SLIDES: The Urbanizing West: Limits to Water, Limits to Growth

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The Urbanizing West – Limits to Water, Limits to Growth

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American Planning Association
Not a new story!

**MAJOR PREHISTORIC INDIAN CULTURES**

The three major Indian cultures in the prehistoric Southwest were the Hohokam, who lived in river valleys in the southern desert and were an agricultural group; the Mogollon, who were hunter-gatherers; and the Anasazi, who were cliff dwellers. The Sinagua lived near Flagstaff and the Verde Valley and comprised traits from all three major cultures. The Salado lived in east-central Arizona and are thought to be a blend of two or more major cultures.
Wettest Quarter Century in 2000 Years

Rainfall Over 2000 Years in New Mexico
Tree rings from El Malpais National Monument (Henri Grissino-Mayer)

Average rainfall 14.5 inches/year
Chaco Canyon abandoned
Mesa Verde abandoned
Last Quarter Century
Future Challenge: Population Growth in the Southwest 2005-2025


Slide courtesy of Western Resource Advocates
Expect a Reduction in Surface Water Inflows
Three Counties; Three Watersheds
12 Tribes
18 Local Governments
More than 130 public water supply providers
More than 30 acequias
40% of the state’s population
Substantial agricultural interests
Habitat for several endangered and threatened species
More un adjudicated paper water than wet water
Ongoing Deficit Spending of Water 15-20% Last Quarter of the 20th Century

Inflows 261,000 af/yr
Deficit 55,000 af/yr
Consumption 316,000 af/yr

55,000 Acre Feet is 18 Billion Gallons
Enough to Fill a Football Field 7 Miles Deep, Every Year!
Aquifers in the Albuquerque Area are Drawn Down 1960 to 2000


Puts a Substantial Drain on River Flows
Is this the Rio Grande?

… or is this the Rio Grande?
SunCal to develop 55,000 acres!
Power struggle for the future of the region
Plans Galore!

- State Water Plan
- Regional Water Plans
- 72-1-9 water dev’t plans
- Local water plans
- Comprehensive plans
- Regional land use plans
- Transportation plans
The Disconnects

- Outcomes not connected to plans.
- Development regulations not connected to the plan.
- Development decisions and budget expenditures inconsistent with the plan.
- Conflicting plans and regulations within the same jurisdiction.
- Gaps and conflicts between jurisdictions.
Connecting land, water & growth in the 21st century requires:

- Breaking down silos
- Connecting federal, state, sovereign tribal governments, local governments, farmers, and a multitude of others in a new way
- Connecting plans, regulations, development decisions and actions as well as financial resources
A smarter process requires, at a minimum:

- Integrated planning systems
- Inclusive and participatory processes
- Informed decision-making consistent with the plan(s)
- A feedback loop and mitigation monitoring
“The motion has been made and seconded that we stick our heads in the sand.”
Hundredth Monkey