

Carpe Diem West - Team Strategy Meeting

Friday, January 28, 2011

San Francisco, CA

Summary of Meeting and Key Findings

On January 28, 2011, Carpe Diem West brought together its “brain trust” in San Francisco to help the organization assess its work in the context of current trends in the scientific and political landscape. The group consisted of Carpe Diem West’s Core Team, along with network leadership chosen for their expertise and diverse backgrounds. Over the course of the meeting, the group engaged in a series of thoughtful and wide-ranging discussions, which focused on two main tasks:

1. Examining the work of Carpe Diem West’s five projects in the context of emerging science and the current political climate, noting assets developed to date and providing mid-course corrections.
2. Defining the development of western water and climate change issues over the past four years, and describing Carpe Diem West’s evolution, role and capacity, to what is its present form, loosely termed “Carpe Diem 3.0.”

1. Meeting Highlights

Over the course of the full-day meeting, the group:

- ▶ Formulated a new description of the Healthy Headwaters Project to reflect the growth and evolution of that project over the past year.
- ▶ Made key strategy recommendations for the Colorado River Futures and Water, Energy, and Climate Change Projects, based on the specialized knowledge and experience of the various group members.
- ▶ Provided guidance on how to develop the Public Health, Water, and Climate Change Project and Carpe Diem West Academy.
- ▶ Established a working definition of the concept of “Carpe Diem 3.0” (see below).

2. Meeting Outcomes

Healthy Headwaters Project

“With Healthy Headwaters, one of the key things Carpe Diem West can use to seize the day is its extensive network of people. They can take a look at the opportunities at a small municipal watershed scale, then think about how that relates to the whole West and what kind of state and national policies need to be in place.”

- Holly Hartmann, Director, Arid Lands Information Center, University of Arizona/CLIMAS

The group assessed the substantial progress of the Healthy Headwaters Project over the last year and agreed that the Project should continue to focus on its central role of telling the stories of successful headwaters protection efforts, define best practices, develop a common vision, provide central information and communications hub and expand the network of municipal and regional leadership.

The group formulated the following description of the Healthy Headwaters Project in the era of Carpe Diem 3.0:

- ▶ Carpe Diem West's Healthy Headwaters Project focuses on the watersheds that serve as "green infrastructure" for the West's cities and towns and cultivated fields, providing them with reliable supplies of clean water (water security).
- ▶ We promote policy and management changes that improve the climate resiliency of these watersheds, including everything from forest thinning to wilderness protection. In addition to water security, ensuring the health of forest ecosystems produces multiple co-benefits, including fish and wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration.
- ▶ Many communities are already devoted to working toward the health of western forests, but it is rare that urban consumers, fishermen, farmers, foresters water agencies and land managers see one another as partners in this effort; our job is to connect them.
- ▶ Our analysis of the field indicates that Carpe Diem West can make an initial and critical intervention by building a network of municipalities engaged in upstream headwaters protection and helping them develop a set of best practices and a common vision of shared policy obstacles. We will then link this group with other networks focused on watershed health and conservation.

Colorado River Futures Project

“In the Colorado basin, Carpe Diem West can bring new perspectives to a discussion that has a long history of a culture that digs itself into a hole. Carpe Diem West can provide cover for those who are looking for ideas, but are uncomfortable in putting them out there.”

- Eric Kuhn, General Manager, Colorado River Water Conservation District

The group discussed the “complicated sandbox” that is the Colorado Basin (politics and culture) and where and how Carpe Diem West’s work could best add value and help to move a science-based solution agenda forward. The group received a presentation from Sarah Bates on the initial findings of Carpe Diem West’s report and interviews with 30 Basin lead stakeholders (final report release mid-April), and heard from Doug Kenney on his Colorado River Governance Initiative project.

Water, Energy, and Climate Change Project

“We’re going to be transforming our energy system in the West over the next 10-20 years to deal with the effects of climate change - and that will mean huge impacts on our water resources. Carpe Diem West is well positioned to bring the right kinds of people together to analyze those issues in the right way. I don’t seen anywhere else but Carpe Diem where that conversation is happening.

- John Shurts, General Counsel, Northwest Power & Conservation Council

The group created an overall strategy for how to introduce a consideration of water impacts into ongoing processes that are planning what the West’s energy infrastructure - including ambitious plans for renewable energy generation - will look like over the next 50 years. The group identified four basic strategy steps:

- ▶ First, Carpe Diem West will develop an overall communications strategy focused on key energy and water leadership. Carpe Diem will build on it’s work from last year, including updating its 2010 water and energy policy brief.
- ▶ Second, Carpe Diem West will further develop partnerships to use the revised brief strategically to inject water into the energy planning conversation, beginning with the ongoing Western Governors’ Association process to look at water impacts in connection with the Western Energy Coordinating Council’s energy planning.
- ▶ Third, Carpe Diem West should develop a list of standard water-related questions that should be considered in the approval process for every energy project.

Carpe Diem West Academy

“The biggest opportunity for Carpe Diem West is to capitalize on all it’s hard work of getting to know the players in the landscape, their relationships and history, and really build on that to move ideas forward. So few people in the landscape really do a lot with relationship building that it’s an opportunity in and of itself.”

- Samantha Campbell, President, Keith Campbell Foundation

Dr. Holly Hartmann described progress to date in creating the Carpe Diem West Academy, which will provide water managers with a toolkit to help them incorporate climate change scenarios into water management and planning. Tools will include basic climate change science and downscaling of climate model projections, vulnerability assessment for integrated systems, scenario planning as a tool for managing irreducible uncertainty, and tools for quantifying hydrologic non-stationarity that can mesh with existing management processes. Carpe Diem West will share the final compendium and examples of best practices with the Carpe Diem Network through a managed website and list serve, and present them in a webinar to Network members.

The next piece will be to assess whether it is feasible to develop an academy, or series of training seminars. This determination will be based on a feasibility study, followed by, if appropriate, a formal business plan.

Public Health, Water, and Climate Change

“Our number one opportunity right now is expand reach by tying in the public health impacts of climate change. This offers us a way to raise attention, expand the dialogue around western water, and build a broader base of constituents.”

- Alexandra Destler, Director, Center for Health & Climate Change, Public Health Institute

Carpe Diem West, and partner Center for Public Health & Climate Change/Public Health Institute, are developing a new project looking at the intersection of public health, water, and climate change.

The first phase of this project focuses on a series of interviews with leadership from the public health, climate science, environmental health and environmental justice sectors to determine what is known, and not known, and what some of the research gaps are. From these interviews and an initial literature review, a summary briefing of findings will be developed, and the first phase of this work presented in a webinar to a larger group of experts to determine initial policy, research and communications needs and next steps.

3. Carpe Diem 3.0

“Carpe Diem West is best positioned to move the conversation about western water forward because it’s managed to create a safe space for some very good thinkers to come together and generate ideas for resolving some very thorny issues without feeling as though their positions may be on the line.”

- Harriet Moss, Vice-President, Carpe Diem West Board of Directors

The group wrapped up its work by describing Carpe Diem West's evolving role, the concept of "Carpe Diem 3.0":

- ▶ Carpe Diem 1.0, the initial phase of the organization, focused on identifying and framing issues in the field of western water and climate change, engaging with leadership in the field, and providing a process to think about those problems in new ways.
- ▶ Carpe Diem 2.0 focused on establishing projects to address the five identified issue areas, and the formation of working groups to guide these projects.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West (3.0) has already established that the connections are in place, and is already recognized as a brain trust, a provider of a neutral forum for leadership, and a resource for information on emerging issues in the field of Western water and climate change.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West is a critical source of the information that's shaping decisions. As a generator of information, we add substantive support and provide a place to have conversations.
- ▶ By continually scanning the field for emerging issues, and by focusing on real people and real information, Carpe Diem West puts the narrative into place, defining the conversation by being the first to describe an issue comprehensively. Carpe Diem West goes beyond case studies and looks further down the time horizon to address more systemic challenges at scale.
- ▶ While Carpe Diem West is not limited to its convener role, its convenings continue to play an important function - each meeting builds upon the last to become more substantive, evolving to push the common understanding of the issues and further establish working relationships among diverse stakeholders.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West is a collaborative of leadership from all sectors. Whether explicit or through an organic process, we recognize and embrace opportunities and push for a targeted set of outcomes in the form of specific policy goals and strategies.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West provides tools, training, shared learning, stories and examples.

Carpe Diem West
Team Strategy Meeting Participants
January 28, 2011, San Francisco, CA

Sarah Bates, Senior Fellow, Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy,
University of Montana

Laura Briefer, Special Projects Manager, Salt Lake City Public Utilities

Samantha Campbell, President, Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment

Matt Clifford, Policy Director, Carpe Diem West

Jenny Corlett, Program Manager, Carpe Diem West

Alexandra Destler, Director, Center for Health & Climate Change, Public Health
Institute

Julie Dixon, Senior Program Director, Resource Media

Holly Hartmann, Director, Arid Lands Information Center, University of Arizona/CLIMAS

Tom Iseman, Program Director, Western Governors' Association

Doug Kenney, Director, Colorado University Western Water Policy Program

Eric Kuhn, General Manager, Colorado River Water Conservation District

Cathy Lerza, Philanthropic Advisor, Tides Foundation

Bill Mitchell, President, Flatcoat Consulting

Harriet Moss, Vice-President, Carpe Diem West

John Nordgren, Senior Program Officer, Kresge Foundation

John Shepard, Senior Advisor, Sonoran Institute

John Shurts, General Counsel, Northwest Power & Conservation Council

Jennifer Sokolove, Senior Program Officer, Compton Foundation

Fran Spivy-Weber, Vice-Chair, California State Water Resources Control Board

Kimery Wiltshire, President & CEO, Carpe Diem West

Steve Whitney, Program Officer, Bullitt Foundation