

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

EVAPORATION FROM RESERVOIRS

According to I. E. Houk, of the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, evaporation from reservoir surfaces on the various irrigation projects maintained by the Reclamation Bureau in the west causes a loss of about 1,000,000 acre-feet of water a year; enough water to irrigate an area of about 250,000 acres of land. For many years the Bureau has measured evaporation on the irrigation projects where large storage reservoirs are necessary parts of the works, the measurements being made by noting the loss of water in pans, either floating on the water in lakes and reservoirs or standing on land.

These measurements show that evaporation losses from lake and reservoir surfaces in the western United States vary from about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet per annum in the northern mountainous regions to about 5 feet per annum in parts of the southwestern states. Shoshone Reservoir, located 5,400 feet above sea level, has an average annual evaporation of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet; Lake Tahoe, Calif., altitude 6,230 feet, loses about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet a year; Elephant Butte Reservoir, in southern New Mexico, altitude 4,500 feet, loses about $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet a year by evaporation. A land pan record in the Yuma, Ariz., citrus district, shows that a reservoir in that region would have an average annual evaporation as high as $6\frac{3}{4}$ feet.

At all stations the evaporation varies considerably from year to year.

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21st and B Sts.,
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