

The Tangled Web We Weave

Undercurrents

By Chris Canaly

It's been a busy few months. Though Stockman's Water Co. didn't file their water application by the end of '96, they sure have been doing their share of promotion on the front range and elsewhere.

HB-1214, (please see summary) a Colorado House Bill carried by Rep. Lewis Entz - that will hopefully be making its way through the state legislature and become law - is an indication of how important this SLV water issue is becoming within the state. Stockman's Water Co. has hired seven lobbyists to defeat it. Lead lobbyist for Stockman's, Jim Brandon, is quoted in *The Pueblo Chieftain*



as saying that "Douglas County, East Cherry Creek Valley and perhaps other metro water interests are ready to float a huge bond issue to build

a well-pipeline project to get the San Luis Valley's water over the mountains to them."

The manager for Parker Water and Sanitation Dist, Chuck Yeager, told a friend recently that Parker's interest in the 20,000 acre ft/yr is going to hinge on whether HB-1214 is passed.

It sounds like some people want to put the San Luis Valley into a position of having to pay for the lack of water management planning some communities are facing on the front range.

According to a telephone poll the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) did just recently (see article page 5), a majority of people on the front range feel the deterioration of quality of life is a direct result of growth and feel the issue is a top priority.

There was a moratorium put on deep wells in the San Luis Valley in 1972. At that time, it was realized that water management had to be a priority if the Rio Grande compact obligations were to be met and the agricultural economy was to remain stable.

So how can Stockman's Water Co. suggest a trans-basin diversion using

deep wells? The answer is augmentation. Colorado Water Law was written for development purposes and Stockman's Water Co., including Ex-State Engineer Jeris Danielson are willing to exploit its weaknesses.

That's not the only disappointment. A sometimes ecology "scholar" from Colorado College, Tom Wolfe, wrote a lengthy opinion that appeared in the L.A. Times (why the L.A. Times?) lauding the benefits of the Stockman's Water plan. Versions of it have appeared in other Colorado publications as well. He actually finishes the piece by saying that the reason people in the valley are against the Stockman's Water plan is because Gary Boyce is a "local boy who made it big and the rest of the valley is so jealous that no good deed will go unpunished." When Greg Gosar caught up with him and asked how he could write such misinformed tripe his response was "no one is doing anything for the forests." It's O.K. to sacrifice the aquifer system and the headwater basin though. Thanks Tom.

Is it my imagination or are people becoming more des-

perate, justifying their anger (and behavior) through ideologic rationalizations...like the report by ECONorthwest in Eugene, Ore. for the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission (see article below) who will report to President Clinton that the water in the Upper Rio Grande continues to be used for agriculture even though it could be of more value to New Mexico's growing cities, "in an ideal world, competitive markets would favor putting Rio Grande water to its most valuable use." It's nice to know that New Mexico isn't suffering the same quality of life issues as the front range.

I wonder if the cheap food policy in our Country has been such a good idea. People take it for granted and are willing to spend much more on recreation, entertainment and virtual reality. The structures we have created are by no means perfect and need work, but to break it all down and replace it with... what? Kudos to Owens Valley for attempting and to some extent succeeding to get some of their water back. I digress. It's time we all went to see Chinatown... again.

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Climate Database for Farmers

A database has been developed by researchers that includes decades of information on water, temperature and climate for every square mile of land on Earth. This tool could benefit farmers, scientists and policymakers on a global scale.

The World Water and Climate Atlas for Agriculture was announced recently by scientists at the International Irrigation Management Institute and Utah State University.

Users of this atlas program can access it through CD-ROM and free of charge on Utah State Internet and will be able to extract moisture and temperature data for an area as small as one square mile. The entire database should be ready by the end of this year.

"The atlas integrates the available agricultural climate data into one computer program and represents the most comprehensive, quality-controlled climatic data set in existence," said Ismail Serageldin, chairman of the International group.

Using this information, the scientists said, engineers can develop better plans for irrigation and water conservation.

From *New York Times Article*

Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission

The Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission is a 22 member commission appointed by President Clinton. The chair is University of Mexico Law Professor Denise Fort.

The Commission is supposed to submit a report to Clinton by October. The report could lead to new federal water legislation.

Recommendations were made by EcoNorthwest

in Eugene, Ore., the consultant hired by the commission to do studies on the Upper Rio Grande. They include some of the following:

1. Much of the water in the upper Rio Grande continues to be used for agriculture, even though it could be of more value to New Mexico's growing cities or other users.
2. Rio Grande water could be more valuable if it were shifted from agriculture to "passive"

uses, such as recreation. 3. The report makes recommendations for how federal agencies should change the way they do business, doing more to bring together buyers and sellers.

A spokesman for the New Mexico Farm Bureau blasted the report saying it ignores one fundamental fact "people need to eat....It's pretty hard to run a boat when you're starving to death."

So Who Owns The Baca Ranch?

According to the Deed of Trust at the Saguache County Courthouse, Farallon Partners LLC out of San Francisco, has lent Cabeza De Vaca (Which includes Stockmans Water Company and Vaca Partnership) 8 million Dollars and secured it with collateral including AWDI Properties, Villa Grove Ranch, Federal Grazing rights and options on Rancho Rosado.

According to the deed, there can be no improvements

of more than 50 thousand dollars on the Baca Ranch without going to Farallon. Farallon can sell the mortgage at anytime and they have the power of foreclosure.

The collateral mentioned above is large compared to the loan, "preserving the capitol" seems to be a credo of Farallon.

The trustor is Cabeza de Vaca, the trustee is Vaca Partners and the beneficiary is Farallon Capital Mgt. Inc. with

a 10% royalty still going to AWDI.

Farallon Capital Management was started in 1989 by a former analyst for Morgan Stanley & Goldman Sachs, 39 year old Thomas Steyer. Steyer is the senior managing member of the General Partnership. There are eight general partners.

Farallon manages more than 1.1 billion in assets (in 1996) for institutional clients including Yale University.