# Post-2026 NEPA Process

## And Lower Basin Alternative

**AWBA Commission Chair Buschatzke**

March 20, 2024

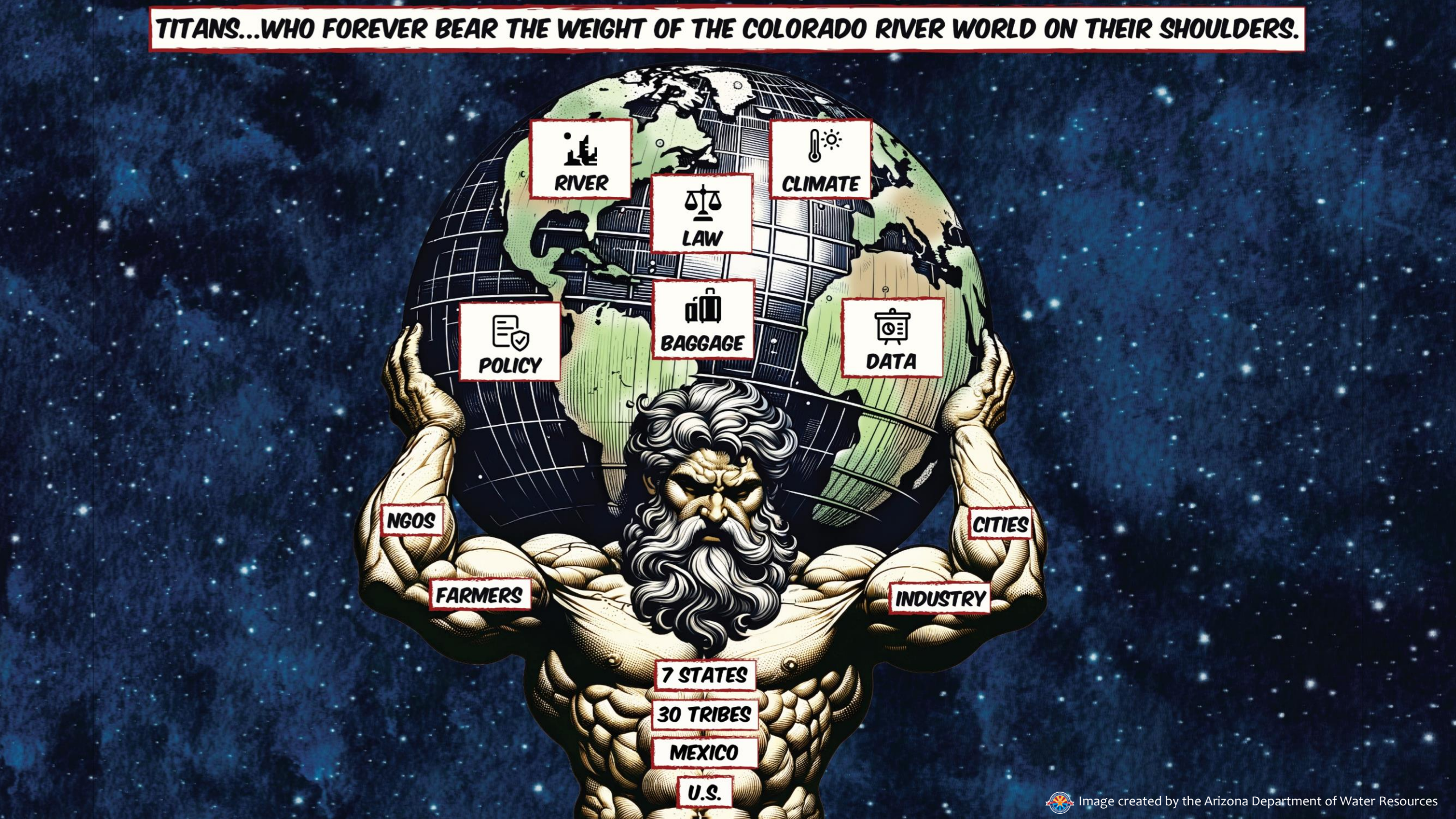



Image created by the Arizona Department of Water Resources

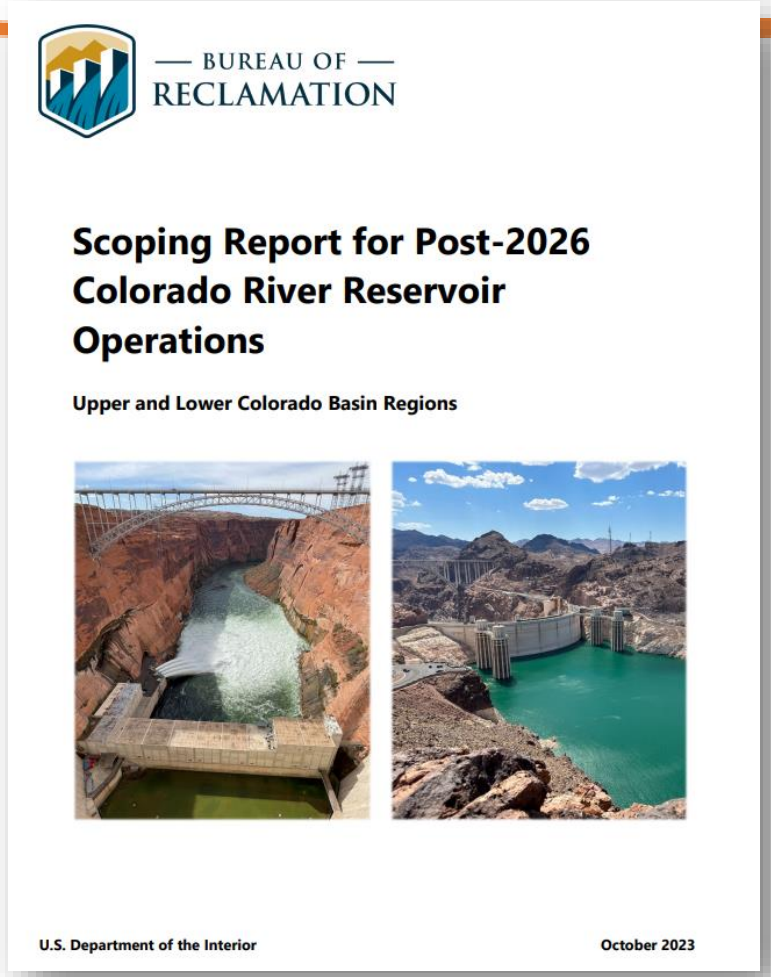
# Supplemental EIS Update:

- Final SEIS released March 5, 2024
- Three Basin States have committed to conserving 3 MAF through the interim period
  - 3 MAF plan is on track to protect the system through 2026
- Most Lower Basin parties have executed final conservation agreements

Information presented at the Arizona Reconsultation Committee Meeting, March 6, 2024

# Post-2026 Colorado River Operations

- BOR initiated the NEPA process in June 2023
- The Lower Basin states have developed a draft alternative for consideration in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Additional work with stakeholders, water users, and the Upper Basin is needed to reach consensus

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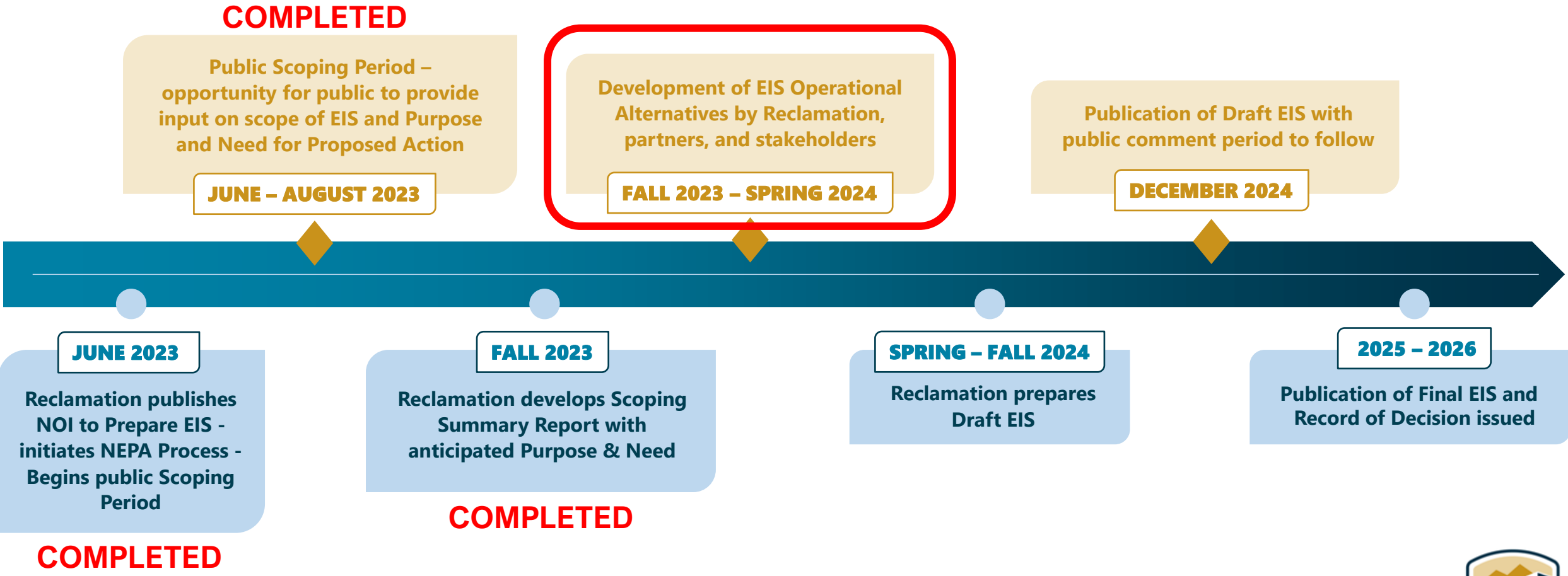
# **Post-2026:** Proposed Schedule

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# Post-2026 Lower Basin States Alternative Goals

- Improve Colorado River reliability over a broad but plausible range of future conditions
- Address the structural deficit and more in the lower basin by reducing 1.5 MAF of use in the Lower Basin
- Sharing the risks and benefits of the system within and between the basins
- Improving predictability of reductions to stabilize Lake Mead

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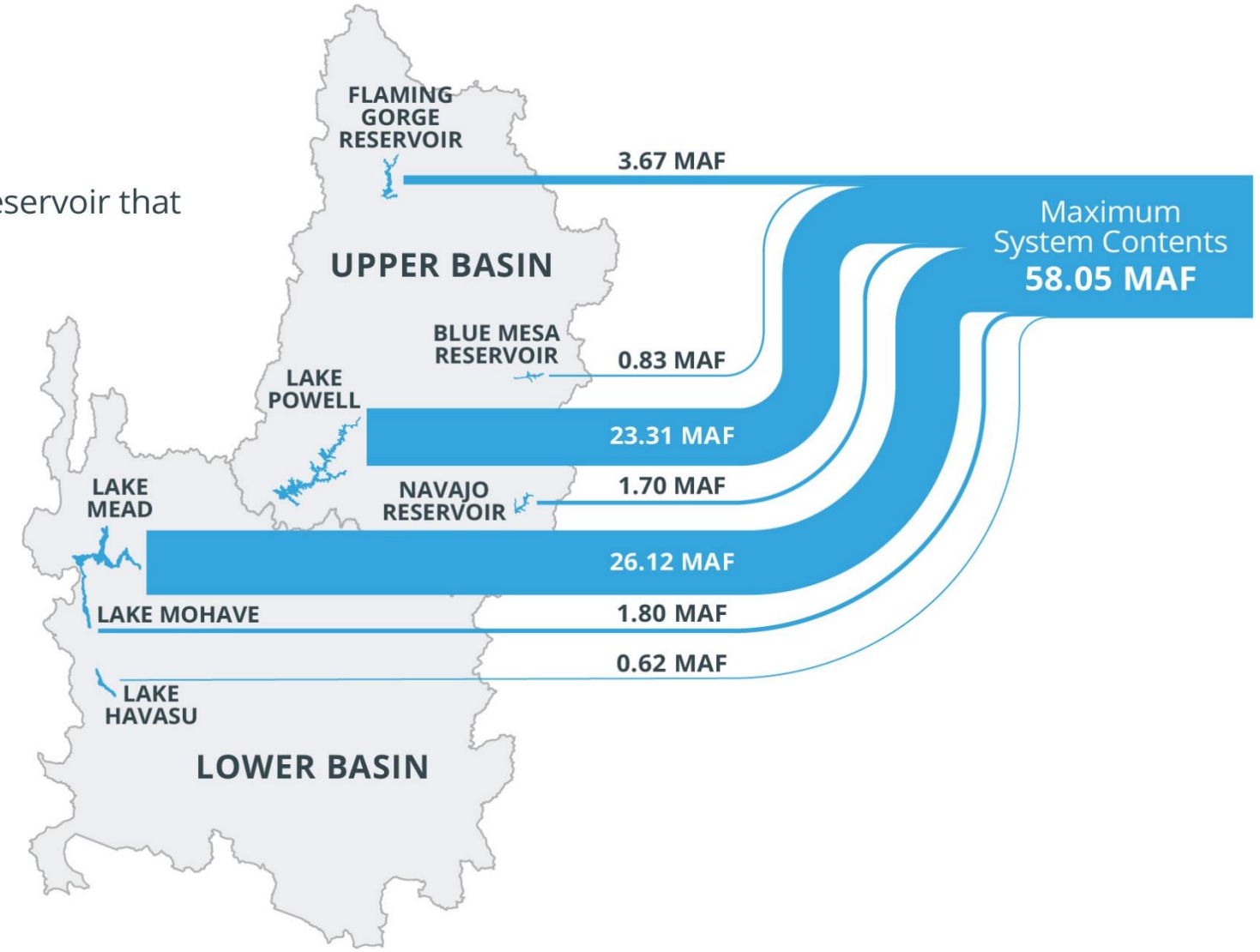
# **Lower Basin Alternative:** Reduction Determination

## MAXIMUM SYSTEM CONTENTS

System contents are based on the volume in each reservoir that is available for release, in millions of acre-feet (MAF)

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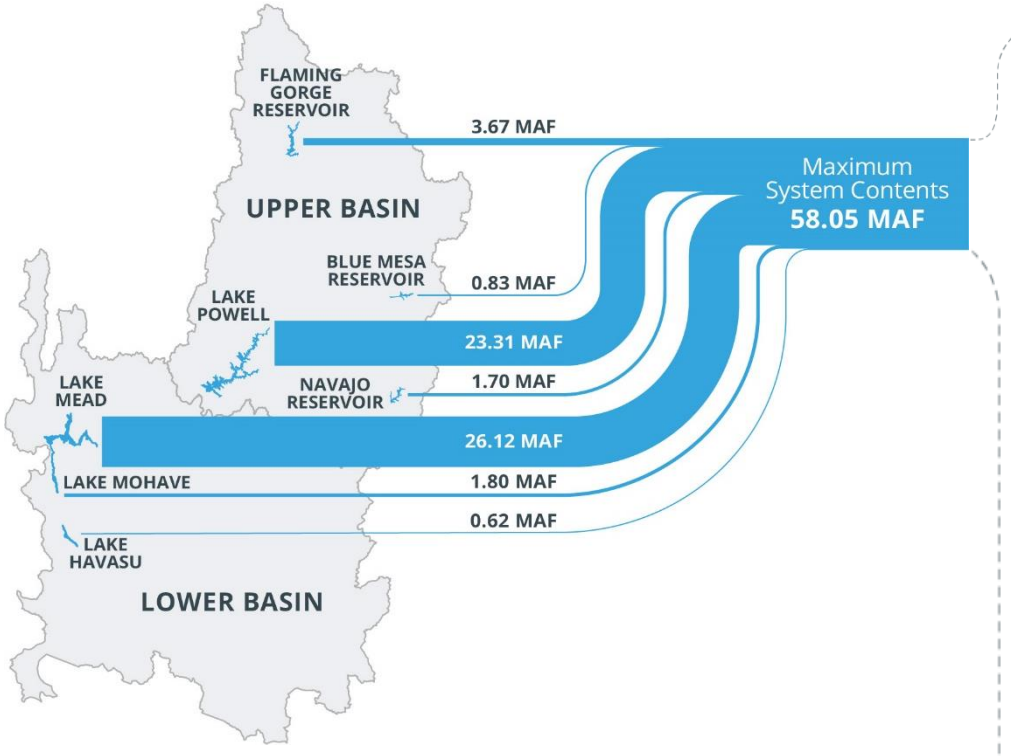
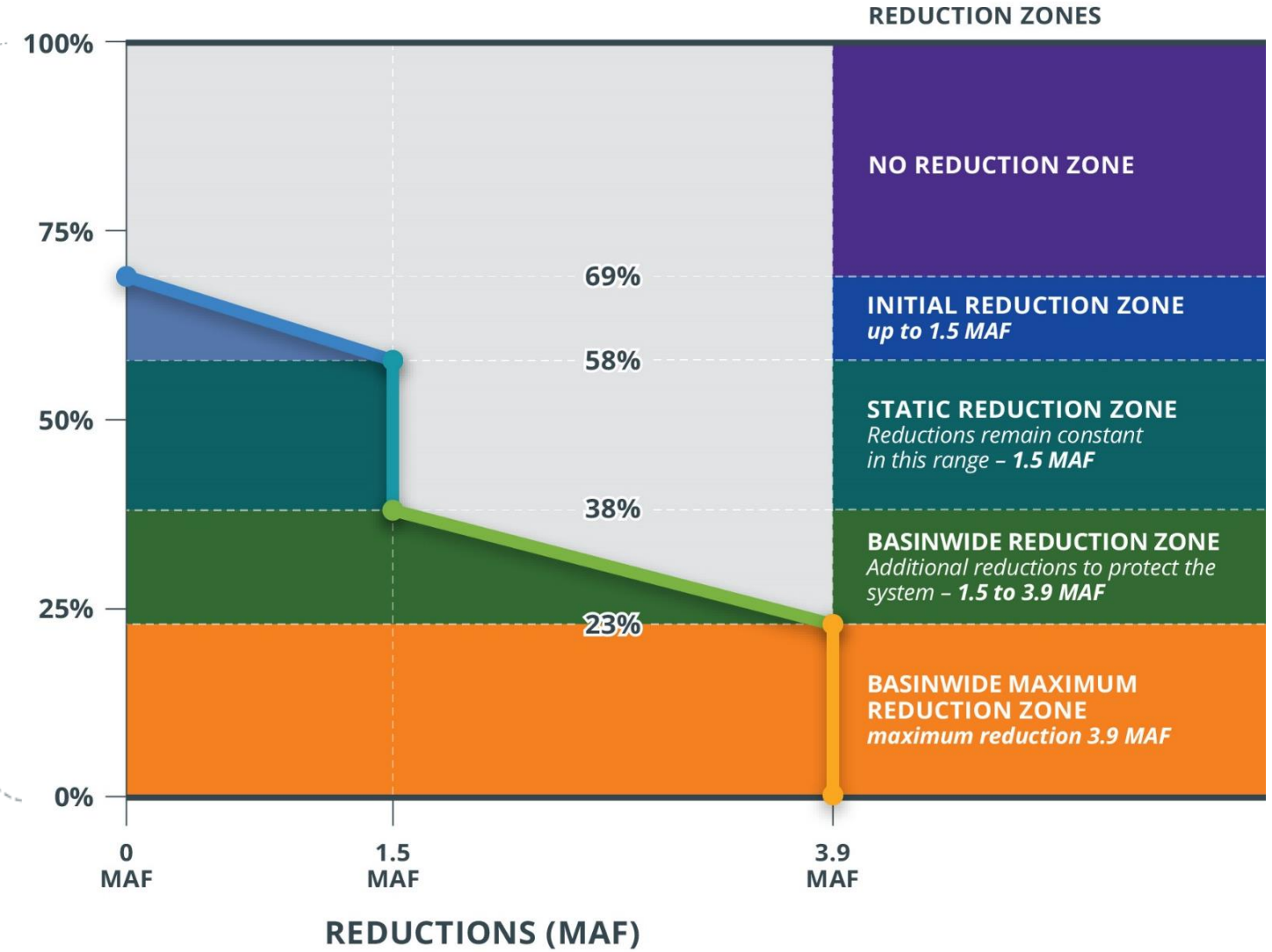
# **Lower Basin Alternative:** Reduction Determination




## REDUCTION DETERMINATION

Reductions are based on the available system contents, based on the function below

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# Reclamation Provided Hydrologies

- Reclamation selected a wide range of future hydrologies to explore system robustness under different operational strategies.
- The hydrologies represent a historical natural flow record in addition to incorporating impacts of climate change, a warming future, and extended droughts.
- One of the ‘wetter’ hydrologies selected is the Stress Test, which is the natural flow record from 1988 to 2020, with an average flow of 13.2 MAF.
- Overall, the hydrologies cover a wide range of minimum and maximum flow sequences that extend beyond the historical records, especially for the minimum flows.

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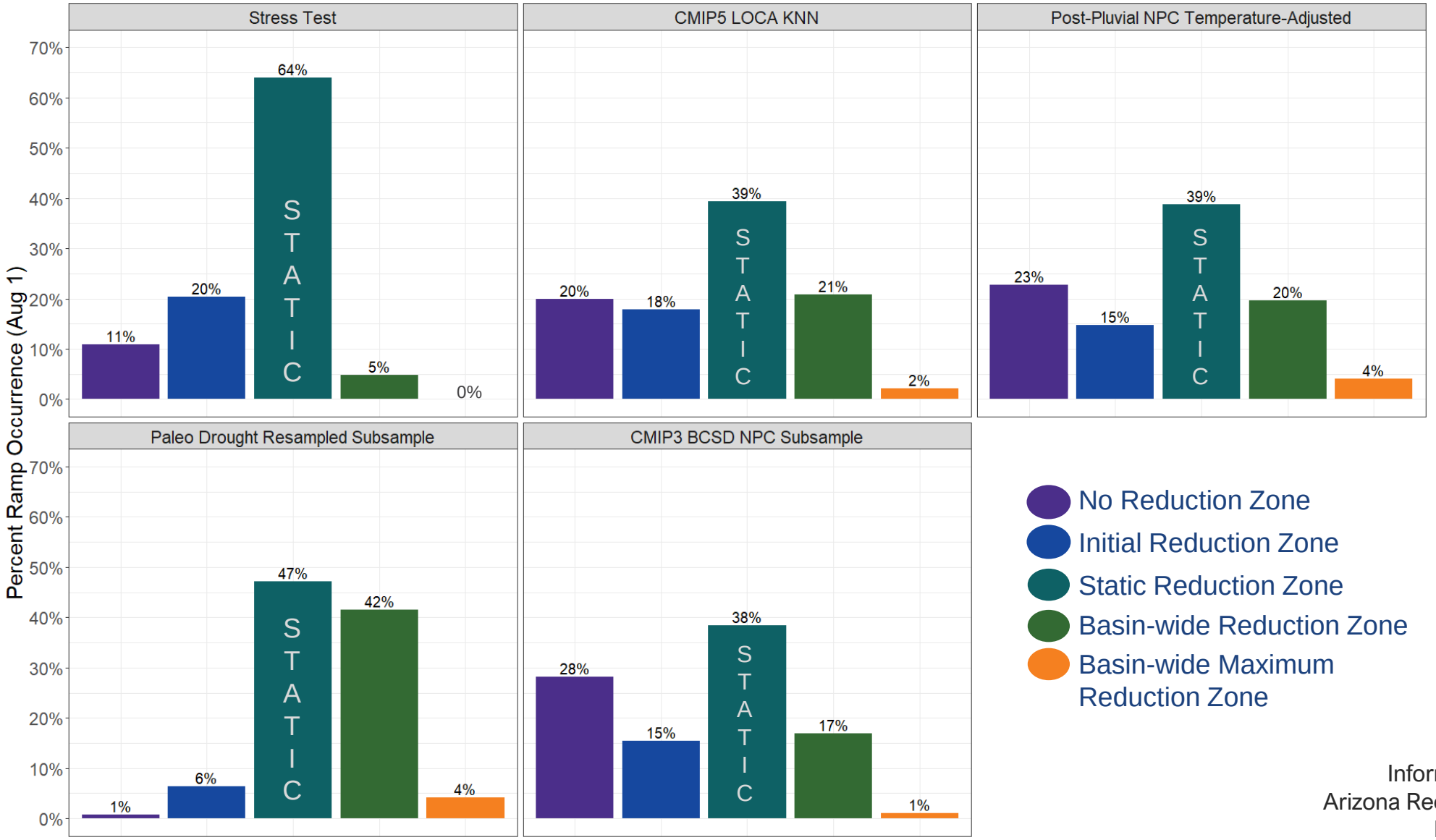
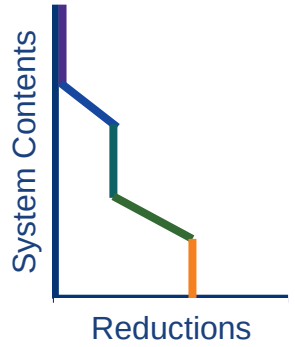
# Technical Analysis




- No Reduction Zone
- Initial Reduction Zone
- Static Reduction Zone
- Basin-wide Reduction Zone
- Basin-wide Maximum Reduction Zone

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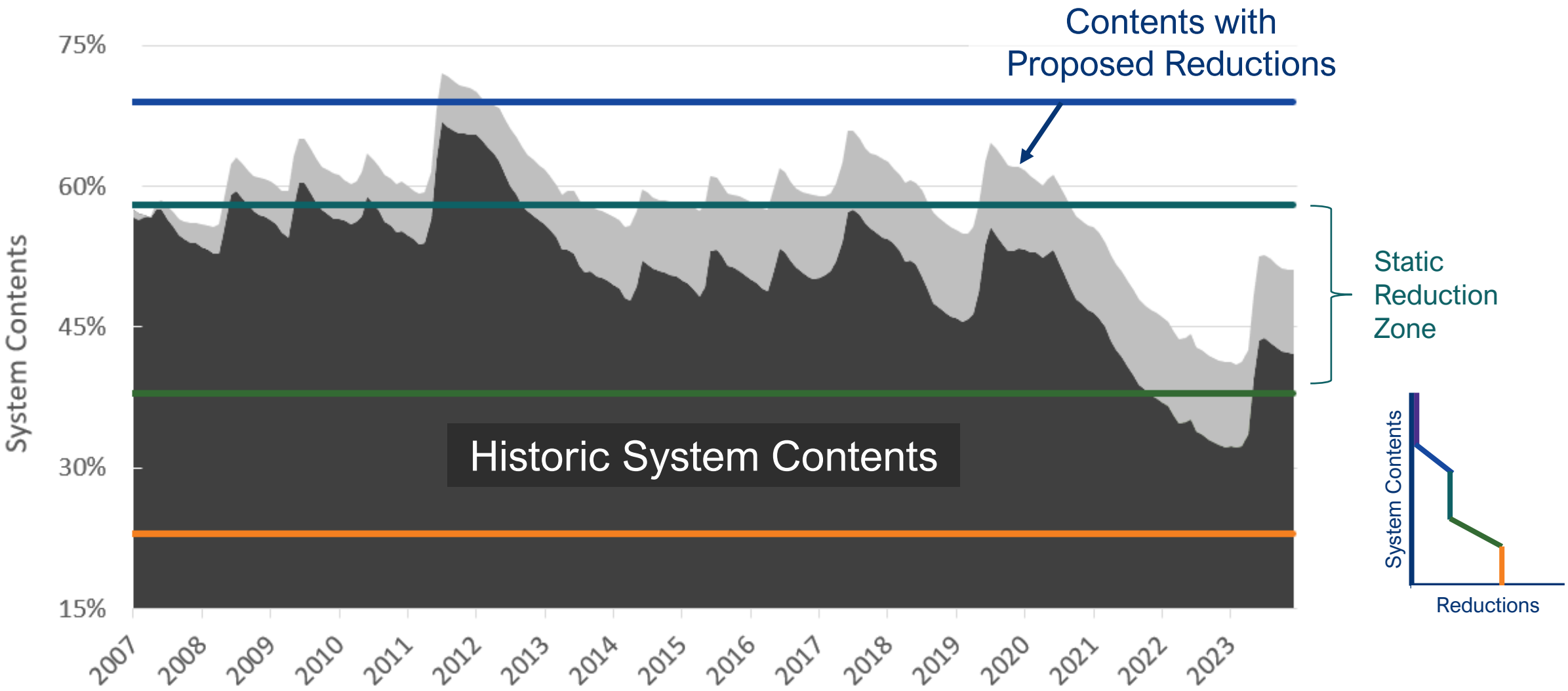
# Proposed Alternative Implemented in 2007

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# Reduction Sharing among Basin States and Mexico

| | Total Reduction Volumes | Upper Basin | Arizona | California | Nevada | Mexico * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Initial Reduction Zone | Up to 300 KAF | 0 | 80% | 0 | 3.33% | 16.67% |
| | 300 KAF-1.5 MAF | 0 | 43.33% | 36.67% | 3.33% | 16.67% |
| Static Reduction Zone | 1.5 MAF | 0 | 760,000 | 440,000 | 50,000 | 250,000 |
| Basin-wide Reduction Zone | 1.5 – 3.9 MAF | Shared among Upper Division states, Lower Division States and Mexico | | | | |
| Basin-wide Maximum Reduction Zone | 3.9 MAF | | | | | |

* Reductions to Mexico will be determined in a separate binational process

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# Surplus Conditions

- Surplus conditions triggered under higher elevations than under the 2007 Interim Guidelines (TBD)
- Surplus will occur under a narrower range of conditions than under the 2007 Interim Guidelines (TBD)
- **If System recovers and Surplus becomes available Arizona receives 240,000 AF of Surplus before California receives access to surplus**

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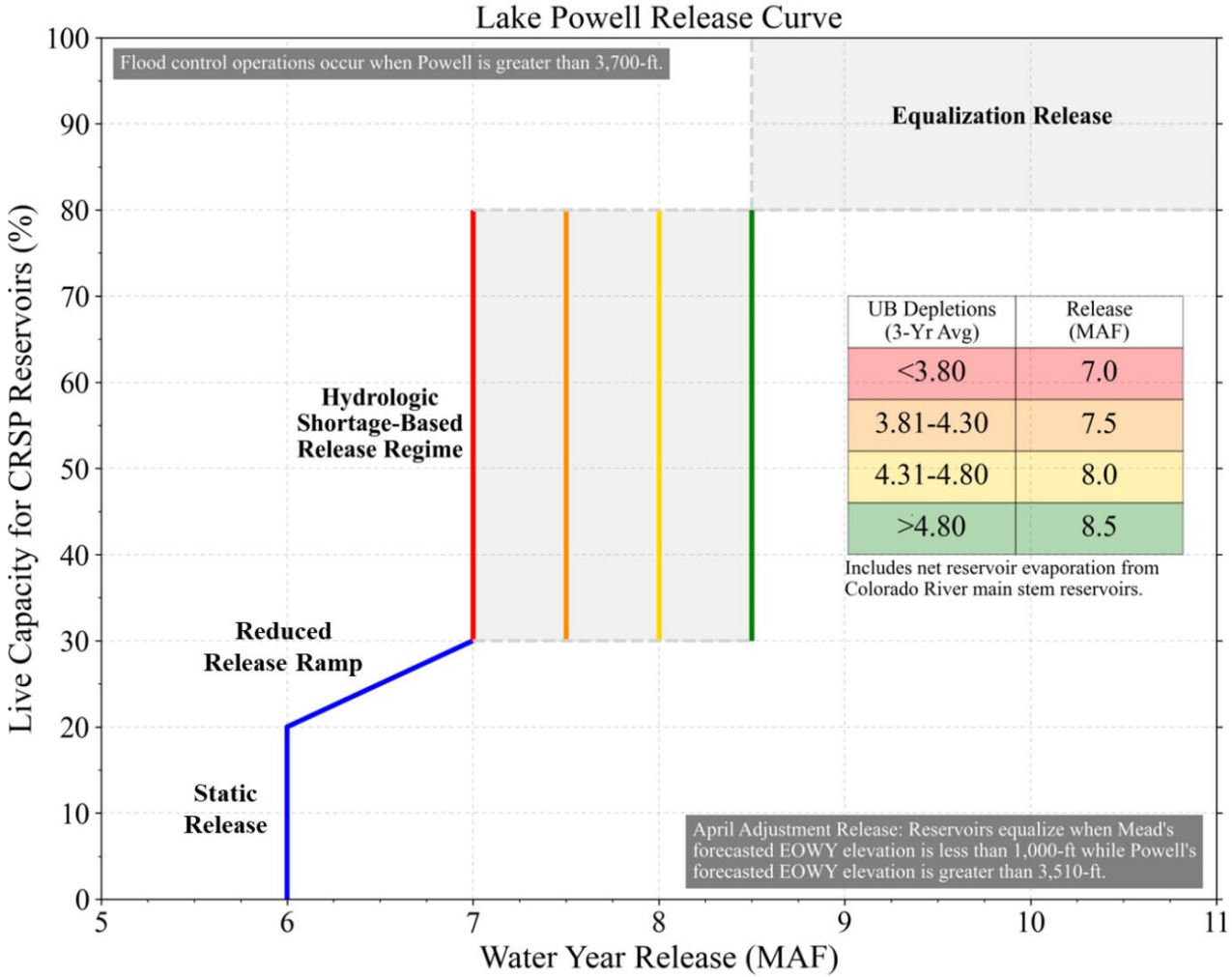
# Lake Powell Releases to Lake Mead

- Considerate of Compact requirements
- Lower Basin Alternative acknowledges the relationship between hydrology and UB depletions
- Lake Powell release to Lake Mead determined primarily by a combination of Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa, Navajo, and Powell (CRSP) live capacity and by UB depletions under certain release regimes




*"Hydrologic shortage" is used to describe a broad range of factors that affect water supply availability in the Upper Division States without taking a position on which of these factors are "shortages."

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# Conservation, Augmentation and Storage

- **Existing Intentionally Created Surplus (ICS) program**
  - Existing rules for post-2026 management of ICS created prior to 2027
  - Can be used to meet reductions (with limitations)
  - Transition with new program TBD
- **New Storage Program -** New program to incentivize conservation, augmentation and storage with new rules
  - Delivery of stored water should not allow any state to exceed their basic apportionment when reductions apply in the Lower Basin (except limited inadvertent overruns, augmentation, and tributary conservation water)
  - The volume of water stored should be subtracted from the total system contents before reductions are calculated, to not diminish the volume of reduction that would otherwise occur absent the stored water
  - Can be used toward meeting reduction obligations, operational flexibility and wet water deliveries (with limitations)
  - Larger (5-10 MAF) cumulative limit
  - Other provisions TBD

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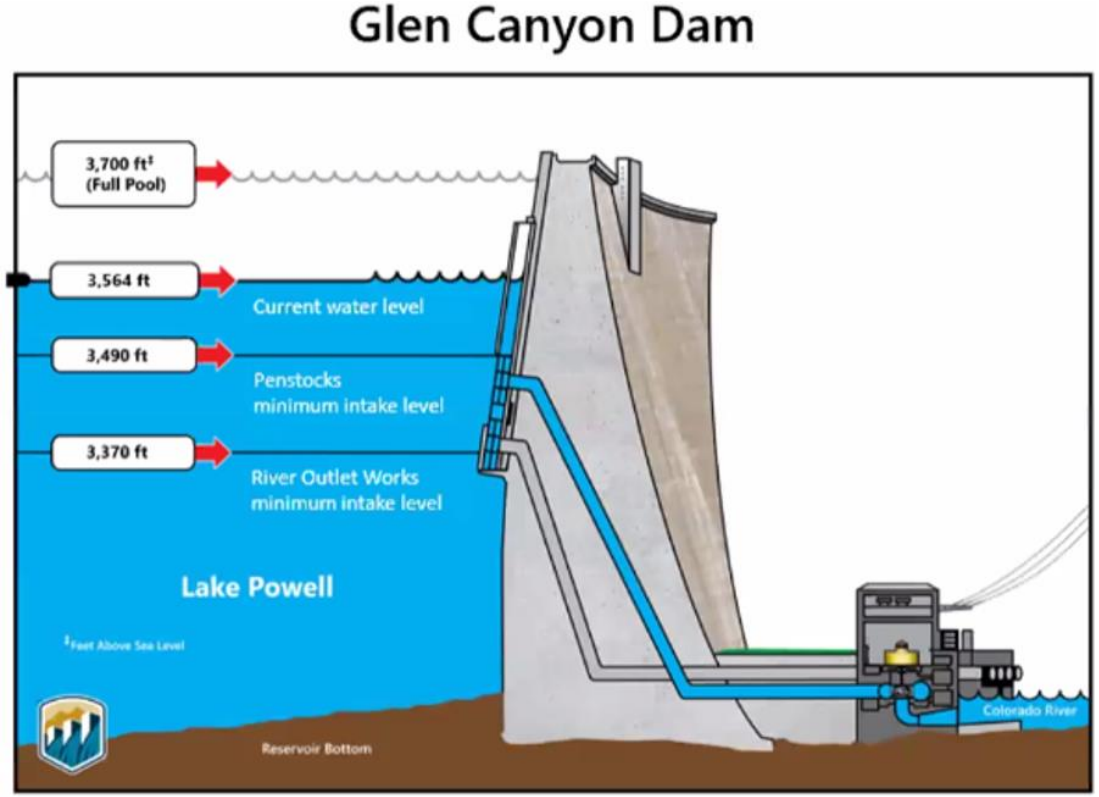
# New Information from Bureau of Reclamation regarding Glen Canyon Dam

# Glen Canyon Dam Operational Information

- Priority is safe and reliable operations
- Glen Canyon Dam was not envisioned to operate solely through the river outlet works for extended periods of time
- New and emerging information and operating guidance
- Active studies and investigations

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