

Debate: Grand Canyon Dam Controversy

Bureau of Reclamation

How would the dams benefit the southwest?	Why were projects like these dams necessary in the southwest?	To what extent would the dams flood the Grand Canyon?	What alternatives were proposed by the Bureau?
<p style="text-align: center;">These two dams would provide funding and power for other Bureau of Reclamation projects throughout the southwest through the sale of hydroelectric power including funding the Central Arizona Project.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">There was tremendous population and urban growth occurring throughout the southwest. In order to have enough water to sustain the growing populations in the arid region water management plans had to be put into action. These dams would help to fund those plans.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The dams would not completely flood the Grand Canyon. In fact the reservoir in some areas would not even be visible from the rim of the canyon.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Bureau of Reclamation proposed that the Marble Canyon Dam not be built but instead only the Bridge Canyon (Hualapai) Dam would still be built. The Grand Canyon National Monument would also be abolished in order to avoid encroaching on a part of the national park system.</p>

Sierra Club

Why should the Grand Canyon be protected from development like dams?	Was there an alternative source of funding and power for the water management projects? Explain.	What perception did the American public have of the Grand Canyon?	What damage could the dams cause to the surrounding ecosystem?
<p>(Suggested Response: should include information from the reading) The Grand Canyon wilderness and ecosystem would be forever changed by the construction of these dams. The canyon is one of the world's treasures and should be protected in order to preserve the natural wonders of the region. Dams would stop the flowing river that created the canyon in the first place and prevent people from enjoying the adventure of running the river.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opponents of the dam argued that the required power and funding necessary for the planned projects could be generated from coal-fired thermal plants or nuclear generators.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">After the Sierra Club ads about the dams to be built in the Grand Canyon hundreds of thousands of letters were sent by the public to legislators. American's and preservationists saw the Grand Canyon as one of the world's treasures and something that must be protected. Sierra Club membership also rose during the Grand Canyon controversy from 39,000 in 1966, 67,000 in 1968 to 135,000 by 1971.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Marble Canyon Dam would flood 53 miles of river and Bridge Canyon Dam would flood 93 miles. 40 miles of the Grand Canyon National Monument would be affected and 13 miles of the National Park. Over time sedimentation would continue to affect more areas of the canyon's ecosystem.</p>

