

USBR PODCAST SCRIPT 2010-01

WHERE THE WATER GOES

STINGER: USBR THEME

NARRATOR: WELCOME TO THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION GREAT PLAINS REGION PODCAST

SFX: WATER RUNNING

NARRATOR: CAN WE INTEREST YOU IN SOME SLIGHTLY USED WATER? IN FACT, PRETTY MUCH ALL THE WATER THERE IS ON EARTH HAS BEEN HERE FROM THE TIME THE PLANET WAS FORMED.

WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT WHEN WATER IS USED FOR SOMETHING, SAY IRRIGATING CROPS IN THE FIELD OR MAKING THAT CUP OF COFFEE YOU HAD THIS MORNING, IT'S NOT USED UP. EVENTUALLY IT WILL END UP BACK IN WHAT'S CALLED THE HYDROLOGIC CYCLE.

THE STORY OF RECLAMATION IS THE STORY OF WATER IN THE WEST, BEGINNING WITH THE RECLAMATION ACT OF 1902, WHICH DIRECTED THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF IRRIGATION WORKS FOR THE STORAGE, DIVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF WATER FOR RECLAMATION OF ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS.

GETTING THAT WATER FROM WHERE IT'S PLENTIFUL – SOMETIMES TO THE POINT OF CAUSING FLOODS -- TO WHERE IT'S NEEDED TAKES SOME SERIOUS ENGINEERING.

LAMB01:

WELL HERE IN THE EASTERN COLORADO OFFICE, WE GET THE MAJORITY OF OUR WATER FROM THE WEST SIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE. SO WHAT WE ARE DOING IS CALLED TRANS-MOUNTAIN, TRANS-BASIN DIVERSION. WE'RE BRINGING WATER FROM ONE RIVER BASIN, UNDER THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, TO ANOTHER RIVER BASIN.

KARA LAMB IS THE PUBLIC INFORMATION COORDINATOR FOR RECLAMATION IN EASTERN COLORADO. SHE SAYS THE COLORADO BIG THOMPSON PROJECT, STARTED IN 1938, AND THE FRYING PAN ARKANSAS PROJECT, STARTED IN 1964, SERVE A LARGE NUMBER OF WATER USERS IN THE REGION:

LAMB02:

THE PROJECTS TOGETHER SERVE ALMOST TWO MILLION PEOPLE AND IRRIGATE ABOUT A MILLION AND A HALF ACRES OUT IN THE EASTERN PLAINS OF COLORADO. WE ALSO GENERATE ABOUT A BILLION KILOWATT HOURS OF ELECTRICITY A YEAR.

NARRATOR:

THROUGHOUT THE GREAT PLAINS REGION, WATER CAN PROVIDE MANY BENEFITS BEFORE AND AFTER IT LEAVES A RIVER OR RESERVOIR. THE SAME WATER YOU FISH OR GO BOATING IN ONE WEEK MIGHT BE GENERATING ELECTRIC POWER OR MAKING A BATCH OF BABY FORMULA THE NEXT.

IT'S A FACT OF HUMAN NATURE THAT WHERE THERE'S WATER...PEOPLE WILL WANT TO COME PLAY IN IT. RECREATION IS ONE OF THE RECOGNIZED PURPOSES OF RECLAMATION PROJECTS.

RON SIEFERT IS THE SUPERINTENDANT OF KEYHOLE STATE PARK IN WYOMING:

SIEFERT01:

WHEN THE PARK WAS ESTABLISHED, WE PARTNERED WITH THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION AND WE MANAGE THE LAND AROUND THE LAKE FOR RECREATION. AND THEN THE BUREAU MANAGES ALL OF THE GRAZING ALLOTMENTS THAT ARE THERE.

NARRATOR:

BUT PERHAPS THE MOST VISIBLE REMINDER OF THE WORK THAT RECLAMATION IS DOING TAKES PLACE EVERY TIME YOU TURN ON THE TAP AND THE WATER IS THERE. THE RECLAMATION ACT OF 1939 OFFICIALLY ADDED MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES AS AN AUTHORIZED PURPOSE OF RECLAMATION PROJECTS. SALES OF WATER TO PLACES LIKE RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA, HELP REPAY THE COSTS OF BUILDING THE LARGE SCALE PROJECTS. JOHN WAGNER IS THE SUPERINTENDANT OF THE WATER DIVISION:

WAGNER01:

I STARTED WITH THE CITY OF RAPID CITY IN 1972 AND WE HAD JUST A VERY GOOD COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP. IN FACT IN 1995 WHEN THE BUREAU WAS GETTING OUT OF THE DAM BUILDING BUSINESS, AND TURNING THEIR OPERATIONS OVER TO LOCAL WATER USERS, WE DID TAKE OVER THE O AND M OF TWO RESERVIORS WE MANAGE. SO FROM THE TIME I STARTED WORKING WITH THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION AND THEN COMING UP THROUGH THE RANKS WITHIN THE CITY, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN A VERY PLEASURABLE GOOD EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH THEM THEY'VE BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE AND VERY HELPFUL.

NARRATOR:

A GROWING POPULATION, SHIFTING ECONOMY AND CHANGING CLIMATE ALL MEAN MORE DEMANDS ON LIMITED RESOURCES, AND WATER IS NO EXCEPTION. FOR RAPID CITY, THAT MEANS CAREFUL PLANNING FOR ANTICIPATED NEEDS:

WAGNER02:

WE HAD OUR CONTRACT RATIFIED IN JULY OF 2007 WHICH ALLOCATED 49-THOUSAND OF THE 55-THOUSAND ACRE-FEET IN PACTOLA DIRECTLY TO RAPID CITY FOR OUR USE FOR GROWTH IN FUTURE YEARS.

NARRATOR:

MORE THAN A CENTURY AFTER IT WAS ESTABLISHED, RECLAMATION CONTINUES TO MANAGE WATER IN THE WEST, AND AS KARA LAMB POINTS OUT, IT'S NOT ALWAYS A SIMPLE MATTER TO DECIDE WHO GETS HOW MUCH:

LAMB05:

BALANCING THE COMPETING DEMANDS ON RECLAMATION PROJECTS IS SOMETHING THAT EACH ONE OF OUR OFFICES FACES IN ALL SEVENTEEN OF THE WESTERN STATES IN WHICH RECLAMATION OPERATES. YOU'VE SEEN VALUES CHANGE ACROSS THE WEST IN THE 110 YEARS THAT RECLAMATION HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE, AND WHILE WE COOPERATE WITH AND TRY TO LISTEN TO ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROJECTS, A LOT OF THE PROJECTS DO HAVE VERY SPECIFIC AUTHORIZING LANGUAGE THAT HAS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. SO WHILE WE NEED TO CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES ON OUR PROJECTS, IF THAT PROJECT IS SOMETHING THAT WAS AUTHORIZED BACK IN THE 40'S, FOR EXAMPLE, THEN THE AUTHORIZATION MIGHT NOT HAVE AS MUCH FLEXIBILITY AS PROJECTS THAT CAME ON LATER. SO WE HAVE TO BE COGNIZANT AND COOPERATIVE AND MINDFUL OF WHAT WE'RE DOING AND FOR WHOM AND WHY...

NARRATOR:

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RECLAMATION PROJECTS, RECREATION, HYDROPOWER, FLOOD CONTROL AND OTHER WATER ISSUES, VISIT THE GREAT PLAINS WEBSITE, AT WWW-DOT-U-S-B-R-DOT-GOV-FORWARD-SLASH-G-P.

THIS PODCAST WAS PRODUCED BY BELONGIE ENTERTAINMENT ENTERPRISES FOR RECLAMATION'S GREAT PLAINS REGION OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

STINGER: RECLAMATION...MANAGING WATER IN THE WEST....