



Colorado River



Lake Mead



Desert landscaping

[Contact Reporter Edward Lawrence](#)

The water from melting snow on Mount Charleston will not make it to Lake Mead for about 100 years according to hydrologists. The wet winter all over the west will also not really help the levels in the lake.

On Thursday, the Southern Nevada Water Authority released new statistics on how the valley is doing with the drought in this area. The numbers show the amount of water going into the Colorado River upstream look very encouraging. But, SNWA says the drought is not over.

A lot more water than normal flowed into Lake Powell in the month of May, 126-percent of normal to be exact. But Tracy Bower from the Southern Nevada Water Authority says, "Lake Powell is upriver. We would like to fill that up first to give us some cushion there. Then again bring Lake Mead up after that."

Currently, Lake Powell is at 46-percent of capacity, so the extra water will stay in that lake.

The normal amount of water will be released downstream into Lake Mead. Bower says the southwestern states draw well more than that amount, meaning Lake Mead water levels will continue to drop.

Bower adds, "We can see that by the bathtub ring that lines the lake. The lake is down more than 65 feet." Bower says it will take five years of rain and snow like this year to bring the Valley officially out of the drought.

Wet weather in Southern California prompted the state to hold back on asking for their allotted water from the Colorado River; mudslides in that area serve as evidence of rain.

Bower says, "During the winter they were not using as much water. As we head into the summer months we know there is going to be greater demand throughout the Colorado River basin." \

The solution, according to the Southern Nevada Water Authority, is to keep conserving.

Bower says now is a perfect time to join the Water Smart program. That program pays you \$1 per square foot to convert grass to desert landscape. Last fall and spring it had a waiting list. There is no wait now.

The good news is the Valley's conservation efforts are working. The latest numbers show that southern Nevada used about the same amount of water in May 2005 as was used in May 2003. And when you consider the Valley's growth rate, there are a lot more people using less water.

Right now, summer conservation restrictions are in effect. You can water any day of the week, just not between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. Although SNWA recommends that you only water four days a week.