Managing Water Along the U.S.-Mexico Border

San Diego, CA Field Office

Yuma, AZ Field Office

Amistad Dam Field Office
Del Rio, TX

Nogales, AZ Field Office

Upper Rio Grande Field Office
El Paso, TX

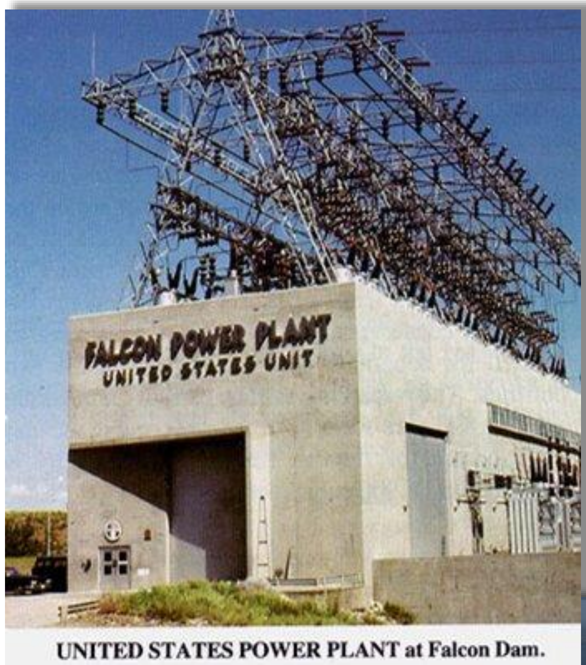
Lower Rio Grande Field Office
Mercedes, TX

Dr. Maria Elena Giner, P.E.
January 24, 2026

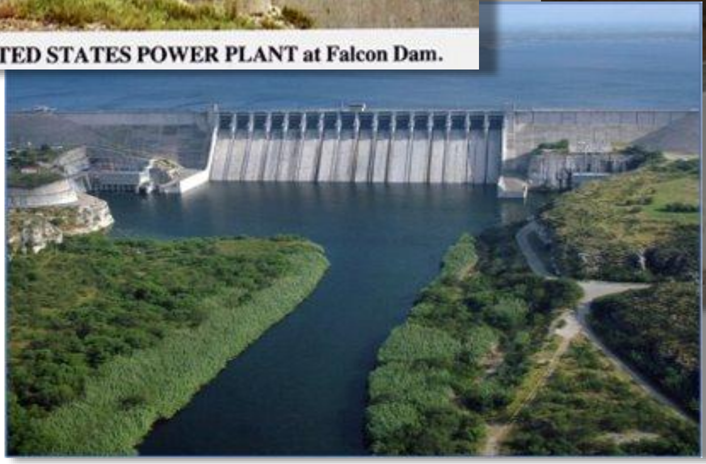
Overview of the IBWC - USIBWC Responsibility

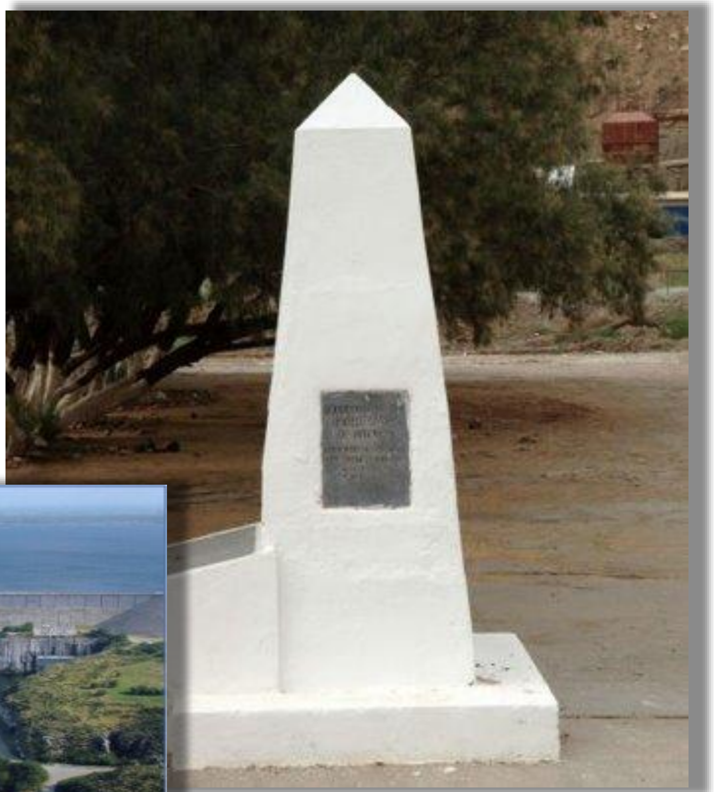
The International Boundary and Water Commission is responsible for **applying the boundary and water treaties** between the United States and Mexico. The USIBWC has a broad range of responsibilities, including:

- **Flood Control**: More than 500 miles of levees, 700 hydraulic structures, 100 gaging stations, 20,000 acres of flood plain
- **Water Delivery**: Ensure compliance with the 1906 Convention and 1944 Water Treaty for the Rio Grande and Colorado River
- **Dams and Hydroelectric Power Plants:** Manage two international dams with hydroelectric plants and four diversion dams
- **Sanitation:** Border sanitation with three international wastewater treatment plants in San Diego, CA, Nogales, AZ, Nuevo Laredo Tamps
- **Boundary Demarcation**: Maintain two international bridges and almost 800 monuments, markers and buoys that demarcate the U.S.-MX border



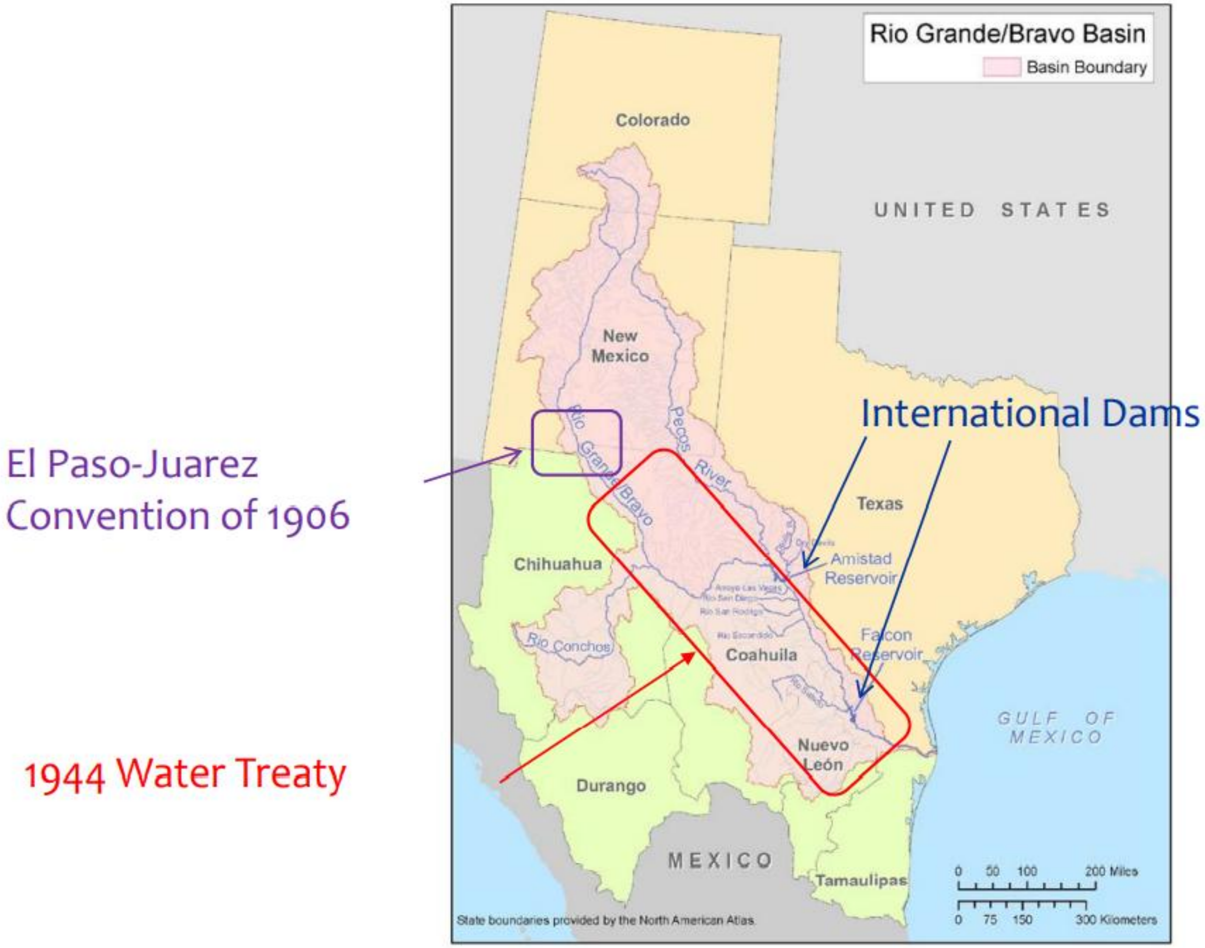
UNITED STATES POWER PLANT at Falcon Dam.





Overview of the IBWC - Treaties

- **Convention of 1889 –** established the International Boundary Commission and established boundary markers
- **Convention of 1906** –distributed waters of the Rio Grande between U.S and Mexico
- **Convention of 1933 -** Stabilized the boundary in the El Paso-Juarez Valley
- **1944 Water Treaty –** established IBWC and how to manage waters of Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers
- **1970 Boundary Treaty** – established how the Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers would be boundaries



Overview of the IBWC – Treaty Officers

Top row from left: *CILA Eng. Antonio Rascón Mendoza , CILA Eng. Augustin Boone Gonzalez, CILA Roberto Luévano, USIBWC Sec. Sally Spener, Attorney Advisor Jennifer Peña, PE Isela Canava, PE Ramon Macias*

Bottom row from left: *MX Commissioner Resendez Maldonado – US Commissioner Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, PE*

Picture taken on at IBWC offices on June 2024

Overview of the IBWC – Minutes

Decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes.

Minutes are binding agreements of the IBWC intended to implement treaty.

They take effect once approved by the U.S. Department of State and Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry

CILA & USIBWC Signing Minute 331 In Juarez, MX (2024)

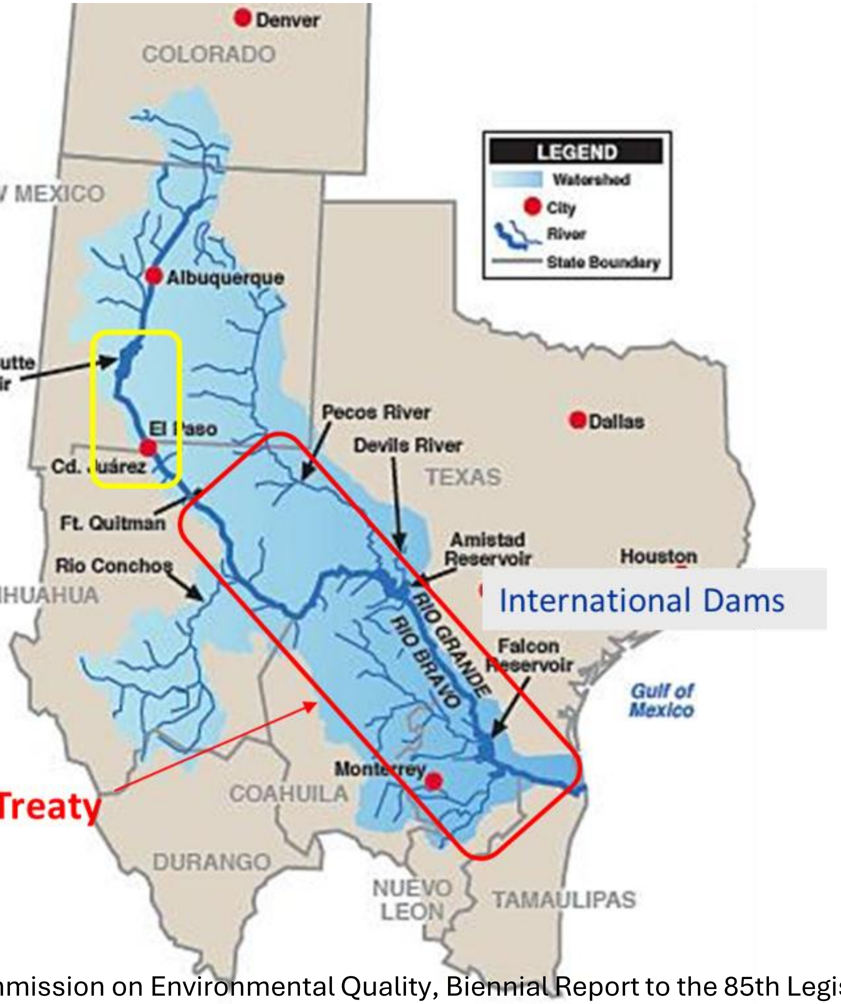
USIBWC Commissioner Dr. Maria-Elena Giner, PE Signing Minute 331 In Juarez, MX (2024)

Water deliveries – 3 basins, 2 treaties, many challenges

Source: The Earth Institute at Columbia University, at http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ CO-River-Basin-REVISED.jpg; modified by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

1944 Water Treaty

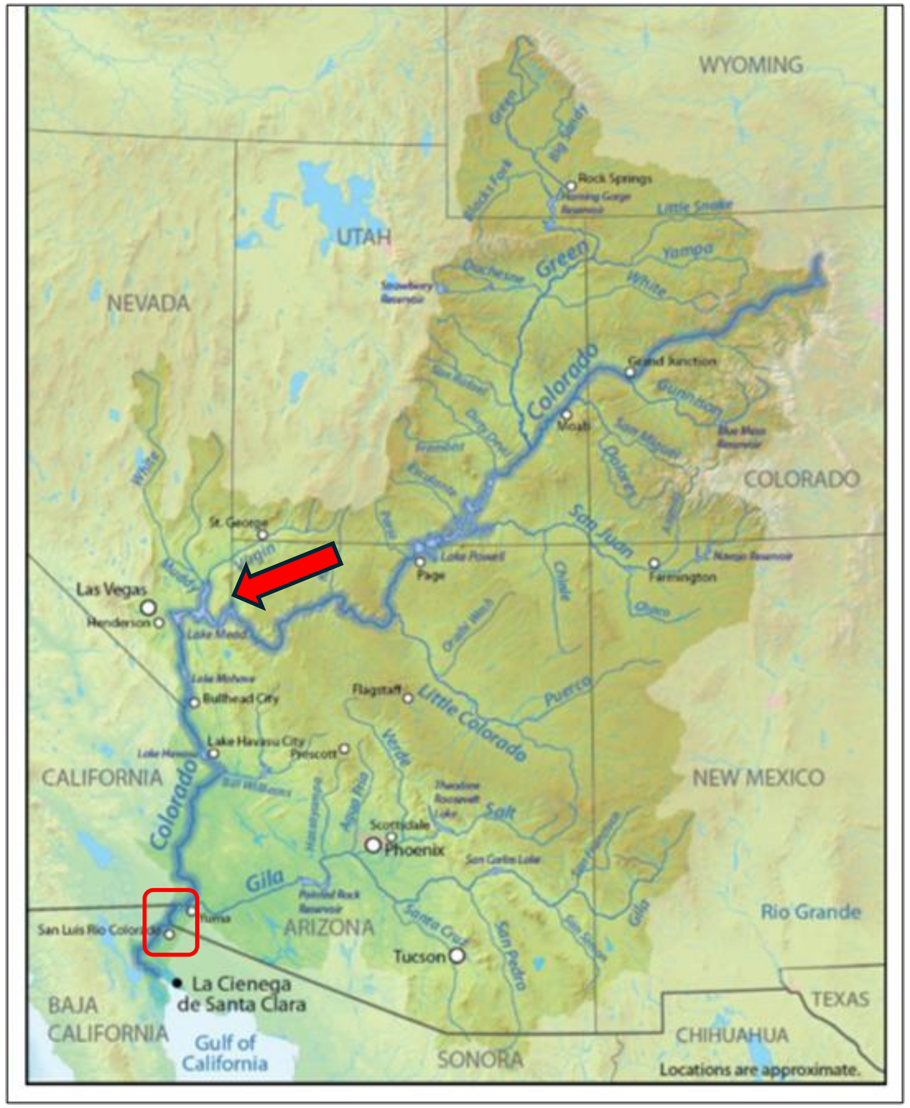
El Paso-Juarez
Convention of 1906



Source: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Biennial Report to the 85th Legislature (FY2015-FY2016), SFR-57/6, Austin, TX, December 2016, at https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/comm_exec/pubs/sfr/057_16/ SFR-057-16-X.pdf.

Source: https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R43312

1944 Water Treaty – Colorado River



Source: The Earth Institute at Columbia University, at http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ CO-River-Basin-REVISED.jpg; modified by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

- U.S. to deliver to Mexico a volume of 1.5 maf/yr
- Challenges – Salinity & Drought
- Cooperation
  - Minute 242 (1973) - Solution to Salinity (1973)
  - Minute 306 (2000) – Conceptual Framework for Studies
  - Minute 317 (2010) – Conceptual Framework for cooperative actions
  - Minute 318 (2010) – Adjustment of delivery schedules as a result of earthquake damage
  - Minute 319 (2012) -Pilot on investment in conservation, conserved volumes, reduced deliveries, water for environment, creation of binational workgroups (5 year)
  - Minute 323 (2017) – Extension of Minute 319 and adoption of the binational water scarcity contingency plan (5 year)
  - Minute 330 (2024) Expansion of Colorado River Temporary Measures

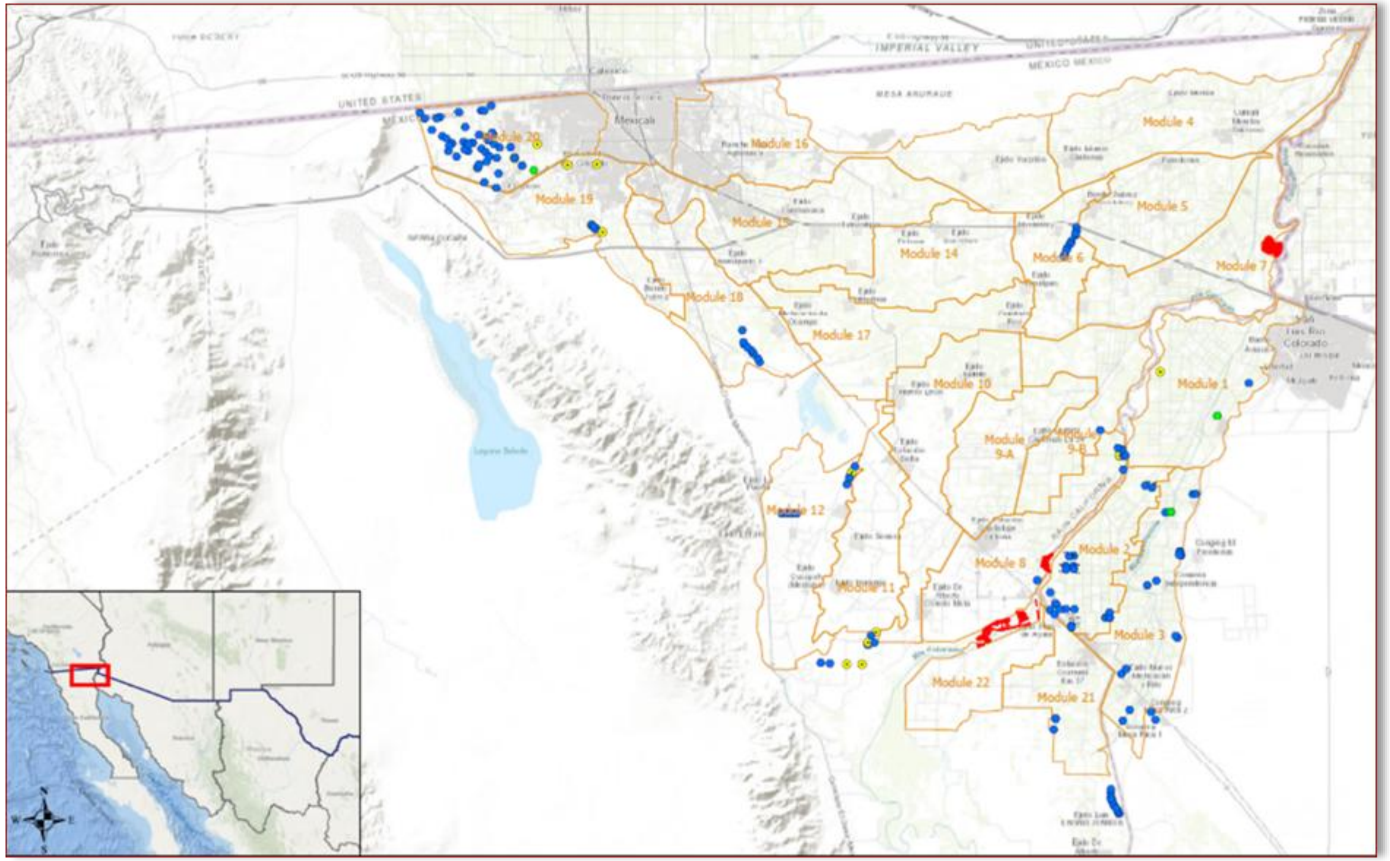
2000

2024

Cooperation on the Colorado River

Accomplishments – Minute 319 (2012 – 2017)

- **$21 M USD** invested in water conservation and environmental projects in Mexico
- Mexico made available **124,000 acre-feet to the US** in exchange for the investment in infrastructure.
- **Infrastructure projects** included and reconstruction, encasement, and lining of existing canals, gate modernizations, land leveling, among others
- Delivered **158,000 acre-feet** of water for environmental purposes
- Created **1,100 acres** of enhanced riparian habitat
- Successful pilot project that provided a **model for binational cooperation**



Conservation Infrastructure Projects in Mexico

Source: https://www.ibwc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Combined-CR-CF-press-release-7-9-2024.pdf

Cooperation on the Colorado River Cont.

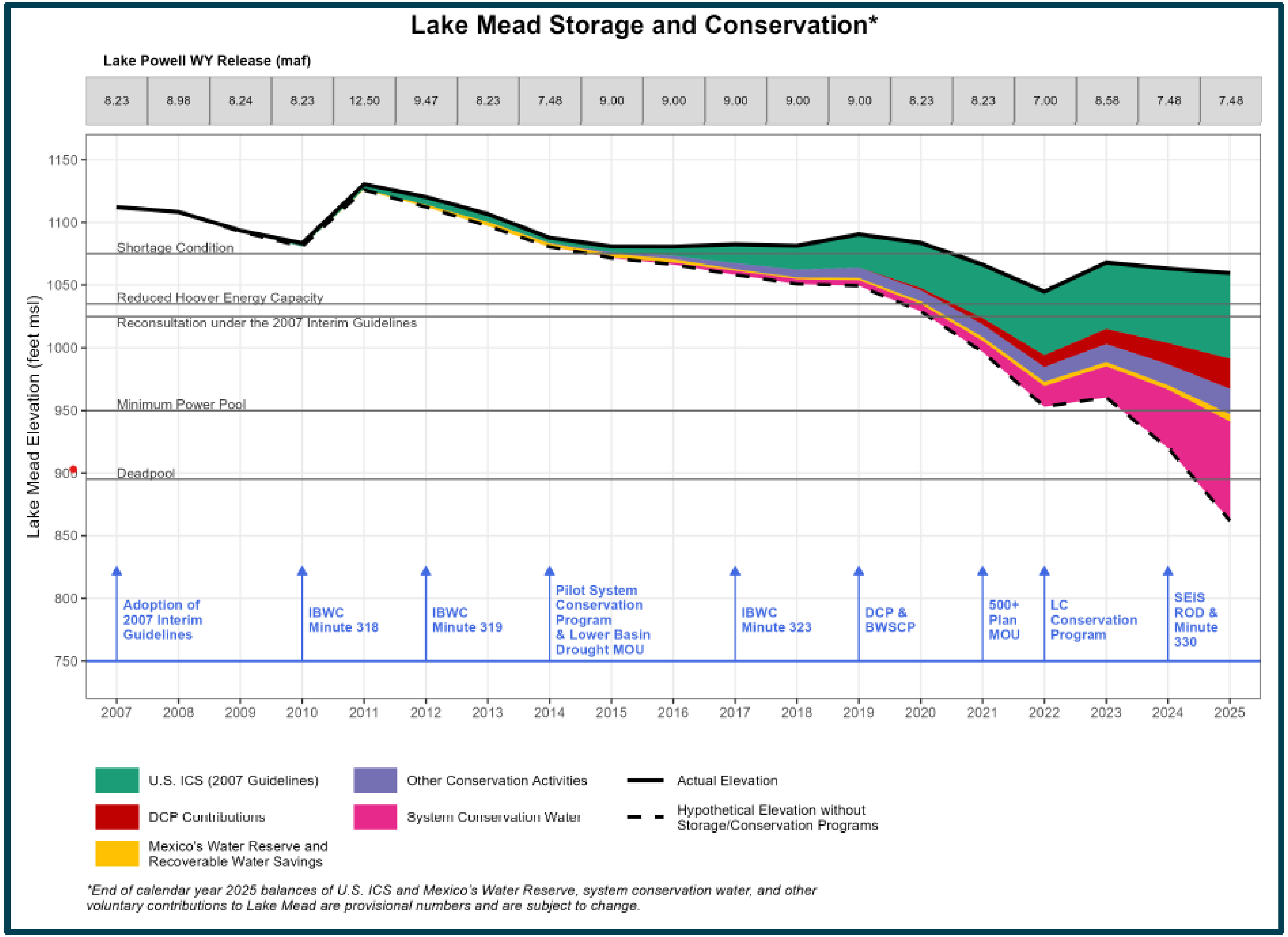
- Minute 323 (2017 - 2026) - Ongoing
  - **$31.5M in funding** for 229,000 AF for U.S. agencies, environment, and system storage
    - Water conservation and new water sources **projects**
    - Water for the **environment**
  - Creation of **Mexico's Water Reserve** to store water in the US for future delivery
  - **Shortage reductions** – Annual reductions based on lake elevations
  - **Recoverable** water savings
- Minute 330 (2024 - 2026) – New Minute
  - Annual reductions of 400,000 AF
  - $65M Funding from Bureau of Reclamation

What is Next, Post 2026?

Laguna Grande Restoration Site

Source: https://www.ibwc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Combined-CR-CF-press-release-7-9-2024.pdf

Cooperation on the Colorado River Cont.



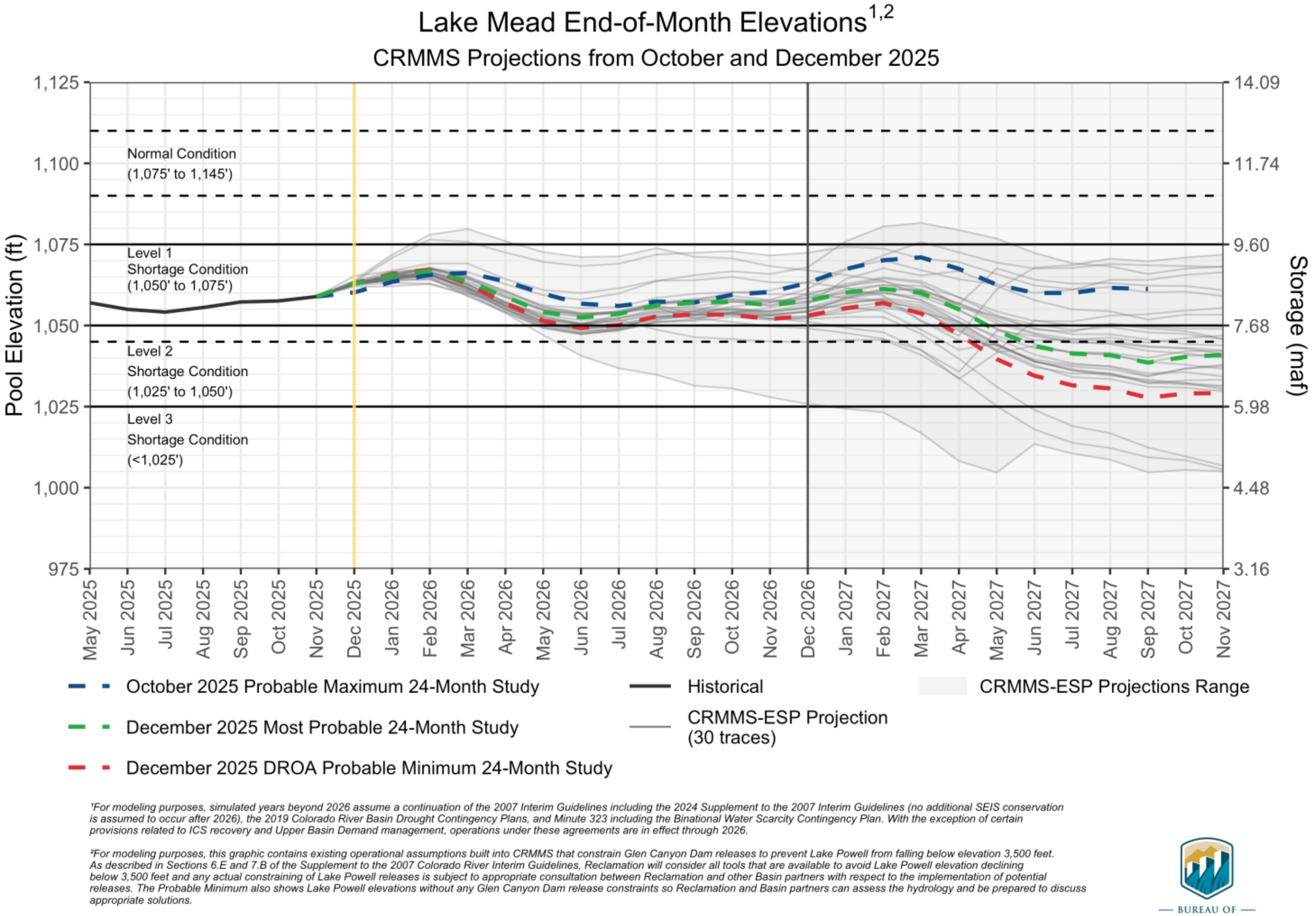
Source: Bureau of Reclamation

Lower Colorado Region 24-Month Study Projections

Shortage Reductions and Water Savings Contributions
Under the 2007 Interim Guidelines, Minute 323, Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP)*,
and Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan
(Volumes in thousand acre-feet)

Lake Mead Elevations (in feet)	2007 Interim Guidelines Shortage Reductions (U.S.)		Minute 323 Delivery Reductions (Mexico)	Total Combined Shortage Reductions (U.S. and Mexico)	DCP Water Savings Contributions (U.S.)			Binational Water Scarcity Contingency Plan Water Savings (Mexico)	Combined Volumes of Shortage Reductions and Water Savings Contributions by Lower Basin State and by Country (U.S. and Mexico)					Total Combined Volumes (U.S. and Mexico)
	AZ	NV	Mexico	*Lower Basin States + Mexico*	AZ	NV	CA	Mexico	*AZ Total*	*NV Total*	*CA Total*	*Lower Basin States Total*	*Mexico Total*	*Lower Basin States + Mexico*
1,090 - >1,075	0	0	0	*0*	192	8	0	41	192	8	0	200	41	241
1,075 - >1050	320	13	50	*383*	192	8	0	30	512	21	0	533	80	613
1,050 - >1,045	400	17	70	*487*	192	8	0	34	592	25	0	617	104	721
1,045 - >1,040	400	17	70	*487*	240	10	200	76	640	27	200	867	146	1,013
1,040 - >1,035	400	17	70	*487*	240	10	250	84	640	27	250	917	154	1,071
1,035 - >1,030	400	17	70	*487*	240	10	300	92	640	27	300	967	162	1,129
1,030 – 1,025	400	17	70	*487*	240	10	350	101	640	27	350	1,017	171	1,188
<1,025	480	20	125	*625*	240	10	350	150	720	30	350	1,100	275	1,375

*Under the Lower Basin DCP, the United States will take affirmative actions to create or conserve 100,000 acre-feet or more of Colorado River system water on an annual basis to contribute to conservation of water supplies in Lake Mead and other Colorado River reservoirs in the Lower Basin. All actions taken by the United States shall be subject to applicable federal law, including availability of appropriations.



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

https://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/riverops/webreports/crmmsCloud_mead.pngpng (3300×2400)

Collaboration with Mexico

- **<u>Common Vision:</u>**
  A Shared River
- **<u>Basis for Decision making:</u>**
  Science for water quality & quantity
- **<u>Environment:</u>**
  Colorado River and Delta Restoration
- **<u>Stakeholder Engagement:</u>**
  Binational Minute Oversight Group: BOR, States, NGO's and Mexico's Conagua and Users
- **<u>Hydrodiplomacy:</u>**
  Voluntary Reductions vs. Mandated
  Process Matters: Consistency, transparency, empathy, AND breaking bread together

Before/After along Colorado River in Mexico
Source: https://raisetheriver.org/stories/

RAISE THE RIVER
RECONNECT THE COLORADO