



IMPROVING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN

The Colorado River is a resource for 40 million people. It provides drinking water, food and energy production, recreation, and irreplaceable habitat for rare and native birds, fish, and wildlife. But it's on the brink of collapse.

To avert a crisis, we must begin to implement durable solutions and increase investment in water-related climate resilience to protect all who depend on the Colorado River.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability for the Colorado River Basin to prepare for and adapt to climate shifts and extremes, including rising temperatures, increased drying, and variability in precipitation. Resilience means identifying, piloting, and implementing durable strategies to avoid or mitigate climate-related risks to the Colorado River community.

HOW TO IMPROVE RESILIENCE IN THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN



Enhance forest health through focused forest management and forest restoration strategies such as clearing surface fuels, restoring river and stream channels, removing invasive plant species, and conducting prescribed burns.



Restore the wetlands, meadows, riparian areas, and connected floodplains that comprise healthy watersheds across the Colorado River Basin. Use methods like beaver-related restoration and hand-built wood and rock structures to slow river flows, recharge groundwater, and re-establish natural storage.



Improve agricultural efficiency and enable growers to thrive with less water by supporting regenerative agriculture practices, alternative crops, and investing in infrastructure upgrades like lining canals with concrete.



Boost municipal water conservation by expanding what is already working, like low-water-use appliances, leak detection systems, replacing thirsty lawns with waterwise landscaping, and incorporating water in development and growth decisions.

WHAT BOOSTING RESILIENCE LOOKS LIKE ON THE GROUND

Addressing Sediment and Erosion Along Wyoming's Green River



Photo Source: Trout Unlimited

To improve resilience in Wyoming's Green River a multi-year effort is underway to control sediment and erosion issues made worse by climate change. The project includes planting appropriate vegetation, managing grazing to protect established plant communities, and installing simple wooden structures and beaver-dam analogs to slow river flows. These efforts will improve river health and water quality, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, enhance forage health in adjacent meadows, and reduce irrigation costs for local ranchers. The project is a partnership between Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Reducing Irrigation Water Use in Yuma, Arizona

In Yuma County, Arizona significant infrastructure and efficiency investments have reduced water use, such as lining the majority of canals and farm ditches within the Yuma irrigation districts, improved scheduling and delivery practices, installing high flow turn-outs, and precision field leveling using lasers. Combined with a shift from perennial and summer-centric crops to winter vegetable production, these improvements have decreased irrigation water diverted to farms by 15% since 1990 (as of 2015).



Photo Source: American Rivers

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR RESILIENCE

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act provide a historic opportunity to support durable resilience investments in the Colorado River Basin.

Visit <https://www.tenstrategies.net/newfederalfunding> to explore funding opportunities.