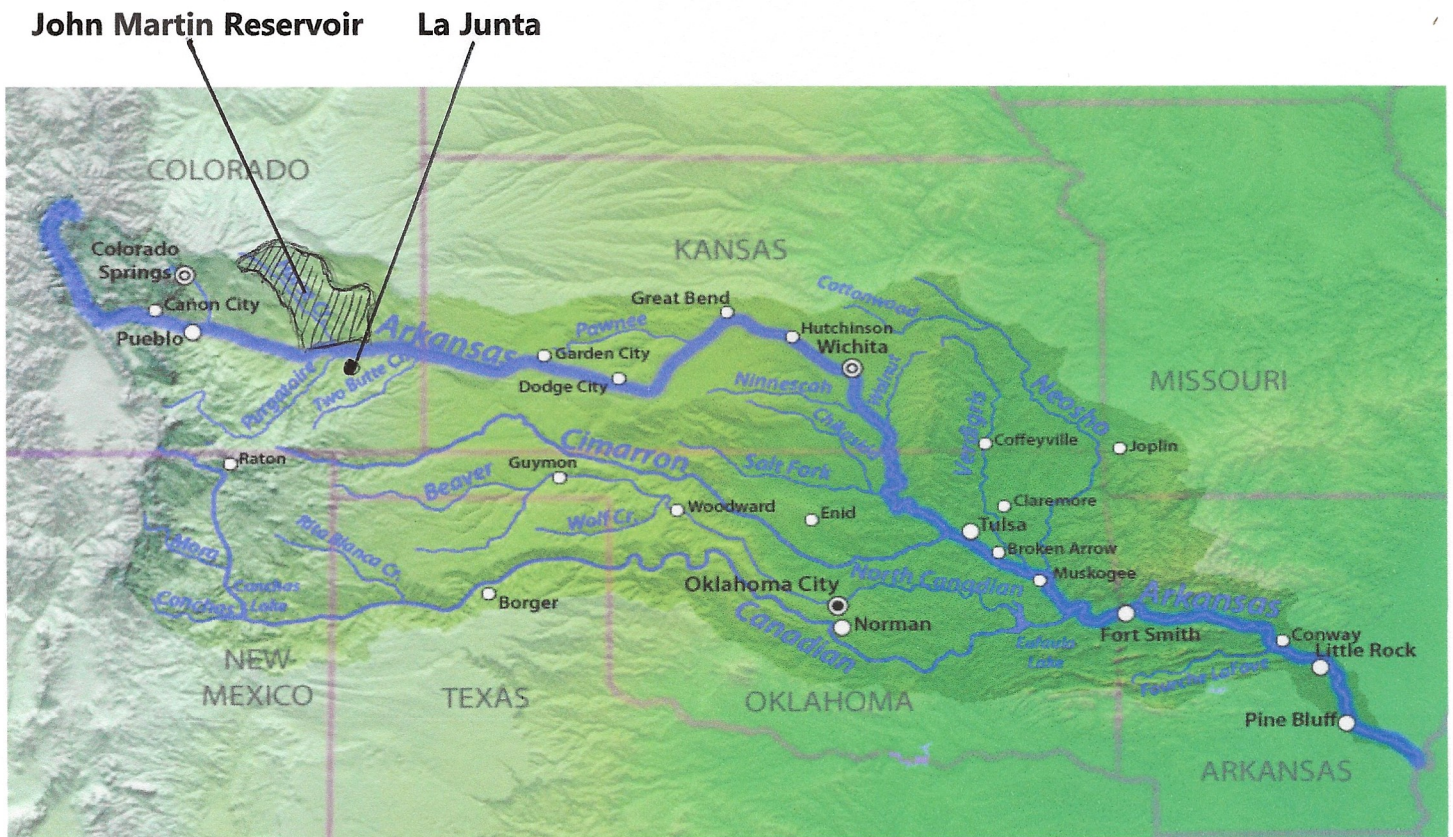


## Arkansas River Basin



### Arkansas River

The Arkansas River, a large tributary of the Mississippi River, rises in the Sawatch Range of the Rocky Mountains near Leadville in central Colorado, U.S., and flows generally east-southeastward for 1,460 miles through Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas before entering the Mississippi 40 miles northeast of Arkansas City, Arkansas. It has a total fall of 11,400 feet, and its drainage basin covers 161,000 square miles.

From Leadville the Arkansas River flows southeast for about 100 miles to Canon City, Colorado, falling 6,750 feet. It leaves the mountains near Canon City through the Royal Gorge, a narrow canyon cut into solid granite with vertical walls more than 1,000 feet high. The Purgatoire River enters the Arkansas just above the John Martin Reservoir (1948), near Las Animas, Colorado. Between Canon City and Great Bend, Kansas, the Arkansas River's channel is wide and shallow and meanders through a dry area that is extensively irrigated. Heavy rainfalls upstream will occasionally cause floods. Southeastward from Great Bend the river flows through a more humid area and is frequently more than 0.5 mile wide with a deep channel. The river receives its main tributaries in the Oklahoma portion: the Salt Fork, Cimarron, Verdigris, Grand, and Canadian rivers. The Arkansas River Navigation System enters the river 5 miles northeast of Muskogee, Oklahoma, at the mouth of the Verdigris River, and continues through Arkansas to the Mississippi. Many water-control projects have been established in the Arkansas River basin, including a multiple-purpose reservoir at Eufaula on the Canadian River near McAlester, Oklahoma. Principal riparian cities are Pueblo, Colorado; Wichita, Kansas; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Fort Smith and Little Rock, Arkansas.