



Carpe Diem West Strategy "Brain Trust" Meeting

Background Information & Analysis

Friday, January 20, 2012 8:00am-4:30pm

Galleria Park Hotel, San Francisco

1. Overview of Carpe Diem West

[Carpe Diem West](#) was started in 2007 by a group of western water leaders acting on a shared belief that the climate crisis requires everyone in the field to think in new ways. It emerged from the realization that western water issues were already complex and divisive, and that the profound changes climate scientists predict for the American West will only increase the pressure on the region's limited water supplies. Carpe Diem West's founders concluded that the existing culture of conflict and compartmentalized thinking is simply inadequate to deal with these new challenges, and that new ways to address Western water issues were needed.

Carpe Diem West approaches the [wicked problems](#) of western water and climate change by building a neutral forum and vehicle for action in which smart, innovative thinkers from various sectors can come together to discuss ideas, generate shared policy ideas, and develop ways to implement those ideas. The organization's most valuable asset is an extensive and broad-based Network of professionals from different parts of the water world - federal, state, and tribal governments and utilities, industry, conservationists, and the scientific community. By drawing on the deep expertise and collective knowledge of this Network, Carpe Diem West is able to leverage a tremendous amount of work and influence in the fields of western water and climate change, despite its modest budget and staff.

After the Network identifies a project opportunity, we draw upon individual Network members with expertise in that area to frame the issues. Those issues then form the basis for more focused discussion among the Network of ideas for action, and to the formation of a Working Group to guide the program and work on specific proposals for action. The process is not driven by the need to build consensus; rather, our goal is to create a forum where leaders from all sides can roll up their sleeves and collectively get to work.

2. Summary of Carpe Diem West's Existing Programs

Carpe Diem West's current program work is organized into three lead programs - *Healthy Headwaters*, *Colorado River Futures*, and the *Carpe Diem West Academy*, plus a new addition - the *Horizons Project*, which monitors and assess emerging developments in the field. Following is a brief summary of the [wicked problem](#) each project addresses, plus the core strategies, objectives, and communications strategies the project is using to address the problem.

Healthy Headwaters

A. The wicked problem – what we are tackling

Communities across the West are facing a serious threat to their water security:

- ▶ The vital headwaters that supply over half the American West's drinking water are vulnerable to a host of threats driven by climate change, including wildfire, invasive species, reduced snowpack, altered timing of runoff, and increased pollution
- ▶ Budget cuts are limiting the ability of federal and state land management agencies to meet the challenge of restoring resiliency to headwaters systems
- ▶ Urban water consumers are largely unaware of where their water comes from, much less that their water security is at risk from climate change; this makes it difficult to engage their support for solutions
- ▶ Water utilities are facing their own set of challenges - including a huge backlog of infrastructure costs and increased customer resistance to rate increases - that can complicate their efforts to invest in headwaters protection

B. End Game

In communities across the West, broad-based partnerships of utilities, agencies, NGOs, and elected leaders are implementing evidence-and science-based strategies to create and maintain resilient headwaters systems over the long term, with the support of federal and state policies and sustainable revenue streams from federal and state government, water utilities, and the private sector.

C. Core Strategies

- ▶ Build and sustain a strong and diverse alliance of water utilities, public land managers, scientists, conservationists, and others who are united around a common goal of headwaters protection
- ▶ Tell the stories of successful headwaters protection partnerships in an effective way

- Develop a shared policy and science agenda that supports headwaters protection and brings it to scale across the West

D. Current objectives

- Create a sign-on Healthy Headwaters Alliance based on a common platform document
- Organize groups of western mayors and water utilities to serve as effective voices for headwaters protection
- Create a replicable model for headwaters partnerships through the work of our “flagship communities” (Salt Lake, Eugene, Denver, Santa Fe, and the Mokelumne)
- Work with the US Forest Service to set priorities for headwaters protection through the Watershed Condition Framework program
- Set the standard for using watershed valuation and avoided cost analysis as tools for engaging the public and water utilities and leveraging investment from them

E. Communications strategies & core audiences

- Overall strategy: educate core audiences of elected officials, water utilities, businesses, and ratepayers about the need to develop and fund policies to protect and restore resilient headwaters systems
- Highlight the stories of successful headwaters partnerships - beginning with our flagship communities - through news stories, op-eds, the CDW website, and direct communication.
- Organize a “Capitol Hill Day” of one-on-one meetings to educate members of Congress and staff about the benefits of existing watershed programs (economic, environmental, and water security), as well as the need for new initiatives
- Create a policy brief, based on examples and data and from the CDW network, making the case for headwaters protection as a means to avoid the costs of treatment plants and other gray infrastructure

Recent Reports

[Watershed Investment Programs in the American West. An Updated Look: Linking Upstream Watershed Health & Downstream Security, November 2011](#)

[User Contribution Programs: Linking Upstream Watershed Health to the Hearts, Minds & Wallets of Downstream Water Users, October 2010](#)

[Stories of successful headwaters partnerships: Salt Lake City, Denver, Eugene, and Santa Fe, October 2011](#)

[Healthy Headwaters Leadership Convening, October 28, 2011 - Meeting Summary](#)

Colorado River Futures

A. The wicked problem – what we are tackling

The Colorado River Basin faces profound long-term water management challenges:

- Water use by cities, farms, and industry now roughly equals the entire flow of the Colorado, and climate change will reduce streamflows by 10 to 40 percent over the next 50 years
- The system is highly complex in both physical and human terms. Water is managed via vast infrastructure spanning seven U.S. and two Mexican states, and an array of state, federal, and local jurisdictions
- Only a small group of government officials and major water users typically have the opportunity to determine long-term problems and solutions, excluding a wide range of water users, environmentalists, academics, politicians, tribes, and many others who have a stake in water management

B. End Game

Through a governance process that gives an effective voice to a full range of affected stakeholders, Colorado Basin water leaders develop, fund, and implement an effective set of long-term, basin-scale solutions for balancing water supply and demand in the Colorado River Basin.

C. Core Strategies

- Work with a broad cross section of innovative, influential Colorado Basin water leaders to create a forum and process for developing and implementing long-term, basin scale solutions for the imbalance in water supply and demand
- Partner with the Colorado River Governance Initiative at the University of Colorado in creating the forum and process, and in developing substantive concepts for solutions.
- Work strategically with the Colorado River Collaborative on both process and solutions, playing on our respective strengths (advocacy vs. trusted broker/ convener)
- Work through a “kitchen cabinet” advisor group of highly respected Colorado Basin water leaders to develop and incubate innovative ideas for solutions

D. Current objectives

- ▶ Working through our Kitchen Cabinet of influential basin leaders, submit solutions proposals to the Options and Opportunities phase of the Basin study, including: (1) a stakeholder engagement model, (2) an Upper Basin Demand Cap, and (3) water banking
- ▶ Foster discussion of our Basin Study solutions proposals among the water community through opportunity-based media and communications (see below)
- ▶ In partnership with the Colorado River Governance Initiative (University of Colorado), conduct a series of solution-oriented convenings of selected basin leadership, with a focus on specific options, the governance process necessary to implement them, and how to create that process

E. Communications strategies & core audiences

To reach our target audience of Colorado Basin water leaders with the influence to create the governance structures needed to develop and implement long-term solutions:

- ▶ Use our research paper *Thinking Like a River Basin* to highlight the perceived need among water leaders for coordinating leadership and stakeholder engagement at the basin scale
- ▶ Conduct a combined webinar on both the *Thinking Like a River Basin* and *Governing Like a River Basin* reports, to be presented to selected stakeholder groups in conjunction with the report from the Options and Opportunities phase
- ▶ Place solutions-oriented media stories in connection with the options submitted by the Collaborative and Carpe Diem West's Kitchen Cabinet to the Basin Study
- ▶ Place media stories in connection with the solutions series of convenings in partnership with the Colorado River Governance Initiative

Recent Reports

[*Governing Like A River Basin: Options for Expanded Stakeholder Engagement in the Colorado River Basin, December 2011*](#)

[*Thinking Like a River Basin: Leaders' Perspectives on Options and Opportunities in Colorado River Management, April 2011*](#)

Carpe Diem West Academy

A. The wicked problem – what we are tackling

Water and energy managers seeking to effectively incorporate evidence-based climate science into their work, and to gain approval for their decisions, face high barriers:

- ▶ A vast array of climate-related tools are available, but little help in understanding which tools are most useful for given practical situations
- ▶ Most tools focus on pieces of the overall picture, not on their interconnection or the process of building water management responses that address long-term uncertainty
- ▶ Tools are unevenly distributed: there are a great number of tools for analyzing technical needs, but few tools for either scenario planning or decision making
- ▶ There are no broadly accepted best available practices, key performance indicators or industry standards and certification programs
- ▶ While a large number of water and energy managers are facing these same issues, there is currently no common portal or community through which they can address them in a collective way

B. End Game

In this time of climate change and accelerating uncertainty in the American West, the Carpe Diem West Academy empowers water resource managers and decision makers to be “climate ready” so that they are able to:

- ▶ Make evidence- and science based choices in the face of climate uncertainty; and
- ▶ Effectively communicate and secure approval for those choices.

C. Core Strategies

- ▶ Building on, and using, the CDW network, incubate new approaches that lead to innovative policy and management choices
- ▶ Use the resources of the CDW network to translate and interpret emerging climate and evidence based science for the network
- ▶ Identify, encourage, recognize innovation; practice innovation diffusion

D. Current objectives

- Develop a three-year strategic plan for the Academy, based on the 12/9/11 strategy meeting
- Develop the marketing, business and operations plan
- Continue regular webinars where stakeholders and managers present new tools and emerging technologies addressing relevant issues (e.g., scenario planning, decision making, best practices), and exchange feedback on these materials
- Provide an actively managed web forum where users can pose questions to the larger community
- Expand the current Advisor Group to include a wider range of experts
- Present the Academy project, emphasizing the website and learning community approach at 2-3 major water/climate conferences

E. Communications strategies & core audiences

- Core audiences are utilities, academics, federal and state agencies, NGOs, and consultants
- Using the Carpe Diem West Network, build awareness of the Academy through various on-line communications tools, and at Carpe Diem West leadership convenings
- Identify and tell the success stories

Horizons Project

A. The wicked problem – what we are tackling

- Because climate change, the hydrologic cycle, and the human landscape of the American West are so complex, they often interact in unforeseen and unpredictable ways
- The results of these interactions can be difficult to detect, because we don't know what we are looking for, and we don't necessarily attribute effects to climate change when we do see them
- There is currently no cross-sector group of professionals devoted to identifying the emerging effects being driven by the interaction of climate change and water in the American West
- The lack of such a cross-disciplinary approach is costly, because the combined effects of western water and climate change can have profound implications for the management of water, land, energy, and other resources, as well as related fields like public health

B. End Game

An established group of influential leaders from a diverse range of professional fields and institutional backgrounds engages on a regular basis to identify emerging impacts being driven by the intersection of climate change and water in the American West, to frame the policy and management issues resulting from these impacts, and to outline possible responses.

C. Core Strategies/ Objectives

Strategies for the Horizons Project is one of the main topics we would like the “brain trust” group to discuss at the January 20 meeting.

To date, our strategies include the following:

- Holding “brain trust” meetings like this one to identify emerging issues and discuss possible responses
- Issuing policy briefs framing emerging issues and fields
- Holding convenings of selected leaders focused on issues our Network has identified

We would like the group to consider how Carpe Diem West can use and other strategies effectively on a sustained basis.

Recent Reports

[Charting the Rapids Ahead: Water, Climate Change and Public Health \(in partnership with the Public Health Institute’s Center for Public Health and Climate Change\), October 2011](#)

[Peak Water, Peak Energy, Climate Crisis: The Collision Ahead, February 2010](#)