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Report Describes Innovative Water Management Actions Taken by Western Water Users

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON (July 30, 2010)

Is there any way to prevent water wars?

- ☛ In Wyoming, ranchers are creating a model watershed that hosts a myriad of wildlife, and robust natural resources while sustaining compatible agricultural uses and a natural resource based recreational economy.
- ☛ In Arizona, irrigation districts are experimenting with ways to use fish instead of chemicals to control aquatic weeds in the local canal systems.
- ☛ In the Colorado River watershed, farmers and ranchers, conservation groups and urban water users are collaborating on plans to develop new water management systems to ensure that water transfers from rural communities will not harm those communities.
- ☛ On California's Sacramento River, irrigation districts are working with the federal government to install a state-of-the art fish screen to protect the habitat for endangered fish and improve water supply reliability for rice farmers and orchardists.

These are just a few examples of creative and successful ways that scientists and agricultural leaders in the Western states are working together to conserve water, develop safe and effective water markets, fix aging infrastructure problems, and restore watersheds.

These and many other examples are detailed in a new report from the Family Farm Alliance. Their report, "Western Water Management Case Studies" has been developed as a practical tool for policy makers and water users who are struggling with the complications created by a host of new rules, policies and prescriptions for water and the environment.

“We are trying to identify the real-world experiences and recommendations that will help communities achieve continued, locally-driven success,” says Patrick O’Toole, president of the Alliance.

The report includes individual case studies for projects located in virtually every major river basin in the Western United States. It reflects the contributions of more than 50 leaders in the western water community, irrigation district managers, engineers, ecologists and water lawyers.

“Readers will learn that water managers, ranchers and farmers are resourceful and creative individuals,” said Dick Moss, Chairman of the Alliance’s Advisory Committee. “We have a proven track record of solving problems and we have a vital role to play in helping federal water policy makers resolve the water conflicts of the West.”

Work began on the report in October 2009. The Alliance was invited to testify before the Senate Water and Power Subcommittee in March 2010 and brief members of Congress on the report.

In addition to descriptions of the individual case studies, the report also summarizes “lessons learned” and includes a policy discussion that underscores the disconnect between existing federal rural policies and environmental regulations.

The Alliance has been a major resource for western water leaders, providing grassroots-driven, practical solutions to the difficult resource challenges faced by farmers and ranchers.

“This case study report will provide yet another tool that will be used to work with policy makers towards this end,” said Moss.

Go to familyfarmalliance.org for a printable, PDF version of the file or send a request to dankeppen@charter.net to have PDF attachment e-mailed directly to you.

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