

Drought Threatens Huge Man-Made Lake



Since 1935, millions of people have enjoyed fishing, boating, and swimming in the huge man-made Lake Mead. But long droughts and high demand for water are causing water levels to drop in the 250-square-mile lake. Some scientists worry that if Lake Mead's water level keeps dropping, the lake could dry up in as few as 13 years.

Lake Mead was created when the Hoover Dam was built and part of the Colorado River was dammed. Part of the lake is in Nevada and part of it is in Arizona.

Lake Mead also is called a *reservoir*; it stores water for homes, farms, and businesses in places such as Nevada, Arizona, and California. Also, water from the lake is used to create electric power for many people in Nevada and Arizona.

About 96 percent of the water in Lake Mead comes from melted snow that falls each year in Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Most of that melted snow flows into the Colorado River and then into Lake Mead. In the past few years, though, there has been less water flowing into Lake Mead. Some scientists think that is because our climate is growing warmer.

NEWS WORD BOX

reservoir climate
businesses drought
population levels

But towns still need the same amount of water they have always needed. Some areas need more water because their populations are growing. So too much water is coming out of Lake Mead and not enough is flowing in.

MORE FACTS ABOUT LAKE MEAD

- Lake Mead is the largest man-made lake and reservoir in the United States.
- The water level of Lake Mead at the Hoover Dam has been falling since 1998.
- Today, Lake Mead contains about 9 trillion gallons of water; but that is only 52 percent of the water it can hold.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

The demand for water continues to grow while the water supply is shrinking. What are some ways that you and others can conserve water so there is enough for everyone?