

Carpe Diem West - Team Strategy Meeting

Friday, January 28, 2010

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”.

2. Meeting Outcomes

Healthy Headwaters Project

“With Healthy Headwaters, Carpe Diem West’s key asset is its extensive network of people. The stories of individual communities on a watershed scale provide a solid base for developing state and national policies for protecting the West’s headwaters.”

- 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 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). The group also heard from Doug Kenney on the finding of 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 three next steps:

- ▶ First, Carpe Diem West will develop an overall communications strategy focused on key energy and water leadership. Carpe Diem will build on its 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 will develop a list of standard water-related questions that should be considered in the approval process for every energy project.

Carpe Diem West Academy

“Carpe Diem West has invested a lot of hard work in getting to know the players in the landscape, their relationships and history. Now it’s really cashing in on that investment to move ideas forward.”

- 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 step 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 to tie 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 created 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 works with the established connections that are now in place, provides a neutral forum for leadership, and is a critical source of the information that is helping shape decisions.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West is often the first to describe a new issue comprehensively. We do this by continually scanning the field for emerging issues, focusing on real people and real information. We also look beyond individual case studies, looking ahead to create a vision of how they can be brought up to scale.
- ▶ While Carpe Diem West is not limited to its convener role, its convenings continue to play an important function. As an individual project matures, each meeting builds upon the last, becoming more substantive and further developing working relationships among diverse stakeholders.
- ▶ Carpe Diem West is a collaborative of leadership from all sectors. We recognize and embrace opportunities, always with an eye on the ultimate goal of creating specific policy outcomes and strategies. Sometimes we pursue these outcomes explicitly, while other times they emerge as a natural result of group discussions.
- ▶ 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