

The drainage area of a stream at a specified location is that area, measured in a horizontal plane, which is so enclosed by a topographic divide that direct surface runoff from precipitation normally would drain by gravity into the river above the specified point. Figures of drainage area given herein include all closed basins, or noncontributing areas, within the area unless otherwise noted.

NEW DOWNSTREAM ORDER OF LISTING GAGING STATIONS

Beginning with the series of reports for the water year ending September 30, 1951, the order of listing gaging-station records has been changed. In this report, in a downstream direction along the main stem all stations on a tributary entering above a main-stem station are listed before that station. If a tributary enters between two main-stem stations, it is listed between them. A similar order is followed in listing stations on first rank, second rank, and other ranks of tributaries. To indicate the rank of any tributary on which a gaging station is situated and the stream to which it is immediately tributary, each indentation in the listing of gaging stations in the table of contents of this report represents one rank. This new downstream order and system of indentation show which gaging stations are on tributaries between any two stations on a main stem and the rank of the tributary on which each gaging station is situated.

The order of listing used before the publication of the 1951 report listed first all stations on the main stem from headwaters toward mouth, then all stations on the uppermost tributary to the main stem from the tributary's source to mouth, and then all stations from source to mouth of the uppermost tributary to the tributary.

EXPLANATION OF DATA

The base data collected at gaging stations consist of records of stage and measurements of discharge. In addition, observations of factors affecting the stage-discharge relation, weather records, and other information is used to supplement base data in determining the daily flow. The records of stage are obtained either from direct readings on a nonrecording gage or from a water-stage recorder that gives a continuous record of fluctuations. Measurements of discharge are made with a current meter by the general methods adopted by the Geological Survey on the basis of experience in stream gaging since 1888. These methods are described in Water-Supply Paper 888 and are also outlined in standard textbooks on the measurement of stream discharge. Typical structures in use at gaging stations are shown in figure 1.

Rating tables giving the discharge for any stage are prepared from stage-discharge relation curves defined by discharge measurements. If extensions to the rating curves are necessary to define the extremes of discharge, they are made on the basis of indirect measurements of peak discharge (such as slope-area or contracted-opening measurements, computation of flow over dams or weirs, and by other methods), velocity-area studies, and logarithmic plotting. The application of the daily mean gage height to those rating tables gives the daily mean discharge, from which the monthly and the yearly mean discharge are computed. If the stage-discharge relation is subject to change because of frequent or continual change in the physical features that form the control, the daily mean discharge is determined by the shifting-control method, in which correction factors based on individual discharge measurements and notes by engineers and observers are used in applying



A. COLORADO RIVER AT LEES FERRY, ARIZ.

Note landing tower.



B. Crystal River Near Redstone, Colo.

FIGURE 1.—GAGING-STATION STRUCTURES.

