

Chapter 2 – Water Supply

To meet demands in the future, the SNWA will rely on access to local water resources, more aggressive conservation and drought response as described in Chapters 1 and 4, and the resource options identified in the SNWA Water Resource Plan, including accelerated development of in-state water resources. The timing and extent to which particular options may be used will depend on Southern Nevada’s conservation, the continued achievement of needed conservation in the future, drought response and any surplus declarations by the Secretary of the Interior. Development and use of a particular resource can require a variety of state and federal regulatory approvals, permits or other forms of compliance with environmental laws and regulations, as well as financing and constructing of major infrastructure.

Under Interim Surplus Guidelines, there are several conditions that allow the Bureau of Reclamation to make surplus water available to meet domestic demands over a state’s basic apportionment. Domestic demands are direct customer uses and exclude the storage of Colorado River water for future use (that is, banking). The surplus conditions and corresponding Lake Mead water levels are identified in Table 2, along with the availability of surplus Colorado River water for Nevada under each condition.

Table 2. Interim Surplus Guidelines

Operating Condition	Lake Mead Level*	Availability of Interim Surplus Colorado River Water for Nevada **
Flood Control	Over 1,204'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All beneficial uses in Nevada, including banking
Quantified	~1,204' to ~1,198'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divided among Arizona, Nevada and California • Priorities of use are (1) domestic, (2) off-stream banking and (3) agriculture
Full Domestic Surplus	~1,198' to ~1,145'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Nevada domestic demands over 300,000 acre-feet
Partial Domestic Surplus	1,145' to 1,125'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of Nevada domestic demands over 300,000 acre-feet
“Normal”	Below 1,125'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nevada use is limited to 300,000 acre-feet, our basic Colorado River water annual apportionment

* Given in terms of sea level elevation.

** Surplus water is also available to Arizona and California under Interim Surplus Guidelines.

There is one situation lower than a “normal” operating condition, which is not covered by the Interim Surplus Guidelines. Should the drought worsen and reservoir levels along the Colorado River decline low enough, Lower Basin states such as Nevada could see their

basic apportionments curtailed in some years. This would be considered a “shortage” condition, the worst-case scenario on the river.

The Bureau of Reclamation has completed its annual consultation and the Secretary of the Interior approved the 2005 Annual Operating Plan for the Colorado River. The Operating Plan includes a declaration of a “normal” operating condition on the river during 2005 based on Colorado River conditions. A “normal” operating condition, means Nevada and other Lower Basin states would be limited to their basic apportionments. The Operating Plan also calls for a Secretary of the Interior review of actual Colorado River conditions in April 2005. This review may influence 2005 Colorado River operations. The SNWA will continue to monitor Colorado River conditions and demands in assessing future drought declarations. The SNWA will also continue to develop banked water supplies and accelerate its development of additional water resources within the state of Nevada, including groundwater in Clark, Lincoln and White Pine counties, and surface water from the Muddy and Virgin rivers.

As these supply efforts move forward, the SNWA Drought Plan is designed to generate additional water savings to address the current and potential challenges posed by the drought. A more detailed discussion on SNWA’s water resource portfolio is contained in the SNWA Water Resource Plan.