



Arizona Reconsultation Committee Meeting #8

November 20, 2023



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RECONSULTATION
COMMITTEE

Meeting Logistics Summary

- Roll Call
 - Members will unmute and acknowledge their attendance when their name is called.
- ARC Delegates
 - If in the room, please raise your hand.
 - If online, use the Teams “raise hand” feature to request to speak or ask questions.
 - Wait to be recognized before speaking to ensure clear communication and remain muted when not speaking.
- Livestream Attendees
 - Electronic public comment forms are available at cap-az.com/ARC for anyone wishing to submit a comment or question during the meeting.
 - All submissions will be addressed during the Call to the Public at the end of the meeting, unless relevant to a specific topic in the presentation.



ARC Meeting #8 Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- ARC Meeting #7 (April 2023) Summary
- Revised Draft Supplemental EIS including Lower Basin Proposal
- Post-2026 Activities
- Next Steps
- Call to the Public



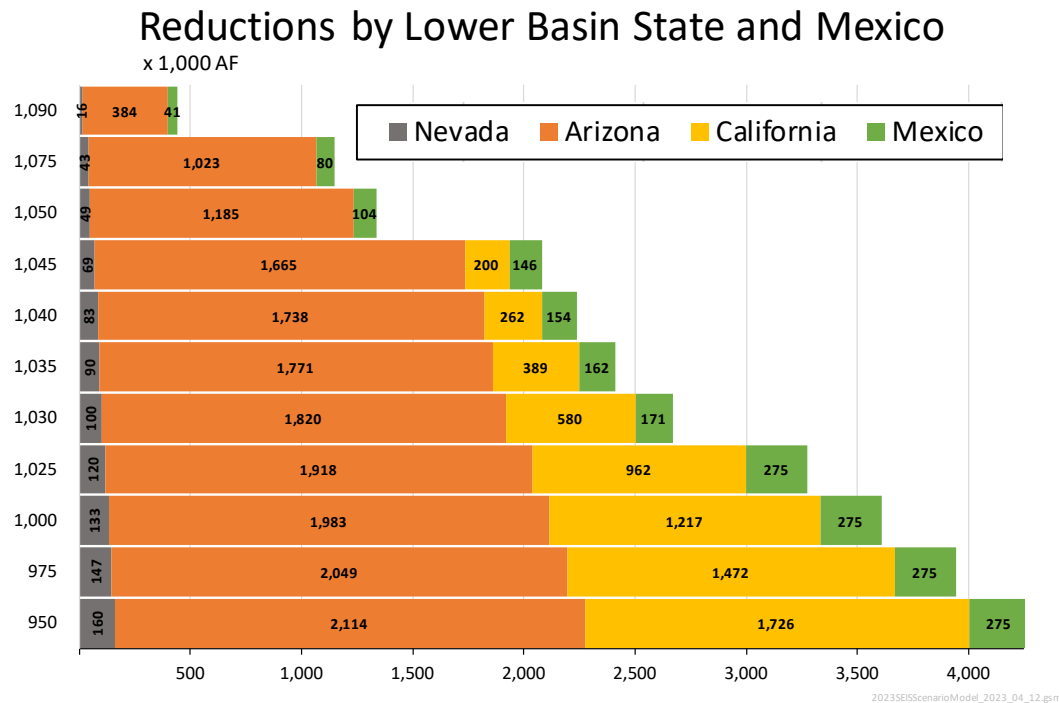
ARC Meeting #7 (April 2023) Summary

- Snowpack was 161% of average and runoff was projected to be 151% of average
- Reclamation's April 14, 2023 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) (for near-term Colorado River operations) had been released, which included two Action Alternatives that were the primary focus of the ARC meeting
 - Both Action Alternatives contemplated deep reductions to Arizona water users
 - Both Action Alternatives were unacceptable to the Lower Basin States

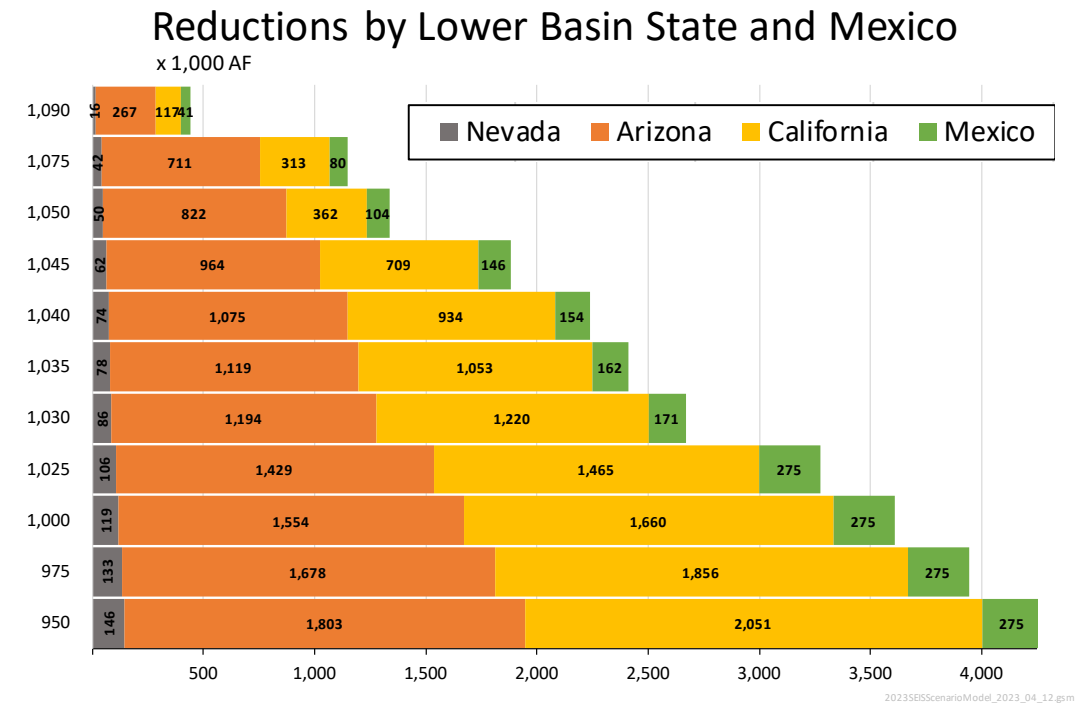


April 2023 Draft SEIS Alternatives

Alternative 1 – “strict priority”



Alternative 2 – “pro rata reductions”



May 2023 Lower Basin Proposal

- Considers changed hydrologic conditions
- Implements 3 MAF of **voluntary** conservation through 2026, with 1.5 MAF by 2024, not attributed by State
- Volumes proposed to date:

Additional Conservation	2023	2024	2025	2026	4-year total
California (KAF)	400	430	430	350	1.6 MAF
Arizona (KAF)	375	375	375	20	1.15 MAF
Nevada (KAF)	75	75	75	65	0.285 MAF
Total	840	880	870	430	3.0 MAF

KAF - thousand acre-feet, MAF - million acre-feet

- 2.3 - 2.5 MAF of conservation will be federally compensated
- To protect critical elevations, Lake Powell annual releases may be reduced to 6 MAF



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Revised Draft SEIS for Near-Term Colorado River Operations



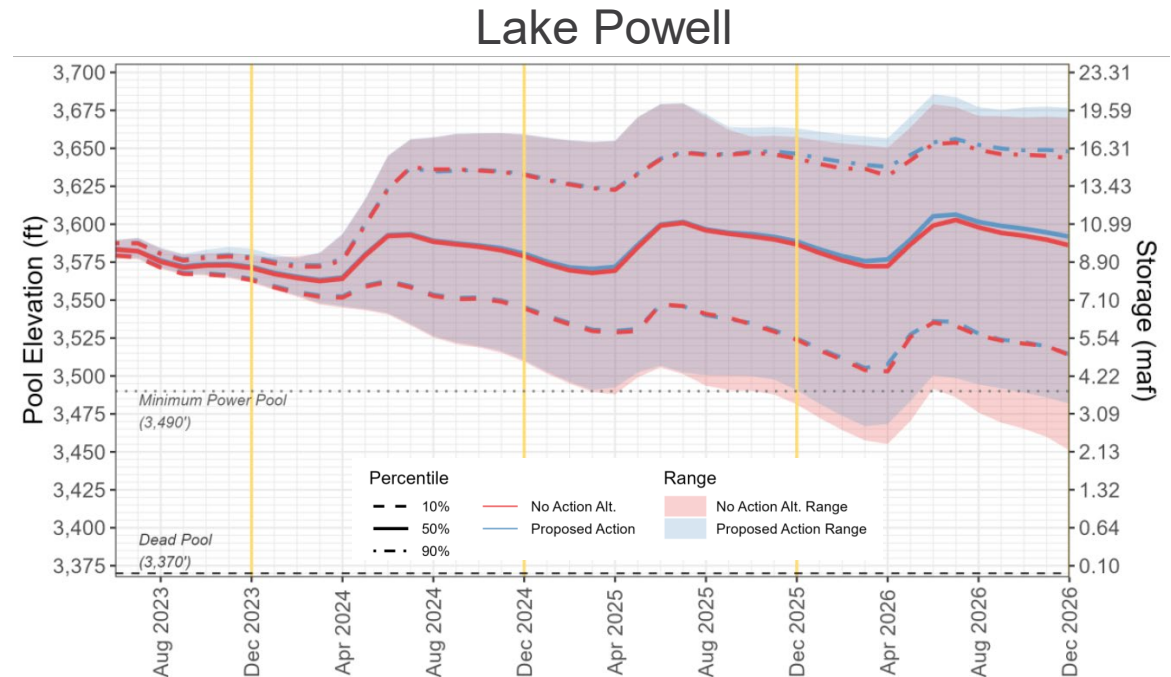
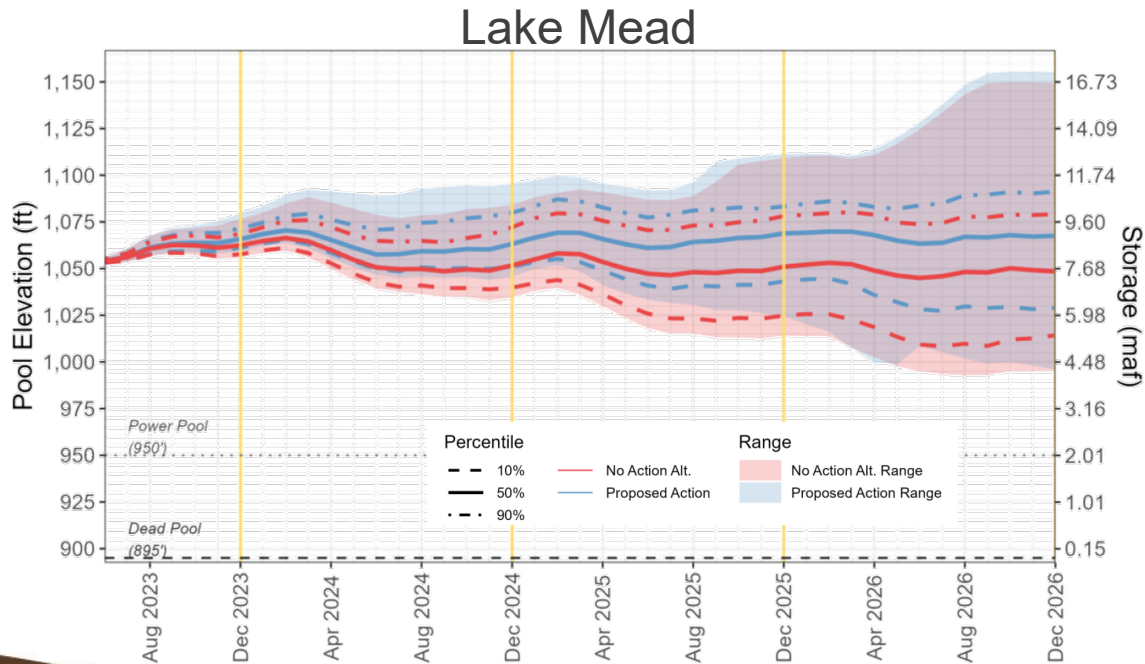
October 2023 Revised Draft Supplemental EIS

“Reclamation will continue the SEIS process with detailed consideration of the No Action Alternative and the Lower Division Proposal. The Lower Division proposal will be designated as the Proposed Action. Action Alternatives 1 and 2 [from April DSEIS] will be addressed as alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis.”



Revised Draft Supplemental EIS

- The improved initial reservoir conditions and the additional conservation perform well over the three-year period (2024-2026)



Source: Revised Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Near-term Colorado River Operations, October 2023



Comparison of Traces for Lake Mead Elevations

Figure 3-9
Lake Mead Minimum Annual Elevation,
Percent of Traces Less Than Elevation 1,020 feet

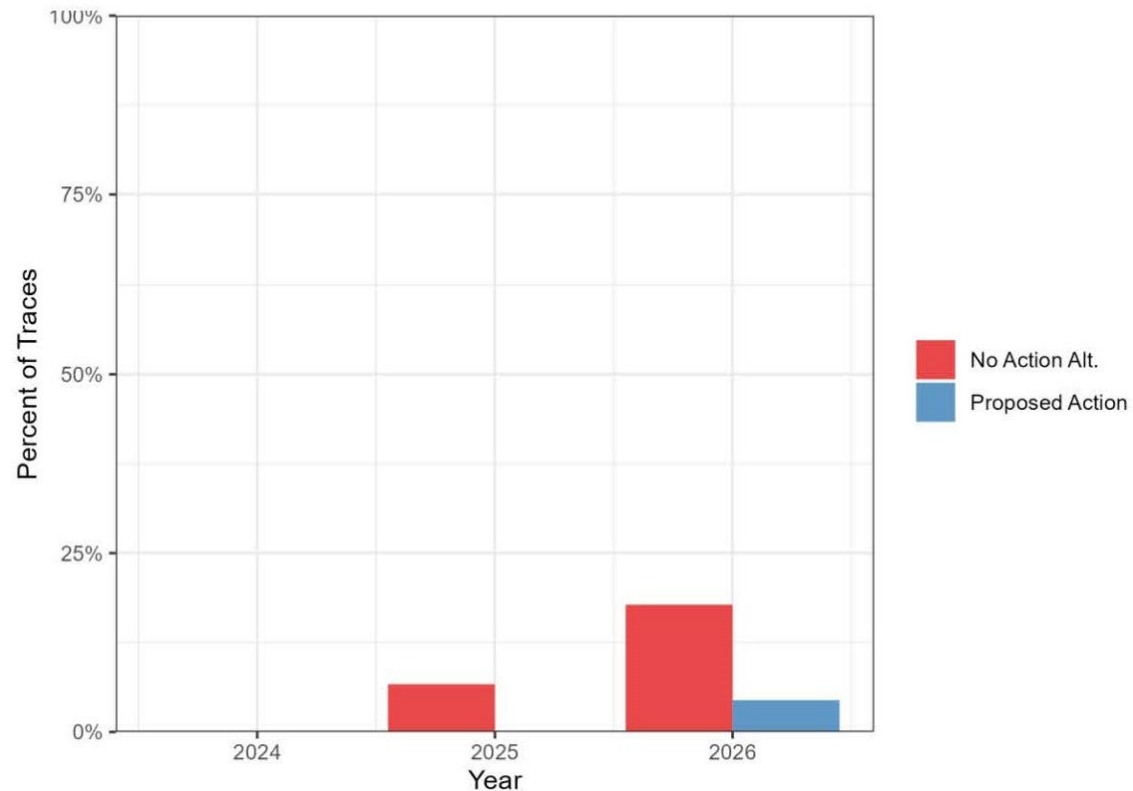
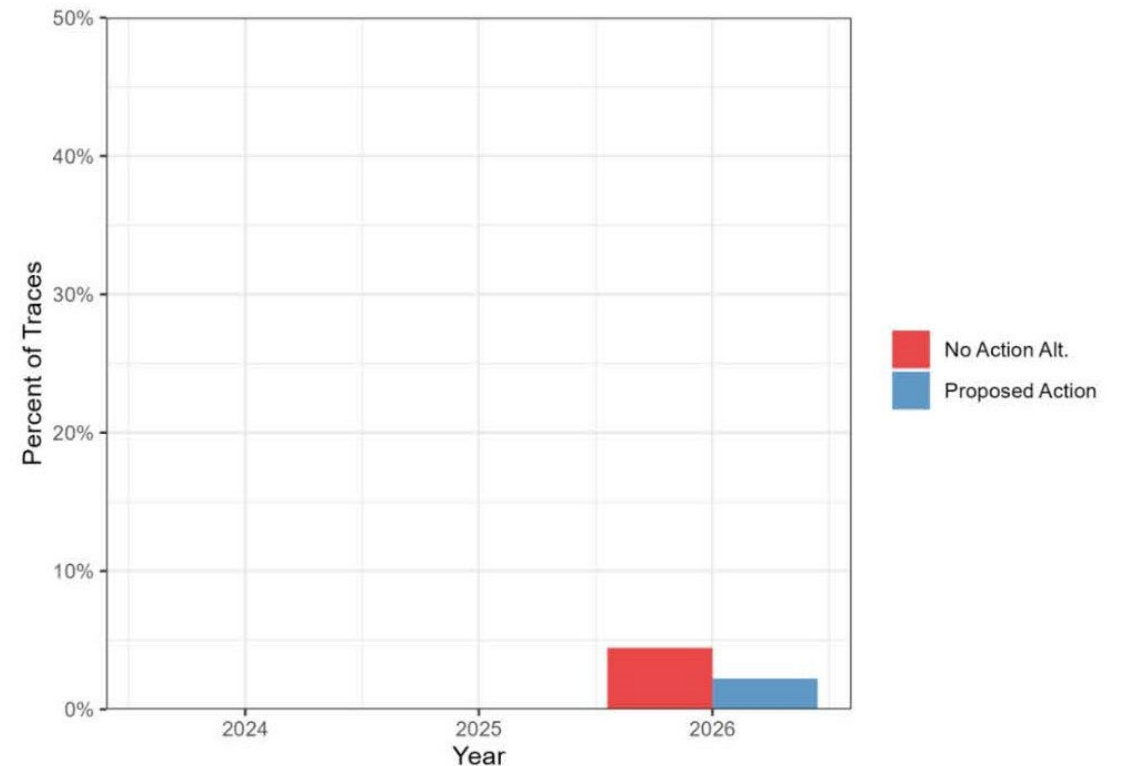


Figure 3-10
Lake Mead Minimum Annual Elevation,
Percent of Traces Less Than Elevation 1,000 feet



October Revised Draft SEIS Next Steps

- Comments on the Revised Draft SEIS are due by December 11th
- Reclamation will address comments, respond, and edit the document as appropriate and issue a Final EIS
 - A Record of Decision can be issued after a 30-day waiting period



Arizona parties contributing water in the interim period:



Progress towards the Lower Basin Proposal:

- Arizona parties have committed to voluntarily conserving approximately 356 kaf in 2023
 - Totalling more than 1 million acre-feet through the interim period
- California parties are in the process of executing final conservation agreements
 - Many have been conserving water since the Lower Basin Proposal was announced – even without an executed agreement with the United States



Arizona Conservation Activities

- Arizona continues to make large contributions to the stability of the Colorado River



5-Year Probabilities: 2022 vs. 2023

- Comparison of August 2022 to August 2023 (most current)
- CRMMS-ESP 5-Year Projections
- Chance of Lake Mead falling below critical reservoir elevations in any month of the calendar year

	Run	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Lake Mead less than 1,020 feet	Aug-22	57%	57%	60%	57%	n/a
	Aug-23	0%	0%	3%	10%	7%
	Difference	-57%	-57%	-57%	-47%	
Lake Mead less than 1,000 feet	Aug-22	23%	20%	20%	17%	n/a
	Aug-23	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
	Difference	-23%	-20%	-20%	-17%	
Lake Mead less than 950 feet (minimum power pool)	Aug-22	0%	0%	7%	3%	n/a
	Aug-23	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Difference	0%	0%	-7%	-3%	
Lake Mead less than 900 feet (dead pool = 895 feet)	Aug-22	0%	0%	0%	0%	n/a
	Aug-23	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Difference	0%	0%	0%	0%	

Post-2026 Process



NEPA Process

- In June, Reclamation formally announced its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for post-2026 operations, and solicited public comments on the scope of specific operational guidelines, strategies, and related issues
- More than 24,000 comments were received
 - 321 unique letters, including: 56 Federal, State, and local entities
 - 15 Tribes
 - 65 Organizations (*approximate*)
 - 21,292 copies of 7 different form letters
- In October, Reclamation released a post-2026 Scoping Report, which summarized the comments, and identified Reclamation's anticipated purpose and need and proposed federal action



Scoping Report: Purpose and Need

- The Secretary is required to coordinate operations of the Colorado River reservoirs
- 2007 Interim Guidelines and DCP are expiring and have not sufficiently reduced risk
- Imbalance between supply and demand will be exacerbated by increasingly likely low-runoff conditions
- Expanded and innovative use of conservation is needed
- Addressing tribal concerns regarding Colorado River basin management is needed



Scoping Report: Purpose and Need *continued*

- Update and expand reservoir management guidelines, particularly for Lakes Powell and Mead
- Provide a greater degree of predictability of the amount of water available under anticipated increasing variability, low runoff and low reservoir conditions
- Provide additional mechanisms for conservation, and reservoir storage and delivery
- Provide new or enhanced opportunities for Basin Tribes to benefit from their water rights
- Provide flexibility to build resilience and accommodate future needs and growth that are supported by Colorado River water supplies, including the integration of unquantified tribal water rights once they are resolved



Scoping Report: Elements of Alternatives

- Identification of circumstances under which the Secretary would allocate, reduce, or increase water available from Lake Mead to the Lower Division States
- Coordinated Operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead, particularly under low reservoir conditions
- Storage and delivery of conserved water in Lake Mead and/or Lake Powell to increase the flexibility to meet water use needs from both reservoirs
 - Includes storage and delivery of non-system water; exchanges; and water conserved through extraordinary measures by or for tribal, agricultural, or municipal entities.



Scoping Report: Proposed Federal Action

- Allows for the development of robust operating guidelines for Lake Powell and Lake Mead without precluding upstream or downstream actions needed to protect critical reservoir elevations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, such as:
 - Approaches that consider total system storage in all major Colorado River reservoirs and/or actual inflows to determine coordinated operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead.
 - Approaches that include opportunities for conservation, augmentation, demand management, or other water management strategies.
 - Temporary emergency response operations at upstream Colorado River reservoirs to protect critical infrastructure at Glen Canyon Dam, so long as the project-specific operations of those reservoirs remain within their respective Records of Decision.



Post-2026: Basin States Activity



Lower Basin: Primary Objectives

- Improve the sustainability of the River over a broad but plausible range of future conditions
- Increase the predictability of reductions
- Address the structural deficit by sharing reductions among the lower basin states and Mexico
- Share the risks and benefits of the system equitably within and between the basins



Lower Basin Objective: Increase Predictability

- Base reductions in the Lower Basin on combined system contents, rather than individual elevations
- Take consistent reductions over a broad range of storage contents
- Eliminate reliance on forecast data



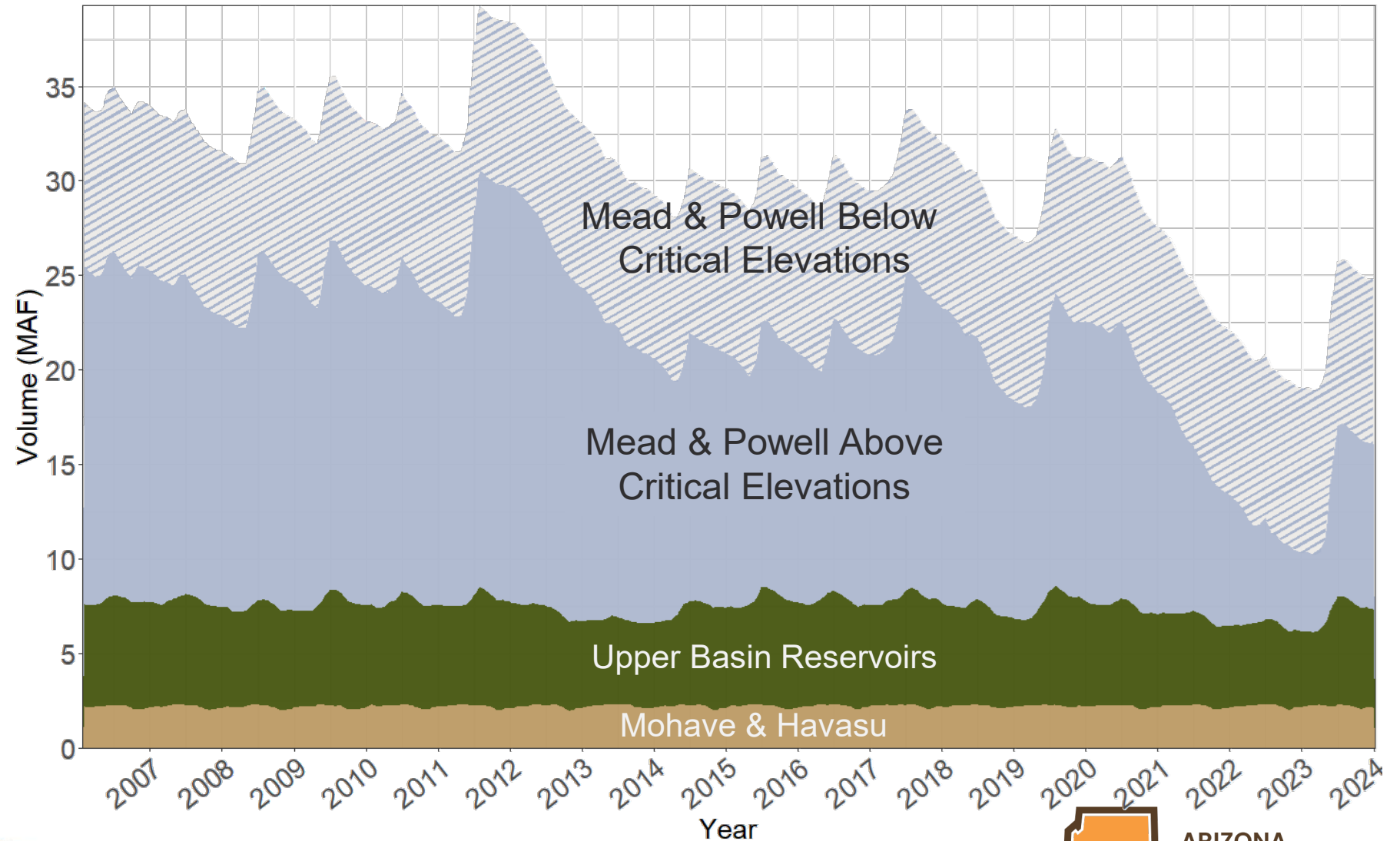
Lower Basin Objective: Share Risks and Benefits

- Recognize the value of infrastructure protection, including Glen Canyon Dam
- Develop rules for releases from Lake Powell that equitably share the risks and benefits to the upper and lower basins
- All water users in UB and LB states participate in reductions



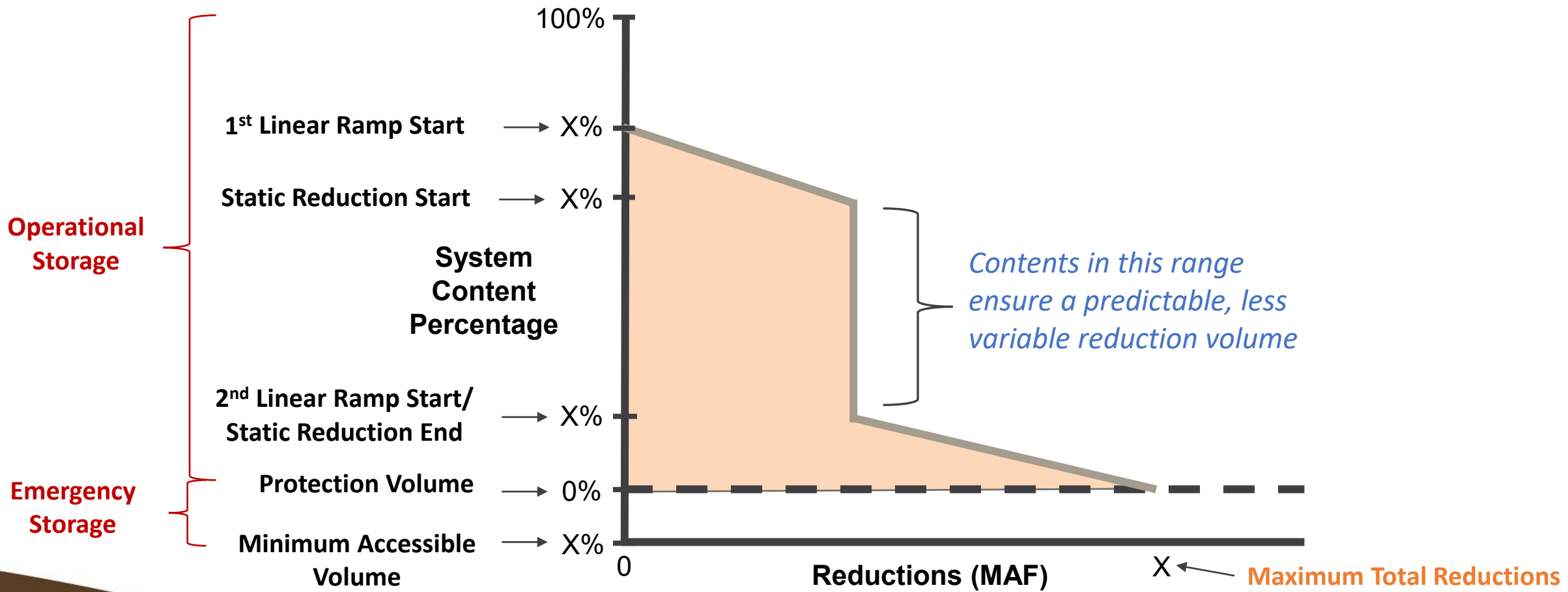
System Contents

- Looking at current system contents rather than forecasts for inflow and predicted elevations provides a more accurate assessment of the system



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Reductions Approach using System Contents



Goals of the System Contents Approach

- Address the structural deficit
- Reduce reliance on forecasts for water supply determinations
- Reduction determinations are no longer directly connected to reservoir elevation in Lake Mead
- Provide consistency and predictability for water users
- Provide a framework for equitable sharing of risk between basins



Next Steps:

COMPLETED

Public Scoping Period – opportunity for public to provide input on scope of EIS and Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

JUNE – AUGUST 2023

Development of EIS Operational Alternatives by Reclamation, partners, and stakeholders

FALL 2023 – SPRING 2024

Publication of Draft EIS with public comment period to follow

DECEMBER 2024

JUNE 2023

Reclamation publishes NOI to Prepare EIS - initiates NEPA Process - Begins public Scoping Period

COMPLETED

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2023

Reclamation develops Scoping Summary Report with anticipated Purpose & Need

COMPLETED

SPRING – FALL 2024

Reclamation prepares Draft EIS

2025 – 2026

Publication of Final EIS and Record of Decision issued

◆ Key NEPA Process milestones – Opportunities for Tribal, State, Partner, Stakeholder, and Public engagement Post-2026 Colorado River Operations Public Scoping



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Call to the Public

- Submit questions or comments using the electronic public comment form at cap-az.com/ARC





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For continued information
and updates, visit
new.azwater.gov/ARC or
cap-az.com/ARC