



COLORADO

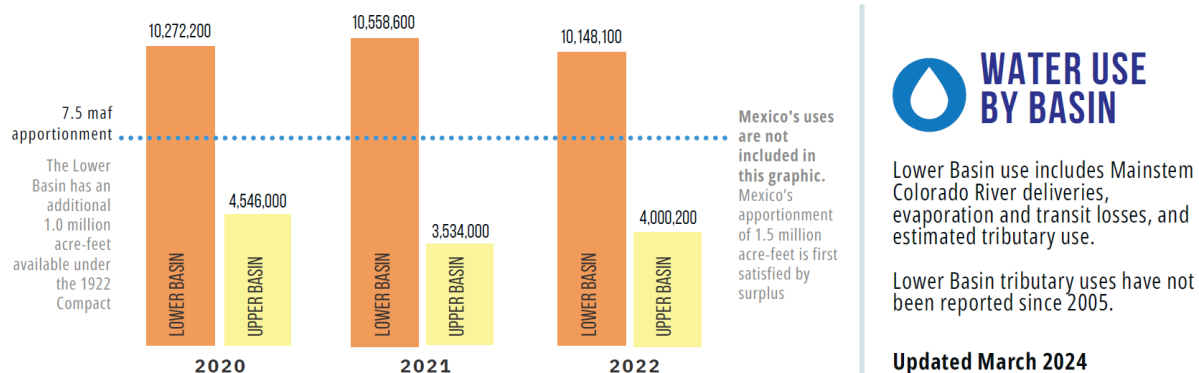
Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado River Use Infographic Fact Sheet

Updated March 2024

The data presented in the [Colorado River Use Infographic](#) shows a comparison of Colorado River uses in the Upper and Lower Basins under the Law of the River.



The infographic uses the best available data to estimate mainstem uses, tributary uses, and evaporation and transit losses for both the Upper and Lower Basins, based on currently available information, quantified at the points of use. Note that the infographic does *not* include Mexico's uses. Mexico is apportioned 1.5 million acre-feet.

Data incorporated in this infographic includes:

- **Lower Basin Mainstream Use**

The infographic pulls from [water accounting tables](#) by the Bureau of Reclamation (also called Decree Accounting per the 2006 Consolidated Decree under Arizona v. California). Lower Basin mainstem uses average between 6.5 and 7.5 MAF per year.

- **Lower Basin Evaporation and Losses**

The infographic pulls from the [Lower Colorado River Mainstream Evaporation and Riparian Evapotranspiration Losses Report](#), issued by the Bureau of Reclamation in February 2024. The report estimates Lower Basin Mainstem evaporation and losses at approximately 1.3 million acre-feet per year.

- **Lower Basin Tributary Use**

The infographic pulls from the Congressionally-mandated [Consumptive Uses & Losses \(CU&L\) Report](#) by the Bureau of Reclamation. Reclamation is directed to report CU&L every 5 years to Congress and the President. The most recent data is from 2001-2005, which calculated average Lower Basin tributary use at 2.2 MAF per year. A provisional update of 1971-2005 CU&L data suggests that this 2001-2005 estimate will increase.

- **Upper Basin Mainstream, Tributary, and Evaporation Use**

Upper Basin uses are estimated based on the [Consumptive Uses & Losses Report](#) as well as UCRC estimates for more recent years not yet estimated in CU&L. Estimates for evaporation at CRSP reservoirs use a net evaporation approach.