Former Commissioner Floyd Dominy, 98, Recalls Reclamation's Vibrant History

Memory Strong and Agile During April Interview for Agency's Oral History Project

A delegation from Reclamation's Washington office traveled to the rural Virginia home of former commissioner Floyd Dominy as part of the agency's ongoing oral history project.

Serving in the post from 1959 to 1968, the 98-year-old Dominy is considered the most colorful commissioner in Reclamation's history. He was appointed and reappointed commissioner under Democrat and Republican presidents alike and enjoyed unparalleled influence with key members of the United States Congress.

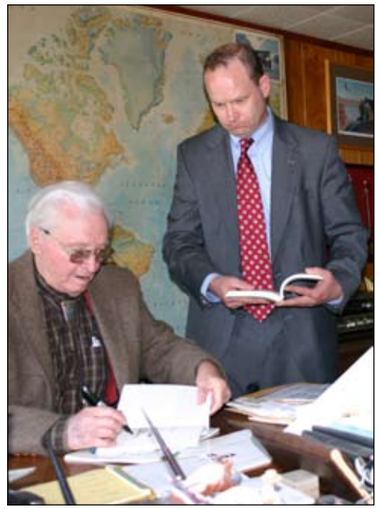
Dominy's wit and recollection were in fine form on April 29, when he was visited at his farm outside Boyce, Va. by the Washington delegation, which included Interior Deputy Assistant Secretary Brenda Burman, Deputy Commissioners Kris Polly and Karl Wirkus, Chief of Public Affairs Dan DuBray, Mid-Pacific Public Affairs Chief Jeff McCracken, and Carter Brown, Special Assistant for Legislative Affairs. McCracken conducted nearly an hour-long videotaped interview with Dominy as part of the visit.

Dominy's commitment to irrigation in the arid American West stemmed from his hardscrabble upbringing on a Nebraska farm. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Wyoming in 1932 and, following stints as a teacher, an agricultural agent and assistant director of the Food Supply Division, joined Reclamation as a land settlement specialist.

Dominy's commitment to irrigation in the arid American West stemmed from his hardscrabble upbringing on a Nebraska farm.

In his interview with McCracken, Dominy recalled that his first interview for a job with Reclamation occurred on the same day that he mustered out of the U.S. Navy at the conclusion of World War II. Dominy's final hours with the Navy were served at the Navy Department headquarters, just a few dozen steps from the site of the main headquarters of the Department of the Interior – where it is still located today.

Dominy used his brief time in Washington that day to telephone Goodrich W. Lineweaver – then Reclamation's Director of Operations and Maintenance – and ask directly for a job. He now recalls that Lineweaver initially tried to give him the brush-off but, after Dominy used his adroit skill of persuasion – a skill that would later come into play in his work with Congress – Lineweaver agreed to grant Dominy a 10-minute personal interview in his office later that same day.



Deputy Commissioner Kris Polly looks on as Former Commissioner Floyd Dominy autographs a book. Dominy also served as Deputy Commissioner of External and Intergovernmental Affairs before being appointed Commissioner.

He got the job. Just 13 short years later, in 1959, he was appointed by President Eisenhower to serve as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. By this time, Dominy's position as the "go-to" guy when it came to testifying before congressional committees was well-established.

"I doubt if the basic principles that I used in dealing with Congress has changed all that much," Dominy said, recalling that each member has individual aims and goals and always demanded to be "treated with courtesy and respect."

For an example, he harkened back to a hearing in the 1960s on Upper Colorado River issues in which a congressman (who Dominy said was by then "in his dotage") publicly and angrily demanded to know why the Bureau of Reclamation had gone to the trouble of building Rainbow Bridge, near Page, Ariz., if there was no water running under it. Dominy says he explained to the congressman that it was really a misnomer to call it a "bridge" since it was more accurately an "arch" created by natural forces and not built by man. Dominy says that by letting the congressman down gently and without embarrassment he cemented a stronger professional relationship and also impressed the other congressmen in attendance.

Dominy says his key to success on Capitol Hill was his ability to do his homework: studying the resumés of each member of the committee that he would face and learning each and every item in the Reclamation budget that could possibly be a potential question.

At 98, Dominy is still as sharp as ever but draws the line at offering any advice for Bob Johnson or any future Reclamation commissioners.

"It's been 38 years since I've been there," he said. "I wouldn't know what advice to give."

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RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

Summer 2008

ETA
Efficiency
Transparency
Accountability

IN THIS ISSUE

Reclamation Grieves Loss of Former Commissioner John Keys

A Letter from Commissioner Bob Johnson

On Friday May 30, the Reclamation family lost Commissioner John Keys when the plane he was piloting over Canyonlands National Park crashed, killing him and his passenger.

During these difficult days, I have often struggled to find the right words to convey our sense of loss. John believed in what he called "Reclamation people," and "Reclamation people" believed in him. He spent his 36-year professional career with Reclamation, working throughout the West. He started as a civil and hydraulic engineer, gaining valuable experience in the Great Basin, the Missouri River Basin, the Colorado River Basin and the Columbia River Basin. He served as Pacific Northwest regional director for 12 years, and, during that time, received the Department of the Interior's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, for maintaining open lines of communication with stakeholders and keeping interest groups focused on solutions.

John retired from Reclamation in 1998 only to return in 2001 when President Bush appointed him as Commissioner, a post he held until April 2006. As Commissioner, he oversaw many significant accomplishments such as the development of the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, a long-term agreement among more than 30 parties to protect and maintain species and wildlife habitat on the Lower Colorado River.

TAMI HEILEMANN | DOI

Standing in the Oval Office in 2002, Commissioner John Keys and Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, present President Bush with the Reclamation Centennial jacket.

Before his retirement two years ago, John said, "I love the Bureau of Reclamation. I believe in what we do. I am proud of our part in the water development and management that has made it possible for us to live in the arid West. I believe that the Bureau and our Department are ready for the water challenges of the 21st century."

"I love the Bureau of Reclamation. I believe in what we do."
- John Keys

After retiring, John stayed in touch with many of us. I frequently sought his sage advice on major decisions. I will miss him personally and professionally, as I know you will.

Let us keep in our thoughts during the coming days John's wife, Dell, his daughters Cathy and Robyn, and his mother.

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Washington, D.C.

Abandoned Mines Sealed Through Collaborative Effort of Reclamation Regional Crews

Reclamation is using its dam construction technology and helicopters to help solve land-based issues.

There are an estimated 500,000 abandoned mine sites in the United States with as many sites in Nevada as the rest of the western states combined. Most of the sites in Nevada are the responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which is taking an inventory of these mines and securing the hazardous areas.

Under a BLM-coordinated, multi-agency effort, Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Region (PN) drill-crews are providing the "boots on the ground" to shore up abandoned mines in Nevada, while Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region (LC) is providing logistical and operational support needed to accomplish the mission.

The drill-crew's mission is to seal the old mine to prevent human trespass and possible tragedy, while allowing clear access for animals that have come to rely on the shafts for habitat and shelter. One of the innovations the crew has devised to accomplish this feat are custom fabricated gates, made at Reclamation's Boulder City facility. Due to the remote locations of the mines, an LC helicopter team transports the gates from Boulder City to the mine site for installation.

ANDY PERNICK | LC REGION

DAVE WALSH | PN REGION

LEFT: The LC Helicopter team transports supplies to the drill-crew, working in remote, inhospitable locations.

ABOVE: PN drill-crew members Steve Scrivner (L) and Kevin Colby (R) weld the gate which will prevent human accidents while allowing animals access for habitat building.

The collaboration involved in the land mine effort is widespread, and includes representatives from the LC and PN Regions, BLM, Corps of Engineers, researchers from Virginia's Christopher Newport University, Nevada Division of Minerals, the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Omaha Division.

Since Oct. 2007, more than 150 sites have been closed. Work on many of these sites was completed by Reclamation's drill-crew, while other sites have been completed by a diverse coalition of partners that volunteer equipment and staff to the effort.

"I think the partnerships are the real story," said A.J. Mitchell, Reclamation's drill-crew foreman. "None of this work would be possible if the networks weren't in place and the various players involved hadn't figured out a way to make things work. It's an encouraging thing to see happen."

Donald Glaser Appointed as New Mid-Pacific Regional Director

Donald Glaser has been named as the Bureau of Reclamation's next Mid-Pacific Regional Director.

Don is a natural resource specialist with 20 years experience in Reclamation in several positions throughout the West and in Washington, D.C., including Assistant Commissioner for Resources Management and Deputy Commissioner.

Don has spent the past seven years managing several non-profit agencies engaged in water education, open space preservation and fish and wildlife conservation and restoration. Prior to that, he was a water resource consultant, the Executive Director for the Presidential Commission on Western Water Policy and the State Director for the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado.

Glaser will replace Kirk Rodgers, who retired in August 2007.

"Reclamation is fortunate to be able to bring Don Glaser back home to the Bureau of Reclamation," said Reclamation Commissioner Bob Johnson. "Don's experience with the Bureau, along with everything he has accomplished since he left Reclamation, make him the ideal person to fill this important position as part of the Reclamation leadership team."

Don was born in Long Beach, Calif., and graduated from Santa Barbara High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Economics from Eastern Montana College (now Montana State University-Billings). He and wife Sandi, will be moving to Sacramento from their current home in Denver, Colo., in the near future.

"I have every confidence that Don Glaser will help make the Mid-Pacific Region responsive to its customers and effective in carrying out Reclamation's mission," said Johnson. "It's a great pleasure for me personally to name Don to one of our top leadership positions."

Faces of Reclamation

Every day, those who work at Reclamation dedicate themselves to bringing water and power to the people of the West. We see their commitment to their work but it can be fascinating to look behind the scenes - to get a glimpse into their achievements and interests. This section of ETA will give you that glimpse and introduce you to some of the faces of Reclamation.

MELISSA ROBERTS joined the Lower Colorado Region in 1998 as a third generation Reclamation employee. She is currently working with the Student Mentor Training Program Team, helping students facilitate ways for improved communication at the office and increased transparency to Yuma's workforce. Melissa was awarded Reclamation's 2007 Administrative Professional of the Year.

JAIME HUERTA joined the Pacific Northwest Region in 2006 as a participant in the Student Educational Employment Program. In 2007, he received Reclamation's "Stay In School" scholarship. Jaime is attending Boise State University with a major in Civil Engineering and a minor in Construction Management. He hopes to graduate in 2011.

HEATHER PATNO, a hydraulic engineer with Reclamation's Upper Colorado Region, serves as the lead hydrologist for Flaming Gorge Dam operations and the Green River. Heather serves as the chair of the Flaming Gorge Technical Working Group providing guidance on hydrology that assists in development of operational strategies and with habitat restoration.

PETE LUCERO joined Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region in August 2004 after working at the National Park Service and the Department of Defense. He has 32 years of Federal service. In 2008, Pete received a Department of the Interior Superior Service Award for his work with concession contracts at Lake Berryessa.

LARRY BEAN, a landscape architect in Reclamation's Great Plains Region, has served in Afghanistan as a project engineer and contracting officer representative since February 2007. He works from the Kandahar Airfield managing construction on police stations and other facilities.

"It is a pleasure and honor to make a difference with the student group, assisting them to understand Reclamation, and how employees truly do make their mark and make the Yuma Area Office so strong."

Melissa Roberts, Management Analyst
Yuma Area Office
Lower Colorado Region

"I enjoy working at Reclamation. I have an opportunity that most college students my age don't have - to get hands on experience. I am able to apply what I learn in class to the real world."

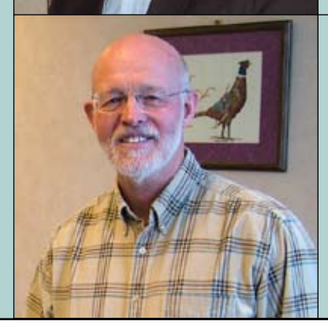
Jaime Huerta, Engineering Aid
Pacific Northwest Region

"I enjoy the opportunity to use my technical skills through hydrologic analysis for operations, and also function collaboratively with stakeholders to create positive working relationships."

Heather Patno, Hydraulic Engineer
Upper Colorado Region

"I think every American places a high value on their leisure activities, and in my job I strive to deliver a quality recreation experience to each visitor Reclamation welcomes onto our property."

Pete Lucero, Chief,
Recreation Resources Division
Central California Area Office
Mid-Pacific Region



"A few months ago Mike [Ryan] sent out an article about the need to be engaged in your work. That really struck a note with me. I'm absolutely engaged in the work...and as a bonus, you feel like it's good work. We're just trying to expand the circle of safety for these people."

Larry Bean, Landscape Architect
Great Plains Region

Which team will win the competition?

The 300-foot long model canal at Reclamation's hydraulics laboratory in Denver, Colo., allows students to control water levels and flows to see which team can more accurately meet irrigation needs and water deliveries.

Reclamation's Canal School: Teaching Modern Methods in Canal Operation and Control

Operating canal-based water delivery systems, the backbone of most irrigation projects, is a challenging endeavor. The goal of delivering water to users at the proper time, the right location and at the correct flow rate is a complex balance. Changes in flow rate are accompanied by changes in the canal water level that take place relatively slowly. Because of these changes, most canal systems operate in a near-constant state of flux, and mismatches between irrigation needs and actual canal deliveries mean either thirsty crops or non-beneficial diversions of water. Improved management of existing canal systems can greatly improve the ability to meet the needs of water users and is an excellent way to do more with available water supplies.

The Bureau of Reclamation's hydraulics laboratory offers annual training on the topic of modern methods and technologies for improving the operation and control of canal-based water delivery systems. Since 1995, the training offered in the hydraulics laboratory has utilized a 300-foot-long model canal facility constructed from clear acrylic with motorized check gates, farm turnouts, modern flow measurement devices, a dedicated Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system and a simulated headquarters control room. The model is equipped for local and remote monitoring and control of water levels, gate positions, and flows, with both manual and automatic control capabilities. Hands-on workshops and team competitions are used to teach canal operating techniques and control methods. The classes also address instrumentation and communication systems associated with modernization of canal systems.

Classes are usually offered during January of each year, with a five-day class focused on canal operations and a three-day class focused on modern flow measurement equipment and methods, including new acoustic instruments and software tools. Students include canal operators, watermasters, district managers, engineers, and other technical staff. Enrollment is typically limited to 15 to 18 students for each class. Classes for international students (including extended field study tours to irrigation projects throughout the western U.S.) have also been offered every two to three years.

More information on upcoming classes is available at http://www.usbr.gov/pmts/hydraulics_lab/workshops/index.html

A Remarkable Consensus

New Colorado River Guidelines Encourage More Efficient Management By Stakeholders

In 2005, after five years of severe drought had dropped the water levels at Lakes Powell and Mead on the Colorado River to lows not seen in several decades, the Secretary of the Interior determined new guidelines were needed to operate and manage the river under low-water conditions.

That summer, Reclamation initiated a highly collaborative and transparent public process involving the Basin States and other stakeholders to develop and implement these guidelines. A team of employees from Reclamation's Upper and Lower Colorado Regions facilitated and guided the 2-1/2 year process.

Secretary Kempthorne, who approved the guidelines in December 2007, called them "a remarkable consensus" among stakeholders about sharing water during drought and charting a water management course for the future.

These new water management tools establish new operating rules for the two reservoirs, encourage more efficient, flexible use and management of Colorado River water in the Lower Basin, and include criteria for determining and sharing shortages in the Lower Basin, if necessary.

The importance of the new guidelines is already evident, as Lake Powell's release has been modified this year to better balance the water supply between it and Lake Mead.

Unfortunately, the project's success is tempered by the unexpected loss of Nan Yoder, a key member of Reclamation's team, in late March.

"We had an amazing team," said Reclamation Lower Colorado (LC) Deputy Regional Director Terry Fulp, the LC project manager at the time. "Nan was an integral part of that team. Without her Herculean efforts, we would not have made our December 2007 deadline. She is deeply missed by us and by the stakeholders with whom she worked."

Water for America Initiative: Addressing 21st Century Water Challenges

In 2009, Reclamation will partner with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to implement the Water for America Initiative. Water for America is focused on addressing 21st century water challenges, including shrinking water supplies caused by increasing demands fueled by environmental needs and population growth, and securing water resources for future generations. The President's FY 2009 budget requests $31.9 million for Reclamation's Water for America activities.

Reclamation's efforts will focus on two of the Initiative's three strategies: "Plan for Our Nation's Water Future" and "Expand, Protect, and Conserve Our Nation's Water Resources." USGS will take on the third strategy to "Enhance Our Nation's Water Knowledge."

As part of the "Plan for Our Nation's Water Future" component, Reclamation will align existing investigation programs with a new basin-wide studies program focused on comprehensive water supply and demand to assess the impact of increased water demands on finite water sources. The basin-wide studies will also examine the impact of climate change on water supply and on the ability of existing facilities to supply water in the future.

The "Expand, Protect, and Conserve Our Nation's Water Resources" component incorporates the most successful elements of two existing water conservation programs, Water 2025 and the Water Conservation Field Services Program. Competitive grants and technical assistance to willing partners will be used to address emerging challenges and prevent future conflicts.

Additionally, Reclamation will accelerate Endangered Species Act activities to maintain and improve Federally listed species and designated critical habitats affected by Reclamation's programs and projects.

Reclamation is currently developing a plan to implement Water for America in FY 2009. This plan will be provided to customers and stakeholders in July 2008 for comments and suggestions.

Through these three strategies, the Water for America Initiative will provide the vision and leadership necessary to ensure sustainable western water supplies for the 21st century.

JACK SIMES | LC REGION

LEFT: Cruz Jimenez, with the Yuma County Public Works, walks through the ravage of illegal dumping at County 19th Street in the south Yuma Valley.

MIDDLE: Jack Simes, who has seen more than his fair share of discarded tires, adds more to the recycle pile.

BOTTOM: Retired Reclamation employee Art Pipkin rounds up yet another tire.

Yuma Cleanups: Success Built on Collaborative Partnerships

The motto of Reclamation's Yuma Area Office (YAO) when dealing with other people's trash: "One cleanup at-a-time." Littered public lands have become an increasing problem in the West, despite efforts of the YAO and other partner agencies.

JOY ORSINI | LC REGION

During the last six cleanups in the Yuma, Ariz. area, 809 volunteers showed up to bag trash, pick up tires and collect other items dumped by the river or on canals. Shopping carts, couches, tables, appliances and other items are commonly discarded and eventually make their way into the water system. Volunteers also hauled in 526 tons of trash and debris, collected over 2,000 tires, 6 tons of metal and 30 gallons of used motor oil for recycling.

YAO initiated the cleanup efforts with partners from the Bard Water District, Yuma Irrigation District, Yuma County Water Users' Association, the Quechan Indian Tribe and Yuma County Public Works. By the end of January 2008, the five agency coalition developed by Jack Simes, YAO's External Coordination Group Manager, would grow to include 30 partners working together to clean public lands.

JOY ORSINI | LC REGION

"They're great to work with and want to help pitch-in to maintain our public lands," said Simes. The districts provide heavy equipment and expertise while sharing knowledge of illegal dumping sites that need to be addressed.

"Reclamation could not do this alone, no one can. It takes partnering to be successful."

After the September National Public Lands Day cleanup in Yuma, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) hosted a forum on illegal dumping. Various Federal, State, and local governments, irrigation districts and area businesses attended. "The goal was to establish more partnerships and keep the momentum going to tackle illegal dumping, not just in Yuma County, but all of Arizona," said Terry Hubbard, ADEQ Illegal Dumping Prevention Coordinator.

"There is strength in numbers and with the help of these types of partnerships," said Simes, "together, we can do this."

ANDY PERNICK | LC REGION

TAMI HEILEMANN | DOI

TAMI HEILEMANN | DOI

DAVE WALSH | PN REGION

ANDY PERNICK | LC REGION

Let the River Run

The Glen Canyon Dam's Jet Tubes Are Opened For a Grand Science Experiment

On March 5, 2008, when Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne opened the jet tubes at Reclamation's Glen Canyon Dam, he released about 41,500 cubic feet per second of Colorado River water into the Grand Canyon, and launched a scientific experiment aimed at learning more about how to improve the river for wildlife and visitors.

"This experiment has been timed to take advantage of the highest sediment deposits in a decade and designed to better assess the ability of these releases to rebuild beaches that provide habitat for endangered wildlife and campsites for thousands of Grand Canyon National Park tourists," said Secretary Kempthorne. "The water will be released at a rate that would fill the Empire State Building within twenty minutes. It will transport enough sediment to cover a football field 100 feet deep with silt and sand."

The experiment – a 60-hour high flow test – is expected to push sand built up at the confluence of the Paria River downstream of the dam into a series of sandbars and beaches along the river. Most sediment entering Grand Canyon National Park now arrives from the Paria River and upper Marble Canyon tributaries below the dam.

The test is similar to the previous high-flow experiments conducted in 1996 and 2004, but the amount of sediment available is considerably larger. In the 17 months preceding the March 2008 experiment, tributaries below the dam provided more sand to the system than had been available at any time in the past ten years- about two times greater than the supply that preceded the 2004 experiment.

Data will also be collected to determine the total amount of sediment in the system and its availability for restoring sandbars and camping beaches, which provide habitat for wildlife and supply sand needed to protect archaeological sites. Interpreting this large volume of information could take from months to years. It will then be used to improve the predictive capabilities of the existing sediment model and determine the optimal peak flows of future high-flow experiments.

"With more than 100 federal, state and university researchers collecting data on behalf of this experiment, it will take some time to interpret the data and reach final conclusions on what has been learned," said John Hamill, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center Chief. "The effects of the high-flow experiment on various resources in Glen and Grand Canyons will be evaluated in the field through the fall of 2008."

In addition, high flows create areas of low-velocity flow, or backwaters, used by young native fish. USGS scientists will be monitoring how the high-flow releases affect the survival of a population of young humpback chub. The humpback chub is one of four remaining native fish in the Grand Canyon.

USGS anticipates that initial reports from the experiment will be provided to the public in late 2008 and 2009; with a complete synthesis of the results, including comparisons with the 1996 and 2004 tests, to be provided in 2010.

The high flow experiment is an interagency research effort conducted by the USGS, Reclamation, which operates Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River; and the National Park Service, which manages Grand Canyon National Park.

DAVE WALSH | PN REGION

Managing for Excellence Moves to New Phase

Final Meeting Recognizes the Retirement of Larry Todd

The Bureau of Reclamation's Managing for Excellence initiative has concluded its first phase and now moves to its continued implementation, marking a new beginning for the agency.

Managing for Excellence has begun to pave the way for Reclamation to evaluate and strengthen its mission through collaboration with partners and stakeholders to effectively meet water and power resource challenges in the Western United States.

This widespread initiative provided insight into Reclamation's challenges and opportunities, made recommendations for improvement and developed detailed implementation plans to ensure Reclamation could continue to meet its goals during the 21st century.

"Managing for Excellence marks an important evolution in the history of Reclamation," said Commissioner Bob Johnson. "We are pleased to see the culmination of months of hard work through the successful completion of the first phase of this important initiative. We are now entering the process of implementing the recommendations that will continue to allow us to be more accountable to our customers and stakeholders, while increasing the efficiency and transparency of our work."

As part of the initiative, Reclamation has facilitated communication with its customers, stakeholders and partners to gain a better understanding of their expectations and concerns. The development of effective collaborative relationships with customers and other stakeholders continues to be a critical component of Reclamation becoming more efficient, transparent and accountable.

Full completion of the 52 of over 100 Managing for Excellence implementation items is anticipated by December 2008.

The final public meeting of Managing for Excellence was held on Feb. 29, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nev., following the annual conference of the Family Farm Alliance. It marked the last day of Deputy Commissioner Larry Todd's 32 year career with Reclamation before retiring.

To learn more about Managing for Excellence please visit www.usbr.gov/eta.

Larry Todd retired with over 34 years of Federal service, including two years with the Bureau of Land Management in the beginning of his career.