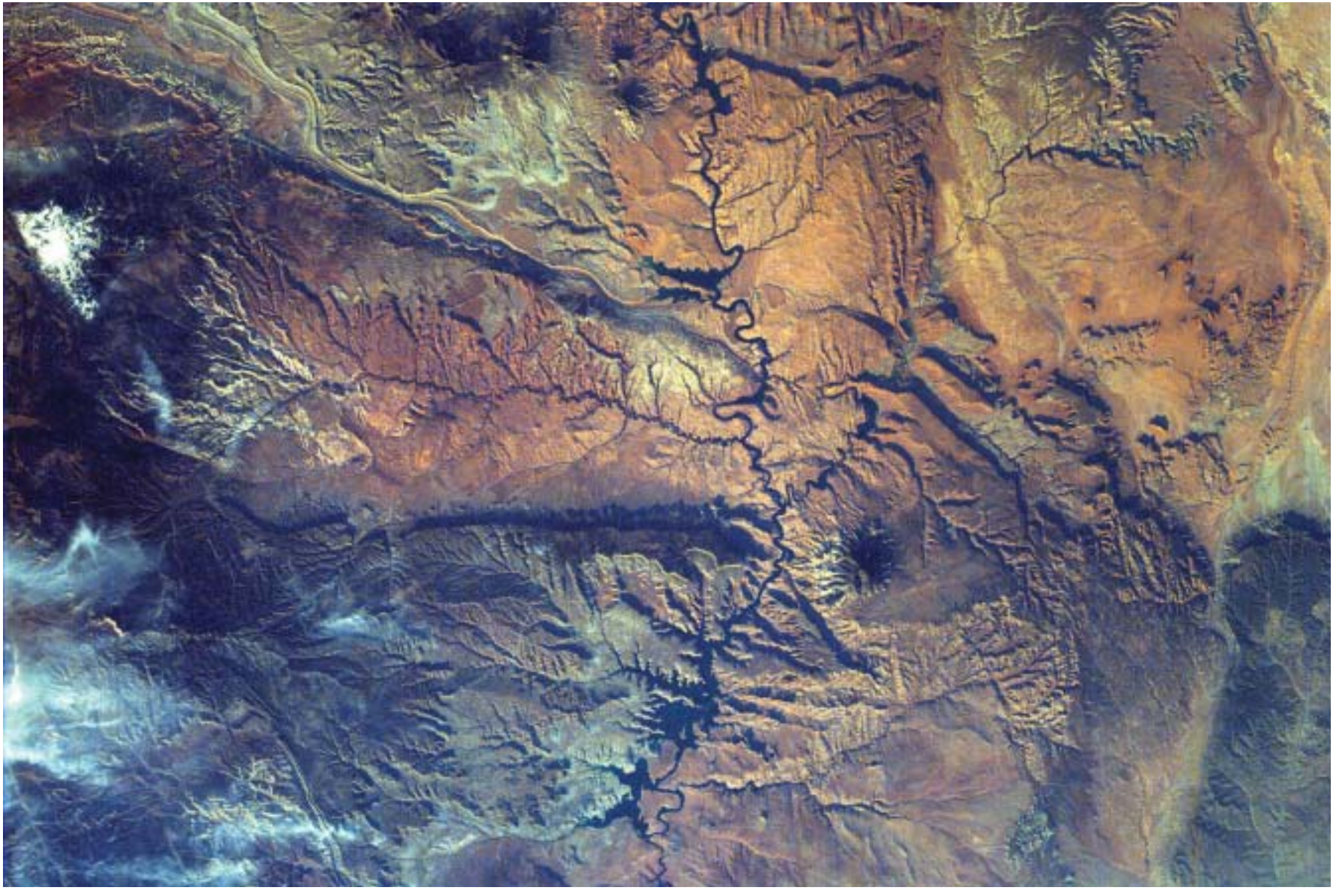
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Colorado River



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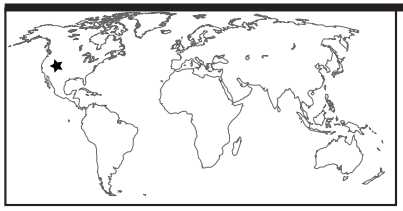

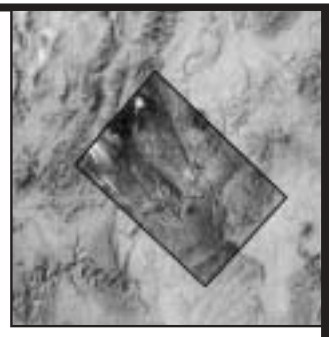

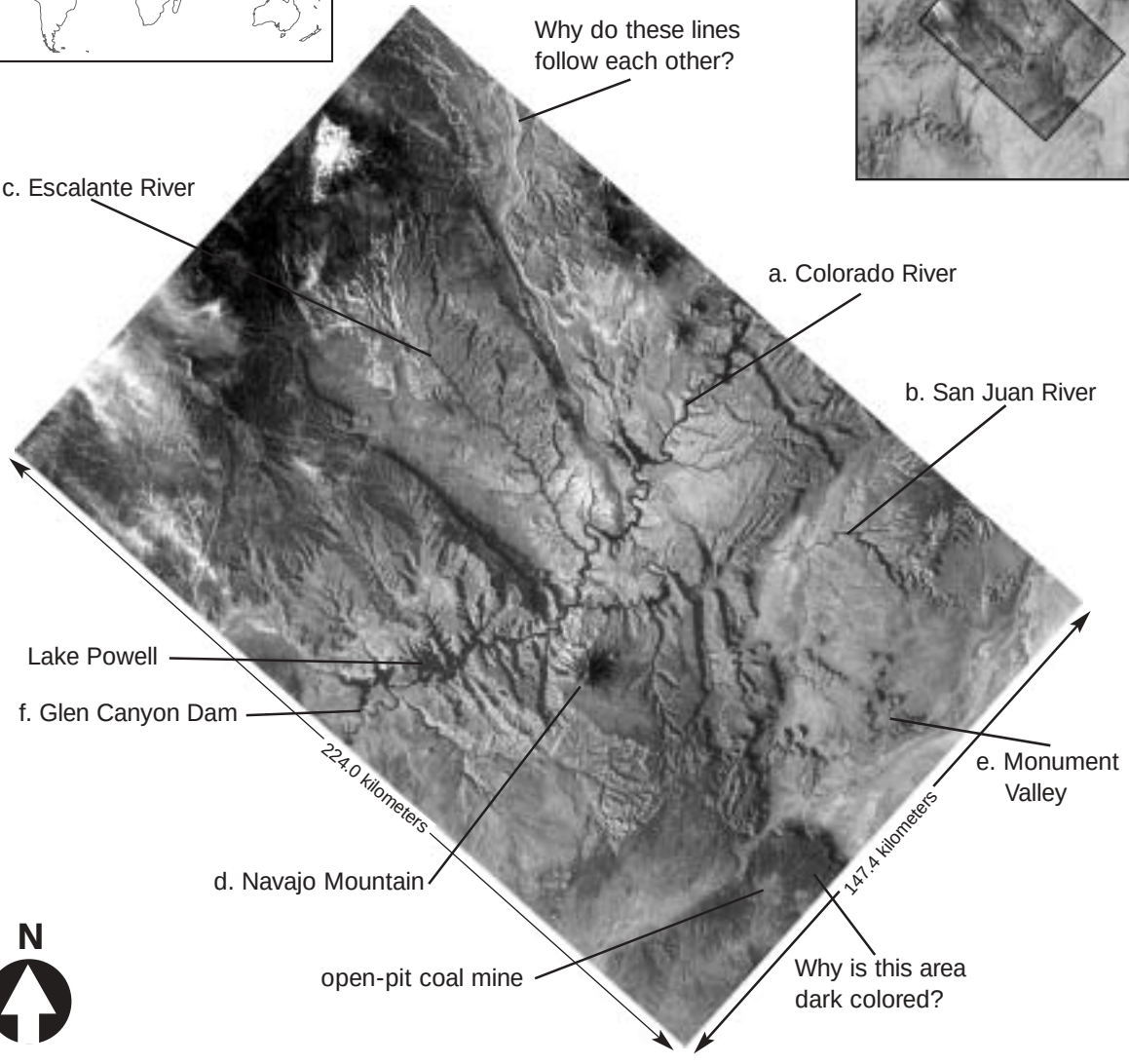

Latitude: 37.47˚ N **Longitude:** 111.18˚ W
Date: October 10, 2001
Image ID #: ISS003.ESC1.283233933

The Colorado River (a) is the largest river in the southwestern United States. As it flows through southern Utah, the river continuously erodes the sedimentary rock layers forming a deep, narrow canyon. Within this image, two tributary rivers, the San Juan (b) and the Escalante (c), flow into the Colorado. The region that gathers rainfall into a river is called a drainage basin. The entire drainage basin of the Escalante River is visible. Tree-covered, high-elevation mountains around the head of the Escalante River basin appear dark compared to the sparsely vegetated, orange-colored sedimentary rocks found at lower elevations.

Navajo Mountain (d) marks the gathering of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers. This isolated dome volcano pushed through the sedimentary rock layers of the Colorado Plateau and is situated near the Utah-Arizona border. Nearby Monument Valley (e), a Navajo Nation Tribal Park, has been characterized by red sandstone buttes and mesas that rise up to 300 meters above the surrounding landscape.

The Glen Canyon Dam (f) is visible at the far western edge of the image. Built between 1960 and 1963, the dam provides the area with water, electricity, and recreation. However, the introduction of the dam permanently changed the local ecosystem, which led to a controversy that is often cited as contributing to the birth of the modern environmental movement.

Additional information:
ISS EarthKAM images and lessons:
http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu
NASA Spacelink:
http://spacelink.nasa.gov

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