**Elaborate on the questions you asked, describing what kinds of data you needed to answer them, and where you found it**

I set out to try and find data that supported my theory that, by being the major source of fresh water for many different major cities, the Colorado river will someday start to dry up. I started to try and narrow down my search to find some actual datasets that I could work with that might convey that an increase in water usage was threatening the Colorado river, which led me to start looking at lakes and reservoirs. After looking into several major SW cities and where they get their water, I discovered that both Phoenix and Las Vegas draw a bulk of their water from Lake Mead which is fed by the Colorado river. This was attractive to me since it simplified how many factors I would need to consider in my determinations (Los Angeles/San Diego, for example, pull their water from several different sources as well as the Colorado, so comparing their water usage to Vegas and Phoenix would be less of a direct correlation.) Plus, I couldn’t find raw data on many of those other water sources but was able to find data for Lake Mead dating back to its construction in the 1930’s. Both Phoenix and Nevada also happen to be in the top 15 for population growth in cities over 50’000, so a comparison between increase in population/water use and increased depletion of Lake Mead (their main water source) could illustrate a growing need for cities predominantly reliant on surface water to find alternative solutions to tackle water supply shortages in the future.

**Describe the exploration and cleanup process**

I had a surprisingly difficult time finding data for the river as a whole which lead me to conclude that, because it plays such an integral part in so different states and cities, trying to treat it as whole data set was unrealistic. So I in trying to narrow may focus, I found water usage data sets by county for both Nevada and Arizona and decided to plot them. Both data sets were from USGS and both included a seemingly endless amount of different categories pertaining to water usage. So I decided to cut out all the other categories and just focused on surface water, which is what water taken from a source like the Colorado river is categorized as. When I graphed the both states by county surface water usage, both Phoenix and Las Vegas immediately stood out as accounting for a vast majority of state wide surface water usage.