

SURVEYS OF COLORADO RIVER BASIN.  
Two Thousand Miles of Stream  
Courses Mapped.

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SURVEYS IN COLORADO RIVER BASIN,  
Two Thousand Miles of Stream Courses Mapped.

One of the largest and most hazardous projects undertaken by the Department of the Interior, through the Geological Survey has been that of mapping Colorado River and its tributaries. From time to time since 1869, when Maj. J. W. Powell, afterward Director of the Geological Survey, first explored the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, topographers, engineers, and geologists of the Survey have been making surveys in parts of the 244,000 square miles drained by the river. Systematic surveys for a series of large-scale maps of the river and the adjacent areas were begun in 1909, and the field work required for these maps is now practically completed. Much of this field work was hazardous and the surveying parties at times suffered great hardships.

When Major Powell made his historic first trip vast stretches of the basin of the Colorado were still unexplored, and the great canyon itself was practically unknown except as a theme for fantastic tales by the Indians. Today the maps prepared and the information collected by the Geological Survey furnish an accurate knowledge of nearly 2,000 miles of the watercourses in this basin, showing every turn of every stream, the location and the fall of all the rapids, the topography and geology of the canyon walls, and the location and cross sections of the more feasible dam sites.

Many Maps Published and in Preparation.

Some of these maps have been included in books; others are published separately, in sets. The Geological Survey's Water-Supply Paper 396, "Profile surveys in the Colorado River Basin in Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico," contains 43 maps showing plans and profiles of the Colorado above Green River, of Green River and its tributaries, and of a part of Gila River. The more recent maps are printed in three colors, black, blue and brown, used respectively for the geographic names, the rivers, and the levels in the region, and represent the highest type of river survey maps. The following maps have already been published: Green River from Green River, Utah, to Green River, Wyo., comprising 16 sheets; Colorado River from Lees Ferry, Ariz., to mouth of Green River, Utah, and San Juan River to Chinle Creek, Utah, comprising 22 sheets. Other maps now in press or in course of preparation are: Yampa River from Green River to Morgan Gulch, Colo., 5 sheets; Colorado River from Lees Ferry, Ariz., to Black Canyon, Ariz.-Nev., and Virgin River, 21 sheets; Colorado River from Black Canyon to the Mexican boundary. These maps are sold for 10 cents each.

The preparation of these maps constitutes one part of the work done by the Geological Survey in determining the water resources of the United States and in classifying the public lands. It is part of a systematic program for obtaining the basic data essential to a comprehensive national scheme for the development of rivers for power, irrigation, and other uses.

Seventy-seven Stream-gaging Stations Maintained.

Another part of the work is that of gaging the streams to determine their flow. On Colorado River such stream gaging has been in progress since 1895, and 77 gaging stations are now regularly maintained in its basin. The measurements thus made are published annually in the Geological Survey's series of reports on surface water supply. The maps and the records of stream flow are from time to time supplemented by other publications. A paper entitled "Colorado River and its utilization," published some time ago as Water Supply Paper 395, can still be obtained, and three other reports are now in preparation that will show how much water is available in the basin and will contain suggestions as to its best use.

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