

# 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

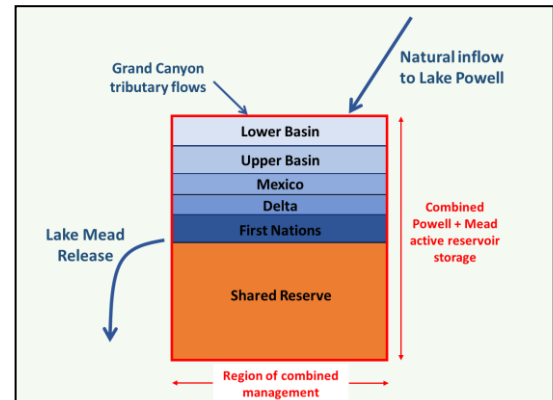
1. Counted all evaporation and evapotranspiration from Lake Powell down to U.S.-Mexico border.
2. Accounts for First Nations and Colorado River Delta.
3. A *Shared Reserve* controlled reservoir drawdown below critical levels.
4. Participants choose each year's Lake Powell natural flow (Figure 3).
5. Additional political decisions 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

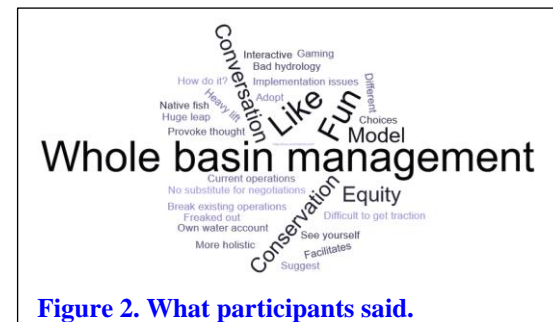
- [Model repository, Let's Start Guide, and Linked Online Help](#) (Hydroshare.org).
- [10 Lessons Learned](#) (Digital Commons).

## Next Step

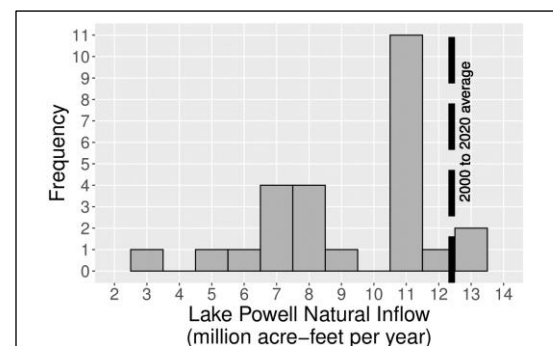
1. Downscale operations that adapt to annual whole basin flow to a monthly timestep.



**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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