# Law of the Colorado River Current Conditions 2022

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# 1948 Upper Colorado River Compact

- Establishes apportionments among Upper Division States based on depletions from available supply:
  - 51.75% Colorado
  - 23% Utah
  - 14 % Wyoming
  - 11.25% New Mexico

- Necessary to resolve uncertainty among Upper Division States PRIOR to additional development: CRSP & CRBP

***Key Innovations***

- Collaboration among the Upper Division States to address shared risks, obligations and opportunities
- Creates unique interstate water agency to implement the Compact including Upper Basin commitments stemming from the 1922 Compact and 1944 Water Treaty

# Upper Colorado River Commission

- Interstate water administrative agency established by the 1948 Compact to ensure appropriate allocation of water to the Upper Division States.
- Serves to ensure commitments under 1922 Compact are met at Lee Ferry and regarding Mexico.
- Seeks to promote interstate comity and to remove causes of present and future controversies.
- Comprised of one representative appointed by the Governor of each Upper Division State and one member appointed by the President.

# Major Upper Basin Reservoirs

- Glen Canyon Dam – Lake Powell
  - 24.3 MAF capacity, **5.8 MAF** current storage
- Flaming Gorge Dam & Reservoir
  - 3.75 MAF capacity, **2.9 MAF** current storage
- Blue Mesa Dam & Reservoir
  - 0.83 MAF capacity, **0.239 MAF** current storage
- Navajo Dam & Reservoir
  - 1.70 MAF capacity, **0.873 MAF** current storage

(storage circa 5/01/22)

# Upper Basin vs Lower Basin

- Supply Dominated vs Entitlement/Storage Dominated
  - Upper Basin relies on available runoff annually, generally uses are upstream of reservoir storage
  - Lower Basin relies on available storage annually, downstream of a single giant reservoir
- Complicated and distributed vs Simple and concentrated
  - 10,000 + turnouts in 4 states
  - ~30 turnouts (mainstem) in 3 states + Mexico
- Depletion based accounting vs CU accounting
  - Upper Basin accounts for depletions, CU and Losses
    - **Evaporation + Losses + CU = Depletions**
  - Lower Basin accounts for CU
    - **Diversions – return flows = CU**
    - **Evaporation and losses occur in the Lower Basin**
  - Lower Basin Mainstem + Mexico depletions routinely 2x Upper Basin
    - **Lower Basin + Mexico depletions > 10 MAF/yr**
    - **Upper Basin < 5.0 MAF/yr**

# Upper Basin vs Lower Basin

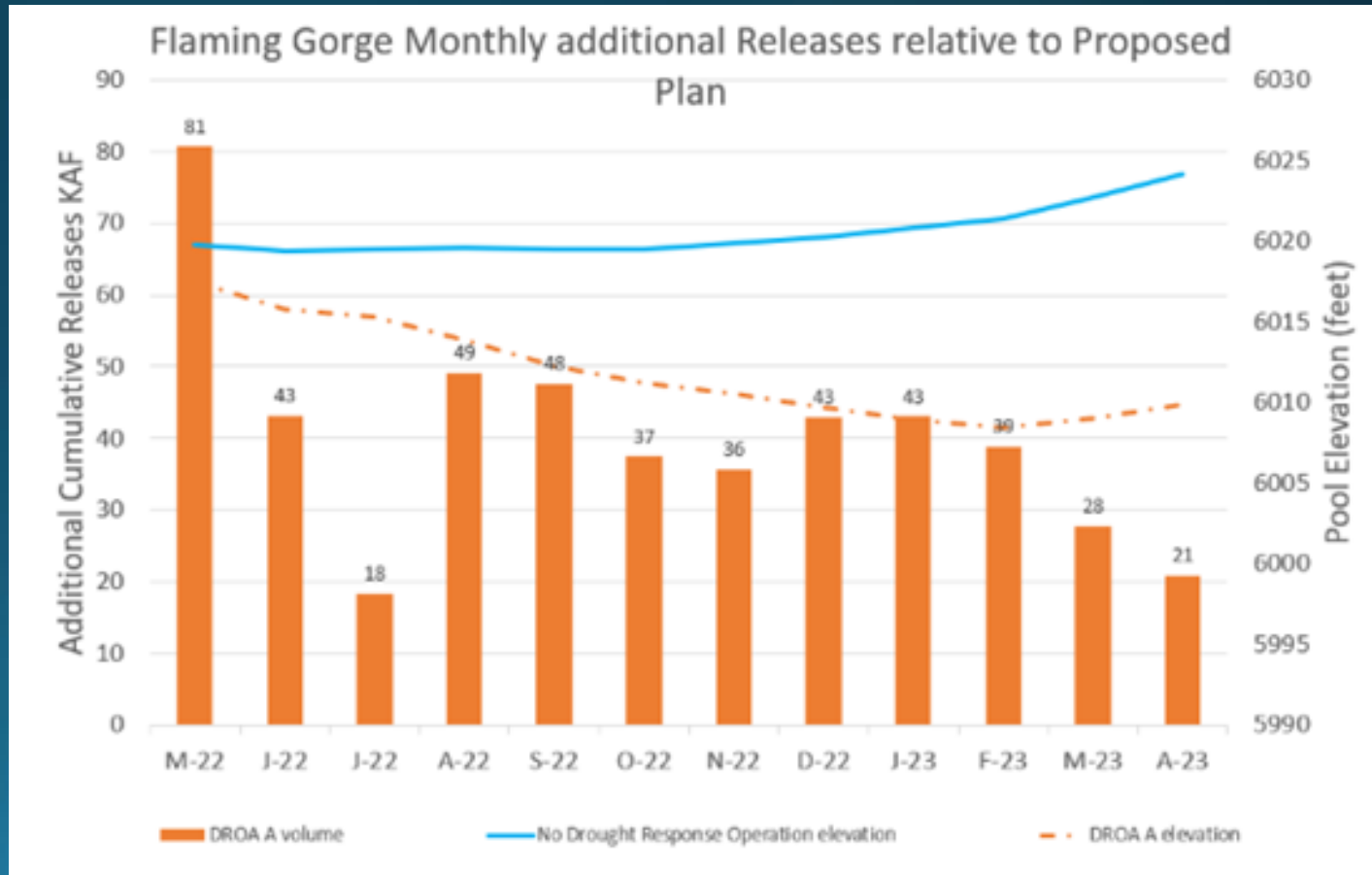
- Long history of collaboration and cooperation
  - CRBPA links Upper Basin and Lower Basin interests
    - 602 A & LROC
  - Grand Canyon Protection Act & GCDAMP
  - 2007 Guidelines link Lake Powell and Lake Mead operations
    - What happens in Vegas doesn't always stay in Vegas
  - Minutes with Mexico
  - Technical collaboration
- Drought Contingency Plans include adaptive measure
  - LBDCP "500 + Plan"
  - DCP Drought Response Operating Agreement (DROA)
  - DCP Demand Management Storage Agreement
- Tribal Engagement and participation

# Drought Response Operating Agreement (DROA) - DCP

- Process to release water from reservoirs upstream of Glen Canyon Dam/Lake Powell to reduce risks to declining below key infrastructure elevations in Glen Canyon Dam/Lake Powell
- Elevation 3,490’ is a key infrastructure elevation to avoid compromising water delivery (release) infrastructure and water management functions from Lake Powell to Lake Mead
- 161,000 acre-feet were released from upstream reservoirs to Glen Canyon Dam/Lake Powell in 2021
- 500,000 acre-feet are planned to be released in 2022 beginning in May 2022 – April 2023, largely from Flaming Gorge Reservoir

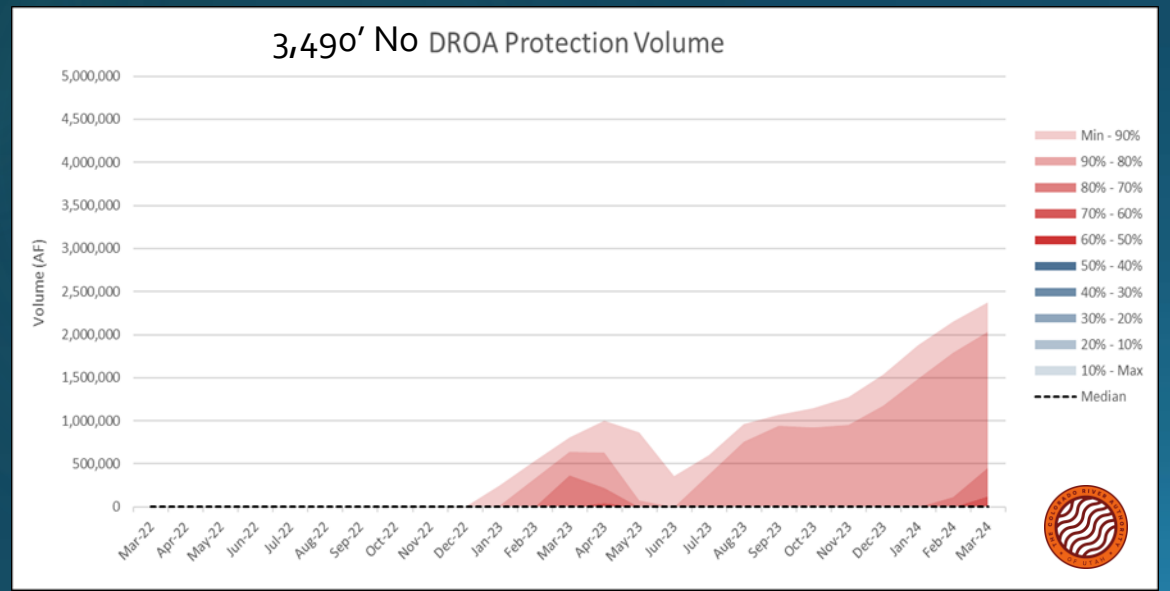
# Projected Impacts to Flaming Gorge

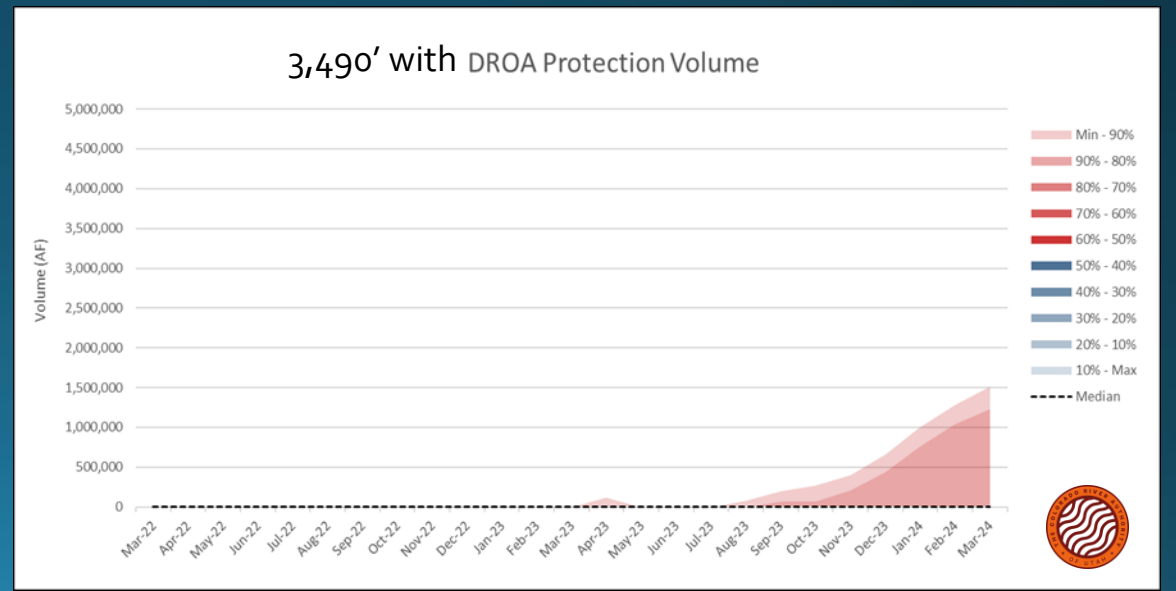
- DROA releases could cause declines in Flaming Gorge relative to No DROA scenario
- Flaming Gorge impacts are on the order of 10’ to 15’ decline in elevation relative to No DROA scenario



# Glen Canyon Dam Cooperative Actions

- April 8th proposal to reduce releases by 0.48 maf in an operationally "neutral" way from Glen Canyon Dam to protect elevations including 3,490'
- Action in coordination with DROA 2022 Plan
- Cooperative Actions reduce risks to ~3%
- Basin States responded on 4/22
- May 3rd, Interior concurred and is conducting DROA and reduced releases

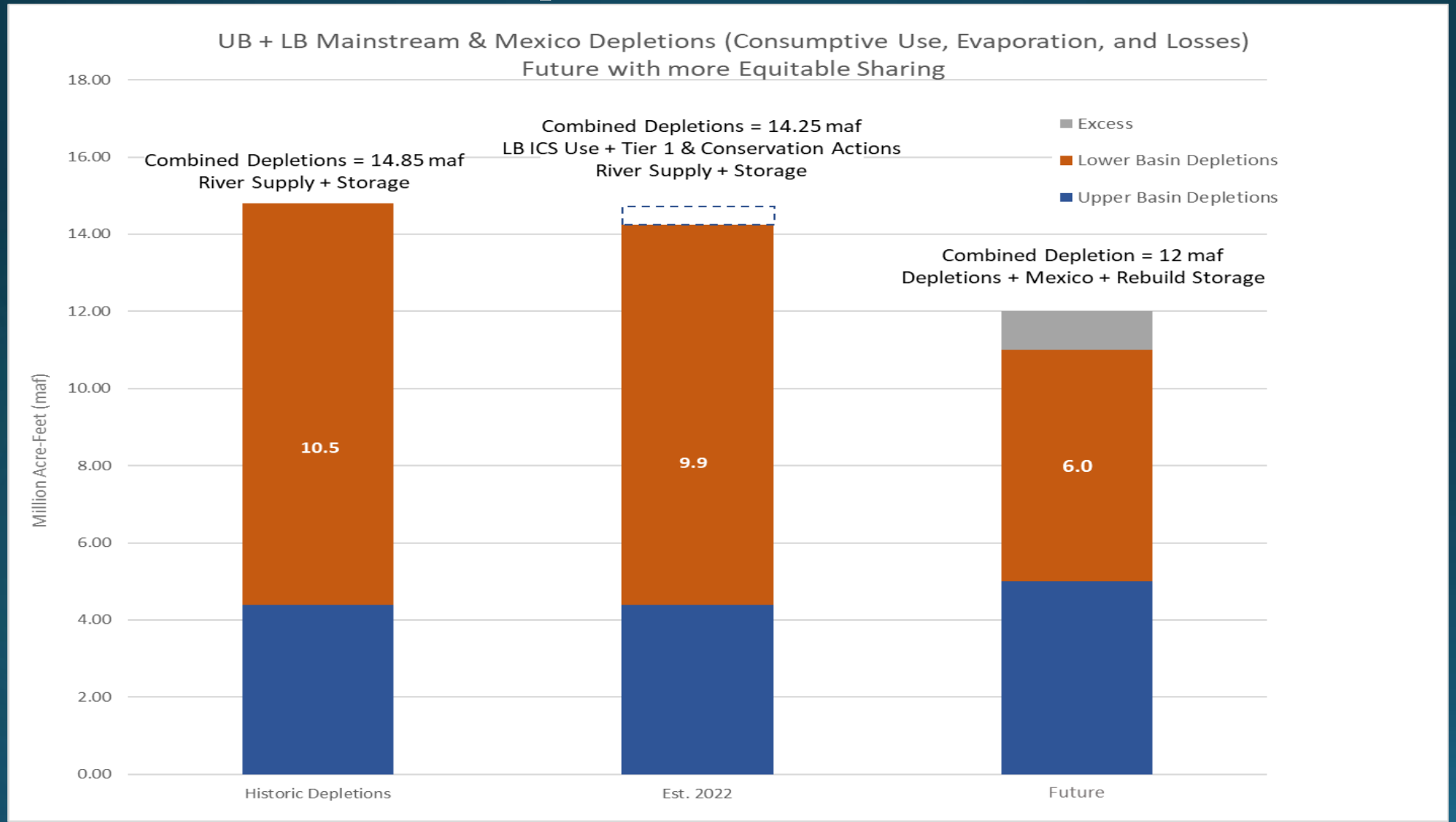


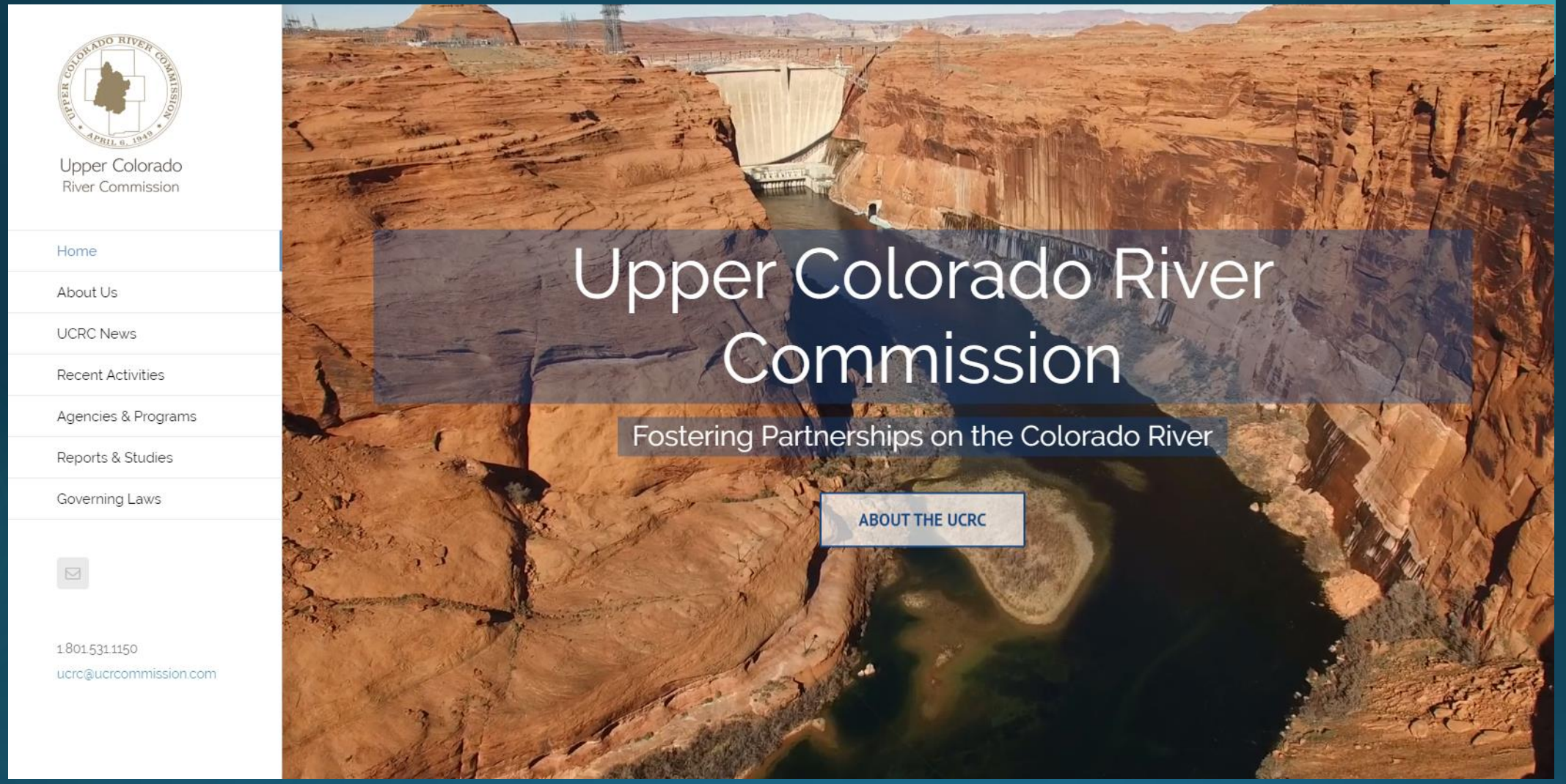



# Colorado River Water Wisdom from Olaf (adapted from Frozen 2)

- "Water is Memory" **Resiliency**
- "I wish it could be this way forever, and yet change is mocking us with her beauty" **Adaptable**
- "All one can do is the next right thing" **Sustainable**

# A future that balances depletions with supply: **Resilient, Adaptable and Sustainable**

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# Questions?