

# Rains mean lake level on the rise

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□ Lake Mead's depth has increased more than 2 feet since Jan. 15, a result of recent floods in Arizona.

By Keith Rogers  
Review-Journal

Visitors to Lake Mead can expect to find their favorite fishing holes deeper than normal this month thanks to a surge of Arizona floodwater downstream.

The federal Bureau of Reclamation, which controls Colorado River flows, has been releasing less water through Hoover Dam because recent rains in Arizona have caused two rivers to surge.

This allows the agency to fill delivery orders in Arizona, California and Mexico with floodwater instead of taking it from the river system, agency spokesman Julian Rhinehart said Friday.

"We've got an unusual situation that has not occurred in 15 years," Rhinehart said, explaining that the normally low or dry Gila and Bill Williams rivers are gushing into the Colorado River at Yuma, Ariz., and near Parker, Ariz., respectively.

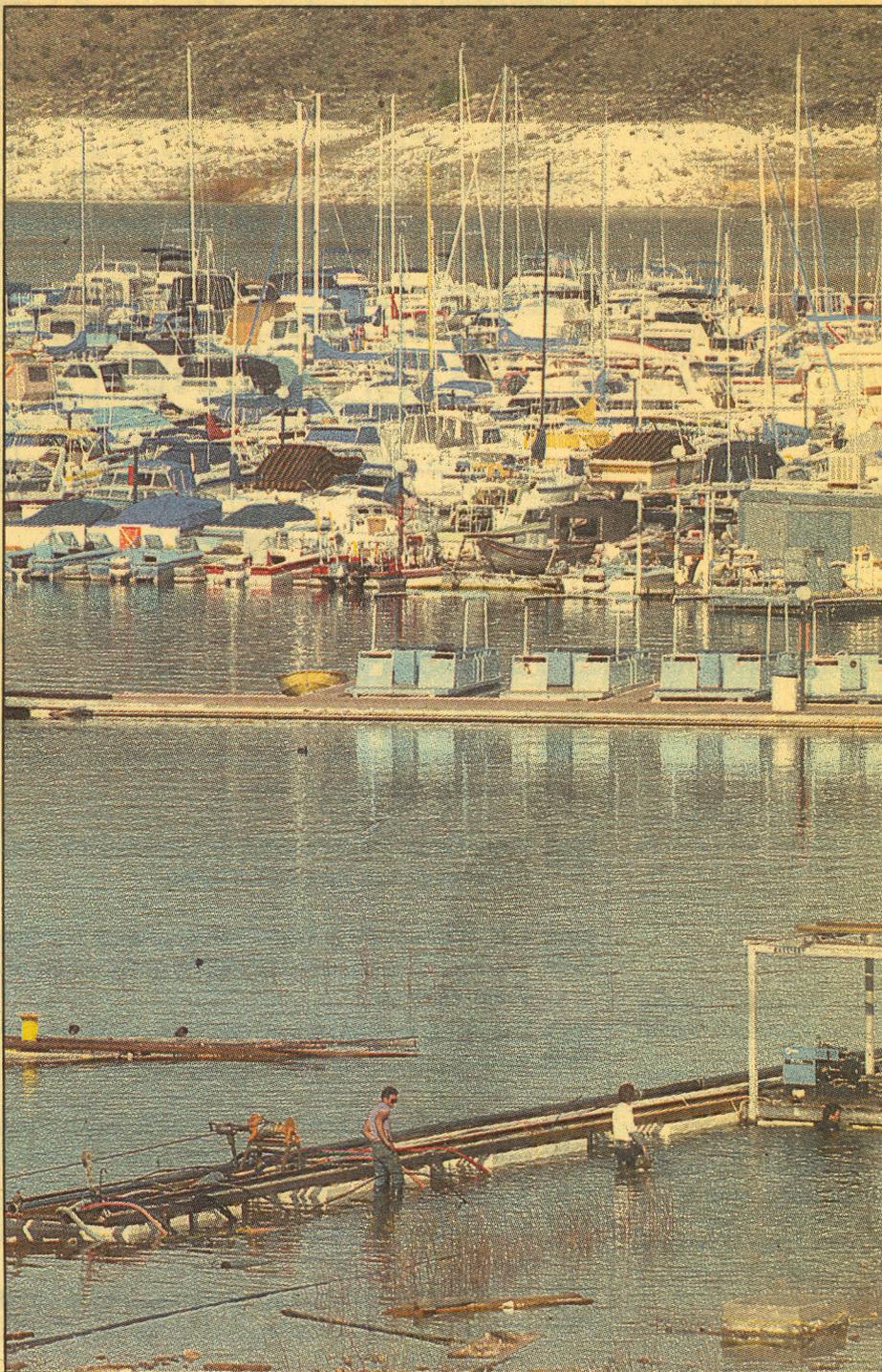
That means Lakes Mead and Powell gradually will rise as a result of normal Colorado River flows.

Marinas on the lakes also will be affected. Preparations were being made last week to move the Lake Mead Marina docks closer to shore.

But runoff from above-normal rainfall this month in Southern Nevada is having virtually no effect on the rising level of Lake Mead, Rhinehart noted.

Since Jan. 15, when the Gila and Bill Williams rivers began discharging floodwater, the depth of Lake Mead has increased more than 2 feet, and it is expected to increase another 5 feet by March 1, Rhinehart said.

Overall, a 7-foot increase in the lake's level translates to "considerably more" change in the shoreline, he said. The change will be more noticeable in flat, shallow areas than in



Jim Laurie/Review-Journal

Workers at Lake Mead Marina on Friday prepare to move a dock closer to shore to accommodate the lake's rising water level. On Friday, the lake level had risen almost 10 feet above the level it was in November 1991.

steep, deep areas of the lake.

The lake's level is expected to reach up to the 1,186-foot elevation mark by March 1. On Friday, the level had

reached the 1,181-foot elevation, almost 10 feet above the level it was in November 1991, which was the lake's

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## Lake

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lowest level in a decade, Rhinehart said.

While the Arizona floodwaters represent a reprieve from a

drought, now in its seventh year in parts of Nevada and the Southwest, the relief appears to be only temporary, Rhinehart said.

"The big thing is how much

we'll get through the Rocky Mountain snow melt," which supplies the Colorado River. "Still things look very encouraging," he said.