



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

**CITATION**

**PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD**  
**COLORADO RIVER INTERIM GUIDELINES**

In recognition of the collaborative effort among the multiple partners to reach agreement on new, interim operational guidelines for managing the Colorado River and to secure a future of cooperation in the Colorado River Basin for the next two decades.

New, interim operational guidelines for managing the Colorado River, which provides water for more than 23 million people and two million acres of irrigated land in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico, were adopted in December 2007. These guidelines resulted from a collaborative effort involving the Department of the Interior, its Bureau of Reclamation, other Federal agencies, State and local government agencies, tribal governments, Mexican governmental agencies, non-governmental entities and private citizens. Against a backdrop of the worst drought in over a century on the Colorado River, a two and a half year National Environmental Policy Act process was undertaken to develop the interim guidelines. This collaborative process, involving cooperation and consultation with the Colorado River Basin states and other entities, included an extensive scoping and public outreach activities to develop and analyze several potential alternatives from which the final was selected. This detailed, intensive and open process generated a level of trust between the cooperating parties that was the catalyst for the successful development of the guidelines, hailed by leaders as the most important agreement among the seven basin states since the original 1922 compact. Adoption of the interim guidelines brings important benefits for the people who depend on the Colorado River and for the river's environment. The guidelines provide water users and managers a greater certainty about water deliveries. They provide better coordination of the operation of Lakes Powell and Mead, minimizing the likelihood of as well as actual occurrence of shortages in the Lower Basin in the future. The guidelines encourage water conservation and preserve the flexibility necessary to deal with future challenges in the management and use of the Colorado River, such as climate change and persistent drought. For their hard work and dedication to reaching agreement on the management of the Colorado River, the partners involved in establishing the Colorado River Interim Guidelines are granted the Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award.