



ARIZONA'S MIGHTY COLORADO

.....
**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ARIZONA, LOCAL ECONOMIES,
GROWING POPULATIONS AND THE NEED TO PROTECT THE COLORADO RIVER**
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PREPARED BY ROBERT FANGER & HOWARD WATTS III

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

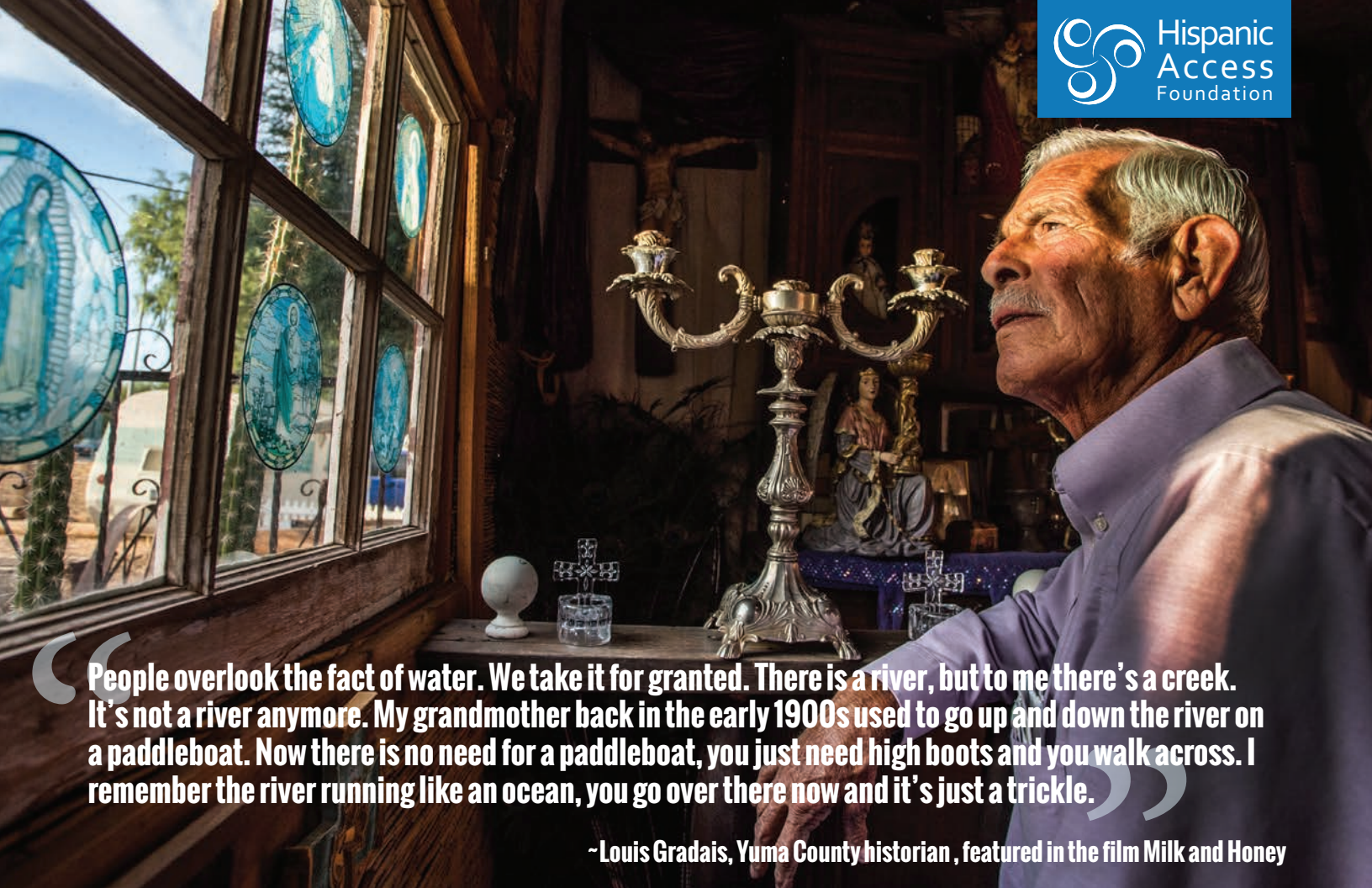
Arizona – from its major urban cities of Phoenix and Tucson to more rural towns like Yuma to San Luis – depends on the Colorado River, which supplies nearly 40 percent of the water used in the state. However, the river is shared with six other states, plus the nation of Mexico, and is over allocated as we use more water than what is stored in Lake Mead. Prolonged drought and changes in climate have reduced supplies even further. Arizona is growing and changing as Latinos become an increasingly larger portion of the population. Engaging this population on water-smart solutions is critical for the state’s future.

This report provides a general overview of Arizona’s water challenges and underscores the importance and need for the Latino community, which has demonstrated a willingness to lead, to be actively involved in the conversation and efforts to protect the Colorado River. A summary of findings includes:

- **A River Under Stress:** Arizona has been in drought for more than 15 years, and Lake Mead continues to steadily decline as use exceeds supply. Rising temperatures and low snowpack upriver threatens to make this worse.
- **Water Fuels Arizona’s Economy:** Tucson and Phoenix make up more than three-quarters of the state’s economy, and depend on the Colorado River for a large portion of their water supply. So does the Grand Canyon State’s top export – tourism – and agriculture.
- **Population Shifts:** Arizona’s population has doubled since 1987 and is growing faster than the rest of the country, which could strain water resources in the future. Latinos are growing as a share of the state’s population, and by just 2030 a majority of residents will be non-white.
- **Latinos Ready to Lead:** Public opinion polling finds a majority Arizonans see the water supply as an important issue, and Latinos are more concerned than the average voter about drought and climate change. There are numerous examples of Latinos as environmental stewards.

While progress has been made on protecting the Colorado River, work remains:

- **The Drought Contingency Plan:** A conservation agreement between Arizona, California, and Nevada would reduce each state’s river use in order to protect Lake Mead. Mexico would also cut back, preventing catastrophic shortages.
- **Conservation and Desalination:** Arizona needs to continue to partner with its neighboring states and the federal government to invest in technologies and programs that reduce water use, and further study additional water sources to ease the burden on the Colorado River.
- **Community Outreach & Education:** To meet these challenges in the face of demographic change, Arizona’s Latinos can’t be left behind. Dedicated outreach and inclusion at all levels is critical.



“People overlook the fact of water. We take it for granted. There is a river, but to me there’s a creek. It’s not a river anymore. My grandmother back in the early 1900s used to go up and down the river on a paddleboat. Now there is no need for a paddleboat, you just need high boots and you walk across. I remember the river running like an ocean, you go over there now and it’s just a trickle.”

~Louis Gradais, Yuma County historian, featured in the film Milk and Honey

INTRODUCTION

The winding Colorado River used to flow 1,450 miles from Colorado’s Rocky Mountain National Park, through seven states and Mexico as it travels to the Gulf of California. This magnificent river has captured the imagination of peoples and different cultures for hundreds, if not thousands of years, and is one of the best known symbols of the grandeur and adventure of the American West.


By now most Arizonans know that this river system is arguably the hardest working river in the country. The waters help irrigate millions of acres of farmland, including nearly 90 percent of the nation’s winter leafy vegetables. The Grand Canyon and multiple sites along the river fuel tourism and recreation. All in all, the river is the life source for more than 35 million people, including nearly a third of the nation’s Latinos.

ALL IN ALL, THE RIVER IS THE LIFE SOURCE FOR MORE THAN 35 MILLION PEOPLE, INCLUDING NEARLY A THIRD OF THE NATION’S LATINOS.

However, demand on the river’s water now exceeds its supply, leaving the river so over-tapped that it

dries up to a trickle before reaching the sea. A century of overusing the river, combined with drought and growing populations, has put the river at a critical crossroads.

The 2017 short film “Leche y Miel” (Milk and Honey)¹ sets out to explore Yuma, Arizona’s Latino community and their financial, spiritual, historical and cultural connection to the strained Colorado River. Milk and Honey provides a microcosm of the relationship the Colorado River has with our communities and underscores how this river truly is the backbone of the west. Through the eyes of farm workers, faith leaders and historians, we gain a better understanding of why we all need to step up to protect the Colorado River for future generations. One of the more moving scenes in the film comes at the close when members of a local church are being baptized in the Colorado River.



“The baptism represent a new life, a new beginning. Baptizing in the Colorado River for our Church represents that we are not disconnected from what God gave us. We live in a city that has been blessed by God. If we don’t take care of our water, if we don’t take care of our rivers, what inheritance are we leaving our grandchildren?”

~Pastor Victor Venalanzo of Iglesia Betania

The Colorado River in Arizona is an integral part of its communities’ heritage and way of life. From serving as the backbone for the agricultural industry to providing a cultural focal point for faith communities, the Colorado River is essential to the livelihood of the Southwest.

As we endeavor to protect the Colorado River and other natural treasures, we can readily see why agencies and governments are called to work together. For, it is only in realizing our connection to each other and all things that we are empowered to leave a legacy of protecting the Colorado River worthy of the generations to come.

We are all in this together – the Colorado River touches all our lives in some way.

A BRIEF HISTORY

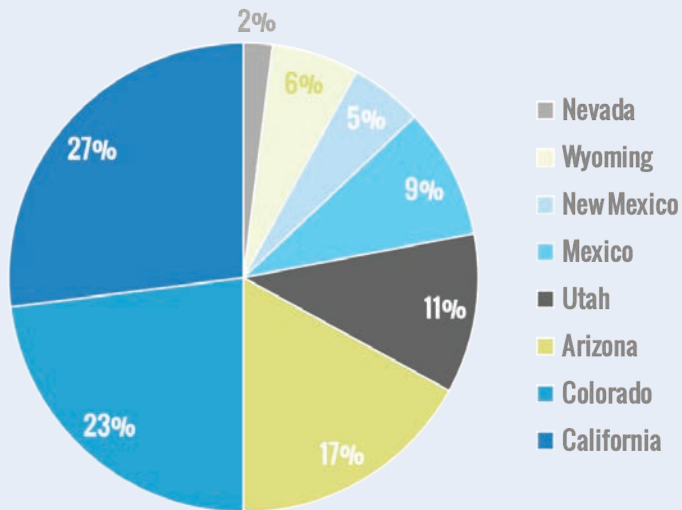
In 1921, the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior and representatives from seven states – Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California - convened the Colorado River Commission. Up to that point, water use followed a simple rule - whoever started using water first had the rights to keep using it. Even in the event of a shortfall, the newest users would be cut off entirely before those with more “senior” rights. But the states at the upper reaches of the Colorado River saw growth downstream – especially in California – and worried that the south would lay first claim to water starting in northern mountains and streams.²

The Commission developed the Colorado River Compact, which divided the river’s flow among the seven states up front. The river’s basin was split in half, with the dividing line at Lee’s Ferry in Arizona, a few miles south of the Utah border. Mexico and Native American tribes were later factored in as well, and the compact was the foundation for a series of laws regulating use of the river. It also allowed the building of dams, canals, and other infrastructure throughout the Colorado River Basin.



There was one big problem, though: in 1921 the river’s average flow was measured at 16.5 million acre-feet (an acre-foot is enough to supply 2-3 average households for a year; it’s about 325,000 gallons or enough to cover an acre of land in a foot of water). 15 million acre-feet were allocated to the seven states, and Mexico later received an additional 1.5 million. But science has since showed that average flows are closer to 13.5 million acre-feet. The amount of water handed out is unsustainable.³

COLORADO RIVER APPORTIONMENT



SOURCE: MIT

Arizona is unique – it’s the only state that is in both the upper and lower Colorado River basins. It received 2.85 million acre-feet of river water every year – 19 percent of the total. And more than any other state, it shares its use of the Colorado with sovereign Native American tribes. The Navajo, Hopi, Havasupai, Hualapai, Fort Apache, San Carlos, Gila River, and Colorado River Indian Tribes all sit along the river or its tributaries.

While the Colorado River makes up Arizona’s western border, most of its growth has been in the south-central cities of Phoenix and Tucson and their surrounding areas. As the limited groundwater supplies for these cities declined, Arizona built the Central Arizona Project – a set of canals, pumps, and treatment facilities that move water east and south from the Colorado all the way to Phoenix and Tucson.

Lake Powell, sit upstream, and fast-growing Las Vegas gets most of its water from Lake Mead. Downstream is massive California. Due to a court case in the 1960s, Arizona and Nevada have junior water rights to California, meaning if there’s a shortage of water, those states take all of the cuts while California takes none.⁴

Arizona is also the junior priority right holder on the river system. The two major reservoirs, Lake Mead and

And cuts could be as soon as 2020. Under a 2007 agreement, when Lake Mead’s surface drops to 1,075 in elevation on January 1st of any year, Arizona will lose access to 320,000 acre-feet of water. That’s enough for about 650,000 households. As of March 19, 2018 the lake is at 1088 feet– just 13 feet above the shortage trigger and close to its annual highpoint.⁵

Drought has gripped the Colorado River since 2000, and flows have dropped by more than 19 percent over the same period. Researchers from Arizona State University and Colorado State University estimate that two-thirds of that decline is due to a shortage of rain and snow, and by the end of the century one third of the river’s water supply could disappear.⁶



The white ring at Nevada’s Lake Mead provides a visual representation of the impact drought has had on water levels.



FUELING ARIZONA'S ECONOMIC ENGINE

Arizona's economy depends on the Colorado River. Phoenix and Tucson make up more than three-quarters of the state's economy, and their water supplies depend on river water delivered by the Central Arizona Project.⁷ And the implications are even broader. In total, the Colorado sustains the economies of 7 states, including 1.4 trillion dollars and 16 million jobs, every year.⁸ That is about one-twelfth of the national gross domestic product. Arizona is surrounded on every side by other Colorado River stakeholders who depend on one another for trade and commerce. The river supports their residents, workers, and visitors.

When it comes to visitors, Arizona has no shortage. 43 million tourists visited in 2016, spending \$21.2 billion in the state and contributing \$3.09 billion in tax revenue.⁹ That's \$1,186 in taxes that each Arizona household doesn't have to pay. There are 184,200 Arizona jobs directly related to tourism, with another 158,300 created due to the economic ripple effect of visitor spending. Tourism is the number one "export" in the state. Arizona is home

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to one of the great wonders of the natural world – the Grand Canyon – and through its depths flow the Colorado River. Flows from the river and its tributaries drive outdoor recreation for tourists in Arizona, and likely provide their drinking water during visits.

The outdoor recreation industry, which the Colorado River helps support through various water related activities like rafting, kayaking and fishing, contributes more than \$21.2 billion to Arizona’s economy and employs more than 201,000 people.¹⁰ Additionally, in February 2018 the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis released numbers showing that the outdoor recreation industry comprises 2 percent -- \$373.7 billion – of the entire 2016 U.S. gross domestic product. Not only does this put recreation ahead of agriculture like farming and fishing (1 percent) and mining, oil and gas extraction (1.4 percent) nationally, but it also underscores the economic impact recreation on the Colorado River can have locally and regionally.¹¹

Another important industry directly tied with water is agriculture. Arizona has a long and rich history of farming and ranching and the lack of freezing temperatures makes a longer growing season possible – with enough water. Arizona is ranked 5th among the states in 2012 for the production of vegetables and melons, 10th for cotton, and 14th for fruit and tree nuts.¹² The state is also ranked 10th for the number of sheep and lambs it rears. Yuma, on the Colorado River, supplies 90 percent of the nation’s winter leafy greens.¹³ It is estimated that approximately 60,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers do the bulk of this work – the vast majority of which are Latino.¹⁴ In 2017, Yuma had the fourth-highest number of H-2A visas for guest workers.¹⁵





POPULATION TRENDS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Arizona's population has now topped 7 million.¹⁶ That is an increase of almost 10 percent since 2010, and double the population in 1987. The state projects that by the year 2050, that figure will grow by between 2.5 and 5 million more people, driven primarily by explosive growth in the Phoenix metro area.¹⁷ With a faster growth rate than the nation as a whole, the demands on the Colorado River already under stress will only increase in Arizona.

**FOUR OUT OF FIVE ARIZONA
RESIDENTS LIVE IN CITIES
DEPENDENT ON COLORADO
RIVER WATER.**

The Phoenix metro area – consisting of Maricopa and Pinal counties – is driving the state's transformation. At more than 4.6 million people as of 2016, Phoenix is home to more than 65 percent of Arizona's population.¹⁸ The Tucson metro area is home to more than 1 million people.¹⁹ Four out of five Arizona residents live in cities dependent on Colorado River water.

The following chart shows a different way to think about the impact population growth and the decreasing volume of the Colorado's flow equates to on a per person basis. When the state appropriations were established in 1921, populations in the west were significantly less and water volume was at healthier levels. But, while

POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION OF WATER

1921

2016

16.5 million acre-feet Total Colorado River Water Flow 13.5 million acre-feet

17% = 2,805,000 Arizona Portion Based on Appropriation 17% = 2,295,000

351,000 Population for the Year 6,900,000

7.99 Arizona's Water Appropriation Per Capita 0.33
million acre feet per capita million-acre feet per capita

AN ACRE-FOOT IS ENOUGH TO SUPPLY 2-3 AVERAGE HOUSEHOLDS FOR A YEAR

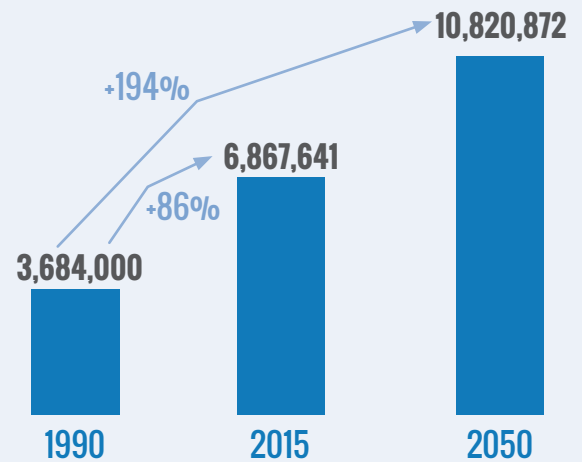
development and growth boomed — Arizona's population grew more than 1200 percent between 1921 to 2016 — water levels dropped.

Arizona's population isn't just growing — it's changing. While Latinos made up about 25 percent of the state's population in 2000, that figure is now more than 30 percent and projected to reach 42 percent by the year 2050.²⁰ Latinos and Native Americans are the fastest-growing racial and ethnic groups in Arizona. From 2015 to 2050, while the state's overall population looks to increase 160 percent, the Latino population will increase by more than 215 percent. By just 2030, a majority of Arizona's population will be nonwhite.

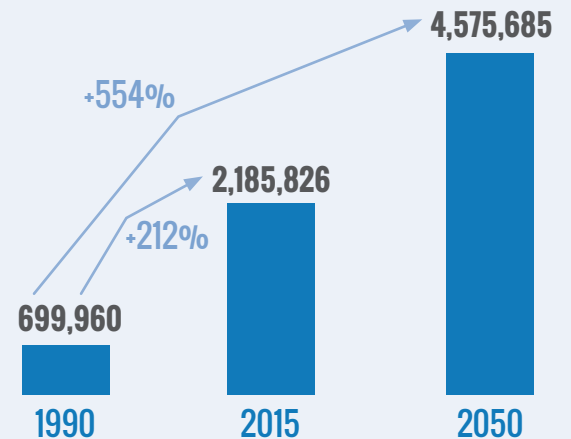
Latino families do lag behind in some measures of prosperity. In Arizona, the Hispanic poverty rate was 26.9 percent in 2016.²¹ That's 7.5 percentage points above the 2016 U.S. average for Latinos of 19.4 percent.²² Yet, Arizona Latinos now yield a purchasing power of \$42 billion a year, and by 2019 that number is expected to top \$49 billion.²³ Nationally, homeownership rates for Latinos are 45.3 percent — well under the 63.1 percent average across race/ethnicity.²⁴ However, 48 percent of Latinos participated in outdoor recreation in 2016 — a very similar amount to Whites (50 percent) — and those that do get outdoors do so far more often in a given year.²⁵ They're also in situations that encourage conservation — living in apartments without individual lawns and pools, closely tracking utility bills and keeping costs down.

Latinos are Arizona's future. Actions taken on the Colorado River now will determine what that future looks like.

ARIZONA'S POPULATION GROWTH



LATINO POPULATION GROWTH



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS / ARIZONA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



PROTECTING THE COLORADO RIVER

THE PROGRESS WE'VE MADE

While development in the West and along the Colorado River has resulted in tension and conflict, recent agreements have shown the value of collaboration in addressing problems of overuse and securing the region's water supply for future generations.

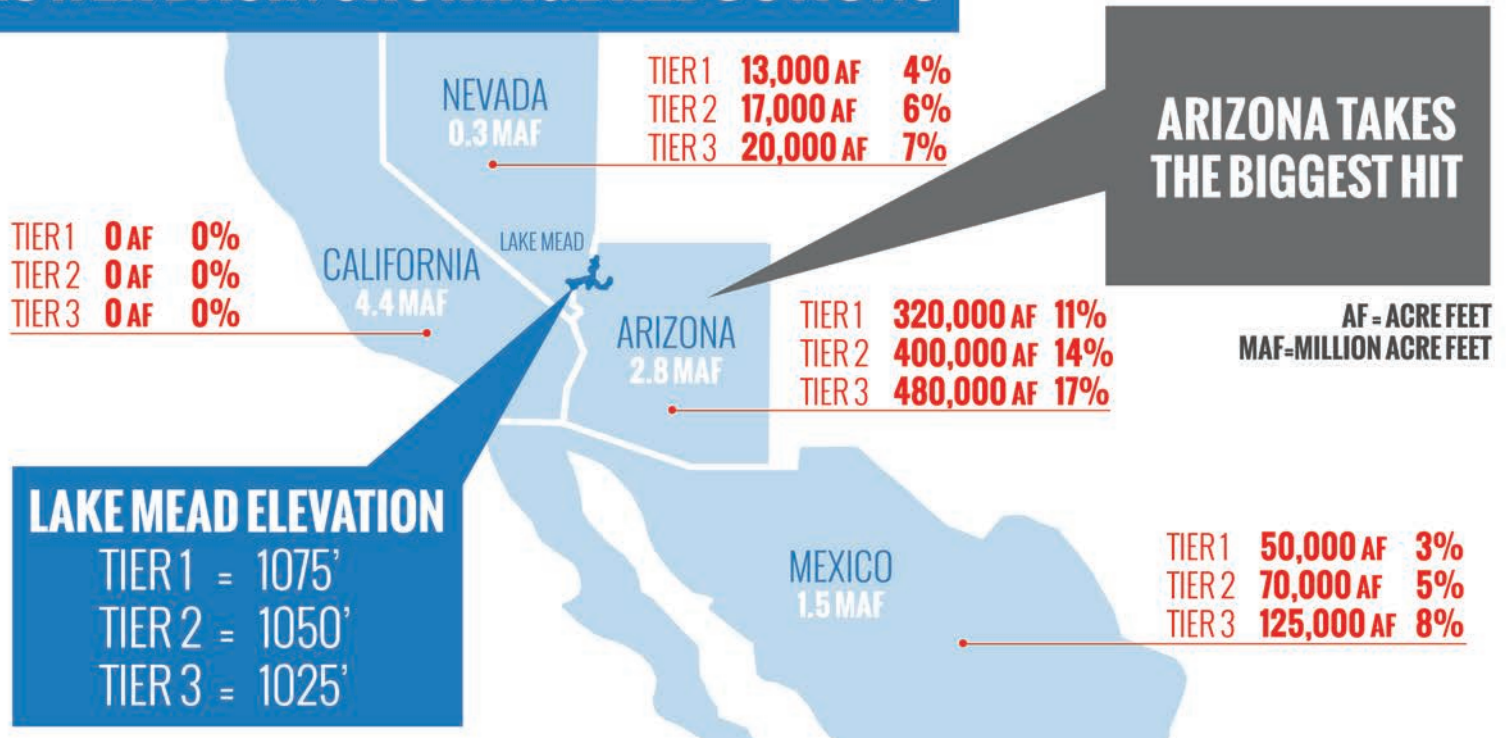
In 2007, Arizona entered a system conservation agreement with other Colorado River states. Seven years into a drought, they realized that they needed to protect the levels in Lake Mead to ensure their water supply is reliable, and worked with the federal government and Mexico to craft guidelines for water shortages.²⁶

Under the 2007 agreement, as the lake's elevation drops, Arizona and Nevada would voluntarily reduce the amount they could take from the

THERE IS A NEED TO
PROTECT LAKE MEAD
LEVELS TO ENSURE
A RELIABLE WATER
SUPPLY.

river. Mexico accepted a change to its treaty with the US that meant it would take cuts too. California, with its senior rights, doesn't take any cuts, and most of the burden falls on Arizona – specifically on CAP and the cities and agriculture it supports. Lake Mead keeps narrowly missing the water level trigger and the shortage has not been initiated.

LOWER BASIN SHORTAGE REDUCTIONS



SOURCE: MANAGING DROUGHT AND SHORTAGE IN THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN – MOHAMMED MAHMOUD, CAP

The other major initiative to protect the water supply is conservation. Since Arizona's landmark Groundwater Management Act of 1980, the state's water use has been declining even as the population more than doubled.²⁷ Cities have used a variety of programs to accomplish this:

- More efficient building codes
- Wastewater recycling
- Seasonal and tiered water billing
- Leak control
- Turf removal
- Rebates for water-saving appliances and accessories²⁸

Agriculture has also stepped up, using new technology to grow the same amount of food using less water. There are programs in place that pay farmers not to grow on part of their land for a year, in order to save water when supplies are scarce. CAP, along with partners in Southern Nevada, California, and the federal government, has funded a conservation pilot program to accelerate these water savings.²⁹

THE WORK AHEAD


While Arizona has a proud and successful history of effectively managing its water resources, it is ready for the next generation of ideas that will lay the groundwork for successfully handling the state's water management for the next several decades.

In 2017, the United States and Mexico entered into a landmark agreement, called Minute 323. This treaty extends and expands conservation and cooperation between the two countries. In exchange for investment in conservation projects in Mexico, more water will be saved in Lake Mead, reducing the chances for shortage.³⁰ Also, Mexico has agreed to smaller voluntary cuts to help avoid the larger reductions that come with a shortage.

There's only one catch. Before Mexico makes these new cuts in river use, the Lower Basin States of Arizona, California, and Nevada have to agree to do the same. Called the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP), it would rework the cutbacks originally agreed to in 2007.³¹ Arizona and Nevada would take smaller cuts now, and while the reductions would still increase as Lake Mead drops, a key difference is that California would also start to cut its use under the new agreement, while previously it took no cuts at all. This agreement would lead to voluntary water conservation, as opposed to the Department of Interior stepping in and enforcing drastic, involuntary cuts, and would help prop up Lake Mead.

The DCP would be an important step in addressing the issue of states using more water from the Colorado River than is available in an average year. However, more work will be needed – conservation programs must expand to meet cuts without hurting residents and businesses. Future agreements may be needed to adjust use even more to meet the challenge of climate change, which could reduce the river's flows by 30 percent or more by the end of the century. Arizona has conducted initial studies into desalination of brackish groundwater – water that is too salty for drinking or irrigation – and this potential new source of water, which could be accessed at far less cost than seawater, could ease the burden on the river.³²

THE NEW DROUGHT AGREEMENT
WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP
IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF
STATES USING MORE WATER FROM
THE COLORADO RIVER THAN IS
AVAILABLE IN AN AVERAGE YEAR.



Planning now, like the Drought Contingency Plan, can ensure that water in Arizona and in cities like Yuma is stable for decades to come.

THE PUBLIC SUPPORT

Drought throughout the West has sharpened public concern about water and its impacts on our economies has lead to a deeper understanding of public opinion. Water is absolutely a top concern for Arizonans.

The Colorado College’s Conservation in the West Poll found that voters thought low water levels and inadequate water supplies were two of the most serious issues facing Arizona, beating out not only other environmental issues but also the economic issue of unemployment.³³ Additionally, when considering the Colorado River and its tributaries, Latinos in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada and Utah feel that it’s a national treasure that should be protected (94%), an attraction for tourism and recreation (91%) and is critical to its state’s economy (86%).³⁴

SUMMARY OF ISSUES: RANKED BY % OF EXTREMELY SERIOUS		
ISSUE	% EXTREMELY/ VERY SERIOUS	% TOTAL SERIOUS
Low levels of water in rivers	53%	82%
Inadequate water supplies	50%	80%
Uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes & property	47%	83%
Poorly-planned growth and development	43%	80%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	42%	80%
Loss of habitat for fish and wildlife	42%	75%
Rollbacks of laws that protect our land, water and wildlife	40%	68%
Our dependence on fossil fuels	38%	72%
Lack of resources to properly maintain and take care of national parks, forests and other public lands	37%	72%
Unemployment	34%	75%

SOURCE: COLORADO COLLEGE CONSERVATION IN THE WEST 2018 POLL

In September and October 2017, the Water Foundation conducted an extensive poll of voters in the Western United States on water issues.³⁵

They found that:

- Only 57 percent of Arizonans said they knew where their water came from
- 73 percent of Arizonans see the water supply as unpredictable from year to year – and Latinos are more concerned than any other racial/ethnic group
- More than half of voters felt that the biggest problem with water was related to availability in some way (shortage, conservation/overuse, drought, climate, growth, etc)
- Latinos are more concerned than the average voter about drought, pollution, and water waste

- 82 percent of Latinos see climate change as a threat to the water supply – more than any other demographic group
- Latinos are the most skeptical of there being enough water to support multiple uses like cities, agriculture, and wildlife/environment.

VOTERS OF COLOR PERCEIVE A WIDER RANGE OF MAJOR THREATS THAN DO WHITE VOTERS

THREATS	ALL VOTERS	WHITES	LATINOS	VOTERS OF COLOR
Long term drought	64%	67%	70%	66%
Pollution of rivers, lakes and streams	59%	58%	71%	67%
Pollution of drinking water supplies	55%	53%	68%	65%
Deteriorating infrastructure, like dams, reservoirs, levees, pipes	54%	54%	56%	55%
Poorly-planned growth and development	53%	55%	46%	50%
Global warming	52%	47%	77%	70%
Climate Change	48%	46%	60%	56%
Waste of water by homes and businesses	47%	45%	55%	54%
Lack of adequate reservoirs to store water	45%	46%	56%	50%
Competition over different uses of water (farms, cities, industry)	39%	45%	30%	32%
Lack of adequate facilities to store water	39%	48%	39%	42%
Export of water to serve users in other areas or states	36%	41%	33%	28%
Over-pumping of groundwater from wells	34%	31%	38%	40%
Waste of water from farms or ranches	26%	24%	28%	32%

SOURCE: WATER FOUNDATION - 2017 WESTERN VOTER VIEWS ON WATER ISSUES POLL

These findings indicate that the Latino community is especially receptive to a conversation about water:

- Use it as an opportunity to educate people about where their water comes from
- Don't be afraid to talk about the impacts of climate change on the Colorado River
- Address pollution concerns in order to keep the focus on issues of quantity, not quality
- Be solution-oriented and focus on win-win ideas to prevent an us vs. them mentality
- Use concern about drought and the water supply to spur action



THE ENGAGEMENT OF LATINOS

Water policy quickly gets complicated, and it's something most people can take for granted: when they turn on the tap, water always comes out. However, they also understand how critical it is for modern life, and life itself.

And while policy is essential to the solution, there is also a necessity to engage local stakeholders in the cause. Not only is public support critical to adoption rates of new policies and initiatives, but it also serves to instill these perspectives as part of a communal way of thinking, which will transform behavior in today and tomorrow. We absolutely need to engage diverse voices to maximize the success of any water policies, such as the DCP.

Historically, outreach to the Latino community on environmental issues has been limited. Given the projected growth of the Latino population in Arizona – approximately 215 percent by 2050 – it makes sense for Latinos to play a larger roll as environmental stewards in the future of the Colorado River.


In fact, there is a permeating belief among Latinos that protecting our environment is a moral obligation.³⁶

Latino engagement on various conservation issues over the past several years demonstrates a strong passion for protecting our natural resources and a willingness to advocate for public policy solutions.

Por la Creación Faith-based Alliance, which develops stewards of God's creation by educating and engaging this generation to leave a legacy for



Latinos are taking a more active role in conservation efforts, seen above in establishing San Gabriel Mountains and Browns Canyon National Monuments.



Lake Mead was one of the sites celebrating Latino Conservation Week. In 2017, over 100 events, including several in Arizona, were celebrated during LCW.

the future and has members located throughout the country, recently released its “Top 5 Conservation Priorities,” which included protecting the Colorado River.³⁷ In 2016, PLC members, representing more than 147,000 churches, sent a joint letter to President Obama urging him to establishing the Greater Grand Canyon Heritage National Monument, which would have further safeguarded the watershed.³⁸

Furthermore, Latinos have stepped up their involvement around public lands protections and were actively involved in efforts to establish San Gabriel Mountains, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, Castle Mountains, Gold Butte and Boulder-White Clouds National Monuments. Participation ranged from leading outings to various sites, to speaking at public meetings, to meeting with elected officials. Subsequently, the largest broad engagement of Latinos in defense of public lands occurred in 2017 as tens of thousands submitted public comments opposing the Trump Administration’s rollback of monument protections.³⁹

Nuestro Rio has been responsible for engaging local Latino elected officials throughout the Colorado River basin on the importance of conserving water and protecting the Colorado River. As participants on the Regional Water Caucus in their state, the officials focus on regional water issues and work to bridge historic, partisan, state and upper/lower basin divisions over the river.⁴⁰

Another indicator is the growth of participation in Latino Conservation Week, a national week in July designed to encourage Latino engagement in the outdoors and stewardship. In its inaugural year in 2014, 16 events were held in a handful of states. In 2017, more than 100 events were held in nearly two dozen states nationwide. Several events have been held by local Arizona organizations.⁴¹

Three-quarters of Latino voters surveyed in Colorado College’s 2018 Conservation in the West poll view themselves as a conservationist, up 18 points from two years ago, so it is the hope that Arizona Latinos, who care deeply about a secure water future, play a more active role in championing sensible and responsible water usage.⁴²

CONCLUSION

The Colorado River has made the growth of Arizona's economy and population possible. It's under more stress now than ever before, and to meet these challenges it's important to engage the state's Latino community. Ultimately, the future of the river, state, and Hispanic population are tied together.

Recent successes have shown the path forward: negotiation, collaboration, and conservation. It's time to boldly move forward on all fronts. Latinos are to lead as advocates for progress, and it's up to everybody to ensure they are part of the conversation and have a seat at tables where these decisions are being made.

Clearly, conserving the limited Colorado River water supply must be a priority for our citizens and elected officials. The river is entrusted to us, a vital source for all of us, but we must take care of it in return. All Arizona stakeholders, working together, can sustain the health of the Colorado River, safeguard this substantial economic driver for countless communities, and make sure future generations do not remember us for failing them, but instead continue to benefit from this incredible treasure.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁸ <http://businessforwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PTF-Final-121814.pdf>
- ⁹ https://tourism.az.gov/sites/default/files/AZImp16p_Final.PDF
- ¹⁰ <https://outdoorindustry.org/resource/arizona-outdoor-recreation-economy-report/>
- ¹¹ <https://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/industry/orsa/orsanewsrelease.htm>
- ¹² https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=ARIZONA
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



ROBERT FANGER

Robert Fanger currently serves as the Chief Communications Officer for the Hispanic Access Foundation. His work has appeared in many of the nation's largest media outlets, including USA Today, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, CNN Espanol and Huffington Post; and local outlets like the Denver Post, La Opinión, Telemundo and Univision. Prior to joining HAF, Robert served as the president of Fanger Public Relations, where he led communications projects and campaigns for clients

such as Hispanic CREO, GEO Foundation, Starfish Initiative, IUPUI – School of Public Health, Center for Education Reform, and several others. Before launching his public relations firm, Robert served as the communications director for the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation, which was created by the Nobel Laureate economist in 1996. He holds an MBA from Purdue University and a Bachelor's in Advertising/Public Relations from Franklin College's Pulliam School of Journalism.



HOWARD WATTS III

Howard Watts III has more than a decade of experience as an advocate for sustainable water policy in the Southwestern United States. A native of Las Vegas and UNLV graduate, Howard has become an expert in Nevada's water law through involvement with the Great Basin Water Network as a volunteer and consultant. He works to promote conservation as an alternative to large water diversion projects, and provides public outreach, research, and communications services related to these issues.

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ABOUT HAF

Hispanic Access Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that connects Latinos with partners and opportunities improving lives and creating an equitable society. Our vision is that all Hispanics throughout the U.S. enjoy good physical health, a healthy natural environment, a quality education, economic success and civic engagement in their communities with the sum improving the future of America. For more information, visit www.hispanicaccess.org.

HAF was actively involved in elevating the Latino community's voice around the Browns Canyon, San Gabriel Mountains, Boulder-White Clouds, Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains National Monument efforts. Additionally, HAF has launched the initiatives Por la Creacion Faith Based Alliance, which unites Latino faith leaders around the protection of God's creation and creating tomorrow's environmental stewards, and Latino Conservation Week, which includes dozens of conservation and outdoor-related events across the country.



**1030 15TH ST NW, SUITE B/1 #150
WASHINGTON, DC 20005
(202) 640-4342**

WWW.HISPANICACCESS.ORG