

RECREATION WORKSHOP REPORT

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I want to express appreciation particularly to the people who attended the Recreation Workshop for their enlightened comments. Our workshop was attended by a cross-section of people, many of whom had much less of a particular or vested interest in recreational use of water than I do. We felt we had the toughest assignment because the recreational use of water is hard to place a value on in the marketplace. We've heard throughout the last couple of days dollar figures on the value of agriculture, dollar figures for the value of industrial use of water, and precise use estimates by municipal interests. This is pretty tough to do for recreational situations. There are methods available to estimate the exact amount of money spent on water-based recreation, but these estimates are not completed in New Mexico at this time. There are some studies being done on it. One of the main problems is, how do you estimate the aesthetic value of water-based recreation? Lots of us like to go out and camp by public streams just because the public stream is there. One of the things that recreational use of water affects is the lifestyles of all of us. It was succinctly put by one of the members of the workshop -- to paraphrase him just a little bit -- we can either provide for recreation or we can build lots of asylums.

Now there is all kinds of recreation, some of it water-based, some land-based, some urban-based. Is bowling just as good recreation as maybe water skiing or fishing? It might be, I don't know. That's

something we have to determine. It's probably the crux of the entire discussion in the recreation workshop. In fact, can water-based recreation compete? Is it viable under the present and the future water constraints in the state of New Mexico? That has to be determined. The best way to determine that probably is through an evaluation or a market test to see what recreational use of water is good for. How much value can we actually put on it? As I have said, there are some studies underway presently. Some more are undoubtedly yet to come.

Maybe there's not as much current conflict with recreational water use and other water users as some of us might imagine. For most of the history of the state, recreational use has piggybacked on other water uses. Because the agricultural uses have to store water, the storage and conveyance mechanisms provide some recreational opportunity. Really the only very specific conflicts that we see coming up are water exports from the state -- whether they be in coal slurry lines, or in the consumptive use of water by the indirect export, previously mentioned, of electrons over the high lines. What will hurt if there is no so-called negative alternative, if there is no water-based recreation or no recreation in the state of New Mexico? That discussion took about thirty seconds. Another one of the individuals, without a vested recreation interest like mine, said everybody will hurt. Without recreation we will directly affect the lifestyles of the whole population of the state, both individually and economically.

There are some values for water-based recreation that are available. The consensus of the workshop was that probably those values are

competitive with other uses at this time. That is a wild guess, but it probably is the case.

We spent quite a bit of time on the discussion of strategies to improve recreational uses of water. One of the main ones brought up was development of management schemes for conservation of water throughout the system. Previously mentioned, at least in the agricultural workshop, was the storage of water in the less evaporative intensive areas, and possibly more efficient conveyance mechanisms. Another thing was, in all water projects consider the possibility of recreational opportunity. An example was brought out from Scottsdale, Arizona, where the federal government and the local people improved on a very severe potential flood situation with a park. The park is, in fact, a portion of the flood control works in this situation. This is the Indian Bend Wash at Scottsdale. Scottsdale, as you know, is a very affluent community. The people there, for some recreational benefit, put in lots of bucks.

The new information that is needed in the area of recreational water use is the value of that use. They have to test the market, determine what the value of the water-based recreation is, and probably people concerned with water-based recreation will have to start forking over the bucks. We've probably piggybacked along with other water uses too long.

Thank you.