

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 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).

New Features Contributed to Basin Management

1. Counted all evaporation and evapotranspiration from Lake Powell down to U.S.-Mexico border.
2. First Nations and Colorado River Delta accounts.
3. A jointly managed *Shared Reserve* controlled reservoir drawdown below critical levels.
4. Participants choose each year's Lake Powell natural flow (Figure 3).
5. Political decisions to implement framework:
 - 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.
 - d. Divide end-of-year combined storage between Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Share Materials with other Parties

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

Next Steps

1. Downscale to a monthly timestep annual reservoir operations that adapt to basin flows.
2. With colleagues, articulate how to measure and strengthen existing collaborations with the goal to co-generate and validate additional frameworks to transition to more sustainable, equitable, and adaptive water uses so basin actors have more choices going forward.

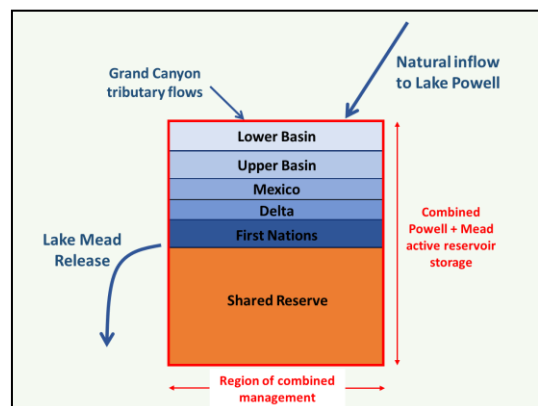


Figure 1. Account balances were the water stored in a combined Lake Powell-Lake Mead bank (account balances not to scale).

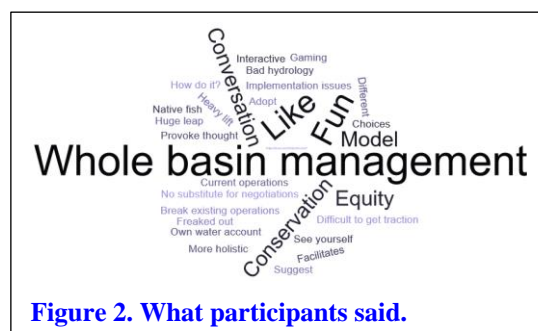


Figure 2. What participants said.

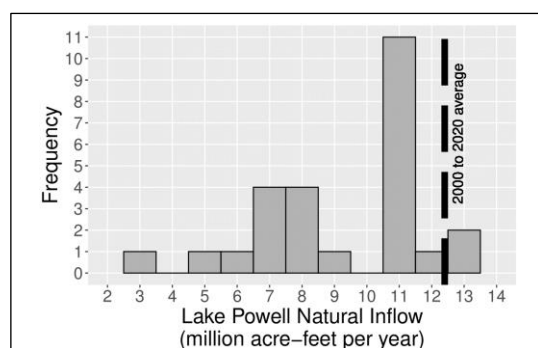


Figure 3. Participant choices for future Lake Powell natural flow.

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