



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441
F (303) 866-4474

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Amy Ostdiek

DATE: January 25, 2021

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 9: Colorado River Updates

This is an information item only, with no Board action requested.

Staff will provide an update to the Board on general Colorado River matters, including the topics below.

Post-2026 Reservoir Operations Negotiations Update

The Bureau of Reclamation completed an effectiveness review of the 2007 Interim Guidelines, which culminated in a report that is available at Reclamation's website. Following completion of this report, in December 2020, Commissioner Mitchell signed on to a letter to Secretary of Interior David Bernhardt along with the other Basin States informing the Secretary that the Basin States are initiating preliminary discussions to determine future recommendations regarding operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead beyond 2026. The letter also requested technical assistance for these efforts. As Commissioner Mitchell and her Colorado River team begin these discussions, she recognizes the importance of working with water users, Tribal Nations, and non-governmental organizations in developing state strategy. In the near future, Commissioner Mitchell will initiate discussions with these groups to discuss status and strategy going forward.

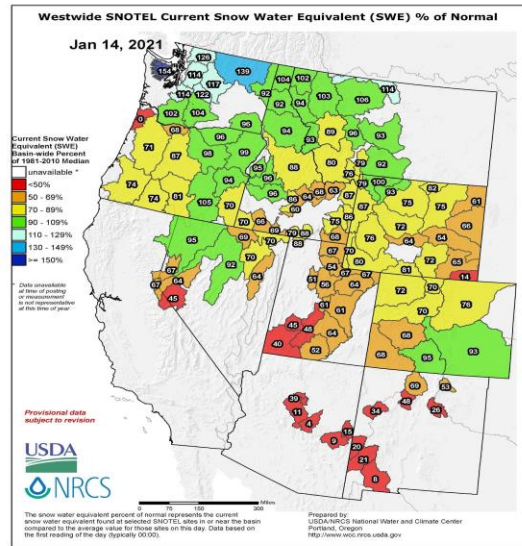
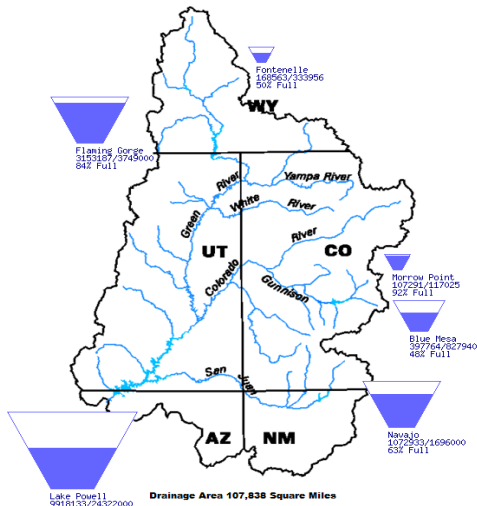
Hydrology and Operations Updates

Extremely dry conditions have persisted throughout the Colorado River Basin from spring 2020 to present. Below average snowpack and low soil moisture levels are contributing to 2021 water supply forecasts that range from 40-80% of average for the Upper Basin, and 10 - 40% of average in areas of the Lower Basin. While it is still early in the snow accumulation season and conditions could quickly change, water supply forecasts are likely to remain below average.

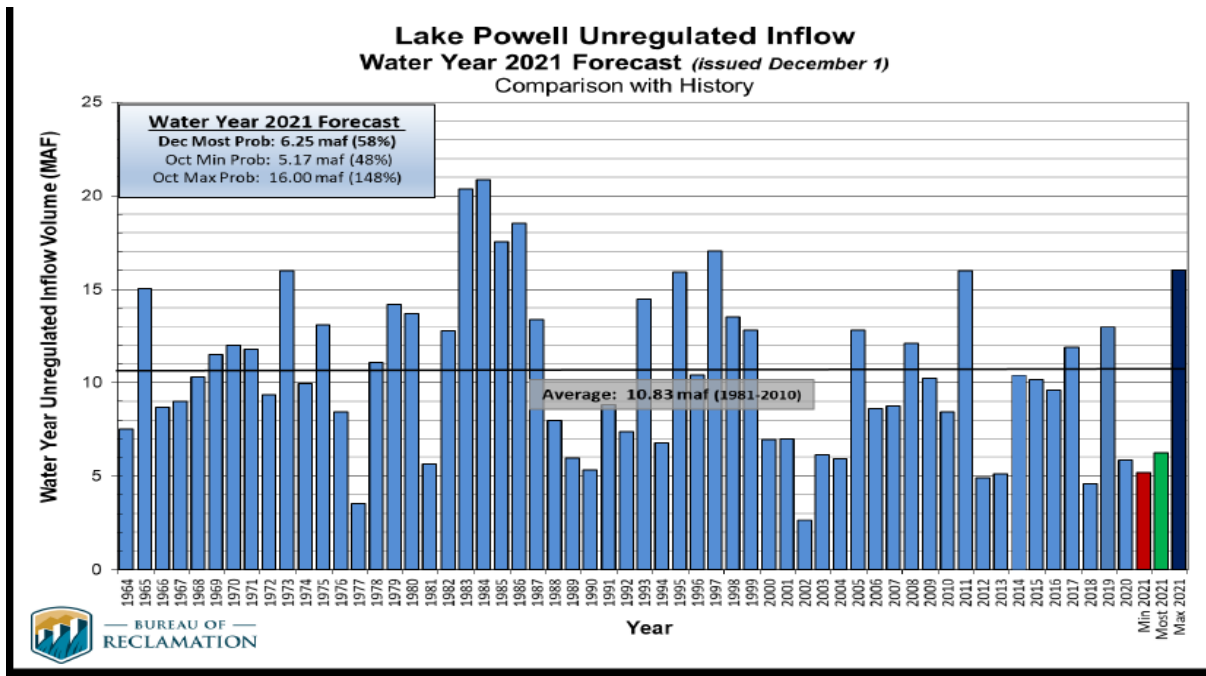


Data Current as of:
01/13/2021

Upper Colorado River Drainage Basin



Current storage and snowpack conditions



Lake Powell released 8.23 MAF for Water Year 2020. WY2021 inflow to Lake Powell is currently forecasted to be 58% of average and releases are projected to be 8.23 MAF. Current projections suggest a WY2022 release of 7.48 MAF. That projected release may increase if hydrologic conditions improve.

Lake Mead elevations will trigger water conservation measures under the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan for calendar year 2021.

