

Colorado River Basin vulnerable to drought

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A National Research Council study of the Colorado River Basin found that the area could suffer severe droughts as the climate warms and population grows.

The council, which is the research arm of the National Academy of Science, said global warming and increasing population rates will put greater pressure on water supplies, presenting "a sobering prospect for elected officials and water managers," The New York Times reported Thursday.

The report's authors said solving the problem could be difficult, but steps including conservation, desalination and water recycling could help, the Los Angeles Times said.

"If people think they can save enough water to meet all the future demands, our judgment (is) that it's not going to be that easy," said Ernest Smerdon, who chaired the panel of academicians and scientists who wrote the report. "(We) are not predicting doom. We are just saying that there are critical issues to be addressed."

"The basin is going to face increasingly costly, controversial and unavoidable trade-off choices," Smerdon said. "Increasing demands are impeding the region's ability to cope with droughts and water shortages."

The Colorado River Basin includes Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico and parts of California.

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