guidelines

- Comments should be directed to the Bureau of Reclamation, not to other commenters.
- Comments will be limited to 3 minutes so we have time to hear from as many commenters as possible. Comments longer than 3 minutes can be submitted in writing.
- This virtual event is designed to be viewed in homes across the country in real time. Profanity is not acceptable.
To Comment

- Click the raise hand button
- Facilitator will call your name
- Click unmute to speak
- Please state and spell your name when you begin
- Please limit comments to 3 minutes. Please submit comments longer than 3 minutes in writing
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