

**Letter #:** 620  
**Date Received:** 12/20/2022  
**Sender Names:** 256: Mary Mitchell  
**Emails:** 256: [REDACTED]  
**Organizations:**  
**Subject:** Fw: Please Make Lake Powell Recreation a Priority

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From: mailagent@thesoftedge.com &lt;mailagent@thesoftedge.com&gt; on behalf of Mary Mitchell  
&lt;mailagent@thesoftedge.com&gt;  
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2022 9:04 PM  
To: CRB-Info, BOR &lt;bor-sha-LCB-Info@usbr.gov&gt;  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Make Lake Powell Recreation a Priority

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Dear Bureau of Reclamation:

I love sail boating on Lake Powell and Lake Mead and some of the best times of my life are the times I've spent on these lakes.

I am confident the Bureau of Reclamation and National Park Service are aware of the biggest problem facing the Colorado River and its reservoirs- namely ALFALFA.

It is very unfortunate that the problem of cultivating this water intensive crop in the arid desert southwest of the U.S. wasn't addressed before Lake Powell and Lake Mead reached these historic low water levels...it is now critical that the production of this crop in this area be drastically reduced, if not eliminated completely. It most certainly will be drastically reduced in the near future if the lakes are allowed to reach dead pool- so why not pre-empt that tragic outcome by curtailing alfalfa production now and preserving our precious reservoirs upon which 40 million Americans depend for their water.

It has been foolish to over allocate 40% of our Colorado River water to this crop even for American livestock feed, but it has been and is currently REPREHENSIBLE to be shipping 20% of the alfalfa to foreign countries. We are effectively shipping our Colorado River water straight to Saudi Arabia and China during the worst drought we've had in 1200 years. Let them source their alfalfa from somewhere else!!! Americans are becoming more and more aware of what is going on and will be demanding answers on why this has been allowed and who exactly has the power to stop it but chooses not to and thereby dooms our lakes if that is the outcome here.

I encourage the Bureau of Reclamation to consider the recreation interests Lake Powell and the other reservoirs in the Colorado River Basin as BOR reconsiders the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the 2019 Drought Contingency Plans, and the international agreements between the United States and Mexico.

Economic benefits from recreation on Lake Powell are larger than the economic impact of the power generation. The economic impact of Lake Powell-based tourism is the lifeblood of towns such as Page, Arizona. Of course this impact reaches throughout the states of Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, California, and beyond. National Park Service recognizes Glen Canyon National Recreation Area contributed \$495 million

to gateway communities in 2019. This number doesn't account for the money visitors spend buying boats and supplies in the surrounding states in order to recreate on Lake Powell. It is likely that recreation on Lake Powell results in economic activity that is measured in billions of dollars. Water use and energy production are also critical services provided by Lake Powell and the Glen Canyon Dam, but it can't be ignored that recreation is as economically important as these other uses. Recreation shouldn't be an afterthought or ignored altogether.

I am aware the "target" elevation is 3,525 feet and the minimum elevation to operate the hydropower, or power pool, is 3,490. Although 3,525 allows you to continue to run hydropower operations, this level restricts numerous recreation opportunities. We have seen numerous closures of marinas and facilities throughout Lake Powell in recent years. Because there are so many variables affecting the lake's elevation such as precipitation, snowpack, runoff, release volumes, and other reservoir elevations the Bureau needs to consider changing the "target" elevation. Once the lake gets to the target elevation, because of the numerous variables it could be too late to keep the hydrology operations going. In the long run, I think 3588 feet is a better target elevation for the lake to meet the demand for recreation in a way that also protects the power and water right interests.

I support the Path to 3588 plan developed by BlueRibbon Coalition that provides a way forward to meet this historic challenge we are currently facing. This plan involves a combination of equitably reducing water use among the affected states and Mexico, reimagining the volume and timing of water releases through the major dams, and having enough flexibility built in so that if the reservoirs begin to fill sufficiently, restrictions on water use can ease. The BlueRibbon Coalition Plan also maintains viable lake levels in Lake Mead, and it should be a preferred alternative to any plan that would suggest draining Lake Powell to fill Lake Mead.

While maintaining Lake Powell at higher elevation levels will require tradeoffs elsewhere in the Colorado Basin, Lake Powell should be given attention equal to its economic impact. It is a national treasure for outdoor recreation and vitally important for local economies at the same time the reservoir and dam provide clean energy and water certainty for downstream users based on the actual amount of water available in the system.

Sincerely,  
Mary Mitchell

Sincerely,

Mary Mitchell

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]