

# Flood experiment to target canyon environment

Associated Press

PAGE, Ariz. — Glen Canyon Dam buzzed with environmentalists and scientists Monday as the government prepared to stage a weeklong flood as an experiment on refocusing the dam's operations to benefit wildlife in the Grand Canyon.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt floated down the Colorado River in a motorized raft one day before the government hopes to

redistribute nutrient-rich sediment through the Grand Canyon by cranking up the flow from the Glen Canyon Dam.

The \$2.7 million flood is a culmination of a decade of planning and debate about the impact of the 33-year-old dam on the canyon's environment.

The event is the first scientifically documented, manmade flood in the United States and marks a shift in government

focus from the dam's ability to generate power to its impact on the environment.

Lessons learned from the flood will be applicable "to dams throughout the United States and throughout the world," said Dave Wegner, the experiment's lead scientist and project manager for the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

Beginning last weekend, river flows were stabilized at 8,000

cubic feet per second in anticipation of today's flood, which will increase flows to 45,000 cubic feet per second — fast enough to fill Chicago's Sears Tower in 17 minutes — for seven days.

On Wednesday, U.S. Geological Survey officials will color the river water with nontoxic red dye to obtain information on flow patterns and carrying of sediment. Samples will be taken at eight downstream sites.