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## **Report Surveys Colorado River Basin Leaders**

*Collaborative approaches to dwindling supplies are highlighted*

As persistent drought, increasing water demand, and the impacts of climate change raise concerns over the future of the Colorado River, a new report identifies momentum for a collaborative path to long-term solutions among leaders around the river basin. Performed by the [Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy at The University of Montana](http://www.cnrep.org) and commissioned by [Carpe Diem West](http://www.carpediemwest.org) - a non-profit group with a network of scientists, water managers, conservation advocates, and government leaders - [Thinking Like a River Basin: Leaders' Perspectives on Options and Opportunities in Colorado River Management](http://www.carpediemwest.org/colorado-report) offers an inside look at influential leaders' most current thinking on the future of the river, and suggests a collective will to move forward on developing solutions.

The Colorado River is the lifeblood of a large swath of the American West, supplying water to over 30 million residents in seven states and Mexico. Water leaders on all sides understand that the future of the Colorado River is uncertain. Ongoing research shows that even under "normal" conditions, river flows have been barely sufficient to meet human needs. Yet drought and climate change are creating a future in which dry conditions are the new normal.

"Basin leaders understand the challenges facing the river and the communities dependent on it, and are oriented toward collaborative problem-solving," said Sarah Bates at the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy. "Many acknowledge that the time is ripe for a broader conversation on the future of the river."

The report consolidates the results of confidential interviews with a diverse cross-section of prominent basin leaders. For a complete list of the people interviewed, see the report's homepage at <http://www.carpediemwest.org/colorado-report>. While conflict over water rights may be unavoidable, the report shows that leaders recognize the severity of the current situation, and are committed to collaborative solutions that avert costly, protracted court battles.

"This report paints a portrait of a river basin - and a leadership community - at a crossroads," said Kimery Wiltshire, Chief Executive Officer of Carpe Diem West. "Innovators from all over the basin are turning toward solutions now, while we still have time to make smart choices. Like many of the leaders interviewed for the report, we believe an expanded dialogue will ensure that difficult decisions are made wisely."

Carpe Diem West is a broad-based network of experts, advocates, decision makers and scientists addressing the impacts of climate change on water in the American West. The Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy is a non-partisan natural resource conflict resolution institute based at The University of Montana.

For more information, visit <http://carpediemwest.org> or <http://www.cnrep.org>

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