

Shepherding Water in Colorado for Compact Security Purposes

Interim Water Resources Review Committee

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What Is Shepherding?

- Allows conserved water to flow downstream to designated point of delivery
- No diversion and consumptive use of this water along the way

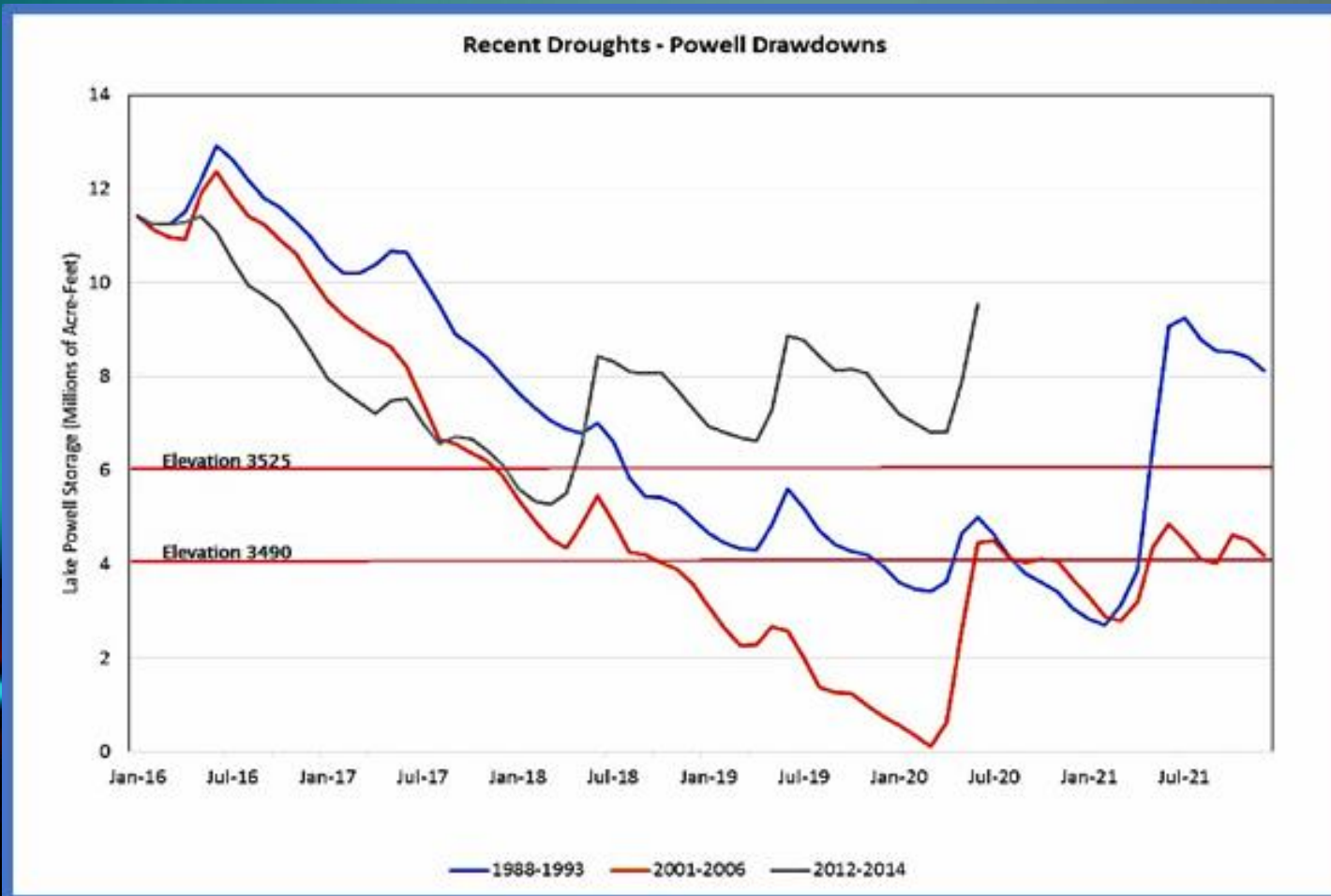
Why Talk About Shepherding?

- Colorado River Compact
 - Upper Basin states will not cause Lee Ferry flows to fall below 75 million acre feet in any 10-year period

Hydrology

- 17 years of drought
 - Lake Powell inflow above average in only 3 of last 17 years
 - Lowest 17-year period since Glen Canyon Dam closed in 1963
- Predicted to get worse!
 - Loss of additional 20% to 30% by 2050

Levels in Lake Powell Can Drop Quickly!



Practical Impacts in Colorado

- Not sure yet how a Compact call would be administered
 - Post-1922 water rights could be shut down in priority order
 - Some sort of “share the pain” arrangement
 - Prioritize critical uses

Vulnerable Water Rights

- Denver Water's Blue River rights
 - 1946 priorities
- Colorado-Big Thompson Project
 - 1935 priorities
- Green Mountain Reservoir
 - 1935 priority

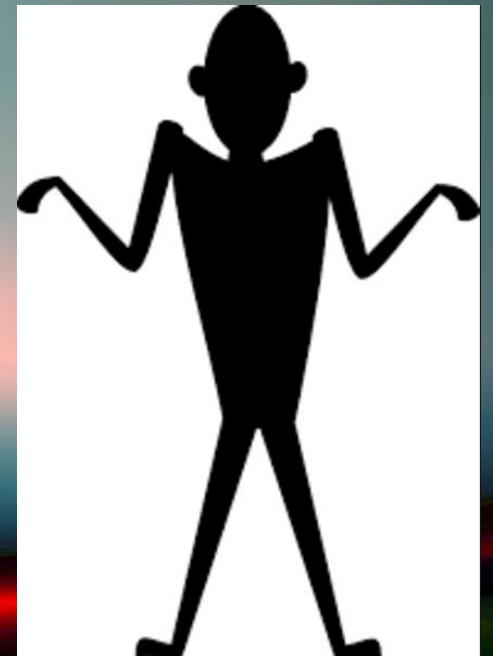
Basin-Wide Efforts

- Drought Contingency Planning
- System Conservation Pilot Program
- All depend on compensated, voluntary conservation that leaves water in the Colorado River System

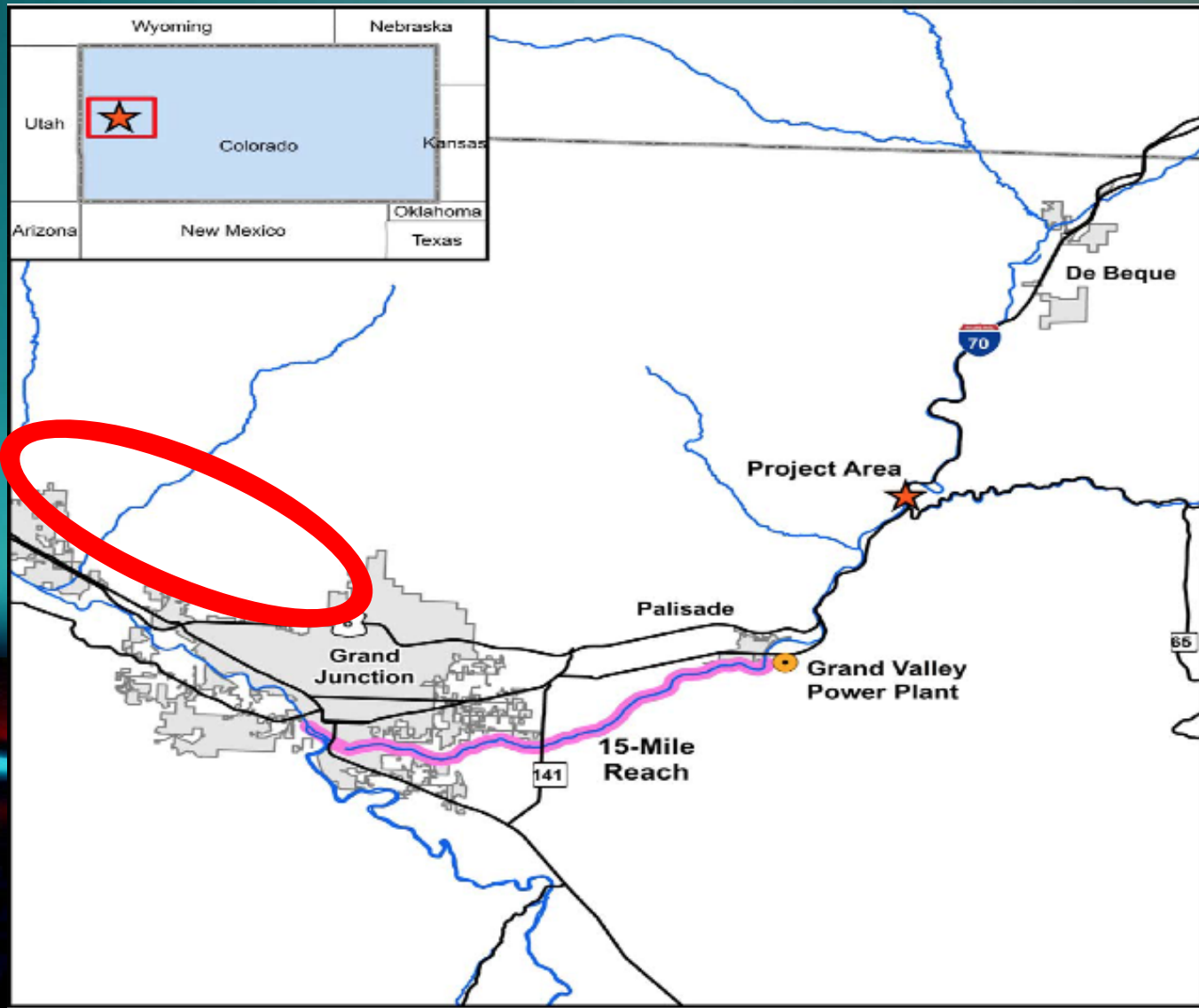
What Happens to the Conserved Water?

- Normally, when a water right is not being used, the water left in the stream is available for other water users to divert
- If that happens here, payment for conservation is wasted and the system doesn't get the intended benefit

What If Amazon Worked This Way?



Geography Matters!



Geography Won't Always Work

- Water conserved far from state line is unlikely to make it there
 - Especially during the irrigation season
- If no shepherding, puts target on farms close to state line

Possible Solutions

- Add “Compact security” to definition of “beneficial use”
- Shepherd Compact security water to the state line
- Require determination by CWCB (in consultation with State Engineer) that Compact security water is necessary and in what amount

Next Steps

- Long term discussion
- Workshop – Nov. 14
- Keep you informed