

Feathered friends are in abundance

By ROSEMARY SCHABERT
Tribune staff writer

A surprise feathered visitor, 3 feet tall, was mingling with the golfers at Ahwatukee.

Fishing in surrounding ponds at its leisure, it captured prey by luring it into the cool shadows of its expansive wings. Eating on the run, it stumbled like a drunk over the grass.

The reddish egret — with a slate blue body and dark brownish-red neck and head — was making a rare visit to Arizona, explained Scott Burge of Tempe, president of the Maricopa Audubon Society.

Arizona attracts a rainbow array of bird species, "probably the most interesting bird life in the U.S.," he said.

Many varieties call Arizona home; others are just passing through.

"We had one woman who had a plain capped startthroat," Burge remembered. "It's only found about 400 miles south of the border and she had one in her back yard in Sunnyslope."

"She was deluged by birdwatchers. They were flying in from all over the country."

More typical than solo bird flights are en masse meetings in Arizona, the most populated non-colonial — non-nesting colony — gathering place in North America.

Although conservationists maintain four refuges, in-

cluding a hummingbird sanctuary near Sierra Vista, most of the bird congregations are in the state's remaining natural strongholds.

Those densely populated breeding grounds are in riparian areas — Arizona's river banks. In those spots, birds find whatever type of food they need, whether fish, frogs or flies. Mesquite and cottonwood trees provide housing and shade.

"The diversity and abundance of bird life in riparian zones is not matched anywhere," said Burge. "You can see some incredibly rare birds. You get up to 50 species in the riparian. The breeding density is incredible."

"If you look for birds in the desert, you'll find less than 10 species. The breeding density is very sparse."

The spot at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers that would be flooded by Orme Dam is one of the last such havens in the state, home to an unusual tenant: the American bald eagle.

The seven pairs of the endangered species around that site are the only surviving southern bald eagles in seven western states, said Burge. The birds, considered by many to be a subspecies of the American national symbol, raise 60 percent of their young there, he added.

In winter, other bird species, more than 150 in all, migrate or breed in the Orme Dam impact area, said Bob Witzeman, Maricopa Audubon conservation chairman.

Reptiles and amphibians also gather at the proposed dam site.

"You're looking at the last vestiges of a very precious habitat," said Witzeman.

"One year, a researcher found 25 species of birds of prey in that area," said Burge. "If you would look in the world you would be hard put to find another spot like it."

At one time, the rest of the Verde and the Gila, Santa Cruz and Salt rivers had "hundreds of miles" of rich riparian regions, said Burge. Should Orme Dam be built, this last haven would be lost and Arizona might "create endangered species," he warned.

"It would be disastrous, with no two ways about it. Arizona in the last 100 years has seen a reduction in a lot of its streamside or riparian habitat, the plant communities closest to the rivers."

To destroy the bald eagles' habitat would be "just like shooting them or electrocuting them," Burge said. "The Yuma clapper rail there is endangered. Some would fly over but not use the area."

Already, the site is plagued by problems of overdevelopment and possible exploitation by tubers, he said.

But the biggest problem is a dwindling supply of aging cottonwood trees to serve as housing for the eagles. The trees are a favorite food of cattle grazing on leased government land, said Burge.

Tonto National Forest rangers are working with en-

vironmentalists to plant new trees where the cattle don't graze, fencing off the areas, said Witzeman.

Without trees, the eagles would have to nest in cliffs, producing one offspring yearly instead of two, he estimated.

The biggest fight for wildlife enthusiasts, however, has been the proposed dam, now under study along with alternative flood control plans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Originally, the dam was one of four to be built by the Central Arizona Project. If all were completed, "we might lose species in all of the U.S.," said Burge.

There's another side of the battle, he added. Birdwatching is "very good for many local economies and small towns in Arizona. I just led a field trip of 20 people from Wisconsin. They paid \$600 each to come."

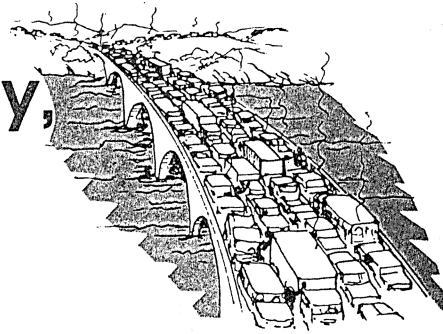
Nor would the Verde stronghold be missed only by an elite group, the men argue. Birdwatchers aren't always equipped with binoculars, cameras and a gift for emulative whistling.

Many Arizonans are informal bird fanciers.

"There are many hummingbird feeders," said Witzeman. "There's a large constituency of bird admirers and bird lovers."

"If the public were to find out two of the last western nests of the bald eagle would be flooded by Orme Dam, they'd look at all the alternatives and consider putting up bridges instead."

Safer, Less Costly, Flood Control NOW!



FLOOD CONTROL NOW!

Most of the alternative measures to Orme Dam can be accomplished in a year or two. It would take at least seven years to complete Orme Dam and might then be blocked by the President, Congress or the courts.

ORME DAM — AN EARTHEN NIGHTMARE

Orme would be an earthen dam, similar in design to another Bureau of Reclamation dam — the ill-fated Teton Dam in Idaho. It would be situated on a highly faulted site of questionable safety just 10 miles upstream from a major metropolitan area. Even worse, it would back up water against the foundation of a weak, poorly constructed dam just upstream, further weakening that structure and setting up the scenario for the combined collapse of both dams. Untold death and destruction would result.

INCREASED PROPERTY TAXES AND WATER BILLS

Flood control alternatives to Orme could cost about \$50,000,000, a fraction of that dam's \$360,000,000 price tag. Much of Orme's cost must be paid back to Uncle Sam through increases in the property taxes and water bills of all citizens living in central Arizona.

.

THE SAFER, LESS COSTLY ALTERNATIVES TO ORMEDAM:

1. Better bridges (1-3 years)
2. Protection of the airport and Holly Acres (1-2 years)
3. Use of the Verde and Salt River dams for flood control as well as storage (now)
4. Improved, radio-relayed flood warning gauges on the upper watershed (one year)
5. Raising Roosevelt for safety and flood control (3-5 years)
6. Enforcement of floodplain laws (now)

Below is a list of some of the many organizations that support the Ft. McDowell community in its opposition to Orme Dam:

American Civil Liberties Union
 Arizona Democratic Party (1978 Platform)
 Arizona Ecumenical Council
 Arizona Libertarian Party
 Catholic Diocese of Phoenix/Human Development Council
 Citizens Concerned About the Project
 Committee to Save Ft. McDowell Indian Community
 Construction, Production & Maintenance Labors Union Local No. 383
 Friends Committee on National Legislation
 Friends Meeting of Phoenix/Tempe
 Friends of Earth

Inter-tribal Councils of Arizona and New Mexico
 Maricopa Audubon Society
 National Audubon Society
 National Indian Lutheran Board
 National Wildlife Federation
 Phoenix Gray Panthers
 Presbytery of the Grand Canyon
 Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
 Sierra Club
 Tempe Democrats
 Valley Republicans

Orme Alternatives Coalition

124 W. Thomas Rd.
 Phoenix, AZ 85013
 (602) 248-0048

Wednesday, December 3, 1980

NAS President Russell Peterson decries pork-barrel dams!

Arizona Republic

Audubon Society classifies Orme Dam as 'boondoggle'

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The National Audubon Society's year-end report names eight "priority targets," including Orme Dam, in its "battle against boondoggles."

"With growing success, the society has been rallying public opposition to federal 'water resource' boondoggles that waste billions of taxpayer dollars and needlessly destroy our national resources," the society's president, Russell Peterson, said in a report to the 412,000 members of the 75-year-old nature society.

He said that although the 1980 Congress again approved funding for such projects, closer votes signaled that "the nation's disgraceful tradition of pork-barrel politics

may, by continued citizen effort, soon be ended."

The eight "priority targets" and their drawbacks, as described by the society, are:

- Orme Dam, part of the Central Arizona Project. The society says it would flood a fertile valley, displace an Indian reservation and wipe out the most productive nesting areas of a bald eagle colony.

- The \$1 billion Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project in Maine, which, the society says, would obliterate much of the St. John River, flood large expanses of forest and produce disproportionately little electricity.

- North Dakota's Garrison Diversion Project, an irrigation project that the

society says would flood 70,000 acres of prairie wetlands, damage or destroy 13 national wildlife refuges and violate a U.S.-Canadian treaty.

- The Columbia Dam in Tennessee, which would block the Duck River. The society says it would flood 12,600 acres of farmland to protect 3,700 acres elsewhere and displace 260 homes upstream to protect 43 acres downstream.

- Washington state's portion of the Northern Tier Pipeline project, which, the society says, would turn the northern entrance to Olympia National Park into a supertanker port.

- The \$2 billion Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Alabama and Mississippi,

which would link the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico for barge traffic. The society says it would destroy farmlands and forests while serving no energy, irrigation, recreation or flood-control purpose.

- Nebraska's O'Neill Irrigation Unit, which, with Norden Dam, would flood a scenic stretch of the Niobrara River to supplement irrigation for 77,000 farm acres. The society says it would destroy 30,000 acres of other farmland.

- The Mono Lake diversion project, a municipal project that the society calls "every bit as destructive as a federal boondoggle," in which Los Angeles plans to tap the lake's tributaries.

16 Scottsdale (Ariz.) Daily Progress Monday, Dec. 1, 1980

Orme Dam on society's 'hit list'

NEW YORK (AP) — The National Audubon Society's year-end report names eight "priority targets" in the "battle against boondoggles," including the proposed Orme Dam northeast of Scottsdale.

"With growing success, the society has been rallying public opposition to federal 'water resource' boondoggles that waste billions of taxpayer dollars and needlessly destroy our national resources," president Russell Peterson says in a report to the 412,000 members of the 75-year-old nature society.

He said Congress in 1980 again approved funding for such projects. But he said closer votes signaled that "the nation's disgraceful tradition of pork-barrel politics may, by continued citizen effort, soon be ended."

The society said it opposes Orme Dam at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers because it would flood a fertile valley, displace residents of the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation and wipe out the most productive nesting areas of a bald eagle colony. The proposed dam is part of the Cen-

tral Arizona Project.

The other seven "priority targets" and their drawbacks, as described by the society, were:

- The \$1 billion Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project in Maine, which allegedly would obliterate much of the St. John River, flood large expanses of forest, and produce disproportionately little electricity.

- North Dakota's Garrison Diversion Project, an irrigation project which the society says would flood 70,000 acres of prairie wetlands, damage or destroy 13 national wildlife refuges, and violate a U.S.-Canadian treaty.

- The Columbia Dam in Tennessee, which would block the Duck River, flood 12,600 acres of farmland to protect 3,700 acres elsewhere, and displace 260 homes upstream to protect 43 acres downstream.

- Washington State's Northern Tier Pipeline Project, which would turn the north entrance to Olympic National Park into a supertanker port.

- The \$2 billion Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Alabama and Mississippi, which would link

the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico for barge traffic. The society says it would destroy farmlands and forests while serving no energy, irrigation, recreation or flood-control purpose.

- Nebraska's O'Neill Irrigation Unit, which with Norden Dam would flood a scenic stretch of the Niobrara River to supplement irrigation for 77,000 farm acres while destroying 30,000 acres of other farmland.

- The Mono Lake diversion project, a municipal project that the society calls "every bit as destructive as a federal boondoggle," in which the city of Los Angeles plans to tap the lake's tributaries.

Other goals listed in the report include protection of the bald eagle, especially along Alaska's Chilkat River; restoration of a lost colony of Atlantic puffin birds on a tiny island off Maine; protection of grizzly bears, wolves, coyotes and other endangered predators, and protection of the bowhead whale of Arctic Alaska and the Eskimo culture.

CAP's Orme Dam earns a top spot

NEW YORK (AP) — The National Audubon Society's year-end report names the Orme Dam, part of the Central Arizona Project, among eight "priority targets" in its "battle against boondoggles."

The society says the dam would flood a fertile valley, displace an Indian reservation and wipe out the most productive nesting areas of a bald-eagle colony.

"With growing success, the society has been rallying public opposition to federal

'water resource' boondoggles that waste billions of taxpayer dollars and needlessly destroy our national resources," President Russell Peterson said in his report to the 412,000 members of the 75-year-old nature society.

He said that while the 1980 Congress again approved funding for such projects, closer votes signaled that "the nation's disgraceful tradition of pork-barrel politics may, by continued citizen effort, soon be ended."

Other "priority targets" and their drawbacks, as described by the society, were:

- The \$1 billion Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project in Maine, which the society says would obliterate much of the St. John River, flood large expanses of forest, and produce disproportionately little electricity.

- North Dakota's Garrison Diversion

on Audubon Society's hit list

Project, an irrigation project that the society says would flood 70,000 acres of prairie wetlands, damage or destroy 13 national wildlife refuges, and violate a U.S.-Canadian treaty.

- The Columbia Dam in Tennessee, which would block the Duck River. The society says it would flood 12,600 acres of farmland to protect 3,700 acres elsewhere, and displace 260 homes upstream to protect 43 acres downstream.

- Washington state's Northern Tier Pipeline Project, which the society says would turn the north entrance to Olympic National Park into a supertanker port.

- The \$2 billion Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in Alabama and Mississippi, which would link the Tennessee River to the Gulf of Mexico for barge traffic. The society says it would destroy farmlands and forests while serving no energy, irrigation, recreation or flood-control purpose.

- Nebraska's O'Neill Irrigation Unit, which with Norden Dam would flood a scenic stretch of the Niobrara River to supplement irrigation for 77,000 farm acres. The society says it would destroy 30,000 acres of other farmland.

- The Mono Lake diversion project, a municipal project that the society calls "every bit as destructive as a federal boondoggle," in which the city of Los Angeles plans to tap the lake's tributaries.

2 Scottsdale (Az.) Daily Progress Feb. 19, 1980

Orme Dam opponents blast SRP releases

By ROB ETHINGTON
Progress Staff Writer

Cessation of water diversion from Salt River Project dams only three days after a U.S. Soil Conservation Service prediction of heavier than average spring rainfall was made public could have been an intentional plot to rally public support for Orme Dam, according to opponents of the dam.

Frank J. Welsh, executive director of Citizens Concerned About the Project, and Dr. Robert A. Witzeman, of the Maricopa Audubon Society, criticized SRP management Monday for leaving the project's reservoirs at 90 percent of capacity shortly after the forecast that late winter and spring rainfall would be 22 percent above normal.

The largest releases of water on record were forced Friday because the nearly-full reservoirs otherwise would have

overflowed from floodwaters.

SRP management has maintained that substantial releases would have resulted even if the reservoirs had been only 70 percent full.

Carol Jennings, SRP spokesman, called the charges "absolutely, totally untrue."

She said the utility is unable to rely on weather predictions alone for water-release strategy.

"If we released water every time someone made a prediction of rain, after a while we wouldn't have any water left. The weather is a gamble."

The Soil Conservation Service prediction related to a snowpack that would melt normally, she said.

Orme Dam would not be necessary if Phoenix city leaders were to move ahead with the Rio Salado project, a large-scale version of Scottsdale's Indian Bend Wash

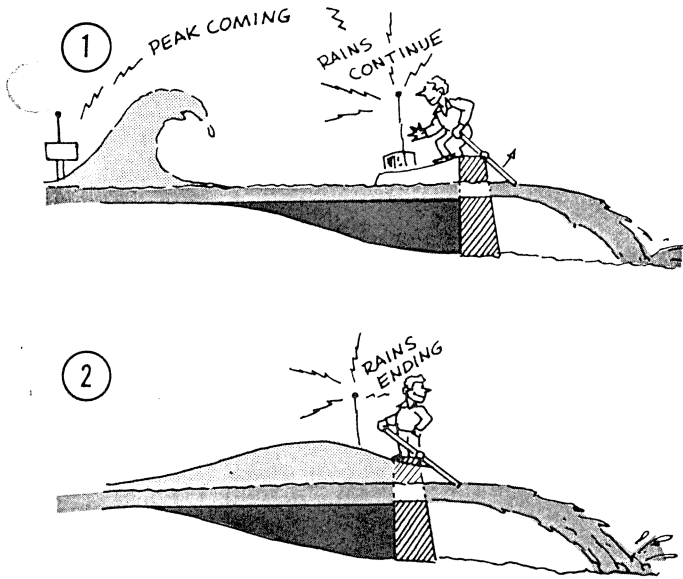
greenbelt flood control system, Welsh said.

Were SRP to retain only another 50,000 acre feet of storage on the Verde River, the largest flow through the Rio Salado system during reservoir inflows similar to last weekend's — even without additional dams — would be about 115,000 cubic feet per second, well below the 185,000 cfs in the river Saturday, Welsh claimed.

**See next page
for hydrograph
of SRP releases!**

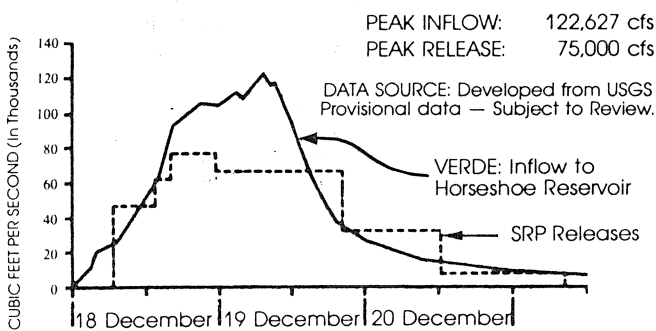
From brochure by Orme Alternatives Coalition

Managing SRP Dams For Flood Control



In a matter of hours sufficient amounts of water may be vacated from the upper gated portions of the reservoirs. This space may then be used to capture and store the dangerous peak of the flood. The operation of the dams in the December 1978 flood demonstrates the manner in which this method can be employed.

Peak Inflow and Releases - Verde River
December 1978

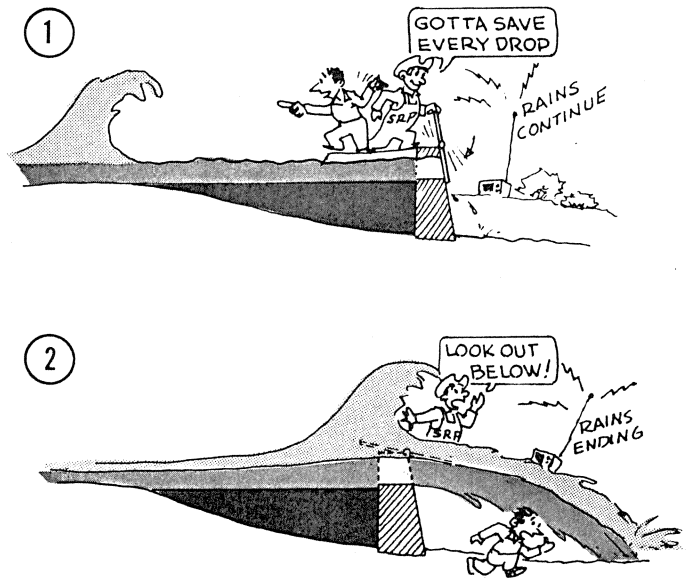


"During the December 1978 storm, the coincidental inflow peak to the Salt and Verde systems occurred on Dec. 18. The Verde system hit its peak of 105,000 cfs at midnight and the Salt peaked at 131,000 at 8 p.m.. If no dams existed, those flows would have reached the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers at the same time and 266,000 cfs of water would have flowed through the Valley. However, because the dams do exist, Salt River Project was able to hold releases at Granite Reef Diversion Dam to 115,000 cfs — less than half of the total peak inflows."

— Hydrographs and caption reprinted from "Insight", March 1979, a publication of the Salt River Project.

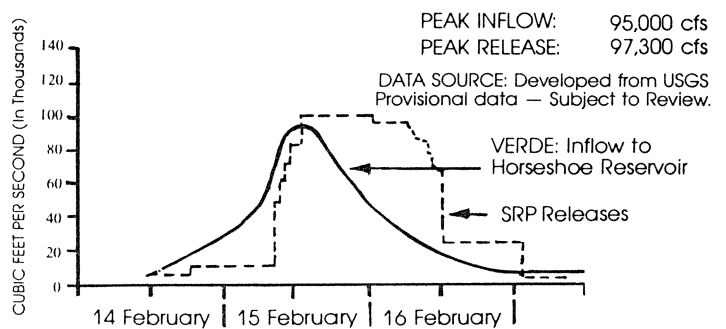
Not Managing SRP Dams For Flood Control

(Summer 1980)



By letting reservoirs fill while the peak is approaching, the Valley is subjected to potentially devastating floods. The February 1980 event is an example of this method of operation.

Peak Inflow and Releases - Verde River
February 1980



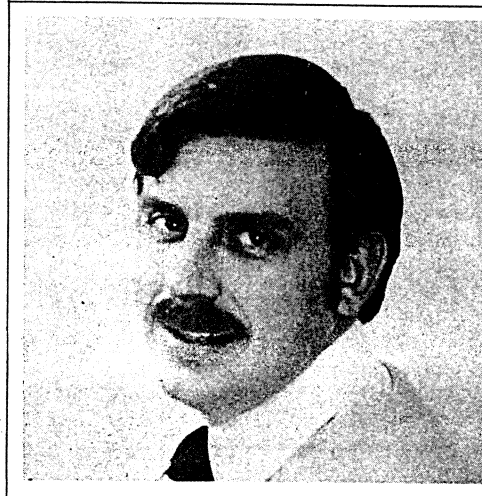
During the February 1980 storm, the coincidental inflow peak to the Salt and Verde systems occurred on Feb. 15. The Verde system hit its peak of 95,000 cfs at 3 p.m. and the Salt peaked at 114,000 cfs at 5 p.m. However, 97,300 cfs was released from the Verde system. Had SRP used its Verde system as they did in Dec. 1978 (when the Verde peak was 22% greater), the Verde release could have been less than 50,000 cfs. The Salt River dams reduced that peak to a release of 73,000 cfs. Thus, the release through Phoenix would have been less than the Dec. 1978 or March 1978 releases.

— Hydrographs from SRP Operational Data and concurrent hydrologic and meteorologic data.

The Orme: A Floodgate of Controversy



REPRESENTATIVE BOB STUMP (D)
Third Congressional District



→ SCOTT BURGE
President, Maricopa Audubon Society

A PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY of government is to help protect the public from the effects of natural disasters like floods. Historically, floods have killed hundreds of thousands and caused billions of dollars in property loss. Finally, in this century, the battle to save people from the tragedy of seeing loved ones washed away and homes destroyed is being won. Building dams is the most powerful tool in that fight.

The unhappy problem of dam construction is that someone must give up the property on which dams are built and reservoirs formed. Understandably, those who are asked to make that sacrifice are greatly distressed.

To avoid that distress, government does its best to see that the construction is necessary and the site is the best possible. Once that is done, the rights of the few must give way to the needs of many. Our constitution permits taking of property for the public good, but requires that those who make the sacrifice must be fully compensated. Without that power, government could not acquire property needed for highways, streets, schools, hospitals or other public purposes. I believe Orme Dam has met that test and must be built.

A dam below the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers has been studied at least since planning of the Central Arizona

continued on next page

ORME DAM HAS been portrayed as a cure-all to all the water problems of central Arizona. Whether it be from flood to drought, Orme Dam will prevent it—or so goes the myth propagated by its proponents. The facts cast a somewhat different light on Orme Dam's costs, functions and its economic viabilities. Its flood control function can be solved for about \$50 million—compared to Orme's \$550 million price tag. Its water storage function is simply unjustified.

Orme Dam would not have solved the recent flooding problems encountered by Valley residents. The main problem was transportation and, with or without Orme, the same Salt River bridges would have been overwhelmed. The reason is that Orme is designed to release 50,000 cubic feet per second (c.f.s.). However, Scottsdale Road Bridge was designed for 35,000 c.f.s., Hayden Road for 25,000 c.f.s. and other damaged bridges for even less.

By this month, two flood-proof bridges should be completed at Alma School Road and 24th Street. By 1983, there should be 11 bridges across the Salt River. The problem of flooded runways at Sky Harbor is being corrected by levees and channels. The only community located in the floodplain, Holly Acres, can be protected or relocated for one to two percent of the cost of Orme Dam. These measures, which allow for the

continued on page 18

Burge ... continued from page 15

passage of 200,000 c.f.s., make Orme's 50,000 c.f.s. a sheer anachronism.

The economics of Orme as a flood-control project were ridiculous even before the community decided to make these changes. Only 23 cents in benefits would be realized for each dollar spent, according to a Federal report. The benefits will be further reduced because of the new bridges, etc.

Proponents have long exaggerated the flood control ability of Orme, an earthen dam, similar to the ill-fated Teton Dam built by the same Federal agency. Flow figures recently released by that agency indicate Orme, as designed in 1976, would have failed in the event of a very large flood. Even worse than Teton, Orme is located only ten miles upstream from a major metropolitan area.

By keeping the floodplain at 200,000 c.f.s. (as is provided by a 1973 law), various alternatives may be employed be-

also help raise the falling groundwater table.

These measures are not only much less expensive but can be accomplished in a few short years. A government official recently stated it would take ten years to build Orme.

It is a myth that Orme Dam would be able to store most floodwaters for later use. During the winter flood season, the water storage portion of Orme Dam would be filled with CAP water. The remaining upper storage space of Orme must be immediately vacated in the event of another storm.

Orme Dam increases by about 12 percent the average deliveries which the CAP is capable of making. However, few realize (except for Orme's special-interest promoters) that Orme's water is solely for agriculture, not for cities or industry. (It should be noted that there is enough annually renewable water in central Arizona

Proponents have long exaggerated the flood-control ability of Orme, an earthen dam, similar to the ill-fated Teton Dam built by the same Federal agency. Flow figures recently released by that agency indicate Orme, as designed in 1976, would have failed in the event of a very large flood.

sides Orme Dam. The alternatives include raising Roosevelt and/or modifying other Salt River Project (SRP) dams. These flood control alternatives would be harmonious with new safety criteria placed on all Federal dams by the 1978 Safety of Dams Act. This law requires these dams to be able to withstand the hazards of exceptionally large flows. Recent studies indicate that under these extreme conditions, all SRP dams would be overtopped. Orme Dam, downstream of all the SRP dams, does nothing to help fulfill these Federal requirements. Therefore, two problems can be solved by opting for these alternatives upstream of Orme Dam.

Using existing SRP dams for flood control can be coupled with methods developed in California, Texas and Oklahoma on recharging water into the underground aquifers. By releasing small amounts of water from SRP dams ahead of the flood season (December to March) and letting it percolate down into underground aquifers, the dams would not be dangerously full when floodwaters come down off the watersheds. The recharged water would

from rainfall to allow the region's present two million population to support ten million people.)

But the \$300 million water storage cost of Orme must be repaid to the government almost entirely by urban Arizona taxpayers. Four separate reports state that the value of additional water brought to the Valley is worth less than \$20 per acre foot. Orme water would cost more than \$100 per acre foot or five times as much as the true value of the water. The economics of this water exemplifies the fiscal irresponsibility of our Federal government. Urban Arizona taxpayers pay for 98 percent of Orme water and receive none of it. Agribusiness only pays two percent of that cost, yet would receive *all* of its water.

Orme Dam's poor economics coupled with its displacement of the Ft. McDowell Indian Community, destruction of Arizona's few remaining pairs of Bald Eagles (our national emblem) and loss of unique live water recreation so close to Phoenix suggest that alternatives must be seriously considered. PM

NAS' Elvis Stahr says CAP should be "zero-funded"

Arizona Republic, Feb. 5, 1981

Environmentalists say CAP should be budget-cut target

United Press International

2/5/81

WASHINGTON — A coalition of environmental groups said Wednesday that administration budget cutters could find choice targets among federal waterway projects, such as the Central Arizona Project and the massive and controversial Tennessee-Tombigbee system.

"These programs can be cut, and cut deeply," said Joe Fontaine, president of the Sierra Club.

"They should be zero-funded," said Elvis Stahr, a lawyer for the National Audubon Society. "Under a real scrutiny, numerous water-development projects would emerge among the very first items to go on the chopping block."

Stahr said the construction budgets of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Interior Department's Water and Power Resources Service "thoroughly deserve close examination."

The Tennessee-Tombigbee waterway project, which runs through Alabama and Mississippi, "plainly is unneeded," Edward Osann of the National Wildlife Federation said.

Asked if Congress would halt the project after investing \$1 billion in it, Osann replied, "If the \$1 billion is a psychological barrier, the remaining \$2 billion needed to complete it

Az. Republic
ought to be an insurmountable obstacle."

In Phoenix, officials connected with the CAP said cutting the project's budget at this stage actually would increase costs to taxpayers.

"Any delay in construction will make it far more expensive in the future," said Rich Johnson, executive director of the Central Arizona Project Association. "The project is so far along now any effort to halt it will throw money away."

"Whatever environmental groups say, I've ceased to be amazed," said Ed Hallenbeck, project manager for the Water and Power Resources Service. "It's pretty hard to respond intelligently to something that stupid."

But Stahr said, "It would seem unconscionable to us if such projects were to escape sharp budget reductions at a time when many social and conservation programs are getting the ax."

Stahr also cited as destructive and uneconomic North Dakota's Garrison diversion unit, Maine's Dickey-Lincoln School Lakes project, Nebraska's O'Neill unit and the Columbia Dam in Tennessee.

— CAP, C8

THE DENVER POST Thurs., Feb. 5, 1981

37

Re-open Water 'Hit List' to Cut

By KENNETH T. WALSH
Denver Post Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Re-opening the water project "hit list" controversy of our years ago, environmental leaders

Wednesday urged President Reagan to slash federal spending for water projects to help balance the budget.

"These programs can be cut, and cut deeply," said Joseph Fontaine, na-

tional president of the Sierra Club.

"This will not constitute a 'war on the West' nor on any other region of the country — only a war on waste."

Fontaine's reference to the "war on

Spending, Environmentalists Urge

the West" harked back to former President Jimmy Carter's attempts to cancel various water projects, including several in Western states such as Colorado.

Western leaders were angered and offended by Carter's attempt, and the president never recovered politically in the region.

Speaking at a press conference, Fontaine called the economics of federal water projects "archaic."

"Benefits" are routinely hyped upward, while costs are routinely understated," the Sierra Club president said. "Cost overruns are commonplace. Our history includes a long, long record of boondoggle projects in which the federal investment was economically justified — the classic pattern of the federal pork barrel.

"That pork barrel is a ferocious generator of inflationary pressures!"

Fontaine called for cuts of \$500 million to \$750 million, about 25 percent, in the proposed water-development projects for fiscal year 1982.

Fontaine said Reagan's actions on water projects will demonstrate whether his administration is "truly conservative or pseudo-conservative."

Elvis J. Stahr, senior counselor of the National Audubon Society, said water projects are a prime area for cut-

backs in any effort to balance the budget.

"Billions of dollars will be saved, staggering environmental losses will be avoided, and there will be no great public outcry, if these programs are severely cut," Stahr told reporters.

"On the contrary, most people will praise our leaders because, for once, fiscal responsibility will have transcended pork-barrel politics."

Stahr singled out several projects across the country for stoppage, including the Central Arizona Project and the Garrison Diversion Unit in North Dakota.

He noted with satisfaction that a project in Colorado, which he didn't name, has been "temporarily stopped" and would have benefited only about 60 ranchers. He was apparently referring to the Fruitland-Mesa Project.

Joining Fontaine and Stahr at the press conference were Brent Blackwelder, a spokesman for the Environmental Policy Center in Washington, and Edward R. Osann, a representative of the National Wildlife Federation and coordinator of the Coalition for Water Project Review in Washington.

Local environmentalist has high hopes for Watt

Audubon Society labels meetings on Orme biased

TEMPE (Ariz.) DAILY NEWS, Tuesday, February 10, 1981

By Mike Tulumello
For the Daily News
Interior Secretary James Watt could have a "perfect marriage" with environmentalists if he applies the Republican pledge to pare the federal budget to flood control and reclamation projects, the Maricopa County Audubon Society's president says.

"If Watt comes in and says we should look at things in terms of cost benefits, he could be a good environmentalist," said Scott Burge.

Protecting the environment and emphasizing economy in government are perfect partners in regionalism and nothing will get done."

Burge said Watt probably will have more impact on public-lands issues such as the Sagebrush Rebellion, the attempt — backed by cattle ranchers and the mining and timber industries — to turn over federal lands to the states.

In the past, Watt has supported the rebellion.

"He apparently has backed off of it somewhat," Burge said. "But our fear is that he will dilute the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service so that they'll bend over backwards for grazing and mining interests.

philosophy, he said. "If you got rid of these monstrosities proposed by the federal government, we'd have nothing to oppose," Burge said. "I hope (administration officials) find themselves in the same position as (former President) Carter did four years ago and try to cut the budget by getting rid of things such as the Central Arizona Project."

The \$1 billion water project is scheduled to bring Colorado River water to Phoenix and Tucson by 1985.

Critics like Burge say it will cost more than it will bring in benefits.

"Watt could put to rest the Sagebrush Rebellion in no time," Burge said. But that may come at the price of allowing partial victories to parties who support the movement, he added.

"It should be interesting," he said. "I'm willing to give Watt a honeymoon."

"Reagan says he wants to make budgetary cuts. Interior would be a good place for them," he said. But, Burge added, "When Jimmy Carter did that four years ago, he got a very bad reception."

Carter deleted CAP — along with several other water projects — in 1977, then restored it without the proposed Orme Dam, a controversial \$600 million structure at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers.

Burge, a conservative Republican, and his group oppose the dam although most Arizona politicians have favored the project

A group opposed to the rebellion — called Save Our Public Lands — has taken out initiative petitions seeking to overturn the Arizona Legislature's decision to join other states suing for control of federal land. Members hope to gather enough signatures to place the question on the

for years. The key question is whether the GOP's fiscal conservatism will apply to the West, Burge said.

"The political base of Reagan is in the West," Burge said. "They may decide to cut urban renewal in the East and go ahead and build the big reclamation projects in the West.

"But they're both the same thing — huge subsidies."

Burge warned, "If he hurts everybody equally when he cuts the budget, he can get away with it. But if he cuts only one area of the country, he'll only get

November 1982 ballot. The Legislature overrode the veto of Gov. Bruce Babbitt in joining the movement. Babbitt has called the Sagebrush Rebellion "the oldest con game in the world," a simple attempt by private interests to take over public land.

The federal Orme Dam alternatives study was attacked anew Wednesday by the Maricopa Audubon Society, which accused the study staff of conducting closed, biased meetings.

Scott Burge, the society president, said at a news conference that these meetings are "smoke-filled rooms" that exclude concerned citizens.

Dames & Moore, a consulting firm involved in the project, is holding a series of "public values assessment group meetings" to elicit opinions on some of the problems involved — such as flooding and environmental concerns.

Participants are invited from special-interest groups that, the company says, represent a spectrum of viewpoints.

But Burge charged Dames & Moore "was apparently unhappy with the results of the previous, open hearings and decided to substitute a participation-by-invitation-only policy."

He said, "Private citizens who do not belong to some official organization are not allowed to participate. Only one individual from each group is allowed to participate."

Burge also argued that questionnaires given out during the meetings "were dexterously manipulated to choose the more grandiose and costly alternatives, like Orme."

A Dames & Moore spokeswoman, Martha Rozelle, later said the public-values sessions are "not a substitute for either past or future public meetings."

They are intended to synthesize the opinions of groups "with a stake" in the study's decisions, she said. She said the Maricopa Audubon Society had not accepted an invitation to take part.

Ms. Rozelle denied that the material distributed at the meetings had been weighted in favor of any of the alternatives.

The study is expected to suggest in October whether Orme Dam should be built or another approach taken to flood control and water storage for the Valley.

Serving the Northeast Valley

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ., SATURDAY, OCT. 3, 1981

75c Per Week — 20c Per Copy

Favors new Waddell Dam Panel rejects Orme

By KEITH BAGWELL
Progress Staff Writer

Construction of a new Waddell Dam northwest of the Valley — instead of Orme Dam east of the Valley — was the recommendation Friday of the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Central Arizona Water Control Study.

Gov. Bruce Babbitt, in a speech Friday opening the committee meeting, promised to heed the committee's advice in his efforts to obtain storage for Central Arizona Project water, control of Salt River flooding through the Valley and shoring up six unsafe Salt and Verde river dams addressed in one federal package.

The 28-member committee's decision, following meetings since 1978 in concert with a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study, was nearly unanimous after three abstaining members changed their votes. The final tally was 19-1, with some

members not present.

The only dissenter at the end of the meeting was Robert Witzeman, a Maricopa Audubon Society member, who charged that the proposed Cliff Dam on the Verde, part of the approved plan, is unnecessary. He called it "an expensive plum just to get additional land (along the Salt channel through the Valley by reducing the width of the flood plain) for developers.

"I wonder if Congress will want to do that for one of the richest, fastest growing cities in the country."

Witzeman charged that the "no action" alternative, one of eight remaining for committee review at the end of the study's work, would be sufficient for flood control and dam safety.

The "no action" alternative includes measures to strengthen Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams on the Salt, \$5 million of channelization work through the Valley and other minor measures

Abstaining, but later changing their votes, were Keith Turley, Arizona Public Service Co. president; Norris Soma, San Carlos Irrigation District director; and John R. Norton III of the J.R. Norton Co. They said they did so in the interest of trying for unanimity.

Turley, Soma, Norton and others had backed a proposal that called for construction of a controversial Orme Dam at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers east of the Valley.

It would have flooded at least 10,000 acres of the 25,000-acre Fort McDowell Indian Community and was staunchly opposed by the community.

Babbitt will use the recommendation to try to persuade Interior Secretary James Watt, the strongly pro-Orme Arizona congressional delegation and the rest of Congress to authorize and fund the construction. The bureau's Arizona Projects Office also will send its advice this

month to Watt and Congress.

The proposal favored by the committee calls for construction of a new, larger Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River near where an existing version creates Lake Pleasant. The dam will store CAP water.

In addition, the plan, like all others but the "no action" plan favored by Witzeman, calls for construction of Cliff Dam on the Verde between the existing Horseshoe and Bartlett dams and improvements to Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams. The price tag is estimated at \$746 million.

Scottsdale Mayor Herb Drinkwater, a committee member, backed the Waddell plan. He said he believes the Orme Dam plan, if approved by all involved, "will be a matter of litigation and will never be built."

The Fort McDowell community has vowed to take any Orme proposal to court if approved.

Conservationists are out of the Orme Dam frying pan and into the Cliff Dam fire.

TEMPE (Ariz.) DAILY NEWS, Saturday, October 3, 1981

Controversy ends

Advisory committee rejects Orme Dam

From staff and wire reports

SCOTTSDALE — A governor's advisory committee Friday unanimously rejected Orme Dam and voted 19-1 for an alternative flood control and water storage plan, a major move toward ending years of bitter struggle over the structure.

The panel recommended that Gov. Bruce Babbitt accept Plan 6, which calls for construction of Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River and Cliff Dam on the Verde River, plus reconstruction of the existing Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams on the Salt River.

The motion to accept Plan 6 — one of eight options drawn up by the 3-year-old federal Central Arizona Water Control Study — was passed "con-

The panel recommended that Gov. Bruce Babbitt accept Plan 6, which calls for construction of Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River and Cliff Dam on the Verde River, plus reconstruction of the existing Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams on the Salt River. The plan needs Congress' approval

tingent on congressional authorization and appropriation of funds with regard to safety of dams, flood control and regulatory storage goals being met."

The committee had hoped for a unanimous decision, but Dr. Robert Witzeman of the Audubon Society refused to budge on his objections to Waddell and Cliff dams. Witzeman said the organization had "given up on environmental concerns" as "an accommodation to the world in which we live."

But he said pumping costs for Waddell would make it economically infeasible and the flood protection that Cliff would provide could be accomplished with a system of dikes. Witzeman has opposed Orme Dam for years.

Babbitt will forward the committee's decision to Secretary of the Interior James Watt and the Arizona congressional delegation as a step toward a final decision. "I hope all Arizonans will unite behind the committee's choice," the governor said. "Our pressing need for flood control is too great to hold up the progress any further."

The rejection of Orme Dam came as welcome news to residents of the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation, most of whom would end up under water if the dam were built at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers. Tribal Chairman Norman Austin said he felt "tremendous . . . super glad. I hope this Orme Dam is finally over with so my people can rest and go on with the chores of daily living," he said.

Bill Schulz, a Phoenix apartment developer and 1980 Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, said he doubted the dam could win judicial ap-

proval when other alternatives were available.

At the outset of the meeting, the committee rejected all alternatives except 6 and 3. The two are virtually identical except 6 calls for construction of Waddell Dam for Central Arizona Project water storage while 3 calls for construction of a small Orme Dam at the confluence of the Salt and Verde rivers for the same purpose.

Plan 3 was supported by Arizona Public Service Co. President Keith Turley. He said although he was aware of the social implications of displacing residents of the reservation, he felt Plan 3 was the most technically feasible and said he had "grave doubts about ever getting funding for 6."

"I'm not sure that abandonment of a confluence site that these people (the Indians) will not say sometime in the future that they were misled," he said. "You can't tell me that leaving them in the economic plight they are in now is good for their future."

When the committee tried to make the vote unanimous, Turley, who originally abstained, voted in favor of Plan 6. "I do have a heart; I do like people," he said. "I just pledge all my abilities to make 6 happen. I pledge my company's support to 6."

An effort by Phoenix Mayor Margaret Hance to include Plan 3 as a fallback alternate was defeated. Her request for expedited work on Plan 6 was endorsed by the committee.

At the same time, the committee approved a motion by Fort McDowell Tribal Council Member Tom Jones calling on Congress to repeal the statutory authority of the Interior Department to condemn reservation land once the four projects are built.

At the same time, the committee approved a motion by Fort McDowell Tribal Council Member Tom Jones calling on Congress to repeal the statutory authority of the Interior Department to condemn reservation land once the four projects are built.

After the meeting, the Salt River Project issued a statement saying that while it supported Plan 3, it accepted the committee's decision and made a "pledge to work with the congressional delegation, the governor and the Bureau of Reclamation to help implement the committee's decision."

Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., said the plan is acceptable only if it provides adequate flood control and CAP water storage — including the Tucson leg. He said it is "crucial" that Congress now reauthorize the Safety of Dams Act of 1978, which would fund the reconstruction of the Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams under Plan 6.

"I have called on both the administration and the Arizona delegation for support and I urge that action be taken as expeditiously as possible," he said.