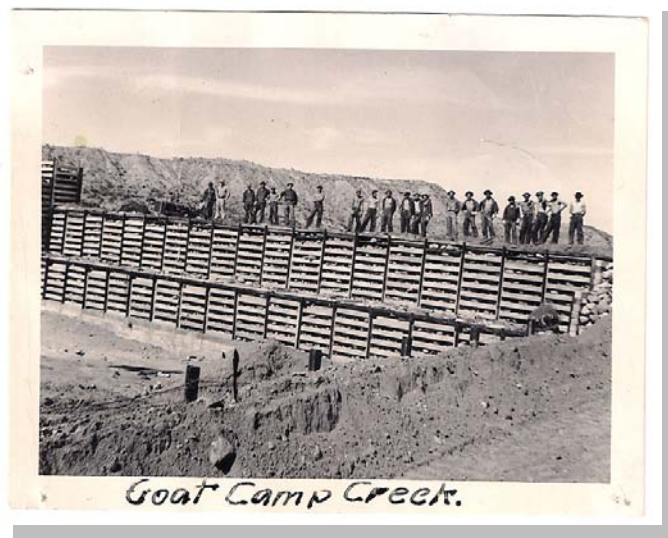


Intervention On the Upper Gila Watershed by Bill Brandau

It is Wednesday morning and as usual I am behind the power curve. I am supposed to have an article to Jan for the GWP newsletter by this afternoon. So what do I talk about? My favorite topic "Working Together". Next week at the regular meeting I will present a short presentation I put together on the history of the intervention efforts on the Upper Gila Watershed since the early 20th century. Here it is the early 21st century and we are still trying to intervening. This is a good thing for the most part; I believe people generally are trying to do the right thing to make things better. They are attempting to manage and restore resources so the resources are sustainable and can be used. It is amazing the efforts that have been put forth to better understand the watershed, to manage it and to protect it. In the last 100 years the count is some 150 different efforts.

The question I had was, have these intervention efforts been sustainable over time and have the efforts had lasting effect on the river, watershed and associated uses. The answer to that question is no. Most of the interventions efforts have not sustain themselves over any length of time. I believe the reason why interventions are not

sustained is they are event based and not people based. Most interventions are tied to some major climatic event, a government program supplying money and/or an energetic person or group that champions a particular cause. When the memory of the event fades, the program ceases to be funded or the person or group ceases to push the intervention efforts usually stop. These interventions are not ultimately sustainable because they have not become part of the fabric of society in the Upper Gila and the people of the watershed have not made them apart of their value system.



The intervention efforts that have with stood the test of time have some common elements of people working together, 1. Common vision, 2. A working level of trust among the people, and 3. Visible successful results of their efforts in a timely manner.

The Gila Watershed Partnership is one of the intervention efforts that have so far with stood the test of time. From time to time it is important to revisit why we are doing what we do. Because of this I at Graham County Cooperative Extension agreed to host a listening session to hear what is important to the people of the Upper Gila Watershed. This information can be used to refine the vision of our efforts in the Upper Gila.

I have attached a short article written by Sharon Megdal who discusses the need for a state wide effort to listen to the people of Arizona about what are their water issues. You in the Upper Gila will have the opportunity to voice your thoughts on water issues important to you in the Upper Gila, April 22. Please read what Sharon has to say and join us at the listening session on April 22, 2010.

Take from Arizona Water Resource, Volume 18, Number 1; winter 2010

By Sharon Megdal, Director Arizona Water Resources Research Center, University of Arizona, January 12, 2010

Over time, I have become more and more convinced that Arizona needs to do a better job of planning for our water future. We face water challenges within and outside of the Active Management Areas. I suspect no person knowledgeable about our

complex water issues would deny we face challenges associated with growth and limited water supplies. Significant uncertainties abound, including those associated with flows of the Colorado River.

A recent survey suggests that Arizonans recognize water as a major issue needing investment. The Center for the Future of Arizona's Gallup Web survey of 831 Arizonans asked that they prioritize six options for the best use of their tax dollars. The greatest number of respondents (28 percent) chose: "Adopt a water management plan that protects water supplies for the entire state." Rural areas and small cities registered greater support for water management planning than other sectors, at 28.7 and 29.6 percent respectively. Otherwise, little difference existed in the opinions by geography, attachment level, or age when it comes to water.

The next most popular policy option (21.5 percent) was "balancing population growth with preserving open space and recreational opportunities." Other options included mass transit systems, new highways and roads, improved interstate transportation and high speed Internet. Admittedly, survey results merely suggest what policies or investments citizens are likely to support in the future. Results clearly depend on the structure of the survey instrument itself. Nevertheless, they suggest that citizens recognize the need for investment in water infrastructure.

What do I mean by water planning? I recently responded to this question by stating that I would begin simply by identifying (1) what water needs have been identified by jurisdiction/water provider; (2) which entities may be looking at the same water sources (such as the Colorado River); and (3) where economies of scale could be realized for infrastructure investments. It was suggested that I call the exercise a "Needs Assessment" rather than a "State Water Plan." I have no problem with that; that is exactly what I am suggesting we do. One has to know the needs before one can identify the solutions.

So, by all means, let's get people together to talk about their needs and see where solutions overlap. Let's engage in a sustained discussion - in other words, we don't go home after collecting data - about water sustainability in Arizona. Let's discuss the water needs of current and future residents, agriculture and industry (including energy), as well as water needed to support the environment. Let's also talk about issues that may not be on the horizon for many of us. For example, the May issue of *Southwest Hydrology* identified carbon sequestration as an issue. What if efforts to sequester carbon in deep aquifers limit our future ability to use aquifers? Very few experts are discussing the treatment of poor quality groundwater as well as efforts to sequester carbon. The Arizona Department of Water Resources has worked long and hard to collect the data presented in its water atlas. We need to take a collective look at that data and see what additional

information we need to gather. We need communities throughout Arizona participating, much as they do with transportation planning.

Resources necessary to support a needs assessment, however, are limited since Arizona is cutting agency budgets. This makes it difficult to carry out existing tasks, let alone take on an assignment as significant as a statewide needs assessment/planning exercise. But all the work does not have to be done by ADWR. If we put our heads together, we can perhaps come up with a strategy involving the universities, and loaned executives from local governments, water agencies, industry and non-governmental organizations.

Arizona Cooperative Extension will be visiting some of Arizona's communities to conduct water listening sessions. County Extension and campus personnel will listen to communities' questions and concerns about water. This winter, we will host a visit by the director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute to hear about their participation in Oklahoma's water planning. At the WRRRC, we recently received a grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust (see page 3) to assess methods used to quantify the water needs of the environment, which will enable us to work more closely with stakeholders currently involved in this important work. Numerous stakeholders, including those outside the three-county Central Arizona Project service area, are participating in the ADD water process. Future needs of water providers and Central Arizona Groundwater

Replenishment District are being considered. The Arizona Investment Council funded a study of water-related infrastructure needs that is posted on its web site.

The point is that many pieces of the puzzle are already being assembled. What we need is an overlay to bring the parts together for a comprehensive look at water and water-related infrastructure needs. I continue to use the half-full, half-

empty glass to summarize our water management situation. Some may say we cannot afford to undertake a needs assessment/planning exercise with the economy in a slump.

Knowing that growth and prosperity will return to Arizona, I can only ask the question: Can we afford not to?

GWP Wins Prize in a National Competition!

The Gila Watershed Partnership has been awarded a \$1,000 grant from The River Network and MillerCoors Watershed Protection Grant. The funds, which are part of a grant to support the protection and restoration of local water resources through agricultural means. The winning organizations were chosen by the public through an online voting competition in which more than 14,000 people voted. Although the Gila Watershed Partnership was not chosen for the first prize, we are pleased and honored to have been chosen as one of eight finalists. We will use our \$1,000 prize to support our important work on the E.coli on the San Francisco River project that is funded by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Thank you to all of you who voted for us!





Arizona Community Listening Sessions **We want to hear from you!**

Please join the Cooperative Extension personnel to identify, discuss, and define the Graham/Greenlee Counties current and future water issues.

Date: Thursday, April 22, 2010

Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Place: General Service Building
921 Thatcher Blvd
Safford, AZ

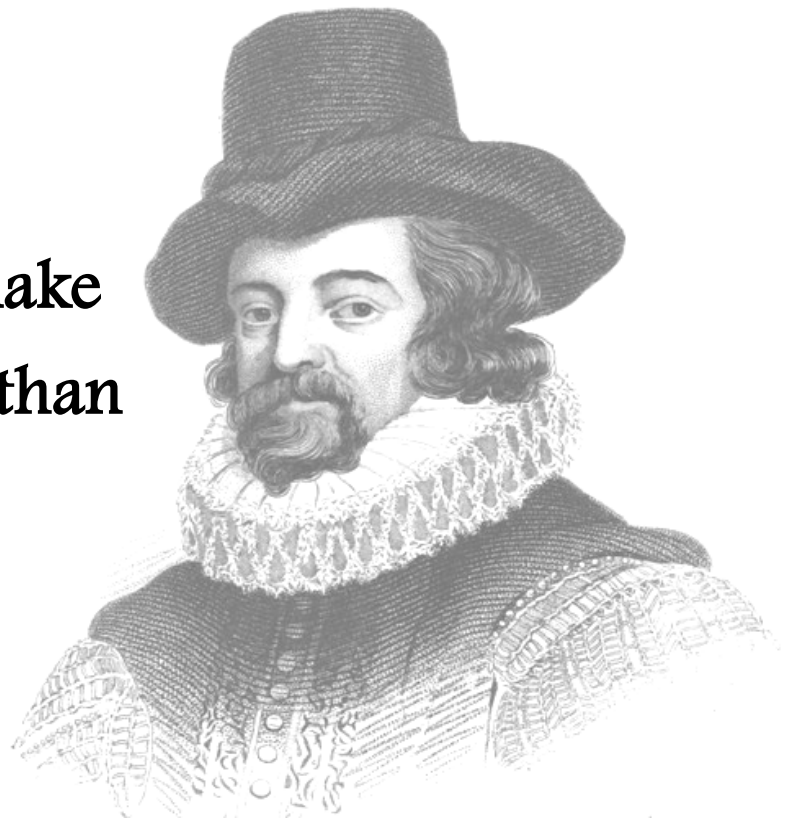
The **Arizona Community State Wide Effort Listening Sessions** will be used to assist Extension, State Agencies, and communities in identifying regional and statewide citizen concerns about water resources.

Questions and RSVPs to Bill Brandau at 928-428-2611 or wbrandau@cals.arizona.edu RSVPs preferred, not required.



**“A wise man will make
more opportunities than
he finds.”**

-Francis Bacon



Calendar of Events

**Wednesday, April 14, 2010,
7 p.m.** April's meeting will be held at the Graham County General Services Building, 921 Thatcher Blvd., Safford, AZ

Thursday, April 14, 2010,
REMINDER-National Earth day is observed April 22nd!

**Wednesday, May 12, 2010,
7 p.m.** May's meeting will be held at the Graham County General Services Building, 921 Thatcher Blvd., Safford, AZ

Our partners include:

- Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Arizona Department of Transportation
- Arizona Department of Water Resources
- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Arizona Geological Survey
- Arizona State Land Department
- Bureau of Land Management
- City of Safford
- Town of Thatcher
- Town of Pima
- Town of Duncan
- Coronado RC&D
- Gila Valley NRC
- Discovery Park
- Farm Bureau
- Graham County
- Greenlee County
- Gila Valley Irrigation District
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Phelps Dodge Mining Company
- University of Arizona
- Cooperative Extension
- University of Arizona NEMO Project
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service – Apache Sitgreaves and Coronado Forests
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- And many community members

Get involved in your watershed

For more information, contact Jan Holder at the Gila Watershed Partnership, 711 S. 14th Avenue, 85546, 520-419-0374, email-watershedholder@yahoo.com