

# One Gung-ho Individual Can Make All the Difference

"But the media likes to focus on an individual, and that's okay if it gets the job done.

"As I got to know the lake, it began to speak to me. It takes that kind of deep feeling and relatedness to a place to provide the kind of energy necessary to fight for it...nobody in his right mind would volunteer for this kind of work; it's an unconscious decision. You do it because it's right."



Island saver Judy Johnson

## "PUT YOUR HEART AND SOUL INTO IT"

In 1970, Judy Johnson was a recently retired symphony orchestra manager who liked to take her son to the southern Maryland shore. Assateague Island, a four-hour drive from their home near Baltimore, was their favorite destination. At that time, government agencies and private developers were planning on turning the raw barrier island into another Ocean City—parking lots, motels, highways, condos, the works.

Johnson's son urged her to do something about it, and her telephone hasn't stopped ringing since. She began at her garden club, organizing the Committee to Preserve Assateague Island with five friends.

"I didn't know anything. I didn't even know who my representative was," she admits. The issue called for a thorough understanding of politics since several federal agencies and the governments of three states were involved. The island has been designated a national seashore, but development threats continue to blossom periodically.

Johnson and her new committee went first to a U.S. senator, and things began to happen. An Assateague study committee was created; Johnson began lobbying the state legislature. She wrote letters, met with state agency heads, wrote newspaper stories, and learned enough about barrier islands, she feels, "to probably get a degree in coastal geology."

She began a newsletter. The committee now has 1,200 contributing members from all over the country.

The most satisfying part of it, Johnson says, is getting support and encouragement from strangers hundreds of miles away. The most frustrating aspect is dealing with recalcitrant officials in state agencies.

"If it's right environmentally and economically, you'll eventually win. But you have to put your heart and soul into it."

## "RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION"

"I get angry when I hear these well-financed special interests lie to the public about their intentions. Righteous indignation sets in when I see the Bureau of Reclamation use our tax dollars to destroy a river in order to line the pockets of some wealthy real estate developer."

Bob Witzeman has been fighting unsound Arizona water developments for 16 years. As an anesthesiologist, he fought Orme Dam "between cases." That dam was scrapped in 1982, saving 25 miles of river and some desert-nesting eagle habitat. Now, each weekend, some 20,000 people float the unfettered river.

The proposed alternative to Orme, Cliff Dam, is nearly as bad, Witzeman believes, and he retired this year so that he can spend 100 percent of his time opposing it.

"You have to be motivated to motivate others. Then let everyone play to their skills whether they be speakers, writers, or organizers," Witzeman says.

"Don't expect to win overnight. And don't focus on the minor setbacks. Keep your eyes on the big picture. There have

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been major changes in attitudes toward conservation in the last decade. Sometimes you'll lose an area but make tremendous gains in public awareness and support. Use that to win the next one."

Witzeman forges coalitions of members of Audubon, National Wildlife Federation, and Sierra Club. "The national groups give you an apparatus, expertise, contacts, and support. It's very gratifying to get a letter of support from a chapter leader in another state.

"It's a never-ending process. The only way to stay sane is to make it fun."



Dam fighter Bob Witzeman. TERRENCE MOORE

These four individuals, and scores of others like them in Audubon chapter nationwide, share some common traits: an abiding concern for future generations, a raving passion for a wild place unbridled selflessness, a belief that they are right and a determination to fight for that belief.

Although their backgrounds, styles and techniques vary widely, the activists agreed on these tenets for a successful campaign:

Don't get discouraged; if you're right you'll eventually win. Be flexible. Don't take the issue or yourself too seriously. Know your limits; learn to say no to challenges beyond your means. Be patient. Enjoy the learning process. The individual can serve as that essential catalyst, but will be only as effective as the people he or she pulls into the action. Be sure you're right. Make it fun.

# Lawsuit seeks halt on dam

By Russ Hemphill  
and Mike McCloy  
The Phoenix Gazette

Environmentalists have widened their assault on Cliff Dam, asking a federal judge to stop work on New Waddell Dam, which is under construction northwest of Phoenix.

They say work on New Waddell, on the Agua Fria River, should be halted until a decision is reached in their year-old lawsuit to stop Cliff Dam, a \$385 million structure proposed for the Verde River.

Legal documents seeking to link the fates of the two dams were filed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Phoenix.

The move, if successful, would delay the 1991 completion date of New Waddell and probably give environmental groups more bargaining power in their fight against Cliff Dam.

Cliff Dam has been a target of environmental groups because it would wipe out about 6 miles of Verde River habitat for endangered bald eagles.

Cliff and New Waddell dams are part of the \$3.8 billion Central Arizona Project, which is bringing Colorado River water to Phoenix.

Cliff would store water and control floods on the Salt River through the Phoenix area, replace Horseshoe Dam and protect Bartlett Dam from heavy flows.

But the flood control benefits of Cliff Dam are being reconsidered by

the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in view of new studies by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that include the effects of 1978-80 floods on the Salt.

The floods deepened the Salt River channel, narrowing the flood plain and perhaps reducing the flood control benefits of Cliff Dam, according to Larry Morton, assistant director of the bureau's Arizona Projects Office.

"If we were to lose all the flood control benefits, it wouldn't be justified," he said. "You'd have to make the dam smaller."

The Corps of Engineers reported to the bureau in mid-October on any change in flood control benefits, Morton said, adding that a public process would be used to alter any plans for building or financing the dams.

The CAP is funded by federal and local taxes and water and power fees. A reduction in flood control benefits could shift repayment costs from the federal to the local level, perhaps increasing property taxes in Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties.

New Waddell Dam would store water from the CAP canal and the Agua Fria River and provide some flood protection in the far west Valley.

Spokesmen for the Sierra Club and Audubon Society said Thursday at the Federal Building in downtown Phoenix that federal officials failed to present "reasonable" alternatives before selecting Cliff Dam.

The environmental groups contend that Horseshoe and Bartlett dams could be modified more cheaply than building Cliff Dam.

Documents submitted Thursday

offer what the environmental groups say are seven "reasonable" alternatives to Cliff Dam, including modifications to Horseshoe and Bartlett dams.

"We didn't have to look very far to find these alternatives," said Alma Williams, chairwoman of the Palo Verde Group of the Sierra Club. Williams said the alternatives were included in early federal documents.

The claim angered one Cliff Dam supporter.

"That's so ridiculous that it is just unbelievable," said Bill Wheeler, executive director of the CAP Association.

Wheeler said Cliff Dam and its alternatives have been thoroughly studied.

New Waddell Dam, when complete, will make Lake Pleasant 15 miles long by 5 miles wide.

Workers have begun work on moving a park road, building a canal to carry water to and from the CAP canal and on a 130-foot deep "cutoff wall" that will block the flow of water under the dam.

U.S. District Judge Roger Strand is set to hear the case Dec. 29.

Thursday's motion by the environmental groups was the first major development in the year-old lawsuit against Cliff Dam.

The lawsuit was filed by the Maricopa Audubon Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the National Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, the Arizona Wildlife Federation, the Prescott Audubon Society, Friends of the River, the Environmental Policy Institute, the American Rivers Conservation Council, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, and Friends of the Earth.

***Ours is a NEPA lawsuit. Republicans in Congress are trying to destroy this invaluable 1969 law.***

# CAP dams project 'dead,' foes contend

Environmental group claims report shows authority now invalid

By ANNE O. HOY  
Republic Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A national environmental group declared the Central Arizona Project's \$1.1 billion Plan 6 dams project "dead in the water" Thursday after releasing an internal Interior Department report that said new congressional authority is needed for the dams.

However, key members of Arizona's congressional delegation dismissed the report, saying issues raised in it have been resolved by the Interior Department.

But the report is likely to fuel critics of Western water projects at a time when federal funds for such reclamation projects are drying up.

Securing new approval from a fiscally strapped Congress to build Plan 6, a flood-control and water-storage segment of the \$5.2 billion CAP, would subject the project to revisions by water-project foes and likely lead to increased costs for Arizona water users.

The report, conducted by the department's inspector general, was released by the National Wildlife Federation. The group has a suit pending in federal court that seeks to halt construction of the Plan 6 dams.

Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said environmen-

talists are trying "to promote their litigation" and "sink this project."

The report said Plan 6 has exceeded by 560 percent the anticipated cost of Orme Dam, the original CAP feature it replaced.

The \$1.1 billion cost of Plan 6 is \$234 million greater than the \$166 million that Orme Dam was expected to cost, accounting for inflation.

State water officials have estimated the cost of Plan 6 at \$1.7 billion.

Quoting from a 1981 Interior Department solicitor's memo, the inspector general's report said that if the cost of the alternative to Orme Dam "is such that it can fairly be said to be a significant departure from what Congress intended, additional congressional authority would be required."

"In our opinion, a 560 percent cost increase constitutes a significant departure from the project as authorized," the report said.

Orme Dam was abandoned for Plan 6 because it would have inundated the Fort McDowell Indian Reservation and posed environmental threats.

Plan 6, adopted in 1984, includes the construction of the controversial Cliff Dam on the Verde River, the enlargement of Roosevelt Dam and repair of Stewart Mountain Dam on the Salt River north of Phoenix, and the construction of New Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River.

The report was dated April 4, just 11 days before Interior Secre-

tary Donald Hodel signed a cost-sharing pact with Arizona that requires water users to pay \$371 million in return for a federal commitment to accelerate funding for Plan 6.

Interior Department spokesman Mitch Snow said inspector general's reports are not routinely released to the public or to Congress. The environmentalists obtained the report this week.

Lynn Greenwalt, vice president for resources conservation at the National Wildlife Federation, said the report shows that Hodel lacks statutory authority for Plan 6 because he has not sought additional congressional authority.

He said the absence of authority renders the cost-sharing agreement between the federal government and Arizona of "dubious legal validity."

"Plan 6 is dead in the water," Greenwalt said.

Snow said Hodel responded to the report on June 10, saying there is no need to go to Congress to seek additional authority. The inspector general has since dropped the recommendation, Snow said.

Hodel said that estimated costs "do not exceed the overall authority approved by Congress" and that, therefore, no additional authority is needed from Congress, according to the June 10 memo.

Snow said Hodel has authority to continue to seek Plan 6 funds from Congress and intends to do so.

"I don't think the Interior Department has done anything wrong

by accident, by commission or omission," Snow said.

The report details what Greenwalt labeled as "financial mismanagement on a grand scale."

It said that the repayment contract between the federal government and Arizona water interests needs to be changed to reflect sound business practices and that the changes would increase by \$80 million the return to the federal Treasury.

The environmentalists' release of the report comes a few months before Congress is expected to begin appropriations hearings on President Reagan's record \$275.8 million request for the CAP for fiscal 1988, which begins Oct. 1. Hearings are expected to begin in late March.

Arizona congressmen dismissed the report, saying the federation simply was attempting to further the lawsuit it has pending in federal court in Phoenix.

"This is another chapter in the struggle to get CAP finished," DeConcini said.

Rep. Jay Rhodes, R-Ariz., a member of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, said the environmentalists are trying to generate political pressure in support of their suit.

D. Michael Rappoport, assistant general manager for government affairs for the Salt River Project, who was involved in the cost-sharing agreement, said the National Wildlife Federation "is recycling outdated information."

# Halt to CAP construction urged until Plan 6 problems resolved

By Sean Griffin  
Gazette Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A coalition of environmental groups has called for a halt to construction of the Central Arizona Project until Congress gives its blessing to the Plan 6 features of the CAP.

The National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society and Friends of the Earth based their demand Thursday on an audit by the Interior Department's inspector general.

The audit questioned whether Plan 6 — consisting of New Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River, Cliff Dam on the Verde River and modifications to Theodore Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain dams on the Salt River — was what Congress intended when it authorized the CAP in 1968.

It was dated April 4, 1986 — 11 days before the Interior Department and Arizona water interests affixed their signatures to a cost-sharing agreement designed to accelerate construction of Plan 6.

The act authorizing the CAP called for the construction of "Orme Dam or suitable alternative." Orme Dam, originally estimated to cost \$42 million, fell victim to opposition from environmentalists and Indians, and the \$1.1 billion Plan 6 was sanctioned as the 'suitable alternative to the dam.

The audit report also recommended that the department's Bureau of Reclamation renegotiate the repayment of the CAP. Although repayment obligations exceeded \$2 billion, the bureau's contract with the Central Arizona Water Conservation District limited its repayment obligation to \$1.2 billion.

In addition, it challenged \$175 million of estimated expenses for the project, saying they were unsupported by facts.

"As a consequence (of the inspector general's report) we believe Plan 6 . . . is dead in the water," said National Wildlife Federation vice president Lynn Greenwalt.

But Interior officials, members of Arizona's congressional delegation and the state's water interests disagreed.

"I think they're trying to mislead the public," complained Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz.

DeConcini said the groups neglected to mention that most of the inspector general's concerns had been resolved.

Interior Department officials released documents Thursday showing that secretary Donald Hodel disputed the need to seek special authorization for Plan 6 because the overall cost of the CAP remained under the limit set by Congress.

Subsequent documents showed that the department accepted and corrected assertions that the bureau had failed to statistically justify some of its cost estimates.

Tom Clarke, director of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, said: "These issues aren't new ones. We've been talking to the bureau all along about many of them."

Clarke said the agency has been holding "preliminary negotiations" with the bureau for several months about renegotiating its repayment obligation.

"We've known for years that this was going to come about, and we've talked about it a number of times at our meetings," Clarke said.

Michael Rappoport, a Salt River Project vice president, said many of

the issues in the report had been raised by the bureau when it negotiated a cost-sharing agreement with Arizona water interests in 1985-86. He said he had not known of the inspector general's concerns when the cost-sharing agreement was signed, and didn't believe any other signers had been informed of the report.

The groups are part of a coalition pledged to halt the construction of Cliff Dam, the most controversial aspect of Plan 6, because the dam would inundate a nesting site for the rare, desert-nesting bald eagle. The Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam has filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Phoenix challenging the adequacy of the environmental impact statements that cleared the way for the dam's construction.

# Cliff

Continued from A1

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1987

## Threats to Cliff Dam may kill water project

Environmentalists have strong case, SRP chief admits

By MARY A.M. GINDHART  
The Arizona Republic

Cliff Dam on the Verde River may never be built, Arizona water officials concede, because of the challenge posed by a federal lawsuit and the loss of flood-control benefits that had been used to justify building the dam.

"The future of Cliff Dam is in doubt. I don't think anyone disputes that," said Jack Pfister, general manager of the Salt River Project. "The threats are serious,

and the opposition has arguments that are meritorious. The issues raised by the opposition are not frivolous."

Pfister's stance is shared by other top water officials and represents a marked change from two months ago, when they were expressing optimism about their chances of fending off the lawsuit and getting the dam built. Most of the officials spoke privately about the dam's problems but refused to discuss them openly, because of the pending litigation.

The \$400 million dam now faces threats on two fronts, led by the

— Cliff, A10

**SRP's general manager concedes: "The threats are serious and the opposition has arguments that are meritorious. The issues raised by the opposition are not frivolous."**

lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Phoenix in 1985 by one of the largest coalitions of environmentalists ever formed to fight a water project.

The environmentalists and their attorneys have raised several arguments against Cliff Dam, which they want to kill because they believe that the dam and its reservoir would destroy a nesting area for bald eagles and that the project is not needed for flood control or water storage for the Phoenix area.

Last month, however, the attorneys unveiled a new strategy that worries Pfister and others. They broadened their attack to include the entire \$1.7 billion Plan 6, which involves not only the construction of Cliff Dam but work on three other proposed dams in the Phoenix area, in hopes that state political leaders will be forced to abandon Cliff Dam to save the rest of Plan 6.

The environmentalists have filed a motion asking U.S. District Judge Roger G. Strand for an injunction to prohibit the federal Bureau of Reclamation from spending any more money on Plan 6 until he rules on their claims that the cost of Plan 6 has exceeded the amount authorized by Congress.

Some of the lawsuit's defendants, which include the federal, state and local governments, have been warned privately by their attorneys that their case for keeping Cliff Dam is weak, not only because of the authorization issue but because of a new report that undercuts the flood-control benefits used by the Bureau of Reclamation to justify building the dam.

The report, prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and issued in November, says record floods in 1980 through 1983 have deepened the Salt River's channel through Phoenix, reducing the danger of future flooding to nearby homes and businesses.

The report suggests the benefits from the upstream flood control that would be provided by the dam may not be as large as federal officials earlier had calculated. Those benefits were used to justify the construction of the dam to

By MARY A.M. GINDHART  
The Arizona Republic

# RIO SALADO: From Instant Acclaim To Heated Controversy

The idea was born in a university classroom and drew immediate public acclaim: Clean up the artificially dry and trash-strewn Salt River bed through metropolitan Phoenix and transform it into a desert park for all to enjoy.

A nearly 4,500-acre park, five times the size of New York's Central Park, would feature horseback-riding trails, jogging paths, tennis courts, picnic areas and golf courses. The riverbanks at the park's edge would be planted with desert vegetation that would bloom throughout the year.

Arizona's legislators jumped on the bandwagon in 1980 and created a special district to implement the Rio Salado plan, conceived 14 years earlier as part of a class project at Arizona State University's College of Architecture.

In 1984, while still in its toddler years, the multibillion-dollar Rio Salado Project began to take shape on paper. But, in an important turning point for Rio Salado, the widespread agreement about the need for the project came to a halt and was replaced by heated debate.

The project was put on paper by Carr Lynch Associates of Cambridge, Mass., which was hired by the Rio Salado Development District. Carr Lynch concluded that the project could take place with or without construction of Cliff Dam, a controversial, \$400 million flood-control dam upstream on the Verde River.

With the dam, there would be lakes, and more of the river's flood plain would be opened up for private development, the consultants said.

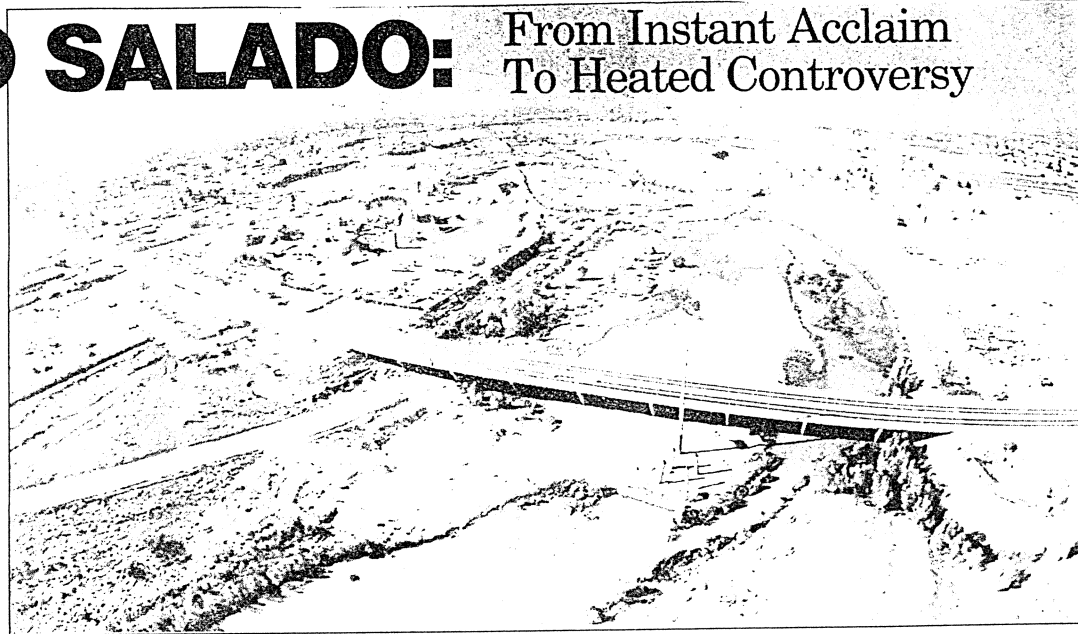
Without the dam, there would be no lakes and less private development. And, there would be water in the Salt River only when existing water-storage dams upstream released water.

The district's board of directors, dominated by developers and officials of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa, believed that the Rio Salado Project, by transforming the barren riverbed into a vast park dotted with lakes, would entice private developers to reclaim a long-neglected area along the river and build homes and businesses that would bring new life to the area.

The board, which also viewed the project as a way to tie together the cities that line the Salt River, believed that the development would come only if the project included lakes, so it endorsed the plan that called for Cliff Dam to be built. The other plan was abandoned.

With the dam, floodwaters down the Salt would be further tamed, and private interests could develop 4,300 acres near the river, nearly as much land as would be devoted to Rio Salado's park. Without the dam, only 2,000 acres would be outside the flood plain and could be developed near the river.

Seemingly overnight, the ASU students' vision had been changed from a multimillion-dollar public park to a \$3 billion development that would include not only the park but businesses, factories,



This aerial view shows part of the Salt River that would be redeveloped by the Rio Salado Project.

shopping centers, condominiums, town houses, hotels, resorts and private sports clubs.

Rio Salado's directors began to promote the project, focusing their first efforts on the business community. The district's plan was strongly embraced by the Valley Forward Association, a group of businessmen who take on projects to promote economic growth.

Supporters and opponents of the Rio Salado Project say the board erred in endorsing the development-oriented plan and promoting it chiefly to the business community instead of taking both plans to the public and letting the people choose.

Aaron Kizer, who joined the district in 1985 as its attorney and is now the project's executive director, admits the board has failed to highlight the public benefits from the plan and has courted mainly the business leaders. "We've done a poor job of getting those facts out," he said. "We have to do better. We don't want to lose it now."

The plan increasingly has come under attack. The board's selection of the Cliff Dam-based plan led to the formation of an organized opposition to the project, known as Citizens Concerned about the Rio Salado Project. That group soon was joined by Citizens Concerned about the Project and the Maricopa Audubon Society, both of which had long opposed federal funding for Cliff Dam and other components of the \$5.2-billion Central Arizona Project.

The opposition has attacked the district's plan on a number of fronts but chiefly because it calls for the construction of Cliff Dam, for extensive development in the river's flood plain and for the use of large quantities of water for lakes.

Cliff Dam has long been opposed by environmental-

ists and others because it would destroy the desert-nesting locations of several bald eagles, an endangered species, as well as about 20 miles of riparian habitat along the Verde River.

Jim Pederson, chairman of the Rio Salado district's board, says the board may be willing to take another look at its plan, but only if obstacles to Cliff Dam, which is being challenged in a federal lawsuit, threaten to kill the dam.

Rio Salado's opponents say it would be irresponsible to build homes and businesses in the Salt's natural flood plain, even if Cliff Dam were built.

"It's foolish," said Bob Witzman, a spokesman for the Audubon Society. "You can't build dams big enough to stop the eventual larger flows down that river. You just don't put people and buildings in flood plains."

Rio Salado board members say buildings would be carefully placed only on the banks of the river, not in the riverbed, which would reduce the chances of flooding. Only special parks, capable of withstanding flooding, would be developed in the riverbed.

The opponents also question the board's choice of the Rio Salado plan with five large lakes instead of the desert-park plan that the board abandoned. They question whether large lakes are the proper image for a desert state that has been forced to adopt one of the country's most aggressive water-conservation plans because it is depleting ground water.

Opponents also complain that the Rio Salado district has overlooked such potential problems as poisonous wastes that could leach into the project's lakes from landfills along the river, the lack of water for the lakes and the large expanses of grass on the lake banks, or the Rio Salado's displacement of

river-bottom sand and gravel companies.

The board, in its excitement to move ahead with its plan, lost one member who wanted nothing to do with a water-oriented project that lacked a source for the water needed for its lakes and lawns.

In resigning, Clifford A. Pugh, a former U.S. Bureau of Reclamation commissioner and engineer, said, "It's a good idea, but we've got the cart before the horse. You solve your problems, then you spend your money. You don't spend your money and then try to solve your problems."

Members of the Rio Salado board say that, in time, they will find a source of water.

Opposition to the project gained momentum in 1983, when the district board proposed that property taxes be used to finance the project.

The Legislature, which had specifically denied the district taxing power in its 1980 enabling legislation, turned down the district's requests in 1984 and again in 1985 for a property tax.

Instead, legislators last year gave the district permission to hold an election to ask voters whether they are willing to support the project with tax money. The district's board, which can hold the election either this fall or in the fall of 1988, favors an election this fall.

Property taxes of \$13 a year on a \$75,000 home are expected to cover \$1.3 billion of the \$3 billion cost of the public portions of the project, which would be built over a period of 25 years, Kizer said. The remaining costs would be financed through fees paid by private developers.

"One of the key issues of the election campaign is to convince the people that this is not going to be a rip-off of the people," Kizer said. "We think we can

prove that the tax dollars will be used wisely and for the public good."

Kizer said a recent poll paid for by the district found strong grass-roots support for the project and suggests that this fall may be the best time for the election.

The poll, by the Behavior Research Center in Phoenix, found that 60 percent of the Maricopa County residents surveyed were aware of the Rio Salado Project. Of those, 55 percent said they would support a countywide property tax to pay for it, 33 percent said they oppose such a tax and 12 percent were undecided.

The Rio Salado Project's opposition is gearing up against the tax measure. Frank Welsh, executive director of Citizens Concerned about the Project, a taxpayer group, calls the project "a billion-dollar, taxpayer-funded playground for real-estate developers."

If private development is going to occur, critics say, it should occur naturally, without the benefit of tax dollars.

The perception that the project is a "developer's rip-off" apparently is held by part of the public. Thirty percent of those responding to an Arizona Poll, conducted for *The Arizona Republic* last month, agreed that the project is a "developer's rip-off," while 31 percent disagreed and 39 percent had no opinion.

Herb Fibel, Audubon Society president, said he thinks opposition to using taxes for the project would dissolve if the board pursued the plan without the dam, lakes and large-scale private development.

"You are talking millions, rather than billions, of dollars," he said. "That is certainly more palatable. I think they could get their taxes."

Category	Acres	Percent of total
Private*	4,330	44
Parks & recreation	2,945	30
Lakes & streams	1,525	15
Sedimentation basin	600	6
Parkways	470	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Includes 16,000 housing units  
Source: Rio Salado Development District

## Dam or no dam . . .

For once I agree with Howard Pyle.

Yes, in the future it is inevitable that floods will come down the Salt through Mesa, Tempe and Phoenix. But to then say that the best and only reasonable solution to the problem is Cliff Dam, and that the environmentalists are shortsighted in opposing Cliff Dam for that reason, is where our views diverge.

Yes, floods will come, but they will come even after Cliff Dam is built.

The presently proposed Rio Salado Development is not a "greenbelt" along the Salt River bed. It is a proposal that calls for intense commercial and residential development radiating outward from the newly created 100-year flood plain boundary, but still within the newly created 200-year flood plain, the newly created 300-year flood plain, etc.

What the "shortsighted" environmentalists are saying, Mr. Pyle, is exactly what you are saying. Yes, there will be floods in the future coming down the Salt River channel through Tempe and Phoenix no matter how many dams are built on the Salt and on the Verde, and, with all of us knowing in our hearts that this is true, how can any rational person then turn around and advocate putting some 37,000 people at risk in a flood-prone riverbed as is proposed by the Rio Salado Development advocates?

The only remaining true justification for Cliff Dam is the economic (commercial and residential development) perks that the dam will facilitate within the Salt River bed in Mesa, Tempe, but particularly in Phoenix.

Herbert S. Fibel  
President  
Maricopa Audubon Society

## LETTERS

Tempe Daily News, May 8, 1986

### Rio Salado plan: Pure riverbed madness

**T**hough taxpayers are about to be asked to spend over \$2 billion on the Rio Salado floodplain development and its upstream real estate dams, what newspaper has investigated the inundation risks of living in this riverbed? The official Rio Salado Master Plan as approved by Phoenix, Mesa and Tempe proposes to move thousands of people and businesses down into some 2,000 acres of presently vacant riverbed.

And what newspaper has told us of Cliff Dam's greatest drawback — that it would be powerless to protect the real estate in its channel if Phoenix had a flood such as occurred some nine decades ago?

Brian Reich, a nationally known engineer-hydrologist from Tucson, reported in a technical journal that the chances of being flooded during a 50-year occupancy on the edge of the legally buildable 100-year floodplain would be 39 percent. If one moved further inland to the 200-year floodplain, the chances would still be a horrific 22 percent!

Both Governor Babbitt and the crew of Plan 6 powerbrokers he

selected ignored a letter sent by Reich to them in April 1985. Reich warned that Arizona's 100-year floodplains are often seriously miscalculated. Also he pointed out major safety and design problems with Rio Salado, as well as pitfalls in its assumptions of safe upstream protection.

Who in their right minds would want to live in such a disaster-prone area downstream from Cliff Dam? Certainly not the governor or his pals.

We are about to be asked by our legislature to vote upon a catastrophically floodprone plan. It would make the taxpayer and the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa co-consentors with Rio Salado, vulnerable to billions in damages to life and property. These cities, their councils, their staffs, the governor and his growth-at-any-cost Plan 6 cohorts have already proved themselves the land-use planning fools of the "civilized" western world with this riverbed real estate madness.

Bob Nieman  
Phoenix

(MAS Newsletter Editor)

**CAP Flap**

# Feds Pump Funds into Mismanaged Arizona Dam Plan

**NAS' Audubon Activist newsletter honors MAS as "an innovative and vigorous chapter."**

**I**F JAMES WATT WERE STILL Interior Secretary, it would have been another mini-scandal. But Secretary Donald Hodel, with his leaden but effective style, has kept it inside the Washington Beltway.

Conservation groups held a mid-January news conference to call attention to Interior's shenanigans related to the Central Arizona Project—a troublesome and expensive water project flimflam that conservationists have fought for years. In January, Secretary Hodel unveiled his FY 1988 budget proposal: as usual, the Bureau of Reclamation dam-builders get a fat (\$98 million) increase while money for wildlife habitat acquisition is cut back. Hodel's number one priority for increased funding is the Central Arizona Project. This is despite an Inspector General's report criticizing CAP for unsound business practices, mismanagement, and a projected 560 percent cost increase.

"The most significant finding and recommendation made by the Inspector General is that the Department of Interior does not have sufficient congressional authority to proceed (with the project)," said William Butler, Audubon's vice-president for government relations and counsel.

Hodel received the damning IG report on April 4, 1986; less than two weeks later, the secretary advanced CAP an important step by signing a cost-sharing agreement with the local sponsors. The contract was signed without reference to the secretary's lack of statutory authority to implement it. The secretary later concluded that the IG's report was without foundation.

"We think Hodel's action was illegal," Butler said. "At best, it's a poor way to make public policy."

CAP, first authorized in 1968, is a concrete network of canals and dams sprawling over several Arizona counties. The total projected cost is \$4 bil-

lion and climbing; much of the project is built. The purposes of the project include power generation, irrigation, and municipal water supplies.

Citing the threat to rare, desert-nesting bald eagles and other environmental consequences, conservationists stopped Orme Dam—a CAP component—after years of effort. Congress ordered the engineers to draw up some alternatives to Orme. Of the resulting proposals, a scheme called "Plan 6" was selected. Plan 6 calls for building two new dams (Cliff and New Waddell), modifying two existing dams (Roosevelt and Stewart Mountain), and breaching Horsehoe Dam. It is this piece of CAP, Plan 6, that the Inspector General found out of control.

The Interior Department's new budget calls for increasing CAP funding from \$166 million to \$275 million. Audubon's Butler argues that Secretary Hodel should take the IG's advice and go back to Congress for spending authority to build Plan 6, and that no funds be appropriated or expended on the project until such authority is granted.

**“We think Hodel's action is illegal. At best, it's a poor way to make public policy.”**

WILLIAM BUTLER

Conservationists, led by Audubon, have sued to stop Cliff Dam, a major component of Plan 6. The dam would clog a free-flowing section of the Verde River, and flood the foraging grounds of rare, desert-nesting bald eagles. The lawsuit contends that Cliff Dam plans so far exceed what was intended that Interior Secretary Hodel must return to Congress for additional authorization.

In 1985, National Audubon Society,

National Wildlife Federation, and Friends of the Earth formed the Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam. Maricopa Audubon Society, an innovative and vigorous chapter, has been leading the local fight for a decade. For more information write: Maricopa Audubon Society, 4619 E. Arcadia Lane, Phoenix, Ariz. 85018; or Audubon's Rocky Mountain regional office (see masthead).

In the same week that Interior Secretary Hodel was sticking his neck out for the Central Arizona Project, CAP officials announced a big sale on water in the system that otherwise will go unused this year. About 500,000 acre-feet of water—enough to serve 2.5 million people—is available because of lack of demand. An acre-foot of water is the amount it would take to cover an acre to a depth of one foot.

The CAP board of directors agreed that it is better to sell the water at a loss than allow it to be "wasted" by flowing downstream.

The proclaimed shift in Interior's budget policy that funnels limited resources into a few water projects and

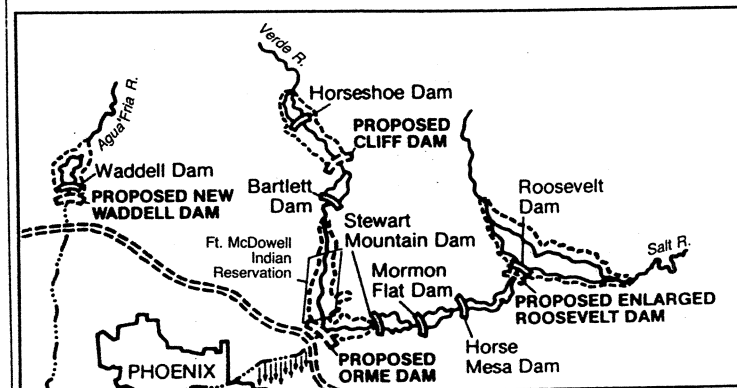
shuts down the planning department's pipeline for new projects has possibilities for conservation. Unfortunately, says Audubon's water projects analyst Charlene Dougherty, projects still are chosen on their political, not their cost or conservation merits. And Interior still throws money by the barrel into destructive water projects while ladling funds by the teaspoon to needy wildlife programs. Overall, Hodel's proposed budget for FY 1988 is \$1 billion less than the agency's 1987 budget.

Big winners this year, besides CAP, are the Central Utah Project, San Luis unit of the Central Valley Project in California, and the addition of a third power-generating unit in the Columbia Basin in Washington.

House and Senate appropriations committees will hold hearings on the budget proposals until April. Appropriations bills should be considered by the full Congress in May. □

*For more information on Interior's budget, contact Charlene Dougherty (water projects) or Cynthia Lenhart (wildlife) in Audubon's Capitol Hill office (see masthead).*

**Desert plumbing.** The Central Arizona Project is a sprawling network of proposed and existing dams, reservoirs, and canals. Even though the federal Inspector General cited the project for mismanagement, the Interior Department has made CAP a budget priority.





# GAO opinion

## Limitations placed on project funding

By Sean Griffin  
The Phoenix Gazette

WASHINGTON — Arizona must seek new congressional authorization for the Central Arizona Project, build it more cheaply, cut some of its features or come up with more local money to finance it, according to the U.S. General Accounting Office.

In an opinion prepared at the request of Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, and released Friday, the GAO concluded that:

■ Federal funds allotted to make existing dams safer cannot be used for the construction of a new one, Cliff Dam on the Verde River.

■ The costs of complying with legislation passed since Congress approved the CAP in 1968 must be counted when calculating the CAP's price ceiling.

■ Local funds contributed to the CAP, revenue from the sale of power generated by Hoover Dam or Navajo Power Generating Station and dam safety funds spent to repair Stewart Mountain and Theodore Roosevelt

# threatens Cliff Dam

dams need not be counted when calculating the CAP's cost ceiling.

The opinion is new ammunition for those opposing the project, including Metzenbaum and a coalition of environmental groups that have sued to halt Cliff Dam's construction. But proponents of the \$3.6 billion project say it could have been worse.

Bill Wheeler, executive director of the Central Arizona Project Association, said he had feared that GAO would find



Metzenbaum

fault in the CAP plan on "every point he (Metzenbaum) had asked about."

Congress originally authorized \$832 million, plus inflation, for the project, which taps the Colorado River for delivery to Maricopa, Pinal and Pima counties.

According to the Bureau of Reclamation, the current inflation-adjusted authorization level is \$3.32 billion. But that figure includes \$353 million to comply with the costs of legislation — such as the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Safety of Dams Act — passed since the CAP was authorized.

See ■ Dam, A-4

The GAO reviewed the legislative history of the CAP and concluded, "The authorizing legislation for the CAP provides no authority to increase the authorized cost ceiling because of costs associated with general legislation."

The bureau's ceiling estimate also includes \$235 million — \$142 million of which were for Cliff Dam — in dam-safety money that GAO said cannot be spent to construct Cliff Dam.

The result, according to the GAO, is that the bureau is limited to spending \$2.8 billion for CAP construction unless Congress authorizes more.

"In this circumstance, the Bureau of Reclamation should restructure the project to reduce project costs without substantially reducing project benefits or seek

legislation permitting a higher authorized cost ceiling," the report concluded.

Proponents have been reluctant to seek new authorization because of Congress' increasingly jaundiced view of western water projects in a period of accelerating spending restraints.

"It's a very comprehensive, five-page report, and it does some very damaging things to water projects," Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., said in Phoenix Friday night. "And I believe you can interpret that very easily to mean that they (opponents) may be able to stop it.

"But it's only an opinion, and I expect that we (the Arizona delegation) will be responding to it."

Late Friday, Department of Interior officials didn't know how they would proceed.

"We just got a copy of it," said Bill Mitchell, director of public affairs for the Bureau of Reclamation.

"It's being run by some staff that are boiling it down from us," Mitchell said, adding that it would be Monday before reclamation commissioner Dale Duvall or other officials would be prepared to comment.

Michael Rappoport, assistant general manager for government affairs at Salt River Project, disputed the validity of the report.

# Smiles

## Environmentalists enthused over GAO Cliff Dam report

By Dave Wagner  
The Phoenix Gazette

Environmentalists greeted a federal report critical of Central Arizona Project funding with varying degrees of enthusiasm over the weekend, but nearly all of them said they hoped CAP sponsors might now agree to drop the idea of building Cliff Dam.

"Our immediate reaction is, 'That's wonderful,'" Herb Fibel, president of the Maricopa Audubon Society, said of the report.

"The general way to get us off their backs is for them to forget Cliff Dam and select another, more environmentally responsible alternative," Fibel said.

Leaders of other environmental groups in the Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam, organized to fight the dam, in a federal lawsuit, agreed with Fibel that the General Accounting Office report was

good news for their cause.

"I'm not surprised but elated," said Frank Welsh, executive director of Citizens Concerned About the Project. "Now, the way I see it, Cliff Dam is putting Plan 6 in jeopardy, and that's putting pressure on all of CAP."

The report released Friday criticized some accounting procedures used by the Bureau of Reclamation in estimating the total costs of the CAP.

It said the authorized \$3.32 billion total spending level of CAP should not include \$353 million in costs associated with environmental and safety programs ordered by Congress after CAP was authorized, nor could it include \$235 million in dam-safety money.

The \$142 million that had been proposed to build Cliff Dam from the

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## ■ Cliff

From A-1

dam-safety fund was ruled out by the report, which is advisory and not binding.

Environmentalists object to Cliff Dam because the proposed site is a nesting place for bald eagles and seven miles of the Verde River that are now a part of the National Wild and Scenic River System likely would be covered by lake water, according to Edward Osann, director of the water resources program for the National Wildlife Federation. The organization is part of the Coalition to Stop Cliff Dam.

"It's really not a complicated matter,"

Osann said from New Orleans Sunday. "CAP is just a lot bigger and multifaceted than the project that was envisaged in 1968, and a lot of additions were never authorized by law.

"I believe Cliff Dam will not be built, but I also think there probably will be more time and money wasted before all parties are brought to that recognition."

Osann said the report probably will have a dramatic effect on the 1987-88 budget of the Bureau of Reclamation as proposed by Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel.