

12/16/21

### **Litigation continues against Gross Dam Reservoir Expansion Project**

Save the Colorado, The Environmental Group, WildEarth Guardians, Sierra Club, Waterkeeper Alliance, and Living Rivers/Colorado Riverkeeper remain in litigation against Denver Water to stop the expansion of Gross Reservoir for reasons that the permit application, and especially the climate modeling for the environmental review, does not properly consider the cumulative impacts that global warming has, and will continue to have, on the natural environment.

This is a trans-basin water diversion project from the Colorado River Basin. Since Year 2000 the 30-year average for the Colorado River has decreased by 2.4 million acre-feet. The demand for Colorado River water exceeded the natural supply in Year 2003. Water curtailments in the Colorado River Basin officially begin on January 1, 2022 and the [two-year projection](#) indicate that the curtailments will triple in magnitude in 2023.

For a second opinion, please read this [OpEd by Seth Cousins](#)

This OpEd was written for this event:

["Powerless Against Denver Water Boulder County OKs Deal to Triple Size of Gross Reservoir](#) by Michael Booth for *The Colorado Sun*.

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12/13/21

### **New Report: 3 of 4 Upper Colorado River Basin States Overusing Colorado River Water**

Shrinking Snowpacks in Utah, Wyoming, Colorado require states to cut their water use from Colorado River and its tributaries or risk 'Call on the River.'

Virtual Press Conference Scheduled for 10:00 am Mountain Time Dec 13 on Zoom, with the following organizations:

- Host: Zach Frankel, Executive Director, Utah Rivers Council
- River activists - upstream to downstream:
- Jen Pelz, Wild Rivers Program Director at WildEarth Guardians
- John Weisheit, Conservation Director Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper
- Kyle Roerink, Executive Director of the Great Basin Water Network
- Robin Silver, Senior Staff, Cofounder Center for Biological Diversity
- Margarita Diaz, Executive Director of Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental, the Tijuana Waterkeeper

[Click here](#) to read the press release: "3 of 4 Upper Colorado River Basin States Overusing Colorado River Water."

[Click here](#) to read the new report -" The Colorado River on Borrowed Time: Colorado River Shortages & the New Normal of Climate Change."

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**Coalition in the news:**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Kyle Dunphey for *The Deseret News*

[Click here](#) to read this story by Brian Maffly for the *Salt Lake Tribune*

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12/13/21

**Zoom Water Conference ‘Dam the Status Quo’ Today, Monday Dec. 13**

Friends of the Colorado River,

We’re delighted to tell you about an event taking place today, Monday, December 13, at 1pm Mountain Time and entitled: “Dam The Status Quo”.

[The Poster](#)

The online event — which you can watch on Zoom — includes Save the Colorado board member, Daniel P. Beard, a former Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation appointed by President Clinton. Dan also wrote the book, *Deadbeat Dams: Why We Need To Abolish the Bureau of Reclamation and Tear Down Glen Canyon Dam*.

Tick Segerblom, a former Nevada State Senator and now Clark County (Las Vegas) Commissioner, is hosting the event.

Additional featured speakers will include Jeff Lukas, lead author of the 2014 report, ‘Climate Change in Colorado’; David Kreamer, former Director of the Interdisciplinary Water Resources graduate program at the University of Nevada; Forrest Cuch, Ute Indian Tribe; Nikki Cooley, Diné (navajo) Nation; Timothy Williams, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe; Eric Balkan, Director of Glen Canyon Institute; and others.

The sign-in for the 1pm event is:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84902356675?  
pwd=MEJpVC9SQVdoTEpSQ2ZnS0pNczhvZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84902356675?pwd=MEJpVC9SQVdoTEpSQ2ZnS0pNczhvZz09)

Passcode: 245783

As climate change grips the Colorado River basin, it’s time for consequential and provocative changes to the management of the river that restore the river and the environment. We think you’ll enjoy this two-hour event (which will also be recorded for viewing afterwards).

## [The Recording.](#)

Dam The Status Quo, indeed!

Millie Mummery  
Las Vegas, NV

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11/02/21

### **Dangerous Precedent: Feds Say No to Controlled Flood on the Colorado River**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Blake Apgar for *The Las Vegas Review Journal*.

[Click here](#) to read this story by Brandon Loomis for *The Arizona Republic*

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11/01/21

### **Citizen Science: Glen Canyon Photo Rematching Project**

#### **Dirty Devil Confluence to Bullfrog Creek**

- Date: September and October of 2021
- By staff and volunteers for the fiscally sponsored projects of Living Rivers: River Runners for Wilderness and Colorado Riverkeeper.
- [CLICK HERE](#) to view this presentation via *VIMEO*.

**Note:** Stay tuned for a more detailed narratives that will include landscape and aerial photos at this website:

[On The Colorado](#)

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09/17/21

### **White Mesa Ute Community Protest & Spiritual Walk**

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the poster for this event.

- **WHEN:** Saturday October 9th at 11 am.
- **WHERE:** White Mesa Community Building adjacent to the gas station (Marathon Oil); Hwy 191 south of Blanding, Utah and north of Bluff, Utah.
- **WHO:** The White Mesa Concerned Community and Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.

- **WHAT:** A Spiritual Walk and Protest against Energy Fuels' uranium mill.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

- The walk from the community center to the uranium mill will be Covid-safe, masks please!
- A caravan will be provided for those that cannot make the 4 mile walk) to the entrance to the mill.
- Please spread the word and come down to White Mesa on October 9th.
- Wear comfortable shoes and bring plenty of water!

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Call White Mesa Concerned Community at (435) 459-2461.

**Sponsored by White Mesa Concerned Community**

**Co-sponsors:** Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, Canyon Country Rising Tide, Earthworks, Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, Grand Canyon Trust, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, HEAL Utah, Living Rivers, Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment, PANDOS, SLC Air Protectors, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, Uranium Watch, Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club.

**STAY TUNED:**

- For a regional conference.
- The co-sponsors will host this program and virtually on zoom.
- October 7th (5-7 pm)
- October 8th; morning/afternoon.
- We will share the schedule and registration info asap.

**Thanks!!**

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08/16/21

**First Ever Declaration of Water Shortage On The Colorado**

**August 16,2021 - [24-Month Report and Shortage Declaration](#). Reclamation.**

- August 16, 2021 - [Appeal Challenges Federal Approval of Water Contract Threatening Utah's Green River / Agency Failed to Consider Climate Change Science, Future Water Shortages Amid Megadrought](#). Press Release from *Center for Biological Diversity*.
- August 16, 2021 - [First CAP shortage for Colorado River declared; more cuts may be coming soon](#). Tony Davis for *Arizona Daily Star*.

- August 16, 2021 - [In a First, U.S. Declares Shortage on Colorado River, Forcing Water Cuts](#). Henry Fountain for *New York Times*.
- August 16, 2021 - [As Colorado River Basin states confront water shortages, it's time to focus on reducing demand](#). Robert Glennon for *The Conservation; Univ of AZ*.
- August 17, 2021 - [First-ever water cuts declared for Colorado River in historic drought](#). By Rachel Ramirez for *CNN*.
- August 16, 2021 - [OpEd: Climate upheaval is upon Utah, and we can't dither, Robert Gehrke explains](#). By Robert Gehrke of *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- August 16, 2021 - ["St. George is not going to get their pipeline." Some look to Utah amid Colorado River cuts](#). By Joan Meiners for *St. George Spectrum & Daily News*.
- August 16, 2021 - [Water shortage declared on the Colorado, triggering cuts to Arizona, Nevada and Mexico Declining flows don't bode well for Utah's dreams of expanding its share of the West's mightiest river](#). By Brian Maffly for *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- August 25, 2021, - [Forecasters couldn't predict how quickly Colorado River reservoirs would dry up this year. Scientists are trying to improve their models. As climate change disrupts weather patterns in mountain regions across the world, scientists are recognizing the need to innovative new research models](#). By Zak Podmore for *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- August 26, 2021 - [Anatomy of a drought: How the West may change for decades to come. Water woes are gripping no fewer than 17 states](#). By Amy Joi O'Donoghue for *Deseret News*.

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07/19/21

### **Request for Investigation of Central Utah Water Conservancy District Use of Congressional Appropriations**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Owen Tucker-Smith & Brian Maffly of *Salt Lake Tribune*.

[Click here](#) to read the letter from the conservation groups to the U.S. Office of the Inspector General.

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07/16/21

## **Damn the Status Quo On The Colorado River**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Rachel Fixsen of *Moab Sun News* and called "Colorado River Users Stand Together: Diverse Group of Stakeholders Asks for Pause on New Water Projects."

[Click here](#) to read about our press conference at Hoover Dam on June 15, 2021.

[Click here](#) to read all the press coverage combined into one file.

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06/07/21

## **SUMMARY: The Woes of Water Managers in the Colorado River Basin**

### **NEWS & OPINION**

#### **News by Date**

- February 26, 2021 - [USU Study #6: Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers](#). (archived [here](#)).
- April 15, 2021 - [The Water Report: Saving the Colorado River \(demand management\)](#). James Eklund.
- April 19, 2021 - [The April 2021 24-Month Study was a shocker, but is it too optimistic?](#) Eric Kuhn.
- April 27, 2021 - [Pumping up fear along the Colorado River](#). George Sibley.
- April 29, 2021 - [9th Circuit Revives Navajo Nation's Water Rights Claim Against DOI](#). Reuters.
- May 4, 2021 - [New normals: The Southwest has grown hotter and drier over the past decade, data shows](#). NOAA 30-year averages since 1901. Ian James of *Arizona Republic*.
- May 11, 2021 - [Arizona Legislature Urges Congress to study feasibility of harvesting Mississippi River floodwaters to replenish Colorado River supply](#). Rep. Dunn.
- May 13, 2021 - [Colorado River water community can solve problems without tossing compacts](#). Tyrell (response to Sibley).
- May 14, 2021 - [The Hoover Dam made life in the West possible. Or so we thought](#). Timothy Egan in NY Times.
- May 14, 2021 - [9th Circuit rebukes U.S. on Native interests in Colorado River rights](#). Hank Lacey of *Law Week Colorado*.
- May 18, 2021 - [Arizona's aquifers remain at risk from "unsustainable" pumping](#). Tony Davis of *Arizona Daily Star*.

- May 27, 2021 - [Predicting the future: Science Moab speaks with Dr. Kevin Wheeler about the future of the Colorado River](#) in *Moab Sun News*.
- May 27, 2021 - [Epic drought tests Hoover Dam as water levels In Lake Mead plummet](#). Ian James of *Arizona Republic*.
- June 2, 2021 - [Foreign firms sucking "virtual" water from America's parched Southwest](#). Diana Kruz of *Mother Jones*.
- June 2, 2021 - [Mega-Dairies: Disappearing wells and Arizona's deepening water crisis](#). Tony Davis in *The Guardian*.
- June 2, 2021 - [Amid dire Colorado River outlook States plan to tap their Lake Mead savings accounts](#). Brett Walton of *Circle of Blue*.
- June 6, 2021 - [Dry times, dire consequences, poor runoff, adds to water woes](#). Dennis Webb of Grand Junction's *Daily Sentinel*.
- June 10, 2021 - [Red Alert: Lake Mead declines to new low as Colorado River crisis deepens](#). Ian James of *Arizona Republic*.
- June 13, 2021 - [Lake Powell Pipeline targets water promised to Utes in scheme Tribe sees as another racially based scheme](#). Emma Penrod and special for *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- June 14, 2021 - [Salton Sea, long a disaster, is on the brink of major collapse](#). OpEd by Frank Ruiz in *The Desert Sun*.

#### **News by Subject: Drought Contingency Planning (DCPs)**

- [Dry times, dire consequences, poor runoff adds to water woes](#). Dennis Webb of Grand Junction's *Daily Sentinel*.
- [Wall Street eyes billions in Colorado's Water](#). Howe of *New York Times*.
- [Exclusive hedge funds eye water markets that could net billions as levels drop in Lake Powell](#), Podmore of *Salt Lake Tribune*.
- [Here's how to save the Colorado River](#). Babbitt in *Writers on the Range*.
- [Western Slope needs to suspend irrigation to replenish Lake Powell](#). Richter in *Denver Post*.
- [Don't hurt farmers to save the Colorado River](#). Mueller in *Writers on the Range*.
- [Letter to Colorado River District Board](#). Communication by Richter.
- [Saving the Colorado River](#). James Eklund in *The Water Report*.
- [Colorado is examining water speculation, and finding it's 'all the problems' in one](#). Heather Sackett of *Aspen Journalism*.

#### **News by Subject: Tribal Water**

- [Is hope on the horizon for Western Tribe's water woes?](#) Teirstein of *Grist Online Magazine*.
- [9th Circuit revives Navajo Nation's water rights claim against DOI](#). Rueters.
- [9th Circuit rebukes U.S. on Native interests in Colorado River rights](#). Hank Lacey of *Law Week Colorado*.
- [Lake Powell Pipeline targets water promised to Utes: Tribe sees another racially based scheme](#). Emma Penrod and special for *Salt Lake Tribune*.

### News by Subject: River Augmentation

- [Arizona Legislature urges Congress to study feasibility of harvesting Mississippi River floodwaters to replenish Colorado River supply](#). Rep. Dunn.

### News by Subject: The Salton Sea (geologic through)

- [Salton Sea, long a disaster, is on the brink of major collapse](#). OpEd by Frank Ruiz in *The Desert Sun*.

### News by Subject: Central Arizona Project and Groundwater Depletions

- [Arizona's aquifers remain at risk from "unsustainable" pumping](#). Tony Davis of *Arizona Daily Star*.
  - [The Myth of Safe-Yield: Pursuing the Goal of Safe-Yield Isn't Saving Our Groundwater](#). Kathleen Ferris of Kyl Center at Morrison Institute; ASU.
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06/07/21

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05/18/21

#### **Lake Powell approaching historic low levels**

Nifty graphics in this report by Max Roth at Fox13 Now, Salt Lake City.

[Click here](#) to review this information.

[Archived here](#)

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05/05/21

#### **Appeal Filed to Sustain Colorado River Flows and Stop Gross Dam Expansion**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Johnson Kuhn of *North Forty News*

###

A coalition of conservation groups filed a notice of appeal recently in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals seeking to halt Denver Water's proposed expansion of Gross Dam in Boulder County and to protect sustainable flows in the Colorado River. The appeal challenges the dismissal by the lower court and asks the appeals court to order review of the merits of the case to ensure the health of the Colorado River, its native and

imperiled species, and communities across Colorado that will be negatively impacted by the project.

“We believe the court simply got this wrong, and we’re excited to move forward with the appeal,” said Gary Wockner, the director of Save The Colorado. “This massive dam project would further drain and destroy the Colorado River, as well as cause irrevocable damage in Boulder County, and thus we are firmly committed to defending the river and the environment to the fullest extent of the law.”

The conservation coalition, including Save The Colorado, The Environmental Group, WildEarth Guardians, Living Rivers, Waterkeeper Alliance, and the Sierra Club, originally filed suit on December 19, 2018, in the federal district court of Colorado. The groups’ litigation sought to halt Denver Water’s expansion of Gross Reservoir in Boulder County and prevent an additional diversion of water from the Colorado River through its Moffat Collection System due to violations of federal environmental laws including the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. The project would triple the storage capacity of Gross Reservoir and the dam would become the tallest dam in the history of Colorado.

On March 31, 2021, the district court dismissed the coalition’s case finding that it was not before the proper court because the Federal Power Act provides the federal court of appeals with sole authority over hydropower licensing by the Federal Regulatory Commission.

“Given the climate, water and biodiversity crises upon us, we need to be restoring river ecosystems, not destroying them,” said Jen Pelz, Wild Rivers Program Director at WildEarth Guardians. “This battle against the powerful water institution is not over and we will continue to fight for water and climate justice by working to reform this broken system of laws and policies.”

“The Sierra Club opposes the Gross Reservoir expansion because of the massive environmental damage it would cause,” said Rebecca Dickson, Chair of the Sierra Club-Indian Peaks Group. “If this project proceeds, hundreds of thousands of trees will be chopped down, countless habitats destroyed, and yet another waterway will be diverted from its natural course to the Front Range. On top of this, immeasurable amounts of greenhouse gasses will be released into the atmosphere during the construction and transportation process.”

“Denver Water’s plan to build the tallest dam in Colorado history will hurt the 40 million people in seven states and two countries who depend on the Colorado River for their water supply,” said Daniel E. Estrin, general counsel and advocacy director at Waterkeeper Alliance. “The basin is slowly dying a proverbial ‘death by a thousand cuts’ as its communities and ecosystems face a water crisis driven by unsustainable demand, prolonged drought, and runaway climate change. We stand with our fellow conservation groups in continuing to oppose this misguided and reckless water grab.”

“The expansion of Gross Dam is a shortsighted response to a long-term problem,” said Beverly Kurtz the President of The Environmental Group. “Denver Water should lead the way in finding sustainable solutions to the challenge of water scarcity, rather than destroying pristine areas of western Boulder County and further threatening the Colorado River with an antiquated dam proposal. Recent data confirm that predicted shortages of water in the Colorado River Basin due to climate change are happening even sooner than expected. Building a bigger dam does not increase the amount of water available. The District Court needs to hear the merits of our case rather than establishing a dangerous precedent by deferring authority to FERC and the federal court of appeals.”

“The year of decision, to not divert more water from the Colorado River, came and went about twenty years ago,” said John Weisheit, conservation director of Living Rivers in Moab, Utah. “We know this is true because the development of contingency planning agreements to avoid water shortages began in 2014 and the urgency to resolve this threat still remains. Yet the contradictions and absurdities to also develop a suite of diversion projects in the Colorado River Basin also remains. If the basin’s water managers will not even adapt to the hydrology they accept, how could they possibly adapt to the hydrology of the future? Our lawsuit is an appeal to accept the truth that the Colorado River has nothing left to give.”

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05/01/21

### **Court Breathes Life into Navajo Fight for Colorado River**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Jeremy Jacobs of *E&E News*

[Click here](#) to read "9th Circuit Revives Navajo Nations Water Rights Claim Against DOI" from *Rueters: Westlaw Today*

[Click here](#) to read the opinion of the 9th Circuit

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04/27/21

## **Writers on the Range: Pumping up fear along the Colorado River**

Opinion by George Sibley

[The Vail Daily](#)

[Archived here](#)

Some Colorado River tribulations today remind me of a folk story: A young man went to visit his fiancé and found the family trembling and weeping. They pointed to the ceiling, where an axe was embedded in a rafter.

“That could fall,” the father quavered. “It could kill someone!”

Puzzled, the young man climbed onto a chair, and pulled the axe out of the rafter. Everyone fell all over themselves thanking him. But he quickly broke off the engagement, concerned that such inanity might be inheritable.

This resembles ongoing dithering over the 1922 Colorado River Compact, a 99-year-old agreement among the seven states through which the Colorado River meanders, on how the consumptive use of the river’s water should be divided to give each state a fair share. The agreement was necessary to get federal participation (money) to build dams to control the erratic river.

The best they were able to do, given the sketchy information they had about each state’s future development and also about the flow of the river, was to divide the river into two “basins” around the natural divide of the Colorado River canyons: Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and New Mexico in the Upper Basin; and California, Arizona and Nevada in the Lower Basin. Each basin would get to consume 7.5 million acre-feet of the river’s water.

This placed a responsibility on the Upper Basin states to “not cause the flow of the river at Lees Ferry (the measuring point in the canyons) to be depleted” below the Lower Basin’s share.

A generous reading of that lawyerly clause in the Compact would say the upper states should just be careful that their water development doesn’t dip into the lower states’ allocation.

A less generous reading would say that if for any reason the flow at Lees Ferry fell below the average of 7.5 million acre feet — whether due to over-appropriation by the upper states, or to a natural cause like a 20-year headwaters drought — the lower

states would place a call on the upper states, which would have to cut their own uses and send their water downriver, whether they “caused” the shortage or not.

To maintain that flow in a drought, the upper states would bear the full pain of the drought for the whole river.

Guess which interpretation the upper states chose for their own 1948 compact? Never mind that a Compact call led by California for its share of water is nowhere mentioned in the 1922 Compact. The axe was planted in the rafter.

They might better have asked how the 1922 Compact creators themselves envisioned the unknown future. The transcripts of the 27 Compact meetings show that the seven state commissioners and their federal chairman Herbert Hoover were concerned, as late as their twenty-first meeting, that they did not know enough about the river’s flows to make a permanent equitable division of the waters.

Hoover summarized their concern, and their intent: “We make now, for lack of a better word, a temporary equitable division,” leaving the further apportionment of the river’s use “to the hands of those men who may come after us, possessed of a far greater fund of information.” They even included in the Compact (Article VI) instructions for reconvening to consider “claims or controversy... over the meaning or performance of any of the terms of this compact.”

By the drought years of the 1930s, it was already obvious that the 7.5 million-acre feet Compact allocations were unrealistic. That would have been a logical time for the upper states to pull the axe out of the rafter, before the river was so fully developed.

But they didn’t, and as the Compact began to take on the aura of something carved in stone on a holy mountain, the fear of the “Compact call” gradually descended into expensive paranoia.

The vastly expensive 24 million acre-feet of storage in Powell Reservoir just upstream from Lees Ferry was created there to fulfill the Upper Basin’s self-assumed “delivery obligation,” come hell or low water.

But now, hellish low water has come to Powell, and Upper states are developing costly “demand management” programs whereby someone yet unspecified would pay ranchers to fallow fields so their water can be “banked” in Powell against the dreaded “Compact call.”

The seven states are now — finally — initiating negotiations on a more reality-based governance of the Colorado River. Let’s hope they have the good sense to pull that axe out of the rafters before negotiating fair water use under it.

George Sibley is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively discussion about Western issues. He has written extensively about the Colorado River.

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04/23/21

### **Reed raft stands the test of one of the West's most epic journeys**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Jonathan Romeo of the *Lewistown Sentinel*

This article is about replicating an indigenous Tule reed boat and testing its performance on a river trip through the Grand Canyon.

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04/20/21

### **The April 2021 24-Month Study was a Shocker, but is it too Optimistic?**

By Eric Kuhn as published here on John Fleck's website called *Inkstain* [HERE](#)

And also archived [HERE](#)

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03/19/21

### **Moab May Be Running Out Of Water. That's Prompting Residents To Rethink Conservation And Development.**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Kate Groetzinger of *KUER Radio*

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More more information, visit [FarCountry.org](#)

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02/21/21

### **USU Study #6: Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers**

[White Paper # 06](#). Full White Paper # 06 called "Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers."

## [White Paper Summary # 06](#)

###

### **NEWS In regards to the responses from representatives of Upper Colorado River Commission about demand projections**

**Note:** In the news pieces below by Joan Meiners and Heather Sackett, the request of the Upper Colorado River Commission to the scientists won't change the results of the study and indicates that the Upper Colorado River Commission will not take responsibility for their share of the water budget imbalance in the Colorado River, which is about 27% of the total; approximately 640,000 acre-feet.

[Click here](#) to read this story by Joan Meiners of *The Spectrum* called "Climate Change and Climate Denial on the Colorado River."

[Click here](#) to read this story by Heather Sackett of *Aspen Journalism* called of "Estimates of Future Upper Colorado River Basin Water Use Confound Planning Report, Shows Study."

[2007 Depletion Schedule for Upper Colorado River](#)

[2016 Depletion Schedule for Upper Colorado River & 2017 Resolution](#)

###

[All news combined from Allen Best and Tony Davis](#). Four stories combined. Individual stories are presented below:

[Colorado River Outlook Darkens Dramatically in New Study](#) by Tony Davis of Tucson Daily Star

[Lake Powell Could Become Dead Pool as Climate Change, Political Wars, and Unabated Growth Drain its Waters](#) by Tony Davis of Arizona Daily Star

[A Deep Rethink of the Colorado River](#) by Allen Best of Mountain Town News

[Again the Question About Whether Lake Powell is Doomed](#) by Allen Best of Mountain Town News

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02/11/21

## **Moab's Aquifer May Be Maxed Out, Prompting City To Explore Water Conservation**

By Kate Groetzinger of KUER Public Radio

The Glen Canyon Group Aquifer is refilled by snowpack in the La Sal Mountains, located southeast of Moab. New research shows there's less water in the aquifer than previously thought.

The city of Moab is planning to implement water conservation measures in the coming months based on a recent study [new study](#) that found the Moab Valley may hold less water than previously thought.

Researchers from the University of Utah and the U.S. Geological Survey used carbon dating and other modern techniques to determine there are around 2,500 acre feet of unused water flowing into the Colorado River each year from the valley — not 11,000, as a 1971 study reported.

They also found Moab may have less drinking water than previously thought. They determined the Glen Canyon Group aquifer is split into two sections. The lower part is where Moab gets its drinking water, which emerges through natural springs near the city's golf course, while the water in the upper part cannot be easily captured.

The researchers estimate Moab is using around 4,000 acre feet, or 1.3 billion gallons, of water each year from the deep section of the aquifer, which is approximately its recharge rate as well.

"This is a very good time to contemplate the negative impacts of future development," said Vic Heilweil, one of the researchers. "Because we think that any additional development of groundwater from the main aquifer may not be sustainable."

Heilweil said he and his colleagues recommended the city begin monitoring the outflow of the springs, which supply Moab's drinking water, in order to determine exactly how much water is coming out of the aquifer. Using that data, they suggested the city create a numerical model that can be used to simulate the effects of additional pumping. That, Heilweil said, would allow the city to better understand the effects of future development.

Council Member Kalen Jones said he's concerned about the new findings, but it could be worse. "We're in a better position than many places, in that other places have gone into an overdrawn situation and are playing catch up," he said.

Jones added that Moab still has the opportunity to manage its water well, and the city council recently directed staff to draft an ordinance that would limit irrigation to certain times of day to help save water.

But the fate of the aquifer will also depend on other water users in the valley. He said the city will likely participate in a watershed management planning process with the state's Division of Water Resources sometime soon.

"Since currently we have very little of anything incentivizing water conservation, we should be doing basic conservation as we enter conversations about the aquifer with other water users in the valley," he said.

But some residents think conservation measures don't go far enough. John Weisheit is the director of a Moab-based non-profit called Living Rivers and he said the city and county should put a moratorium on all new development until they know exactly how much water is available in the aquifer.

"Water conservation is good, but when water conservation goes from one use to another, it's not water conservation," he said. "That's called demand hardening."

Jones said that's not likely to happen, but the city already has a moratorium on new hotels and is ready to look at creative ways to conserve water without making residents give up things like gardening and landscaping.

### **News from KSL on February 12, 2021**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Graham Dudley called "How Much Water Is Really Under Moab? Scientists Say Less Than Thought."

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For more information visit this resource page at the [Far Country website](#)

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02/07/21

## **Exclusive: Hedge Funds Eye Water Markets That Could Net Billions As Levels Drop In Lake Powell**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Zak Podmore of *The Salt Lake Tribune*

### **Excerpt from Living Rivers:**

For John Weisheit, conservation director of the Moab-based nonprofit Living Rivers, initiatives to cut back on water are too often used for more growth, despite declining runoff.

“What really has to happen is you have to balance the water budget,” he said. “All they’re doing is moving water from this place to the other. They call it savings, but it’s not; it’s just transferring uses. You take out a lawn in Las Vegas and then they build 10 more houses. Where are the savings?”

Weisheit, who has also advocated for the decommissioning of Glen Canyon Dam, doesn’t think drought contingency plans will fundamentally alter the trend.

“We knew the Colorado River was going to run out of water 30 years ago,” he said, adding if hedge funds step into the vacuum and offer a new approach, it is only a “consequence of [water managers’] inaction.”

“This system is on its way to crash,” Weisheit continued. “The train is one mile away from going over the cliff.”

Weisheit doesn’t believe creating private markets will help the problem, but he thinks the question water managers should be asking themselves isn’t whether private water markets will be a fix, but why they’re being considered at all as a response to the crisis. “The question isn’t, should this happen? It’s, why did this happen?” he said. “And, what are you going to do?”

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01/22/21

**OpEd: Railway For Oil Diverts Millions From Utah Communities**

[Click here](#) to read this OpEd by Deeda Seed of Center for Biological Diversity and John Weisheit of Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper

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For more information, please visit:

[Center for Biological Diversity](#)

[Colorado River Connected](#)

[2020. EIS: On The Colorado](#)

[2016. Analysis: On The Colorado](#)

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01/22/21

**Plan by Utah Governor Cox will put rural Utah in the ditch**

[Click here](#) to read this OpEd from the Editorial Board of *The Salt Lake Tribune*

[Click here](#) to read the proposed planning document from Governor Cox

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**Recent OpEds by Grand County Citizens**

[Click here](#) - Kya Marienfeld & Vera Smith: "Restore Science and Accountability to BLM's Management of Western Landscapes"

[Click here](#) - Mike Coronella: "Spencer Cox's Centrist Plan Follows the Far Right Agenda"

[Click here](#) - John Weisheit and Deeda Seed "Railway ForOil Diverts Millions From Utah Communities"

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01/16/21

**Colorado Sues BLM Over Western Slope Management Plan from William Perry Pendley**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Jason Blevins of *The Colorado Sun*

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01/12/21

**Groups Ask For Investigation Of Proposed Dam On Virgin River**

[Click here](#) to read the press release

[Click here](#) to view the letter to the Inspector General of US Department of Agriculture

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01/11/21

**New Film Chronicles Environmental Outlaw Ken Sleight's Fight To Restore Glen Canyon**

**UPDATE: Live Stream - The Unfinished Fight of Seldom Seen Sleight**

**FREE SCREENING OF THIS DOCUMENTARY IS NOW SOLD OUT**

If you would like to watch the film, it is still available through Cinema On Demand with proceeds benefiting Living Rivers and various film makers of the Colorado River [HERE](#). The admission fee is \$9.99 and this offer ends January 31, 2021.

**Please view the Q & A session [HERE](#)**

**DATE:** January 12th, 2021 at 7 p.m.

**[News clip from \*The Salt Lake Tribune\* by Zak Podmore on January 19, 2021](#)**

- [The One-Dam Solution](#) & archived [here](#)

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**FREE FILM SCREENING** and presented nationally by the Utah Film Center  
January 12, 2020; 7 pm (Mountain time)  
Question/answer session to follow

[REGISTER](#) for this event here

[LINK](#) to the official website of Utah Film Center

[LINK](#) for this documentary at the website for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City, California.

[Podcast](#) from *Podship Earth* that includes an interview about the making of this documentary about Sleight.

[Click here](#) to read this story by Maggie McQuire of *Moab Sun News*

[Click here](#) to read this story in the *Moab Happenings*

PHOTO (below): Moab's Star Hall, the venue for the debut of this documentary.



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01/08/21

**Lake Powell Pipeline: Desert Pipeline Tests Colorado Rivers Future**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Richard Martin of *S & P Global Market Intelligence*

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01/08/21

### **Sarah Stock Appointed to Grand County Commission (Utah)**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Carter Pape of *Moab Times-Independent*: "Commission Appoints Sarah Stock to Vacant Seat"

[Click here](#) to read this story by Rachel Fixsen of *Moab Sun News*: "Sarah Stock Appointed to Grand County Commission"

**Note:** Living Rivers has accepted the resignation of Sarah Stock as Program Director of Living Rivers & Colorado Riverkeeper. The citizens of Grand County have gained a wonderful public servant.

###

### **Moab News: Water Scarcity Issues Confronting Moab-Spanish Valley**

[Click here](#) to read this story by Rachel Fixsen of *Moab Sun News*: "Thirsty Valley: City Officials Take Hard Look At Water Resources Nearing Max"

[Click here](#) to read this story by Doug McMurdo of *Moab Times-Independent*: "Got Water? More Questions Than Answers On Aquifer Capacity"

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01/01/21

### **Climate's toll on the Colorado River: 'We can weather maybe a couple of years'**

The warming climate is intensifying drought, contributing to fires and drying out the river's headwaters, sending consequences cascading downstream.

Ian James, Arizona Republic 7:37 a.m. MST Jan. 1, 2021

[Click here](#) to read the story

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