



— BUREAU OF —  
RECLAMATION

# Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

**For 120 years Reclamation has been managing water and generating hydropower in the Western United States. In the last 120 years, Reclamation has become the nation's largest wholesale water supplier and second largest producer of hydropower. In that time, and more recently, the western water supply has become stressed, and the most pressing issue is climate change.**

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy affirms Reclamation's commitment to bring leading science and engineering to this significant challenge. Reclamation is working to respond to the issues of today and diligently prepare for those to come. To do this, we are building upon over a decade of Reclamation's investments in climate science and studies that have yielded tools, data, and experience to respond appropriately. This foundation, coupled with new infusions of funding and priority—such as the authorizations included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—provide the basis and means for responsible, necessary action.

The scope of this undertaking is far-reaching, and the gravity could not be greater. We recognize that an effective and appropriate response to climate change is broader than Reclamation. It must be deliberate and collaborative—in lockstep with partners and stakeholders—including power customers and water users, state and Tribal governments, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public. With this broad coalition, we have the expertise to monitor and understand changes, the innovation to mitigate impacts, and the will to take meaningful action.



## Goals

- 1. Increase Water Management Flexibility**
- 2. Enhance Climate Adaptation Planning**
- 3. Improve Infrastructure Resilience**
- 4. Expand Information Sharing**



**Goal 1. Increase Water Management Flexibility**  
**Reclamation will continue efforts to increase water management flexibility.**

This includes improvements to reservoir operations to cope with changing hydrologic conditions through Reclamation’s WaterSMART Basin Studies Program, and providing cost-share funding to non-federal recipients for water delivery system improvements through Reclamation’s WaterSMART Grants Program. Reclamation will also pursue other strategic efforts to update water and hydropower operating criteria; develop new water and power technologies; and advance tools that serve water and power operations. Through these efforts, Reclamation is increasing the effectiveness of operations and the availability of Reclamation project water. As a result, Reclamation will have more water management flexibility to respond to a changing climate.

**Goal 2. Enhance Climate Adaptation Planning**

New tools are needed to support the consideration of climate change within Reclamation planning activities and related environmental reviews, including reviews under National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and other regulatory requirements. This includes appraisal and feasibility studies, asset management, operations and maintenance, major rehabilitation and replacement, dam safety, restoration, and other types of water supply planning studies. Reclamation has long required consideration of climate change in planning processes. To build climate resilience through planning and environmental review processes, Reclamation will expand consideration of climate change within planning processes for implementation studies.

**Goal 3. Improve Infrastructure Resilience**

Most of Reclamation’s water and power projects

were constructed more than 50 years ago and the earliest projects now exceed 100 years in age. Continued operation of these facilities is a testament to the original engineering and construction, as well as years of diligent maintenance. To ensure these projects continue to provide benefits to the American public, Reclamation is committed to improving the resilience of our infrastructure in the face of a changing climate. Toward this end, Reclamation will build on a legacy of infrastructure management and operations and maintenance, and leverage funding and resources provided through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in support of these efforts. Fulfilling this commitment will require scientific research to understand current and future conditions, and modern engineering to fortify infrastructure as conditions continue to evolve. In pursuit of this commitment, Reclamation will embark on strategic activities in hydropower, dam safety, infrastructure investments, and innovation.

**Goal 4. Expand Information Sharing**

Adequate preparation for climate change requires timely access to essential data and information. In addition, it is critical to invest in climate literacy and organizational capacities to share and use data, information, and tools to help us adapt to climate change and build resilience. Expanding information sharing is key to addressing climate change impacts that are compounded by drought, aging infrastructure, diminishing water supplies, and increasing environmental and aquatic ecosystem challenges. Reclamation will work with partners to develop quality-assured climate change information and data. Then, we will work to make the information available and provide training and leading practices to support application of the information through Reclamation’s Climate Change Community of Practice.