

Dams in Arizona

Building dams is one way in which people change their natural environment. A dam is built across a river to stop the flow of the water. People build dams for different reasons. Some dams are built to help stop floods in wet years and make sure there is enough water to grow crops in dry years. Other dams were built to move water from a river into canals to irrigate farm crops. Dams are also built to make electricity. Other dams are built to hold water for a town or city's use or to make a lake for recreation.

People in Arizona have been building dams for hundreds of years. The first dams were small dams built by Native American tribes to move water from rivers into their fields to grow crops. As more people moved into Arizona and started farming and using water, more dams were built. Many larger dams have been built in the last 100 years. Most of these dams were built to prevent flooding, provide water for crops and cities, or make electricity. Large lakes created behind the dams have provided fun activities for Arizona residents. These are some examples of the good effects of changing the natural environment by building dams.

There are also harmful effects of dam building. The dams' lakes flooded land and the homes of many animals when it was built. The water temperature of the river after it leaves the dam is colder than it was before, and some fish and water animals can no longer live there. Some Arizona rivers have very little water in them below the dams. The fish, birds, and plants that used to live in or around these rivers are no longer there. The people living along these now-dry rivers sometimes had to change their way of living. These are ways in which the natural environment changed when the dams were built.

Use the Important Dams in Arizona map to answer questions 5–7.

5. Name the 4 dams on the Salt River.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

6. Write the dates of construction of the following Colorado River Dams.

Glen Canyon Dam _____

Hoover Dam _____

Davis Dam _____

Laguna Dam _____

7. Which Colorado River dam was built the earliest?

Arizona Dams
Key to Student Worksheet

1. Any 2 of the following: (2 pts)
 - Control water
 - Stop floods
 - Water for crops
 - Make electricity
 - Water for cities and towns
 - Make lake for recreation purposes
2. Native Americans (1 pt)
3. Any 2 of the following: (2pts)
 - Stop flooding
 - Water for cities and crops
 - Provide electricity
 - Recreation opportunities
4. c (1pt)
5. In any order (4pts)
 - Theodore Roosevelt Dam
 - Horse Mesa Dam
 - Mormon Flat Dam
 - Stewart Mountain Dam
6. (4 pts)
 - Glen Canyon Dam - 1964
 - Hoover Dam – 1936
 - Davis Dam – 1949
 - Laguna Dam –1909
7. Laguna Dam (1 pt)