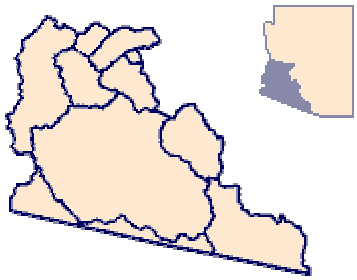
LOWER COLORADO RIVER PLANNING AREA



The Lower Colorado River planning area is located in the southwest portion of the state and consists of eleven groundwater basins known as the McMullen Valley Basin, Butler Valley Basin, Tiger Wash Basin, Harquahala Basin, Ranegras Plain Basin, Parker Basin, Gila Bend Basin, Lower Gila , Yuma Basin, San Simon Wash Basin, and Western Mexican Drainage Basin.

All of the planning area lies within the Basin and Range physiographic province which is characterized by northwest-southeast trending mountain ranges separated by broad alluvial valleys.

The planning area has a semi-arid climate characteristic of the Basin and Range province with hot, dry summers and mild winters. Rainfall occurs during two "wet" periods: a summer period in July and August and a winter period from December to March. Average annual precipitation ranges from 10 inches in the higher elevations to 3 inches along the Colorado River. Average annual temperatures range from 74·F at the Yuma Airport (210 feet above mean sea level) in the Yuma basin, to 65·F at Aguila (2,170 feet above mean sea level) in the McMullen Valley basin (Brazel, 1981).

The planning area is bordered on the north by the Bill Williams and Lake Havasu basins, on the west by the Colorado River, and on the south by the International Boundary. The eastern edge of the planning area borders the Phoenix, Pinal, and Tucson Active Management Areas. Elevations range from 5,720 feet above mean sea level at Harquahala Peak in the McMullen Valley basin to 80 feet above mean sea level where the Colorado River crosses the International Boundary into Mexico. The planning area encompasses parts of La Paz, Yuma, Maricopa, and Pima Counties.

HYDROLOGY OF INDIVIDUAL BASINS AND WATERSHEDS

GROUNDWATER -- The Lower Colorado River planning area consists of eleven groundwater basins listed below:

Use the links below for details on the basins and watersheds.

McMullen Valley Basin
Butler Valley Basin
Tiger Wash Basin
Harquahala Basin
Ranegras Plain Basin
Parker Basin
Gila Bend Basin
Lower Gila
Yuma Basin
San Simon Wash Basin
Western Mexican Drainage Basin

SURFACE WATER -- The Lower Colorado River planning area encompasses portions of the Colorado River watershed and the tributary Gila River watershed. Both of these are discussed separately below and include a discussion of streamflow characteristics, storage facilities, and water quality:

Colorado River Watershed
Lower Gila River Watershed

REFERENCES used for Lower Colorado River planning area description.