

Challenges for Reclamation: a Western States' Perspective

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By Craig Bell

2006 Water Report

The six major sections of the WGA Water Report are:

1. Water Policy and Growth
2. Water to Meet Future Demands
3. Water Infrastructure Needs and Strategies for Meeting Them
4. Resolution of Indian Water Rights
5. Climate Change Impacts
6. Protecting Aquatic Species under the ESA

2008 Water Report - “Next Steps”

WSWC should enter into a formal agreement to:

- Create a “Western States Federal Agency Support Team”
 - comprised of reps of federal agencies
- Create a WSWC “liaison position”
 - to facilitate collaboration



Foreword

The Western Governor's Association should:

- Urge Congress to require federal water resource agencies to include:
 - “Integrated Water Resources Planning and Assistance” as part of their mission
- Goals
 - Change way water planning is conducted
 - Reduce inefficiencies

State Water Plans

- Federal agencies should use state water plans:
 - To help determine national water policy and priorities that best align federal agency support to states
 - Inform decision making regarding regional water issues



Water Planning & Management

Federal agencies with long range water supply planning responsibilities should:

- Work in cooperation with states to help communities develop
 - Drought preparedness plans
 - Drought contingency plans
 - Establish or enhance federal reservoir drought contingency plans
 - Be visible and engaged in all drought-related forums.

Water Infrastructure Needs & Strategies

Water and Wastewater Treatment

- Encourage private and public/private financial partnerships
- All levels of government should cooperate in development and implementation of criteria for prioritizing
 - infrastructure needs
 - asset management strategies
 - policies
 - standards
 - techniques
 - technologies

“Easy” Questions for the new BOR Commissioner

- Is our present level of water use in the West sustainable, and if not, what changes are needed?
- What do you see as Reclamation’s role in water management/development vis a vis the States?
- What role do you see Reclamation playing in the future in support of local watershed groups?
- What are the biggest challenges to finally resolving Indian water rights claims?
- How can climate change considerations be better integrated into future water resources planning?
- What role would you anticipate Reclamation may play in water conflicts resolution in the West?
- What would you like to see as your legacy as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation?

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