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The Hoover Dam

Have individuals ever thought of how dams truly affect their surroundings? Well, dams actually have a huge impact on people and the environments that surround them. There are over 80,000 dams in the United States, each one shaping its environment (“Questions about Removing Dams”). The Hoover Dam, in particular, is one of the most well-known dams in the United States, and like all other dams, it has impacts on people and the environment near it. The Hoover Dam has positive impacts on the environment, such as flood control, water and electricity sources, and profits for tourism; but it also has negative impacts on its surrounding areas, such as destruction of the surrounding ecosystem, flooding of parts of the Colorado River, and the encouragement of poor irrigation practices.

The Hoover Dam has positively affected thousands of people. It has controlled flooding in the Imperial Valley, which is downstream from the dam. The dam regulates the water level of the river, so that when the river rises, it keeps the excess water from flooding the Imperial River Valley. Rita Kennedy states that flooding of the Imperial Valley was a huge problem for farmers who established their farms there, and also according to Kennedy, once the dam was built, the farmers were able to maintain a farm without having to worry about their crops being flooded. In addition, the Hoover Dam helps supply water to many of the surrounding desert-like regions. According to Rita Kennedy, the dam supplies water to communities in Nevada, California, and Arizona, making it possible to have cities in these regions. Because of the dam, parts of these states were able to develop into very famous and successful communities. The dam also provides a source of hydroelectric power for some of southern California and Nevada. According to Amanda Briney, the dam is only 30 miles from Las Vegas, which makes it a very popular tourist attraction. Many tourists visit Hoover Dam, which brings in money for the state of Nevada.

Unfortunately, the dam has many negative aspects that affect the surrounding environment. It has a huge impact on the surrounding ecosystem. When the dam was built, the water level downstream was lowered, which created stagnant water and higher water temperatures (“Hoover Dam and Dam Construction”). These water conditions caused many species to adapt to their conditions, but others had to relocate, or they died off. As a result of the decreasing fish population, many species of fish have become endangered (“Hoover Dam and Dam Construction”). Another poor quality of the dam is that it collects water in a reservoir, which floods the area upstream from the dam. This flooding has caused at least 30 million people to abandon their homes since the 1930s (“Hoover Dam and Dam Construction”). Lastly, poor irrigation practices are a result of the dam; many farmers take advantage of the plentiful and cheap water source and use wasteful watering techniques as opposed to water-saving ones (“Hoover Dam and Dam Construction”).

The Hoover Dam has helped thousands of people by supplying water, controlling floods, supplying hydroelectricity, and bringing in profit from tourism. In contrast, it has harmed the surrounding environment by destroying surrounding ecosystems, flooding parts of the Colorado River, and encouraging poor irrigation practices. Many people think that the Hoover Dam is very helpful towards surrounding communities, but others would argue that it hurts more than helps. With the right information, individuals can start realizing the true cost of dams.

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