

Adopted July 19, 2005
Readopted April 16, 2008
Reconsideration: Draft #1, January 2011

Colorado River Storage Projects Act

Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statements:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District (*River District*) supports the development of all authorized and participating projects under the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA), wherever *economically, hydrologically and environmentally* feasible.

The Colorado River ~~Water Conservation~~ District will advocate for fulfillment of the purposes of the Upper Basin Fund, including its use to support construction and development of the authorized and participating projects under the CRSPA. However, in recognition of federal deficit concerns and other political realities, the Colorado River ~~Water Conservation~~ District will also pursue self-funded projects and other financing alternatives in the interest of realizing the benefits of water storage *anticipated* under the CRSPA.

Background & Discussion:

In 1956, the U.S. Congress passed the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA). CRSPA authorized the construction of five large storage reservoirs: Powell (“Glen Canyon”), Flaming Gorge, Navajo, Aspinall (“Curecanti”), and Fontanelle, called the “Storage Projects.” A primary purpose of these storage reservoirs is to regulate the Colorado River to allow the Upper Basin States to fully develop their compact entitlements while meeting 1922 Compact and Mexico Treaty requirements.

Additionally, CRSPA authorized the following “participating projects” in Colorado: Florida, Paonia, Pine River Extension, Silt, Smith Fork, Bostwick Park, Savery-Pot Hook, and Fruitland Mesa. Finally, the CRSPA directed completion of planning reports on the Juniper, Parshall, Troublesome, Rabbit Ears, Eagle Divide, San Miguel, West Divide, Bluestone, Battlement Mesa, Tomichi Creek, East River, Ohio Creek, Grand Mesa, Dallas Creek, Dolores, Fruit Growers Extension, Animas-LaPlata, and Yellow Jacket projects.

The CRSPA also established the Upper Basin Fund, which was to be funded with a portion of Colorado River-*derived* federal power revenues. Excess revenues, after reimbursement for certain storage project costs, were to be apportioned among the Upper Basin states, with Colorado receiving 46%. These revenues, in turn, were to repay the federal treasury for the construction costs of participating projects.

In 1968, Congress, with the concurrence of the basin states, passed the Colorado River Basin Project Act. Among other things, this Act authorized construction of the Central Arizona Project (CAP), but at a heavy price to Arizona. In order to secure political support, the CAP accepted the first and predominant burden of Lower Basin shortage allocations. Additionally, one of House Resources and

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Interior Committee Chairman Wayne Aspinall's conditions for support of the Act was for the Secretary of the Interior to proceed "as nearly as practicable" with the construction of the projects authorized in the 1956 CRSPA, ensuring construction of these projects would start no later than the date of first delivery of water from the CAP. Clearly, this has not occurred for all CRSPA projects.

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Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statements:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District (River District) believes that the primary purpose of the Colorado River Storage Project Act is to foster the comprehensive development of the water resources of the Upper Colorado River Basin through the construction and operation of mainstem storage units, participating projects, and hydroelectric power generation and transmission facilities. The River District will continue to advocate and support operating policies and procedures at the state and federal level that protect and preserve these resources for those purposes.

The River District will advocate for operational procedures on the upstream storage units, Navajo, Aspinall and Flaming Gorge, that store and release water in a manner that benefits downstream users, recreational and environmental values, preserves hydroelectric generating capacity and flexibility, and recognizes commitments to upstream development such as the Aspinall Unit Subordination and Taylor Park Exchange agreements.

The River District will further advocate for policies and procedures that protect sufficient capacity and yield in the four mainstem storage units to maximize protection of the Upper Basin against a future curtailment under Article III of the Colorado River Compact.

Background & Discussion:

In 1956, the U.S. Congress passed the Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA). CRSPA authorized the construction of four large, mainstem storage reservoirs: Powell (“Glen Canyon”), Flaming Gorge, Navajo, and Aspinall (“Curecanti”), collectively called the “Storage Units.” A primary purpose of these storage reservoirs is to regulate regulation of the Colorado River to allow the Upper Basin to fully develop its compact entitlements while meeting 1922 Compact requirements.

CRSPA and related legislation authorized the following “participating projects” in Colorado: Florida, Paonia, Pine River Extension, Silt, Smith Fork, Bostwick Park, Savery-Pot Hook, West Divide, Dallas Creek, and Animas-LaPlata, San Miguel, and Fruitland Mesa. Due to financial feasibility and other limitations, not all of the authorized projects have been completed. Completed projects will require continued capital investment.

The CRSPA also established the Upper Basin Fund, which is funded with a portion of Colorado River-derived federal power revenues. Excess revenues, after reimbursement for certain storage project costs, were to be apportioned for repayment of irrigation features of the participating projects among the Upper Basin states, with Colorado projects receiving 46%. These revenues, in turn, were

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to repay the federal treasury for the construction costs of participating projects. The River District will benefit from operating alternatives for the Basin Fund such as the 2010 Upper Basin Fund agreement, which modified the surcharge paid by power distributors for the electricity from federal hydropower sites across the Upper Basin that reduces CRSPA power rates and provides additional funds to address CRSPA-related projects.