**SCRIPT— WATER DESK**

**TITLE: Climate change drying up Colorado River**

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| SUGGESTED LEAD-IN  | **A “megadrought” in the American Southwest is shrinking reservoirs and putting the region’s water supply at risk. Mitch Tobin has this story from the Water Desk.** |
|  | The Colorado River supports 40 million people and millions of acres of agriculture. |
|  | But in recent decades, the river has been gripped by severe drought made worse by climate change. Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the nation’s two biggest reservoirs, are less than half-full. |
| Brad Udall, Colorado State University | “This is the second worst 19-year period going back 1200 years. That's a megadrought.”“Since the year 2000, the Colorado River has lost about 20% of its flow and about half of that loss is due to rising temperatures . . . “ |
| Mitch Tobin, The Water Desk | “In years past, at this spot, I would have been standing—or swimming—in Lake Powell, but after decades of historic drought and rising temperatures, there’s no longer any water here and the Colorado River is a long walk behind me.” |
|  | In the 1960s, Glen Canyon Dam created 186-mile-long Lake Powell to store Rocky Mountain snowmelt; today; the so-called “bathtub ring” shows just how far the reservoir has fallen. |
|  | The 710-foot dam flooded a gorgeous canyon upstream and utterly transformed the river downstream through the Grand Canyon. |
| Anne Castle, University of Colorado Boulder | “It was hugely controversial at the time because of the environmental impacts. And I think if we were considering building that reservoir today, it wouldn't happen . . . but the economies that have grown up around it because of the reliability of supply that it provides are very, very significant.” |
|  | With climate change shrinking the Colorado River’s flow, many in this fast-growing region are wondering just how low reservoirs like Powell will sink—and what that means for the Southwest’s economies and ecosystems. |
| John Weisheit, Living Rivers | 18:20 “This is a system that's about to collapse.”3:55 “It's not really a river anymore, it doesn't even make it to the ocean. It's a river without integrity. It's a river that isn't allowed to be free. We've totally captured and imprisoned it. And that's not right. |
|  | In 2019, seven states signed a historic drought contingency plan with limited cutbacks meant to stave off severe water shortages and disruptions in hydropower generation. |
|  | But scientists project the water management challenges may only get tougher as the planet warms and the Colorado River Basin dries out. |
|  | I’m Mitch Tobin, reporting for The Water Desk. |
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