

Mar 4, 2013

Pam Adams  
P.O. Box 61470  
Boulder City, NV 89006-1470

Subject: America's National Parks Deserve Consideration and Participation in Colorado River Basin Decisions!

Dear Pam Adams,

Please consider this message as our comment on the Colorado River Basin Water Demand and Supply Study, drafted by the Bureau of Reclamation.

I (George) first got to know the Colorado River when I worked on a BuRec-sponsored ecology research project on the Colorado Plateau near Moab in 1963. My wife and I have returned over the past 50 years for work and pleasure, both on the western slope of Colorado and throughout southern Utah.

We appreciate this study as a step toward identifying the issues that must be decided with respect to conflicting demands on the Colorado River. We favor the low-cost approaches including water conservation and reuse. These can be the "low-hanging fruit" in dealing with the gap between supply and demand.

However, we see a big gap in the study: the national parks and other protected areas of the basin have not been fully considered. These include areas administered by the National Park Service within the Colorado Basin and wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, and inventoried roadless areas administered by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. All those areas have important needs for water to support recreational use and fish and wildlife habitat.

The NPS-administered areas include Arches National Park, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area, Dinosaur National Monument, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and Rocky Mountain National Park. BLM has identified several million acres in southern Utah as having wilderness characteristics and deserving further consideration for designation as wilderness. A number of wilderness areas have been designated by Congress in Colorado and Utah parts of the basin.

Water in these areas is an important part of the visitor's experience and an essential resource for wildlife. The economy of the western slope and southern Utah is heavily dependent on tourism, and that segment has been growing as people have discovered the wild canyon country.

We would like to see the Bureau include these elements in further work on the basin study:

1. Bring the National Park Service in as a full partner in the study and recommendations that will emerge from it.
2. Adopt a more formal study process that provides open public review of drafts and involves all the stakeholders in the discussion about the next steps to be taken. Wilderness and wildlife-related citizens' groups should be fully involved.
3. Provide close coordination with the Glen Canyon Dam EIS process for the long term experimental and management plan, as this will have a major impact on the future of Grand Canyon National Park under terms of the Grand Canyon Protection Act.

Thank you for considering our thoughts on this project.

Sincerely,  
Mr. George Alderson