

The Colorado River Update

2025 Annual Conference for the Arizona Agribusiness & Water Council

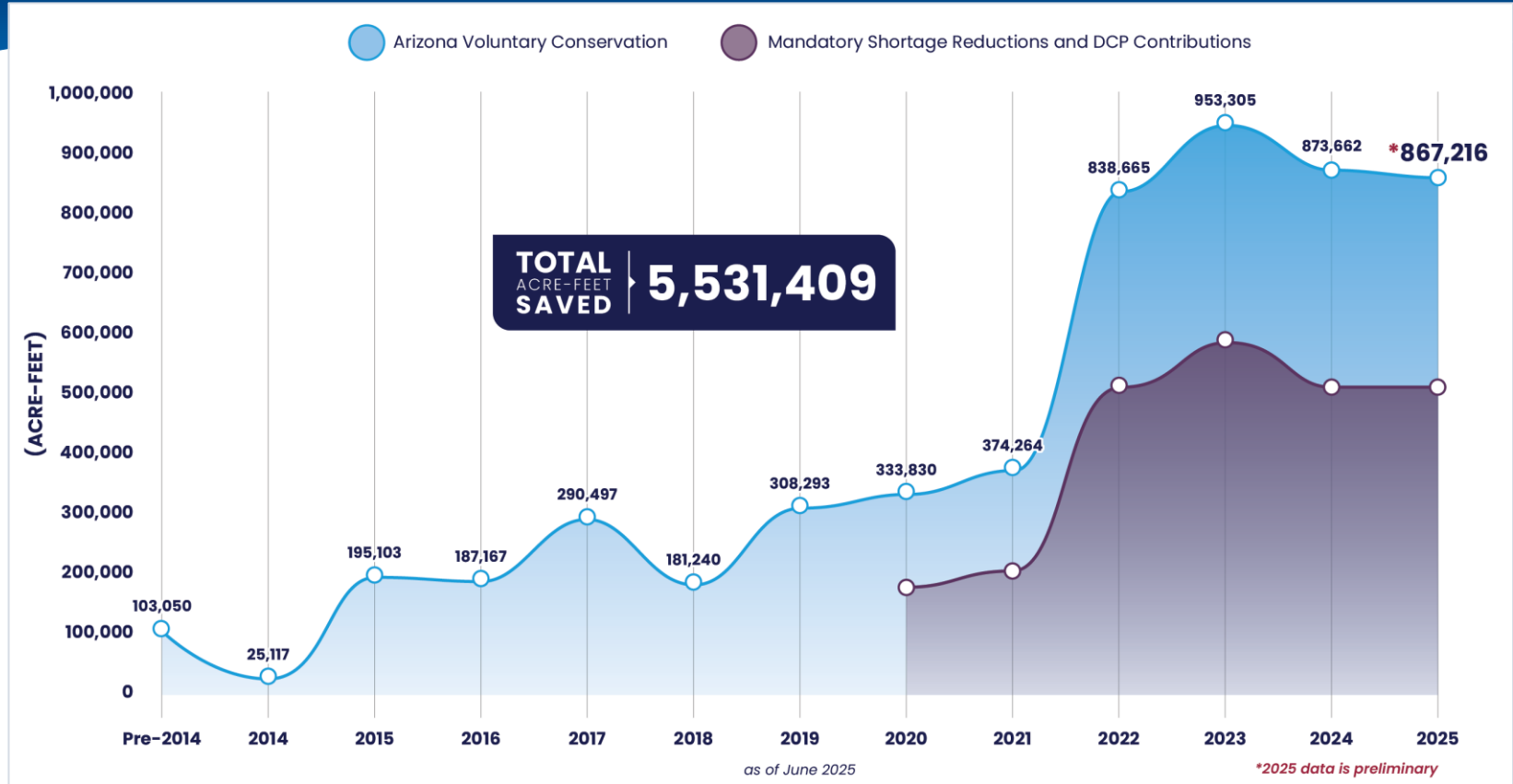


*Clint Chandler, Deputy Director
Arizona Department of Water Resources
September 19, 2025*



Arizona Conservation Update

Arizona's Demonstrated Water Savings & Future Storage



Arizona Parties that have Contributed Water

Matador Farms LLC



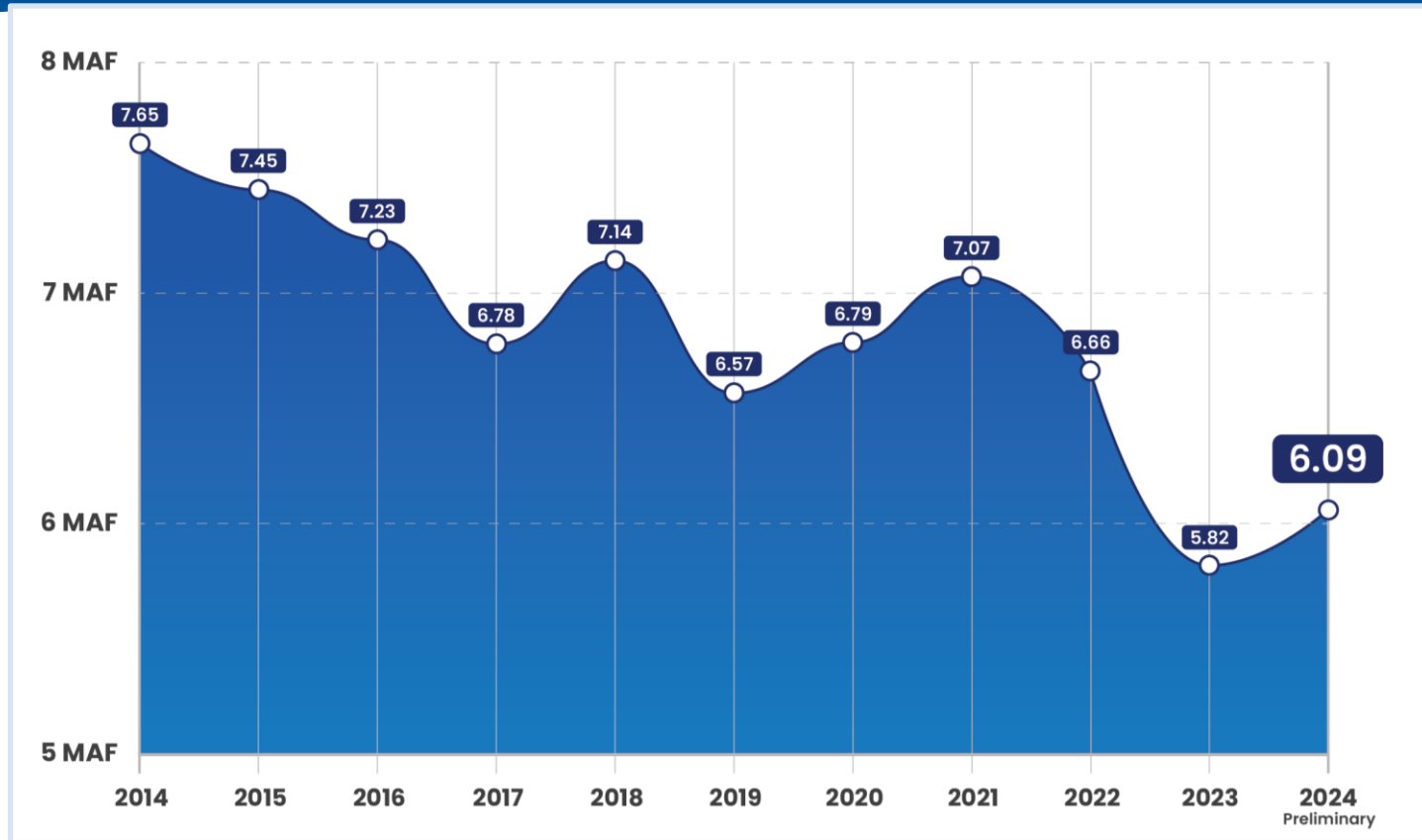
Apache Junction
WATER DISTRICT



GM GABRYCH FAMILY LIMITED
PARTNERSHIP

Cathcart Farms

Lower Basin Consumptive Use (2014 – 2024)



Status of SEIS ROD Lower Basin Conservation

As of June 2025

Year	Amount Conserved (acre-feet)	Cumulative Conserved (acre-feet)
2023 ¹	1,160,697	1,160,697
2024 ¹	871,014	2,031,711
2025 ²	870,372	2,902,083
2026 ²	771,148	3,673,231

¹Information on accounted system conservation is documented in the 2023 and 2024 Water Accounting Reports, respectively, and can be found online at: <https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/wtracct.html>

²All projected or provisional volumes are subject to change. Additional conservation activities are being considered including system conservation, ICS, and other conserved water in 2025 and 2026. These additional activities will be included in Reclamation's operational modeling.





Post-2026 Process Update

Post-2026 Timeline

- June 2023: Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) formally initiated the Post-2026 Process
- October 2023: Scoping Summary Report and Federal Register Notice identified the Proposed Federal Action and Purpose & Need
- January 2025: Alternatives Report identified preliminary range of alternatives
- **Current: Overall process currently refining alternatives for Draft EIS**
- Fall-Winter 2025: Publication of Draft EIS
- Spring-Summer 2026: Publication of Final EIS
- Summer-Fall 2026: Adopt Record of Decision



Lower Basin Comments on Reclamation's January Alternatives Report



The Colorado River Basin States Representatives of Arizona, California, and Nevada

February 13, 2025

Via email and U.S. Mail
c/o Daniel.gustafson@ios.doi.gov

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Congratulations and Perspectives from the Lower Basin States on the Colorado River Post-2026
Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead

Dear Secretary Burgum:

Congratulations on your appointment and confirmation as Secretary of the Interior. Your leadership in the West makes you exceptionally well-positioned to lead the Department at this critical time. We look forward to working with the Trump-Vance administration and you as we navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead for the Colorado River and the Nation.

A top priority for Arizona, California, and Nevada (the Lower Basin States) is developing the next set of operating guidelines for the Colorado River. As you know, the current guidelines governing the operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead will expire next year in 2026, and the process of formulating new guidelines for implementation in 2027 is already underway. This effort, including the associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, is crucial to the future management of the Colorado River system.

In a January 2025 letter to the seven Basin State Representatives, the fourteen United States Senators representing the Basin States underscored the importance of a seven-state consensus and urged Basin negotiators to commit to developing a consensus proposal for future Colorado River operations. The Lower Basin States strongly support a collaborative, consensus-driven approach to developing these guidelines and remain actively engaged in discussions among the seven Colorado River Basin States to reach a unified agreement. An imposed solution or litigation would undermine decades of cooperative progress and jeopardize our ability to continue managing the system effectively. Collaboration has long been a hallmark of the Colorado River Basin, and we are confident that, with your leadership and support, this tradition will endure and deliver success on the Colorado River in this administration.

Our commitment to this process is reflected in our proactive efforts. As an initial step, the Lower Basin States have voluntarily proposed conservation commitments totaling 1.5 million acre-feet per year under most system conditions, as part of a package that would include more substantial Basin-wide reductions when system contents fall below certain thresholds, among other operational components. We are

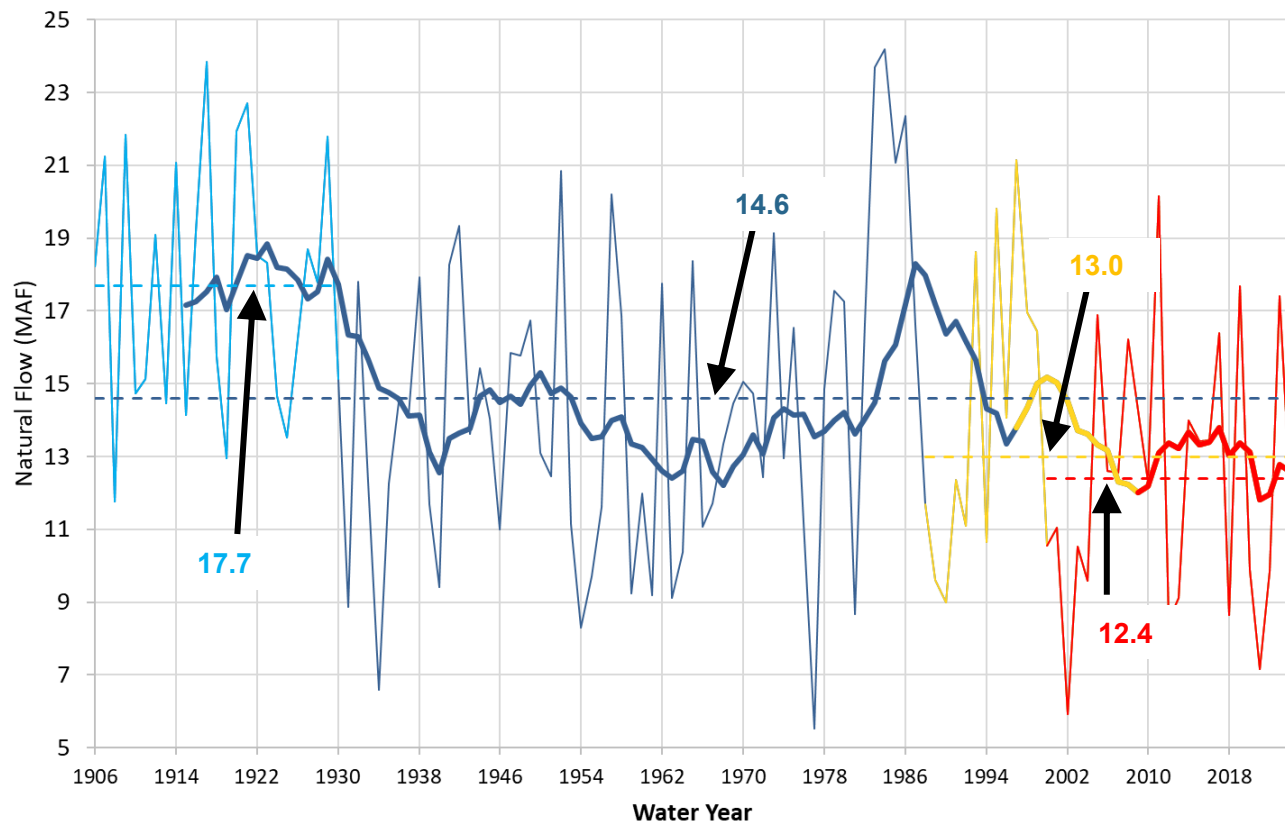
- Without fully analyzing the Lower Basin Alternative, the United States omitted it from the January Alternatives Report.
- The Lower Basin States request to have the alternative fully analyzed and included in the draft EIS has not been accepted.
- The Lower Basin identified fatal flaws in the January Report.
- The Lower Basin requested Reclamation retract the report.



Seven State Discussions

- A compromise based upon the Lower or Upper Basin alternatives is not achievable
- Arizona continues to seek a collaborative path forward that avoids litigation
- Evaluating a “Supply Driven” concept that shares the water the river actually provides while requiring each Basin to take actions to live within their respective shares
 - Many of the elements already proposed in the Lower Basin States Alternative are actions that need further development for a “Supply Driven” release concept
 - Maintain an Upper Basin delivery obligation to the Lower Basin

Natural Flow Colorado River at Lees Ferry Gaging Station, Arizona



1906-1930

1906-2024

1988-2024

2000-2024

— Annual Flow
— 10-yr Avg
- - Average



Arizona's Positions

- Arizona intends to continue the collaborative path we have forged with MOU, the 500 Plus Plan, DCP, the system conservation program, and many others
- Arizona has stepped up to the plate and would take the largest reductions in the static ramp
- Arizona believes the natural flow percentage should be based on sharing of the hydrologic risk and the Law of the River

1922 Compact Issues

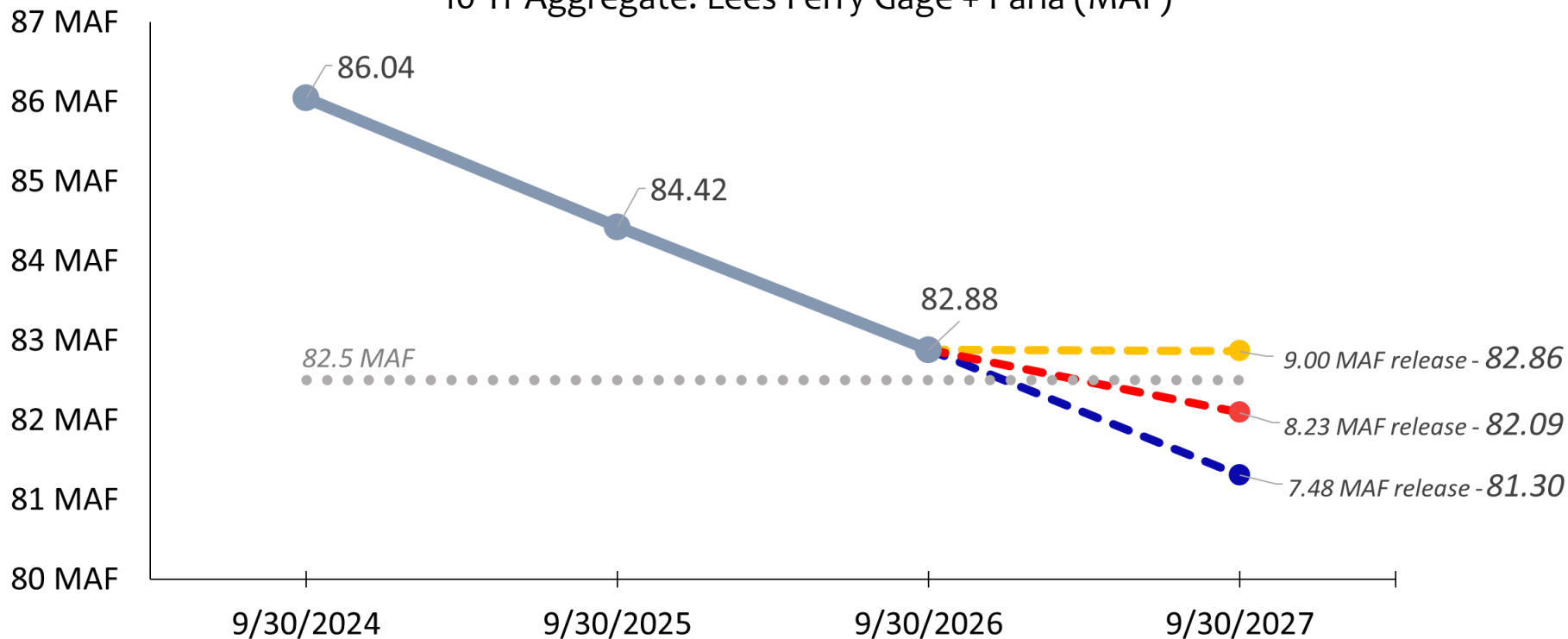


Colorado River Compact Compliance

- Compliance means flow of the Colorado River at Lee Ferry shall not be below an aggregate of 75 MAF over a rolling 10-year period, plus annual releases equal to one-half the Mexico Treaty burden.

Projected Water Year of Flows Below Compact Requirements

10 Yr Aggregate: Lees Ferry Gage + Paria (MAF)





Intra-AZ Process

Intra-Arizona Process Initial Goals

- Balance the need to adapt to reduced Colorado River supplies while maintaining Arizona's economic viability.
- Understand and balance differing perspectives on sharing reductions post-2026.
- Identify resources that could help with developing an intra-Arizona framework.
- Create a framework to leverage the benefits of Lake Mead storage.
- Identify how all Arizona Colorado River water users will contribute to a solution.

Listening Sessions

- ADWR and CAP will be holding small-group listening sessions in the next few weeks to get feedback and to gauge interest in participating in workgroups
- ADWR and CAP are interested in receiving feedback from stakeholders regarding the post-2026 operational guidelines in Arizona and between the states

What is your plan to be part of the solution?

Questions?

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