



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upper Colorado River Commission and Bureau of Reclamation Advance Reservoir Evaporation Study Across the Upper Basin

New state-of-the-art evaporation monitoring and data systems improve understanding of reservoir losses

Flaming Gorge Reservoir, Wyo. and Utah, July 9, 2026 — The Upper Division States of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, through the [Upper Colorado River Commission \(UCRC\)](#), in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), are advancing a multi-reservoir evaporation measurement and monitoring effort that is improving our understanding of reservoir evaporation losses. The effort supports more accurate, data-informed water management throughout the Upper Colorado River Basin.

The Reservoir Evaporation Project focuses on the Upstream Initial Units — Flaming Gorge, Blue Mesa and Navajo reservoirs — and represents a coordinated Upper Basin effort to strengthen scientific understanding of evaporation under increasingly arid conditions.

The project underscores the shared commitment of the Upper Basin states and Reclamation to invest in better science, improved data integration, and collaborative solutions that support long-term reliability and resilience across the Colorado River system.

“Collaboration between Reclamation, the UCRC and the Upper Division States is critical to improving the accuracy and transparency of water data across the Basin,” said Wayne Pullan, Upper Colorado Basin Regional Director for the Bureau of Reclamation. “This study helps strengthen the technical foundation needed for future reservoir operations, forecasting and accounting efforts.”

The study is modeled in part after the long-term evaporation monitoring program at Lake Powell and is intended to provide additional ground-truthing and verification for reservoir evaporation estimates in the Upper Basin. The project supports the development of more refined data sets and methodologies to improve future decision-making.

“This project reflects the Upper Basin’s commitment to providing the best available science to support water management decisions,” said Chuck Cullom, Executive Director of the Upper Colorado River Commission. “As we continue to face the impacts of dry hydrology, improved measurement and verification tools are essential to inform operations, transparent accounting, and collaborative management throughout the Colorado River Basin.”

Commissioners and representatives from the Upper Division States and Reclamation staff recently participated in a field visit at Flaming Gorge Reservoir to review the floating monitoring platform and associated instrumentation being used in the study.



Photo Caption:

Commissioners Brandon Gebhart and Gene Shawcroft, Bureau of Reclamation Upper Colorado Regional Director Wayne Pullan, Desert Research Institute scientist Chris Pearson, Upper Division State representatives, and Bureau of Reclamation staff visit the floating evaporation monitoring platform at Flaming Gorge Reservoir as part of the Upper Basin Reservoir Evaporation Project.



Photo Caption: Flaming Gorge Reservoir evaporation monitoring station.

