

Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study

Background

- » The Colorado River Basin Water Supply and Demand Study, conducted over a three-year period from January 2010 through December 2012, was an unprecedented joint effort by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the seven Colorado River Basin States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. It is the most comprehensive basin-wide study ever undertaken within the Department of Interior.
- » The purpose of the \$7 million study was to define future imbalances in water supply and demand through 2060. It also developed and analyzed options and strategies to resolve those imbalances.

Results

- » The study confirmed what most experts know: there are likely to be significant shortfalls between projected water supplies and demands in the Colorado River Basin in the coming decades.
- » Investments in additional augmentation projects and water conservation can restore the reliability and sustainability of the Colorado River to meet current and future water needs.
- » Immediate collaborative efforts among the federal government, states, key water agencies, tribes and other stakeholders – including feasibility studies, and potentially, legislation and policy development to support new programs and augmentation projects – are needed to protect and enhance the Colorado River system and its water supplies.

Next Steps

- » Work groups have been formed to explore possible solutions to the projected imbalances in future water supply and demand.
- » The work groups consist of a broad range of stakeholders and focus on three primary areas: municipal and industrial conservation and water reuse; agricultural conservation, productivity and water transfers; and environmental, power, and recreational flows.
- » The groups are expected to complete their tasks in 2014 and provide recommendations to the States and water users in 2015.

CAP's Role

- » CAP was significantly involved in the Basin study and provided staff resources and input toward the formation of the work groups.
- » In addition, CAP is working with partners in the Colorado River system to develop augmentation concepts, such as weather modification, removal of non-native plant species and desalination, that will increase the reliability of Colorado River supplies and reduce future water supply imbalances.

