

Hicks-Ray Associates



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TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Fred B. Hicks and Tom Ray
SUBJECT: Shades of the Future

“The tale of the Colorado River has become tangled in part because its evolution into two distinct water realities, that of the Upper and the Lower Basins. One operates in a deficit relative to its normal water allocation; the other a surplus. Arizona, Nevada, and California are managing the River in reverse, backtracking to limits long since exceeded. Some of the water belongs to the Upper Basin, its origin. Indifferent before, these headwater states now cast a wary eye not only towards the Lower Basin but to each other’s plans to develop more from the river. Self-interest is replacing the collegial attitudes of the past.” [Bart Taylor, “Search for Consensus Elusive in Colorado River Basin,” Planet Profit Report, 8-21-12]

Articles like this are not a surprise to WESTCAS. Many of our members are on the front lines of this emerging challenge. And those who attended the June summer conference in San Diego were briefed by the Bureau of Reclamation on its Basin-wide study of the Colorado River which will underpin many of the next steps in addressing the issue of too much demand and not enough river.

The Fall Conference in Tucson will provide yet another opportunity to come together and address how WESTCAS can be an important part of this and other emerging water issues that impact the Arid West.

If we don’t continue to work together, perhaps we will be reduced to something resembling the Texas-Oklahoma Bridge war which unfolded during the summer of 1931. This featured Oklahoma Governor Alfalfa Bill Murray massing the National Guard on the Oklahoma side of the Red River and patrolling the area himself with a pistol. In response, the Governor of Texas sent a detachment of three Texas Rangers to protect the interests of Texas.

The attached photo shows Captain Tom Hickman of the Rangers, holding a 12 gauge shotgun and standing in front of a sign that references a Federal Court action that had favored Texas. Let’s hope that we don’t replay this scene in the 21st century with States guarding their water rights like Captain Hickman guarded the Red River Bridge back in July, 1931. The October 10-12 Tucson Fall conference will give us all an opportunity to further discuss the latest developments with regard to the Colorado River.

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