

**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**  
**ISSUES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND GOALS**  
***VERDE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP***

Held at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University  
Prescott, Arizona

January 22, 2005

Presented by  
North Central Arizona Regional Watershed Consortium



Workshop Sponsors

Salt River Project  
Verde Watershed Association  
Williamson Valley Concerned Citizens

## **Introduction**

The **North Central Arizona Regional Watershed Consortium** (NCARWC) convened a one-day workshop entitled **VERDE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP** January 22, 2005, at the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Davis Learning Center in Prescott. There were 152 participants in the workshop, within the following categories:

Federal Officials (8), Tribal Representatives (2), State reps and agencies (6), Elected Municipal Officials (7), Yavapai & Coconino County Supervisors (3), University Members (7), Citizens (30), Consortium Members (54), Master Watershed Stewards (11), Agriculture (2), Youth Camp (1), Students (17), Salt River Project (2) Realtor (1) and Press.

The focus of the workshop was to initiate a dialogue among interested parties in examining the issues involved in regional watershed planning and management for the Verde River Basin. This workshop was a collaborative effort consistent with the recommendations of the recently completed 85th Arizona Town Hall. The workshop was designed to explore goals and objectives, identify interested constituencies, and discuss the practical and political challenges to effective regional planning and management. The outcome of these discussions will serve as the basis for a follow-up workshop in April 2005 that will develop recommendations and a plan for action.

The Keynote Speaker for the workshop was Grady Gammage, Jr., Senior Fellow, Morrison Institute for Public Policy, ASU and past President of the Board of the Central Arizona Project. Targeted participants in the workshop included municipalities in the Verde River watershed, agrarian enterprises and rights holders, tribes, the Salt River Project, county, state and federal representatives, and concerned citizens.).

This report contains the detailed responses of the six breakout groups of attendees to the focus questions presented to them, lists the most frequently cited responses and summarizes the themes that emerged.

*The NCARWC consists of 18 citizens groups that have banded together out of a common concern that watershed resources should be managed for sustainability and the common good of all stakeholders.*

**VERDE WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP**  
**Embry Riddle Aeronautical University**  
**January 22, 2005**  
**8:30AM- 4:30PM**

*Registration and Coffee (8:30 AM)*

*Welcome (9:00 AM)*

- \* **Keynote Address** -- *Grady Gammage, Jr., Adjunct Professor, ASU College of Law*
- \* **“Threat to the Verde River and to Sustainability of Water Resources”** *Ed Wolfe, Scientist Emeritus, U.S. Geological Survey*
- \* **“Review of the Verde River Basin Watershed and Presentation of ‘Findings’”** *David Ostergren, Associate Professor, Northern Arizona University*
- \* **First Break Out Session:** *“Sustainability As Concept and Reality”*

*Lunch*

- \* *Break-out Reports From First Session*
- \* **“A Verde River Basin Partnership”** *State Representative Tom O’Halleran*
- \* **“Key Elements of Successful Partnerships”** – *Larry MacDonnell, Colorado Watershed Assembly, Porzak Browning Bushong Law Firm, Boulder, Colorado*
- \* **Second Break Out Session:** *“Partnership Constituencies”*
- \* *Afternoon Break-out Reports*
- \* **Concluding Remarks (4:30 PM)**

## WORKSHOP QUESTIONS AND GROUP RESPONSES

### **First Morning Session Question To The Six Break Out Groups**

*What do you enjoy about living in the Verde River Basin area?*

#### Responses by Frequency of Citation

- 5 - The beauty of the area
- 5 - Outdoor recreation
- 5 - Climate
- 4 - Open Space
- 4 - Rivers for recreation and appreciation
- 3 - History
- 3 - Family life
- 2 - River flow
- 2 - Quality of life
- 2 - Rhythm of the Land

#### COMMENTS

Participants in all groups enjoy the sense of community, the small town feel, the climate, and the diversity of wildlife, scenery and population. These plus other single responses from individual groups show clearly that the rural atmosphere, and the natural environment were most attractive to the attendees. The recreational value of the river would be sorely missed if it were no longer available. Sixty percent of the responses related to environmental benefits in the area.

### **Second Question For The Morning Session**

*If we are going to sustain this way of life we value, what should be our regional water management goal?*

#### Responses

- 6 - The concept of sustainability was identified as a goal in all six groups. Concern for future generations and for biodiversity were embraced within the goal of sustainability.
- 6 - Population growth management was incorporated in goal statements of all groups.
- 5 - Preserving the flow of the river and riparian areas was a stated goal in five of the groups.
- 4 - Water conservation goals were mentioned in four groups, with two groups proposing mandatory goals.

#### COMMENTS

There was a compelling consistency within all groups in their goal statements. The urgency for action now was apparent in all groups. Hope and confidence in our ability to better manage our water resources for the future was also implicit in the responses. The knowledge of the participants on relevant water issues was impressive.

In total, there was a broad range of regional water management issues, and participants were sensitive to the needs of all stakeholders. Many of the groups' statements referred to

strategies rather than goals or outcomes for water management, such as “agree on assumptions of what we are trying to sustain” and “adopt a regional and integrated approach.” These strategies will be valuable to the partnership when a Management Plan is being developed.

### **First Question For The Afternoon Session**

*What should a regional water management partnership look like?*

*What are the competing interests.....?*

#### Responses

- 6 • Local/regional/state and federal governments
- 6 • Agriculture/ranchers
- 6 • Recreational interests
- 5 • Realtors, developers (local and large outside)
- 5 • Native American nations
- 5 • Industry
- 5 • Environmental Groups
- 4 • Tourism industry
- 4 • Salt River Project
- 4 • Citizen groups
- 3 • Private property rights holders
- 3 • Water companies
- 3 • Educators
- 2 • Well owners
- 2 • Water right holders
- 2 • State land/School Districts
- 2 • Chamber of Commerce
- 2 • Resorts/golf course owners
- 2 • Logging, mining, quarry
- 2 • Ditch companies
- 2 • ADWR and ADEQ
- 2 • Future generations

#### COMMENTS

The competing interests include every identifiable group living and working in the watershed. It will be important to group them together as much as possible in order to have a workable number of participants.

## **Second Question For The Afternoon Session**

*What should be the role of citizen participation.....?*

### Responses

- 6 • Communicate with elected officials
- 6 • Articulate citizen's concerns and get beyond the talking stage
- 5 • Volunteer to help promote a Partnership
- 4 • Become better informed
- 4 • Help to make a Partnership happen through groups already formed
- 4 • Be involved in election process (for public officials)
- 3 • Organize public venues to tell the story of our watershed
- 2 • Have a place and a voice at the Partnership table
- 2 • Speak to neighbors/community

### **COMMENT**

A predominant theme was citizen involvement with officials, including participation in elections to ensure that knowledgeable candidates with the foresight to address these problems are elected, follow-up to hold the elected officials accountable, and citizen participation in any partnership which is formed. The need for "more action and less talk" was expressed.

## **Third Question For The Afternoon Session**

*What is likely to be the greatest long range benefit....?*

### Responses

- 6 • Help bring about regional water planning and management (systems thinking)
- 5 • Protection of quality of life, including open space, for now and the future
- 5 • Maintain sustainable water supply in the Basin for humans and the ecology
- 5 • Maintain property values and business economies
- 5 • Maintain flow of rivers/streams (quality and quantity)
- 5 • Avoid crisis management (water shortages, litigation, economic losses)
- 4 • Build a consensus among the stakeholders
- 4 • We will not lose the natural resources, beauty
- 4 • Collaboration—regional cooperation—interdependency of water resources
- 3 • Responsible land development may result
- 3 • May develop a sense of trust
- 2 • Public and elected official awareness
- 2 • Help elected officials be wise leaders: hold them accountable
- 2 • Citizen's consortium will become legitimate and respected for its concerns for the Verde Watershed

### **COMMENT**

In addition to the desirability of preserving the natural surroundings and a rural way of life, a strong concern was expressed about protecting the economic health of the entire basin and preventing costly litigation over conflicting water rights.

## **Workshop Summary**

### MAJOR THEMES THAT EMERGED THROUGHOUT THE WORKSHOP

- Concern about reducing or even losing the flow of the Verde River.
- Concern about the economic impact if water tables drop anywhere in the watershed.
- The need for sustainability in the water management of the Basin combined, however, with the fear that sustainability may not be achievable. Is it too late?
- The recognition of the valuable attributes of the area that attract people to it, and the land management approaches needed to retain those attributes.

### WHAT WENT WELL

- The groups recognized that the interests of all the principal stakeholders must be protected, including those that were not well represented at this workshop.
- A comprehensive and credible list of stakeholders was generated.
- The workshop achieved a general consensus that a working partnership among the agencies, municipalities, citizens and other stakeholders is needed in order the valuable attributes of the area that attract people to come here, and the land management approaches needed to retain those attributes. to achieve the goal of cooperative regional management of the watershed for the benefit of all.
- The turnout of about 150 was very good.
- All speakers were appropriate in addressing the topic of a partnership.
- The level of participation by attendees was excellent in the morning breakout sessions.
- The attendees were very well informed on regional water issues.

### WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE THE WORKSHOP BETTER.

- If more of the major stakeholders had been present.
- If more attendees had been able to stay for the afternoon sessions.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Our objective for the Workshop was to garner support for a Verde River Basin Partnership. Judging from the levels of participation, we appeared to have met that objective in all groups. In addition, more than 60 attendees wrote responses indicating their continued willingness to support development of a watershed-wide partnership with their time and talents, and in some cases, with financial contributions.

Therefore it is recommended that the Consortium proceed with public education efforts throughout the Basin and produce a follow-up public workshop within several months directed towards developing a plan of action. A concerted effort should be made to encourage attendance by major stakeholder groups that were not well represented at this workshop, ie., agricultural interests, realtors and developers.