

Friday, June 19, 1987

Tucson Citizen

Cliff Dam dumped to ease CAP's way

From Citizen Staff and Wire Reports

Arizona's congressional delegation, seeing support eroding in Congress for the proposed Cliff Dam, agreed yesterday to shelve the controversial component of the Central Arizona Project.

In return, lawmakers told a news conference yesterday, environmentalists have agreed to drop a lawsuit against the dam and will refrain from opposing funding for other features of the CAP.

Delegation members said they unanimously agreed to drop Cliff Dam, proposed for the Verde River northeast of Phoenix.

The action virtually assures timely completion of the CAP, which carries Colorado River water to cities and other users in central and southern Arizona, delegation members said.

"To me, this is a victory for everyone," said Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz.

"This is a historic moment," added Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz.

Kolbe called the agreement "a legislative home run" and said the remaining CAP plan stands a better chance of passing the House without Cliff Dam.

But Rep. Bob Stump, R-Ariz., said he went along with the deal "with the greatest reluctance. I have the feeling we may have moved too fast and that there are people in Arizona who won't be happy."

Rep. Morris K. Udall, D-Ariz., said the National Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam had been gaining ground in Congress and it appeared the House next week might have voted to deny a \$1.2 million appropriation for the dam.



Associated Press

Rep. Morris Udall, flanked by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (left) and Sen. John McCain, said plans to build Cliff Dam have been put aside.

Cliff Dam dumped to allow congressional OK of CAP

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"We just don't have the clout we had before," Udall said.

Udall said the water Cliff Dam would have provided would have come from a variety of small steps, including conservation.

He said the agreement would not void the CAP's cost-sharing arrangement with water users.

But Roger Manning, executive director of the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association, said the agreement for local water users to provide \$370 in up-front financing for the CAP is "if not dead, close to it."

"We were guaranteed a certain amount of storage space behind that dam," Manning said. "Without that dam there is no space. Without that space there is no water. And without that water there is no money."

Manning said local water users had hoped the agreement would contain assurances that the

water that would have been stored behind Cliff Dam would be found from other sources. But, he said, there are no such assurances.

The dam was a "very central part" of the funding agreement, Manning said, and he said he could not predict what steps will be taken now that it has been scrapped.

"I know I can't go to my board, which is made up of the cities that signed the agreement, and tell them that it would be of value for them to remain in it," he said.

The move to drop Cliff Dam came after 13 meetings this week. They were attended by all seven members of the delegation, participants said.

The coalition agreed to support appropriations under the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act to complete safety-related improvements at Horseshoe, Bartlett, Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams.

"The parties agree that additional flood control measures may be needed on the Verde River and that the addition of flood control measures at Bartlett and/or Horseshoe dams may be required to meet such needs," they said in a statement.

The statement said the delegation and the Interior Department "are committed to ensure that the Valley cities will secure water supplies necessary to replace the water yield that otherwise would have been provided by Cliff Dam."

Members of the delegation said the agreement would not affect the overall CAP.

"We can put this together without Cliff Dam," Udall said.

"We will finish this project close to on time," DeConcini said. The CAP's Tucson leg is now being constructed and should be finished by 1991.

CHRONOLOGY

■ 1968: Congress authorizes Central Arizona Project with the \$42 million Orme Dam at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers.

■ 1976: Orme Dam is scrapped amid heavy opposition from environmentalists, tubers and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa and Fort McDowell Indian reservations.

■ 1977: Interagency Task Force on Orme Dam Alternatives is created by Gov. Raul Castro. Brent W. Brown, executive director of Arizona Office of Economic Planning and Development, is named chairman.

■ 1978: Interagency Task Force concludes more than one dam is necessary to provide the regulatory, flood control and water storage functions Orme offered. Also, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers adopts new safety standards for dams, leaving most U.S. dams, including those on the Salt, Verde and Agua Fria rivers, substandard. Central Arizona Water Controls Study panel is created.

■ 1978-80: Major floods hit the Valley.

■ 1981: Central Arizona Water Controls Study lists nine alternatives to Orme; concludes Plan 6 is best. Plan 6 includes new Cliff Dam on the Verde River, raised Roosevelt Dam on the Salt and rebuilt Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River. Eugene Hinds, regional director of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region, recommends Plan 6 to Interior Secretary James Watt in October.

■ 1984: Interior Secretary William Clark approves Plan 6 as suitable alternative to Orme Dam. Only a few days later, bald eagle nests are discovered in Cliff's path. Final environmental impact statement is filed in March.

■ 1985: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issues "final biological opinion" in August, declaring Cliff Dam won't jeopardize endangered bald eagles if strict guidelines are followed. In September, a coalition of national and environmental groups files a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Phoenix, claiming Cliff would destroy key bald eagle foraging areas.

■ 1986: Interior Secretary Don Hodel signs cost-sharing agreement with Arizona officials in April. Arizona cities and water districts agree to pay \$348 million of Plan 6's \$1.1 billion cost in advance in exchange for federal government's promise to speed completion of CAP. In August, Salt River Project concludes hydroelectric generator at Cliff wouldn't be economically feasible.

■ 1987: Federal, state and local officials meet behind closed doors in Las Vegas, Nev., and in Phoenix to discuss whether Cliff should be sacrificed to salvage remaining features of Plan 6.

U.S. General Accounting Office concludes CAP's updated cost — \$3.32 billion — exceeds authorized spending limit in February. Environmental groups amend suit in March, claiming Plan 6 is illegal because its cost — \$1.1 billion — is 10 times Orme's \$110 million indexed cost.

On June 12, Rep. Larry Coughlin, R-Pa., asks fellow representatives to delete money for Cliff.

Judging Coughlin has support, members of Arizona's congressional delegation huddle in 13 secret meetings June 16, 17 and 18. On June 18, delegation announces it agreed to scrap Cliff to save rest of Plan 6 and environmental groups announce intention to drop suit.

Cliff Dam cut, clearing way for rest of Plan 6

By Dinah Wisenberg
States News Service

WASHINGTON — Arizona's congressmen capped three days of closed-door bargaining with environmentalists yesterday by agreeing to eliminate Cliff Dam from the Central Arizona Project.

The environmentalists agreed to drop opposition to funding for the rest of Plan 6, a water storage and flood control system that is a key feature of the CAP. They also agreed to drop a lawsuit against the dam and Plan 6.

"The delegation, with some misgivings, decided to give up on Cliff Dam," Rep. Morris K. Udall, D-Ariz., told a news conference yesterday.

The \$395.5 million dam would have been built between Bartlett and Horseshoe dams on the Verde River. It would have provided flood-control — and additional water — for Phoenix and other valley-area cities.

Dam work may be needed

The delegation and environmental groups also agreed that additional flood-control measures may be needed on the Verde River, including work on Bartlett and Horseshoe dams.

"The delegation has pledged, and we hereby pledge again . . . to get back the water for Phoenix and other cities that they would have gotten if Cliff Dam had been built," Udall said.

The dam was opposed by a coalition of 12 major environmental groups who said it was a threat to some bald eagle habitat along the Verde River.

"It's a solution and it's the one that we were seeking," said Edward Osann of the National Wildlife Federation.

"Legislative home run"

Sens. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., and John McCain, R-Ariz., said the agreement would not nullify the federal-state cost-sharing arrangement for Plan 6. A DeConcini spokesman said the agreement will have to be modified, however.

Arizona's five representatives and two senators announced the settlement after more than a dozen delegation meetings this week.

"This is the legislative home run

that brings the Central Arizona Project home," said Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., adding that he hoped the settlement would be the "last legislative battle" surrounding the \$3.8 billion CAP.

The delegation opened talks after learning late last week that Rep. Lawrence Coughlin, R-Pa., was trying to slash the \$1.2 million fiscal 1988 appropriation for Cliff Dam.

Coughlin threatened to take the issue to the House floor if a deal had not been negotiated with the National Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam.

During a verbal exchange with Kolbe during a House Appropriations Committee meeting Wednesday, Coughlin agreed to hold an anti-Cliff Dam amendment until the Arizona delegation completed its talks.

Coughlin, who in the past has taken on other federal projects considered by some to be pork barrels, said he opposed funding Cliff Dam because it would have been built with money originally intended to improve the safety of existing dams.

He also said he opposed the dam for environmental reasons, and because he didn't want to spend taxpayers' money "to provide for a real estate development."

Entire CAP was at stake

Even if the Appropriations Committee could have defeated a move by Coughlin to drop Cliff Dam funding, a floor flight over the issue would have likely meant the end not only of the dam, but of all of Plan 6 as well, according to delegation members.

While Cliff Dam would not have directly affected the supply of water to Tucson, elimination of Plan 6 could have jeopardized completion of the entire CAP, said Terry Bracy, a lobbyist for the Southern Arizona Water Resources Association.

The dam itself was not very important to Tucson, but the city wants the agreement to remain intact because it includes high levels of funding to build the Tucson leg of the CAP, said Assistant City Manager William Ealy.

Tucson is to receive its first delivery of CAP water in 1991.

Arizona Daily Star reporter Enric Volante also contributed to this report.

vation storage feature on the Verde River.

I therefore urge the Secretary of the Interior to act promptly to implement this agreement so that the necessary work on plan 6 can proceed expeditiously.

The amendment under discussion also provides funds for several fish and wildlife studies. I want to emphasize my belief that these studies have independent utility. The studies should not be construed as an intent to resurrect or to fund Cliff Dam in the future.

Throughout the history of the central Arizona project, flood control issues have been of primary concern. The amendment currently under consideration addresses these flood control concerns. Specifically, if flood damage reduction measures are to be taken at two other dams in plan 6—the Bartlett and Horseshoe Dams—the measures would be developed in consultation and cooperation with the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior. I am confident that during this process all alternatives for flood damage reduction on the Verde and Salt Rivers will be examined, including downstream reaches below their confluence as well as above.

Earlier in my statement, I mentioned the many hours of talks that went into this agreement. I would be remiss, however, if I didn't comment upon the fine work of the General Accounting Office and the Department of the Interior's Inspector General. It is through these Federal offices that many of the problems associated with Cliff Dam were brought to our attention. The reports of these offices clearly demonstrated the need for congressional action to correct Cliff Dam's problems.

In conclusion, I want to state that the cost, financing mechanism, and the environmental issues surrounding Cliff Dam helped lead to its demise. But there are positive results which will be realized through the elimination of Cliff Dam.

The statutory cloud surrounding plan 6 will be lifted once Cliff Dam is deleted from the approved plan. The overall cost ceiling for the central Arizona project, as contained in the 1968 enabling statute, will not be breached if Cliff Dam is eliminated. And the necessary water project construction can proceed.

All of this can be accomplished when the negotiated agreement is implemented. I pledge my assistance in implementing this accord and urge adoption of the amendment.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY,
Washington, DC, June 24, 1987.
Hon. LAWRENCE COUGHLIN,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COUGHLIN: I wish to extend the National Audubon Society's strong endorsement of the amendment you and the Arizona delegation are offering to the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill

related to Cliff Dam on the Verde River in Arizona. This amendment is based on an unprecedented agreement reached last week between the Arizona congressional delegation and representatives of several of the environmental organizations presently in litigation to prevent construction of Cliff Dam. Under the terms of the agreement, the delegation will seek no further funding for construction of Cliff Dam, and the environmental organizations, including the National Audubon Society, will drop their litigation and withdraw their opposition to the remaining elements of Plan Six of the Central Arizona Project.

The Verde River is indeed a national treasure. Fifty miles of the Verde are presently in wild and scenic status. Cliff Dam would have inundated ten miles of adjacent river that was originally proposed for wild and scenic designation. This stretch represents some of the last remaining streamside wildlife habitat in the Sonoran Desert and includes critical nesting habitat for several pairs of the only known desert dwelling bald eagles in America.

Cliff Dam was highly problematic from its conception. A huge earthen dam (338 ft. high) at a cost of about \$400 million, Cliff would have pushed the cost of Plan Six of the Central Arizona Project over its authorized ceiling. The Bureau of Reclamation proposed to pay for the dam with dam safety money, despite strict prohibition in the Dam Safety Act against use of its funds for new dams. Early this spring, the General Accounting Office concluded that it would be illegal to use dam safety funds to construct Cliff Dam. Furthermore, the GAO said that Arizona must seek new congressional authorization for CAP or cut some of its features to stay within existing authorization ceilings.

All these problems meant that both Cliff Dam and the Plan Six portion of CAP would be in jeopardy when Congress voted this year on funding for water projects. To avoid a potentially uncontrolled loss on the floor of the House, the Arizona delegation has taken the courageous step of working out an agreement with Plan Six opponents in advance of floor action that has stunned both Arizona and observers of western water conflict.

The agreement marks an historic resolution to a conflict of many years duration. In our view there are no losers in this agreement. The Verde River will continue to run free, and Phoenix will be permitted to pursue a number of other options to achieve flood control and water conservation needs for the city. It should be noted that this agreement nearly foundered over the issue of flood control. Because Phoenix's exact needs have yet to be identified, it was extremely difficult to achieve an agreed upon statement concerning future flood control. We are confident, however, that the spirit of cooperation that permeated the shaping of this agreement will prevail as both sides work together toward implementation of the agreement.

We want to thank you for your leadership in bringing to the attention of the Congress the many problems associated with Cliff Dam. Your opposition to Cliff Dam has not only saved the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, it has saved one of the most magnificent free-flowing reaches of the West from becoming yet another reservoir. For this, we are very grateful.

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH RAISBECK,
Vice President for Government Relations.

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH,

Washington, DC, June 24, 1987.

Hon. LAWRENCE COUGHLIN,
Room 2467, Rayburn HOB, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. MORRIS K. UDALL,
Room 235, Cannon HOB, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. JIM KOLBE,
Room 1222, Longworth HOB, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR SIR: Through this letter I wish to express our support for the Coughlin-Udall-Kolbe amendment regarding the Cliff Dam and Plan Six of the Central Arizona Project. We understand that you intend to offer the amendment when the House takes up Floor Action on the 1988 Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation. I also wish to express our sincere appreciation for the roles that each of you and the entire Arizona congressional delegation have played in bringing about this historic resolution of issues surrounding the C.A.P.'s Plan Six. These issues had threatened to divide the people of Arizona and the United States Congress for years to come.

As this amendment now flows from a Statement of Principles jointly agreed to by members of the Arizona delegation and environmental organizations, it represents more than simply a single year's halt in funding of a dam. The Arizona delegation has agreed to drop its current and future support for the Cliff Dam or any similar Verde River water storage feature and environmental organizations have agreed to terminate a lawsuit that has clouded the future and timely completion of other Plan Six features as well as Cliff Dam due to environmental, financial and other legal issues. Environmental organizations also agree not to contest the adequacy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for remaining Plan Six features at New Waddell, Modified Roosevelt and Modified Stuart Mountain Dams and to support appropriations for Safety of Dams repairs at Horseshoe and Bartlett Dams on the Verde and at Roosevelt and Stuart Mountain Dams on the Salt River.

The agreement also establishes a framework and process involving both the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of Interior in identifying and providing any needed additional flood control measures at Bartlett and Horseshoe Dams or elsewhere to protect the lives and property of residents in the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. Evaluation and implementation of flood control solutions must be accomplished using Corps of Engineers criteria and in compliance with environmental laws, including NEPA and the Endangered Species Act.

Also, in recognition of the serious potential for environmentally damaging riparian and habitat losses on the Verde River, the Arizona delegation has pledged to look at options elsewhere than the Verde for additional water supplies to meet urban demands and tribal water rights claims.

Finally, the agreement calls for a commitment of the parties to support a full mitigation effort for all habitat losses associated with the construction of the remaining Plan Six features.

There is no question of the historic nature of this agreement. It is our hope that the final result will be to provide the needed long term protection for the superlative natural values of the Verde River and that all legitimate water supply and flood damage control needs can and will be met through the implementation of this agreement at potentially large savings to the citizens of the United States.

NAS' Raisbeck and FOE's Conrad enter their agreements to drop the remainder of our litigation against "Plan 6."

Once again, on behalf of Friends of the Earth, I wish to express our deepest respect and highest regard for the wisdom, judgment and honor with which each of you conducted yourselves and each of the other members of the Arizona delegation conducted themselves in developing this legislation and the agreement.

Sincerely,

DAVID R. CONRAD,
Washington Representative.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION,
Washington, DC, June 24, 1987.

HON. LAWRENCE COUGHLIN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. COUGHLIN: I am pleased to extend the support of the National Wildlife Federation to the amendment to be offered to H.R. 2700, the Energy and Water Development Appropriation Bill for Fiscal Year 1988, deleting Cliff Dam from the Central Arizona Project. I also want to confirm our support for the "Statement of Principles" dated June 18, 1987, upon which the amendment is based.

Each member of the Arizona Congressional delegation is to be commended for his willingness to place the long-term future of the state above political posturing for short-term gain. Indeed, the businesslike atmosphere in which negotiations took place could be a model for the resolution of other water resource controversies.

Also deserving commendation at this time is Senator Howard Metzenbaum, whose interest in the environment and perseverance on this issue resulted in several General Accounting Office reports that documented serious problems in need of Congressional attention.

Although the language of the Statement of Principles speaks for itself in most respects, I would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on several key points.

Other Features of Plan 6.—The essence of the dispute over Cliff Dam relates to the loss of unspoiled riparian habitat along the Verde River that would result from the construction of the dam and the storage of water for water supply purposes. As long as Cliff Dam or similar proposals for storing significant amounts of water on the Verde River are eliminated from Federal and local plans, the Federation will not object to further Federal funding for the remaining elements of Plan 6. This commitment, and the corollary agreement not to contest the adequacy of the Final Environmental Impact statement as it pertains to other Plan 6 features, are made with the understanding by all parties that Plan 6 will be implemented in full compliance with all applicable environmental statutes.

Changes that may be proposed in the construction or operation of Plan 6 elements in the future—circumstances not covered in the Final Environmental Impact Statement—must be fully and fairly evaluated in their own right. And while we will not oppose the orderly completion of the remainder of Plan 6, we do not construe this commitment as exempting Plan 6 or the Central Arizona Project as a whole from any general budgetary reductions that may be made in the Bureau of Reclamation program in future years.

Termination of the Lawsuit.—Once the Secretary of the Interior has acted to officially remove Cliff Dam from the approved plan for the Central Arizona Project, the Federation will act promptly to terminate legal action against Cliff Dam and Plan 6 without prejudice. Indeed, we intend to inform the court of this agreement at an early date, and our counsel stands ready to cooperate in the timely resolution of all pro-

cedural steps necessary to carry out this agreement.

Dam Safety Funding.—The Federation strongly supports the installation of safety-related improvements at Bartlett and Horseshoe Dams on the Verde River. We will support any reasonable request for Federal funding necessary to accomplish this purpose on a timely basis.

Flood Control.—The replacement of the flood control storage that would have been provided by Cliff Dam with some combination of workable alternatives is clearly a high priority within the Valley. We believe that the need for additional flood damage reduction measures must be weighed carefully, in light of new Hydrological data pertaining to the flood plain of the Salt River through the Phoenix metropolitan area. Although the Federation is not committed to any particular flood control measures, we are committed to a cooperative effort between conservationists, local planners, and Federal agencies to identify needs and to evaluate alternatives.

Under the terms of this agreement, a path is open for additional flood control storage at Bartlett and Horseshoe Dams, provided that there is an updated determination of need, and a finding of feasibility pursuant to the evaluation criteria currently employed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. The Corp is expected, under the terms of the Statement of Principles, to undertake studies to evaluate a range of flood control measures. The scope of these studies should include downstream measures in the metropolitan area, as well as upstream storage, and non-structural as well as structural measures. All parties will seek an expeditious review and evaluation of these alternatives by the Corps.

Water Supply.—The relatively modest yield of municipal water supply that would have been provided by Cliff Dam can be addressed by a wide variety of measures. We urge local officials, conservationists, and other knowledgeable citizens to work together to formulate a broad new water supply strategy for Valley cities. This agreement to forego Cliff Dam should give new impetus to the consideration of broad new water conservation and demand management measures by Phoenix and its suburbs, measures that are predicted to be necessary in any event as a result of the state groundwater management law. Water rate design, building and plumbing codes, and subdivision and landscaping requirements should all receive attention in order to stretch existing supplies in the most cost-effective manner. With continued rapid growth in the metropolitan area, the benefits of such a water conservation program could be realized well before the previously scheduled 1997 completion date for Cliff Dam itself.

River Protection.—We believe that the natural values of the remaining unspoiled portions of the Verde River warrant permanent protection and national recognition. We look forward to working with the delegation in the future on appropriate legislation to accomplish this purpose.

In conclusion, let me again underscore our appreciation for the leadership you have shown in resolving this issue, and express our strong support for the agreement and our commitment to work together to see its benefits fully realized.

Sincerely,

JAY D. HAIR.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

(Mr. UDALL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the amendment offered by Mr. KOLBE on behalf of the Arizona congressional delegation.

I would first like to express my appreciation to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. COUGHLIN] for his cooperation and assistance in the preparation of this amendment.

I would also like to express my thanks to my friend and chairman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BEVILL] for his understanding, assistance, and continued support for completion of the central Arizona project. I am grateful for his cooperation, and that of the ranking member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MYERS] in helping the Arizona delegation achieve a solution to our Cliff Dam problem.

I would further like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my colleagues in the Arizona delegation: Senators DeCONCINI and McCAIN, Congressmen STUMP, KOLBE, RHODES, and KYL. Their collective political judgment, conviction, and effort made possible the difficult and not altogether popular decision embodied in this amendment and in the June 18 statement of principles.

Mr. Chairman, adoption of this amendment will mark the first step toward implementing a settlement reached by the Arizona delegation and a coalition of 11 national and local environmental organizations—thereinafter "coalition."

These organizations—Maricopa Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Prescott Audubon Society, Friends of the River, Environmental Policy Institute, American Rivers Conservation Council, National Parks and Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, and Friends of the Earth—have been united in their efforts to wage a legal and political war to stop construction of Cliff Dam on the Verde River in Arizona.

Adoption of this amendment will begin a process of ending this warfare before it takes an increasingly greater toll of time, energy, resources, and political capital which the Arizona delegation needs to pursue successfully other objectives beneficial to Arizona and the Nation. Chief among these objectives is completion of the central Arizona project.

Cliff Dam is one of four structures comprising plan 6, which the Secretary of the Interior selected in 1984 from among nine possible alternatives to Orme Dam. Orme, a huge structure authorized by the Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968, was to have been built at the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers north of Phoenix. In 1976, in the face of intense opposition by an Indian tribe, environmentalists, and the Carter administration, Orme was shelved, and a long

AWF's Jay Hair agrees to sign off on remainder of enviro litigation against "Plan 6."

Abrupt Halt

Cliff Dam's Demise Reverses Mind-set On Water Projects

BY MARY A. M. GINDHART

Starting with the completion of Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River in 1911, water-storage dams in Arizona have nourished desert farms and, more recently, quenched the thirst of a rapidly growing urban population.

"Building dams is a mind-set," said Dr. Robert Witzeman, former president of the Maricopa Audubon Society and a long-time dam opponent. "Unfortunately, those in control of Arizona are still taming the West. It's the Arizona heritage."

No longer. An era of building water storage dams in Arizona came to an abrupt halt earlier this month with the demise of Cliff Dam. The \$390 million dam, which had been planned for the Verde River east of Phoenix as part of the Central Arizona Project, became the victim of powerful opponents, notably key members of Congress and local and national environmental groups.

Cliff Dam and its predecessors have a long history. Federal engineers have been planning for a dam to store water and capture flood waters on the Salt, Verde and Gila rivers since the 1940s. More than \$20 million has been spent by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on what was first Maxwell, then Orme, then Cliff Dam.

"It's disheartening for this to happen when we have gone as far as we have in terms of depth and the extent of planning for Cliff," said Larry Morton, director of the bureau's Arizona Projects Office in Phoenix. "However, we are here also to

react to changes of conditions, and this is a change."

He said nearly all Arizona CAP officials were "surprised, shocked and outraged" by the settlement reached between Arizona's congressional delegation and environmental groups that deleted Cliff Dam from plans for the \$5.2 billion CAP. The move effectively kills the dam because there are no other sources of federal funds for it and local governments say the dam's costs and opposition preclude them from building it.

"All of a sudden, the deal was here," Morton said. "By the time we knew it was going on, it was nearly over."

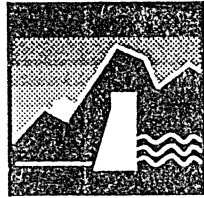
Herb Fibel, president of the Maricopa Audubon Society, said he believes the speed of the negotiations, which began June 18 and ended with an agreement the next day, is a result of others "finally seeing the light" that the environmentalists have long seen.

Environmentalists, who once were routinely ridiculed at public meetings on water projects, gradually have gained respect in Arizona. Even the once-exclusive club of water politicians increasingly has had to answer to environmental and economic arguments against the CAP.

"We've faced a tremendous uphill battle against the belief that dams were good at any cost," Fibel said. "But times are changing."

He and Witzeman say they don't want to be "bad winners," yet they can hardly hide the joy they share about the victory. At one point during the settlement negotiations, the mild-mannered, articulate Witzeman, who had spoken against the dam for nearly 20 years, was so excited that he

Cliff and Orme Dams chronology



1968 Congress authorizes the Central Arizona Project, including Orme Dam at the confluence of the Verde and Salt rivers, ending 14 years of litigation between California and Arizona over rights to water in the Colorado River.

1977 President Carter places the CAP on his federal water project 'hit list.' After a campaign by Arizona congressmen, the CAP is salvaged, but Orme Dam is abandoned because of environmental and Indian concerns.

1978 Central Arizona Water Control Study launched by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers to study alternatives to Orme Dam.

1981 Gov. Bruce Babbitt's Orme Advisory Committee selects Plan 6 as the alternative to Orme Dam. Plan 6 includes Cliff Dam on the Verde River, New Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River, and modifications to the existing Stewart Mountain and Roosevelt Dams on the Salt River.

1984 Interior Secretary William Clark approved Plan 6 as the best water storage and flood control proposal for the CAP but delayed work on Cliff to allow further environmental studies.

1985 Cliff Dam is given a green light despite federal opinion that its reservoir would flood nests of bald eagles, an endangered species protected by the federal government. Environmentalists file suit to block the dam's construction and form a coalition to lobby against the dam in Congress.

1986 Environmentalists argue in federal court that Plan 6 should be halted until a judge determines whether Interior Department evaluated all alternatives to Cliff Dam, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

1987 Arizona's congressional delegation agrees to abandon Cliff Dam. In exchange, environmentalists agree not to oppose funding for the remaining parts of Plan 6.

Gus Walker/Republic

Mary A. M. Gindhart has covered water issues for The Arizona Republic.

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Cliff Dam A Setback To Water Projects

Continued from C1

couldn't find words to express his feelings that the battle might soon be over.

Opponents' Chief Motivation

Environmentalists used many arguments in fighting the dam. But their chief motivation was to save a 10-mile stretch of wild and scenic river through the Sonoran desert and a unique ecosystem that serves as the habitat for desert-nesting bald eagles, an endangered species. "I haven't been paid to fight this fight," Fibel said, referring to the many water officials and politicians who fought for construction of Cliff. "We've been there fighting because we believed it was right."

He wasn't alone. A coalition of 13 environmental groups with a combined membership of 5.4 million was committed to fighting the dam. It financed the federal lawsuit that, along with pressure from congressional opponents, is credited with making the death of Cliff Dam inevitable.

A key strategy of the environmentalists was to go after not only Cliff Dam but the \$1.1 billion Plan 6, a key element of the CAP that included Cliff.

Each year since the CAP's authorization in 1968, Arizona has sent a group of supporters to lobby for CAP funding. The massive water project, first scheduled for completion in 1980, is slowly winding its 333-mile way from the Colorado River near Lake Havasu to its terminus south of Tucson. It is now scheduled to be completed in 1991.

For the past three years during CAP appropriation hearings, environmentalists have strongly argued that Cliff was a boondoggle, that the United States should not be subsidizing development in metropolitan Phoenix.

Sacrificed To Hostile Congress

It has been a tradition in Congress that all water projects receive some funding, however small, so that state delegations could return to their constituents with a "piece of the federal pie."

But that changed in this year's Congress. The Reagan administration sought funding only for the two largest projects, the Central Arizona Project and the Central Utah Project. Politicians

END OF AN ERA: A SPECIAL REPORT



Michael Ging/Republic

The chief motivation for environmentalists in their fight against Cliff Dam was to save a 10-mile stretch of wild and scenic river through the Sonoran desert

were angered and, for the first time, were free to attack another state's water project without fear of losing their own state's project. They vented their anger on Cliff Dam.

Amid threats against the dam by members of Congress from other states, Arizona's delegation decided among themselves that the dam no longer could be saved. The dam had now caused too much attention to the entire CAP.

So the dam was sacrificed. "We are agreed that for now Arizona gives up the idea of building Cliff Dam," said Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., adding that the days of Western coalitions to win large water projects are past. "We just do not have the clout we had before."

In exchange for Cliff's death, environmentalists agreed not to oppose other features of Plan 6 — New Waddell on the Agua Fria River west of Phoenix and repairs to Stewart Mountain and Roosevelt dams upstream on the Salt River.

Assessing The Loss

The loss of Cliff Dam costs the Valley some additional water supply, said Tom Clark, general manager of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, the managers of the CAP.

"However, it's not all gloom and despair," he said. "The CAP will operate without Cliff."

Most of the CAP's water storage space will be provided by the New Waddell Dam, which is scheduled for completion in 1991.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which is

and a unique ecosystem that serves as the habitat for desert-nesting bald eagles, an endangered species.

building the CAP, must wait for direction from Congress on what to do next.

There must be decisions on flood control, water storage and a \$371 million funding agreement between local city and state officials and the federal government to help finish other dam projects in Plan 6. Because Cliff has been eliminated, the funding agreement is on hold and must be renegotiated. The federal government now will look to see if flood control space can be added to existing dams on the Verde River and at a lower cost than Cliff's \$390 million price tag as part of the agreement with environmentalists.

"We have not looked at the other Verde River dams for the purpose of flood control," Morton said. "We will now — now that we no longer have Cliff."

While it may take awhile for the wounds to heal among Cliff's supporters, Fibel and Witzeman say the long-term effect will be hardly noticeable.

"The brotherhood has had to save face," Witzeman said. "It hurts them to think that the environmental community has had a hand in the water decision-making process. Water politics always has been a closed club. We've been the outsider — until now."

The delegation's decision to kill Cliff Dam drew immediate complaints from its supporters, who have long claimed that the dam, located above the confluence of the Verde with the Salt River, was the last chance for flood control along the Salt through the Valley.

"We are the largest metropolitan area downstream of major rivers without upstream flood control," says George Britton, Phoenix's deputy

"If water becomes short, we will adjust," Herb Fibel said.

city manager for water and environmental resources. "I just can't believe that the dam is not needed."

The dam, however, is not needed as badly as it was when floods on the Salt River in the late 1970s and early 1980s destroyed bridges and some small communities. Those bridges have been replaced by larger ones that can withstand greater floods, and those communities have been relocated or protected from floods.

And even the backers of the \$3 billion Rio Salado Project, who had envisioned a large-scale public and private development on the river's banks, had begun to scale down the proposed project in case Cliff Dam was not built — and to head off opposition when they ask Maricopa County voters this fall to approve a property tax to fund the Rio Salado.

Won On Economic Arguments

In the end, it was not environmental arguments that won the battle against Cliff, but economic arguments.

Environmentalists criticized Cliff Dam as a bad financial deal. The dam's benefits were not worth its costs, they said. Although much of the project's cost would be repaid, with interest, the interest rate was only 3 percent.

"We're looking at a federal government budget that's running into huge deficits," Fibel said. "There are literally billions of federal dollars spent for water projects in the West and the East that were supposed to pay their way and never have."

The cities of Phoenix, Glendale, Tempe, Mesa, Scottsdale and Chandler had pledged \$60 million to help build the \$390 million Cliff Dam in exchange for rights to water that would be stored in its reservoir. The annual yield of 30,000 acre-feet of water would serve about 150,000 people a year.

"Cliff Dam was the centerpiece of the Plan 6 facilities from the view of the cities," the cities' mayors wrote in a letter of protest delivered late last week to delegation members and Interior Secretary Donald Hodel.

The dam's opponents, however, argued that a combination of conservation and efforts to make farmers pay the full cost of water is a much more practical way to stretch the state's water supply.

"In my opinion, if water becomes short, we will adjust," Fibel said. "I think that adjustment is more appropriate than building more dams. If there were not enough water to grow cotton and pecans in Tucson, then they won't grow cotton and pecans."

May 13, 1987 Scottsdale (Ariz.) Progress

Stop Rio Salado

Few county taxpayers realize they are being asked to finance a Rio Salado floodplain real estate scheme this November which statistically assures flooding its inhabitants.

In April 1985 Brian Reich, a nationally recognized Arizonan with 30 years experience in flood hydrology, warned Governor Babbitt and his "Plan 6" dambuilding committee of the risks of building dams such as Cliff Dam to "protect" riverbottom real estate development. Rio Salado would insert commercial development and homes for 36,000 people down into thousand of acres of reclaimed and not-so-reclaimed riverbottom land.

Reich showed that homes and businesses closest to the river would have a 39-percent chance of disaster during a 50-year occupancy. This means odds for disaster of greater than one in three. The higher, middle portions of the riverbed reclaimed by Cliff Dam would have a 10- to 22-percent flooding risk, Reich showed.

Even those structures in the highest, driest part of that reclaimed land would have a 5-percent chance of inundation.

Babbitt and his committee ignored Reich — though Stewart Udall vigorously protested Cliff Dam. Perhaps Udall, as former interior secretary and chief government dam-builder, knew something about Mother Nature's way of ultimately reclaiming what is hers.

Besides Rio Salado being periodically flooded, Reich warned of the risk from building an earthen dam like Cliff upstream of a metropolis. The proposed Cliff Dam would be one of the highest earthen dams ever to be built by the Bureau of Reclamation. It would have similar dimensions to the Bureau's ill-fated earthen Teton Dam. That "state-of-the-art" dirt dam burst the first year the bureau filled it in 1976!

CLEMENS TITZCK
Phoenix

TURSDAY, JULY 4, 1987 THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

FLOOD

Rio Salado Risk

Editor:

The Rio Salado District should be commended for its response to criticism that the project is flood-prone. Critics have repeatedly and correctly pointed out that the 1891 (200-year) flood, even with all Plan 6 dams in place, would be twice as large a flood as Rio Salado could handle.

Last year, the district inserted language in its enabling legislation saying that it "may" build at the safer 200-year floodplain, not the 100-year floodplain. The wording in that legislation, to be credible, should have said "shall" instead of "may."

Allowing developers to move development deep into the riverbed after upstream dams have made it "safe," does not decrease the percentage of flood risk one iota. It does, however, make riverbed landowners and developers very rich. It also imposes a costly financial burden on flood victims and taxpayers if those dams fail to perform as promised.

Rio Salado's proposal to develop at the 200-year floodplain still presents serious risk. Fifty years at the edge of such a floodplain has a 20 percent flood risk. Floodplain development must not move inside today's 100-year Salt River floodplain boundary after upstream control. In that way, the risk will remain below 20 percent for Rio Salado or private developers!

Whether private or taxpayer-funded developers ultimately develop our Salt, let us avoid the perilous temptation of moving down into that mighty river's bed. That would free Rio Salado and the gravel operator from the charge that they are profiteering at taxpayer expense.

CHARLES BABBITT
Vice President
Maricopa Audubon Society
Phoenix

Cliff Dam Bites the Dust, Desert-nesting Eagles Win

by Elizabeth Raisbeck

MIRACLES DO SOMETIMES happen in Washington. Cliff Dam on the Verde River has been vanquished. The entire Arizona Congressional delegation held a press conference June 18 to announce that it would seek to eliminate Cliff Dam from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) because its members feared that opposition to Cliff Dam was threatening to bring down a large segment ("Plan Six") of the multifaceted project.

In the thirsty West, abandoning a treasured water project is tantamount to suicide for a politician, but thanks to years of work by the Maricopa Audubon Society in Phoenix, the delegation saw that if Cliff wasn't dropped, Phoenix could lose much of the future water development it had planned. It took political courage for the delegation to "just say no," and much of the credit goes to the dean of the delegation, Morris Udall, chairman of the House Interior Committee.

Cliff Dam would have flooded one of the last free-flowing stretches of river in the Sonoran Desert. The Verde River is home to about 25 pairs of the only known desert-dwelling bald eagles in the country. Federal dams in Arizona have already destroyed more than 95 percent of the eagles' streamside nesting habitat, and this phase of CAP, a five-dam combination of rebuilt old and new dams, will flood still more of the bald eagle habitat. Cliff Dam was the most destructive element of the plan.

When the House Appropriations Committee met in June to vote on the Energy and Water appropriations bill for FY 88, Rep. Larry Coughlin (R-PA) was prepared to offer an amendment to strike Cliff Dam from the bill. Audubon and others made clear to the delegation that if the amendment failed in committee, we would carry the fight to the House floor against not just Cliff Dam but all of Plan Six, taking a choice bite out of the water projects budget that would save the taxpayers at least \$30 million next year.

The day before committee action, Audubon was invited to sit down and discuss a resolution of the conflict, and in 24 hours an agreement had been reached that eliminated Cliff Dam from the plan.

Such an agreement would have been unheard of even a year ago, but much has changed in the world of western water. The enormous federal deficit has forced Congress to take a hard look at water project proposals. Local citizens have become much more vocal in challenging not only the environmental impacts of water projects, but also their questionable economics. Most importantly, it was the dogged opposition of conservation-minded citizens led by Maricopa Audubon that convinced some powerful public officials that life could go on without Cliff Dam. □

Liz Raisbeck directs Audubon's political activities in Washington, D.C.

Phoenix Gazette

AY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1988 M

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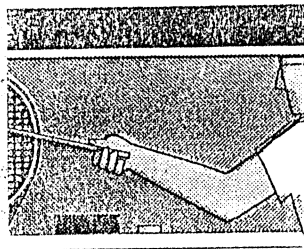
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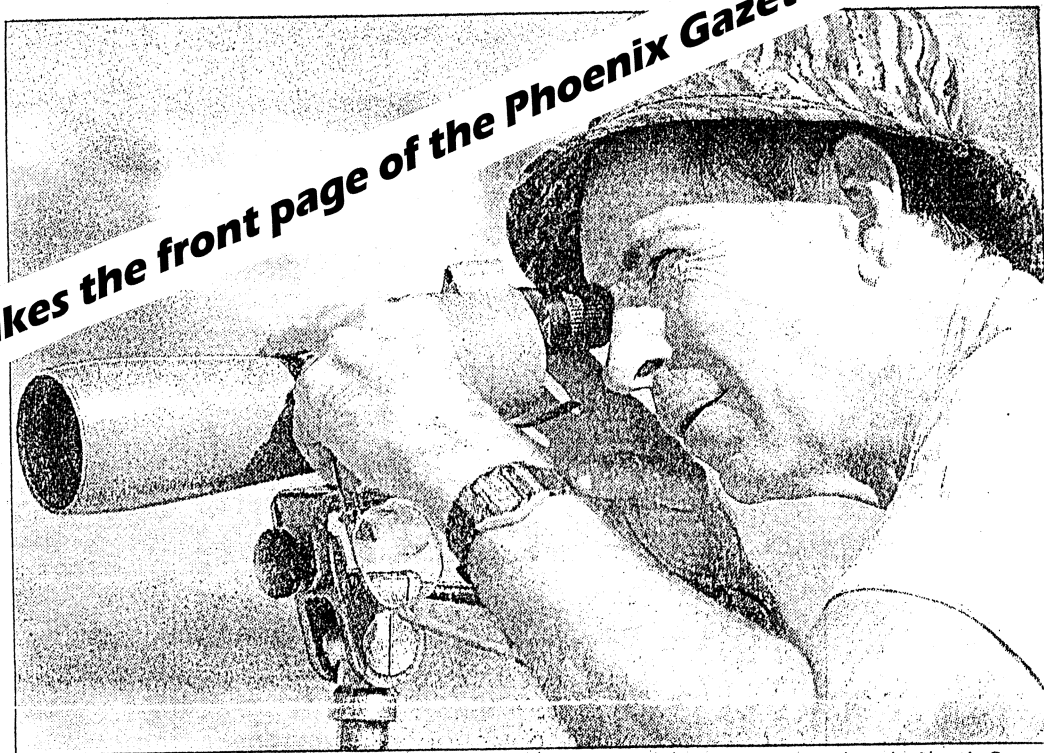
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ould you believe

— A 350-pound sow decided that idy for hog heaven and tried to way to the slaughterhouse. hog leaped from a truck Thursday ne U.S. 70 in Raleigh, N.C. A size that the hog lifted the truck's

Birdwatching makes the front page of the Phoenix Gazette in 1988!



Mark Henle, Phoenix Gazette

Robert Witzman peers through a scope, searching for rare birds in Phoenix sewage ponds.

A fowl smell

Bird watchers follow their noses to best spots

By Clay Thompson
Phoenix Gazette

The sun has been up for a while and it's starting to heat up, and a truly incredible smell is coming up off the sludge ponds at the city's 91st Avenue sewage treatment plant.

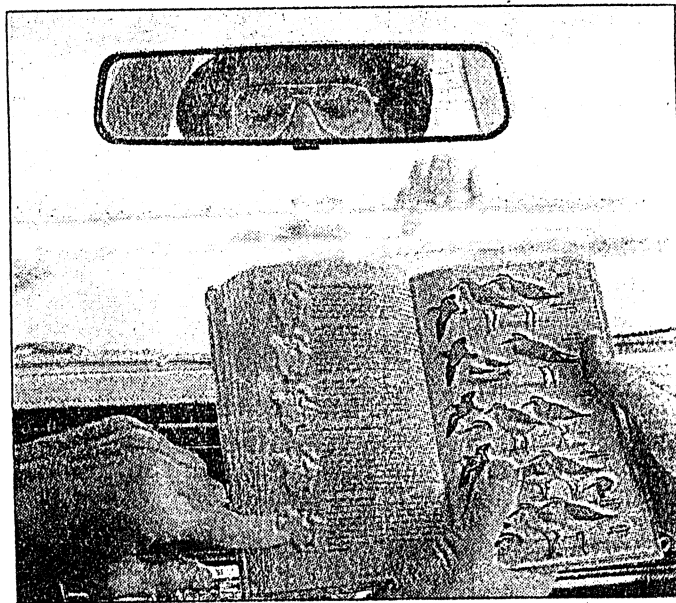
The breeze isn't strong enough to stir the heavy black and green surface of the sludge ponds, but it's brisk enough to waft great snootfuls of that smell into Dr. Robert Witzman's car.

"Birders," said Witzman, who is looking out the side window while the car cruises down a narrow lane between two ponds, "don't mind the smell."

You might tend to think of bird watching as a sport of open green fields or shady forests, perhaps a nice marsh now and then. But in the Valley, especially during the spring or fall migration seasons, the interesting birds — and the interested birders — are at the sewage ponds and the landfills and similar less-than-picturesque city sites.

Witzman, conservation chairman for the Maricopa County Audubon Society, was scouting the 91st Avenue sewage

See ■ Birds, A-5



Phoenix Gazette

Witzman uses his field guide to identify birds he has spotted from his car, parked near the 25th Avenue landfill.