Increase in Precipitation Provides Hope for Colorado River Basin

The Los Angeles Times article below discussed the recent increase in snowfall throughout the Rocky Mountains, finally combating the effects of a long standing drought that had ravaged the region. The result of this increased snowfall finally provides some hope that water shortages will not be a significant problem for the region, as evidenced by the option to divert water from Lake Powell to Lake Mead, bringing it above shortage levels. The river still faces challenges though, due to the demand outpacing the supply, but this provides hope that shortages can be averted.

To meet the demand, budgeting is necessary. This is especially true since, while this year has provided an uptick in snowfall to the region, glacial recession is still a concern. With glaciers receding, less water will be available for streams, and thus, less water for reservoirs such as Lake Powell or Lake Mead. This is important for projects such as the one discussed in the National Geographic article reference below. To restore the Colorado River Delta’s biodiversity, a large pulse of water was released from Lake Mead. If water levels can be maintained in Lake Mead, perhaps the delta can be restored fully. Water managers in the region stress though not to get complacent. One good winter will not be enough to bail out the region from its water shortages. Budgeting of water is going to be necessary to meet the agricultural, industrial, and domestic water demands of the region, while also attempting to restore wetlands devastated by the changing climate.

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-colorado-river-20170217-story.html>

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/special-features/2014/12/141216-colorado-river-delta-restoration-water-drought-environment/>