

Colorado River Basin Water Accounts: 1-page summary

Why Care

- 26 Colorado River managers and experts **constructively improved basin water accounts as a framework to transition emergency reservoir operations into more sustainable, equitable, and adaptive water uses.**
- Time commitment was 1 to 3 hours per participant during Summer and Fall 2021.
- In an online model session, up to 6 participants together consumed, saved, and traded water in six basin accounts in a combined Lake Powell-Lake Mead water bank (Figure 1).
- At each session end, participants shared what they liked and what to improve (Figure 2).

Additional Contributions to Basin Management

1. Counted all evaporation and evapotranspiration from Lake Powell to U.S.-Mexico border.
2. New accounts for First Nations and Colorado River Delta.
3. A *Shared Reserve* controlled reservoir drawdown below critical levels.
4. Participants choose each year's Lake Powell natural flow (Figure 3).
5. Further steps to implement:
 - a. Decide number and extent of accounts.
 - b. Divide current reservoir storage above critical levels among accounts.
 - c. Divide each year's basin natural flow among accounts.
 - d. Divide end-of-year combined storage between Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Find and Share Materials

- [Model repository, Let's Start Guide, and Linked Online Help](#) (Hydroshare.org).
- Write up of [10 Lessons Learned](#) (Digital Commons).

Next Steps

- 1) Downscale annual adaptive operations to monthly.
- 2) Partner with 5 other research institutions to measure ability of similar online tools to build trust and collaborations.

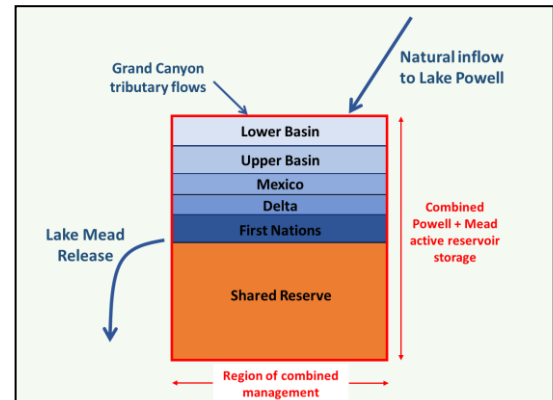


Figure 1. Account balances were the water stored in a combined Lake Powell-Lake Mead bank (account balances not to scale).

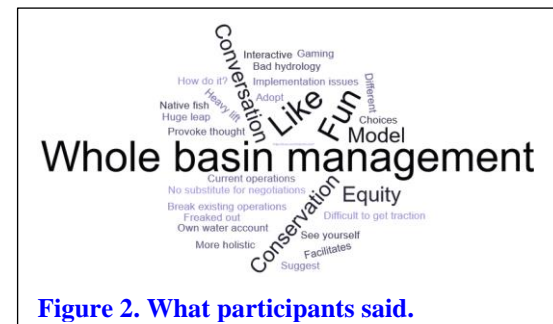


Figure 2. What participants said.

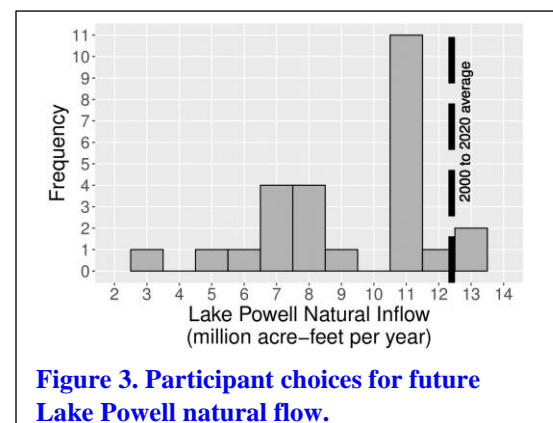


Figure 3. Participant choices for future Lake Powell natural flow.

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