## **Discover the Colorado River!**

Last time Water Wise readers learned how people through the centuries have always relied on water in what's now Arizona. This month, let's learn about the

River water is a RENEWABLE resource, meaning that nature replenishes it through rainfall and snowmelt year after year.

Colorado River, a very important renewable water source for several states in the West.

## Running with the Colorado

What falls over 10,300 feet without breaking? What runs more than 1,450 miles without legs? It's the Colorado River!

The Colorado starts as just a stream high in the mountains of northern Colorado. But as it travels south and west, the stream is fed by water from other rivers, called TRIBUTAR-IES. The river flows through the desert and ends in northwestern Mexico.

For thousands of years, the Colorado has inspired and sustained the people who have lived along its shores. Today, the Colorado and its tributaries bring water to people, animals

and plants in seven U.S. states and two states in Mexico. More than 25 million people in the Southwest depend on the river to supply water for homes, industry, farming and recharge projects (underground water storage).

The river provides drinking water, natural habitats, fisheries, food, electricity (in the form of HYDROPOWER) and fun!



The Colorado's watershed (basin) is the entire land area that drains water into the river. It's a big area of the Southwest, covering 244,000 square miles!

Still, water is limited in the Colorado Basin. In order to share the Colorado's water, states and Indian nations in the United States and Mexico have made agreements saying how much water each can use. For example, an international treaty between the United States and Mexico determines the minimum amount of water that must be left in the river when it crosses the border.

River users have also agreed to leave water in the river for the natural environment. And some water returns to the river after it has been used.

To help control the river, the government built two large dams—Hoover Dam in 1931 and Glen Canyon Dam in 1963, creating huge reservoirs to store water. In Central and Southern Arizona, Colorado River water is delivered by Central Arizona Project.

## More Ways to Learn About Water

## Colorado River Scramble!

Unscramble the letters to figure out the water words from this month's column.

BLEEWERNA
RETWA
NORAZIA
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Central Arizona Project is a 336 mile long system of aqueducts, pumping plants, and pipelines which carries Colorado River water into central and southern Arizona.



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