



MEMORANDUM

TO: IEDA Board
RE: Water Report
DATE: March 13th, 2026

Post-2026

It seems that the one thing the Upper and Lower Basins can agree upon is that the Draft EIS is flawed. Some have even suggested starting over. Well, the deadline for federal intervention has come and gone and the race against the clock doesn't allow for a redo. The clock will strike the proverbial midnight on October 1st, 2026, at which time, the operating guidelines go back to about 1970.

If the Draft EIS comments are any indication, some groups are preparing for a lawsuit, especially since it is likely that the Upper Basin will be out of compact compliance in 2027. Arizona delegation members have weighed in from both sides of the aisle demanding equitable protections for Arizona regarding the Colorado River.

One article I found claimed that "Colorado leaders said the draft plan does not impose sufficient shortage reductions in the Lower Basin, which includes Arizona, California, and Nevada." With the March 2nd snowpack estimate at 67% and Lake Powell at 25% full, we can't afford a prolonged legal fight.

Some have mentioned a short-term deal to help figure things out, but all the while, the feds will keep moving forward. DOI signaled their hand in the Draft EIS, as the Basic Coordination (reduction of 1.5 MAF in Lower Basin) is the only alternative they feel that they have legal authority to implement without additional authorities.

Nevada has submitted a stopgap, short-term (two year) management plan in an attempt to bridge the divide on March 6th.

Good Things to Know

ADWR Finalizes Designation of Ranegras Plain Groundwater Basin as AMA. A notice of director's designation was issued and a public workshop was held on March 5, 2026.

Arizona Water Company introduced Pinal County's first ADWAS, which should provide sufficient assured water supply for over 80,000 homes.

Governor Newsome launched the California Water Plan 2028 on February 25, 2026. It will identify effective, local, regional, and statewide water management strategies. It will also establish an interim statewide planning goal to identify 9 MAF of additional water supply by 2040.

Fears grow as invasive species of golden mussels spread through California waterways. First discovered two years ago, they found their way into the Friant-Kern Canal near Fresno. Golden mussels latch onto human water infrastructure, which "impedes water flow, clogs pipes, and fouls watercraft motors, and necessitates ongoing, costly removal to maintain operational functions."