



AMERICAN WATER RESOURCES ASSOCIATION

Community, Conversation, Connections

Setting a Direction for U.S. Water Policy

Richard A. Engberg

Technical Director, AWRA

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

2009 Water Planning Workshop

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Orlando, FL

US Water Policy

- Water policy in the US has its basis in the dissimilar riparian and prior use doctrines
- Laws prior to 1950 deal almost exclusively with water resource development
- Laws since 1950 deal almost exclusively with water resource protection
- Result is ad hoc - a fragmented, often conflicting, set of policies



Water Policy Dialogues

- AWRA's Board of Directors addressed water resources policy in an early 2001 meeting recognizing the Nation's:
 - Aging water resources infrastructure
 - Changing population dynamics
 - Unequal distribution of freshwater resources
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Changing land uses
 - Climate change
- The Board launched a series of “dialogues” on water resources policy to provide suggestions and recommendations for water resources policy direction in the 21st century



SCOPE OF THE DIALOGUES

AWRA's Water Resources Policy Dialogues have been completely objective, providing each participant with a heightened awareness of *ALL* sides of important water resources policy issues primarily for the United States.

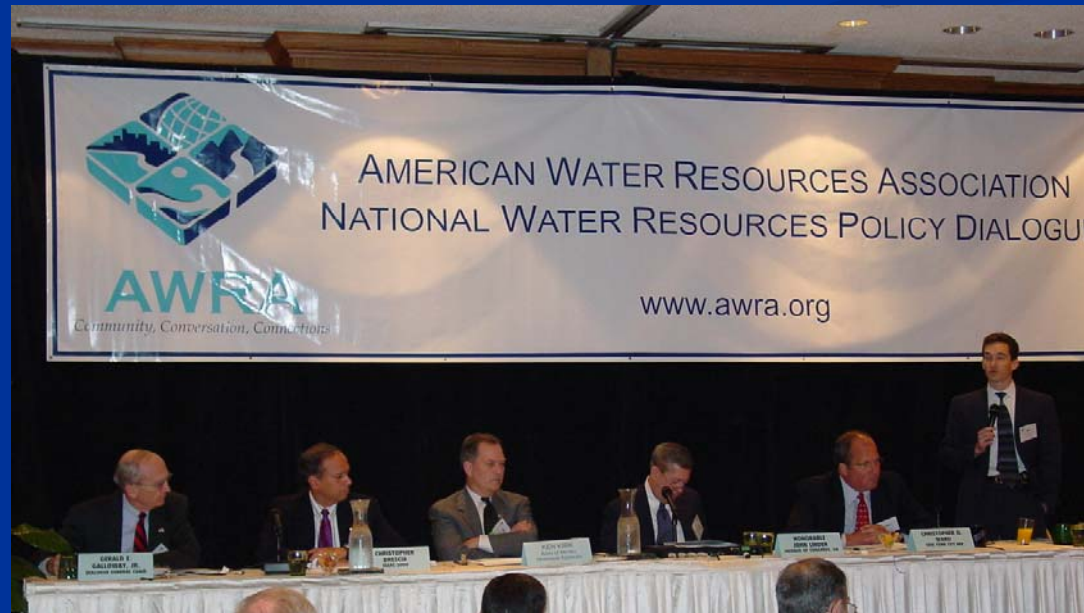
**The Dialogues reviewed existing federal water policies and how they impact state and local entities.
Attendees identified future federal policy issues.**

WPD1	Washington, DC	September 2002
WPD2	Tucson, AZ	February 2005
WPD3	Arlington, VA	January 2007
WPD4	Washington, DC	September 2008

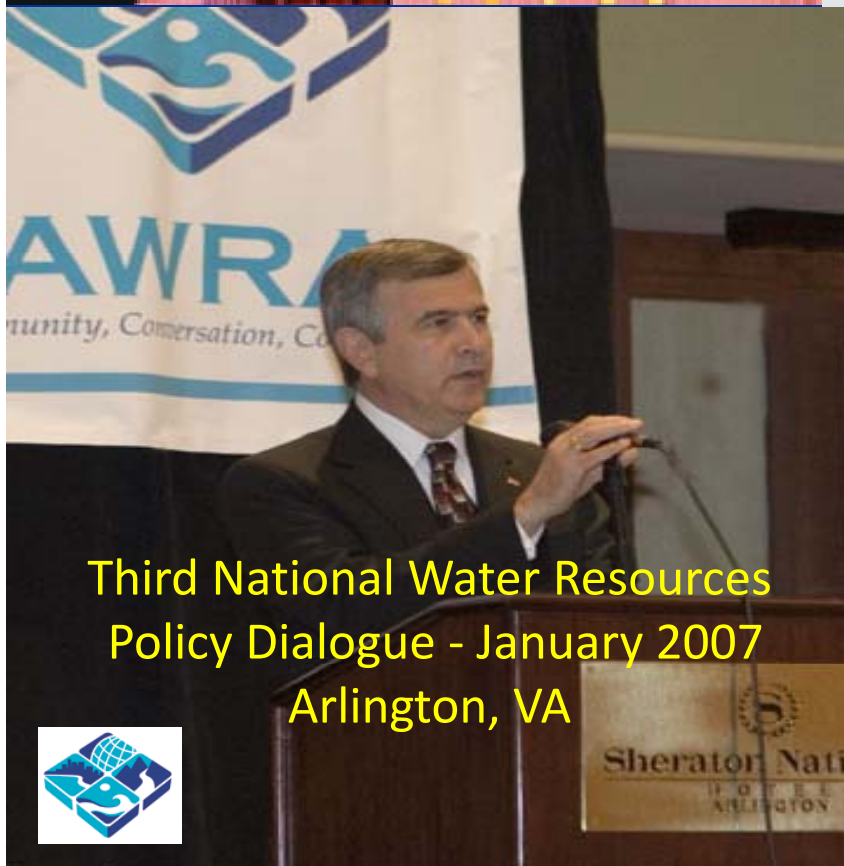
SCOPE OF THE DIALOGUES

(continued)

The participants represented ***all water resources disciplines***, and included water resources policy makers from the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, and from all other levels of government including tribal governments; environmental groups; academics and researchers; industrial and development representatives; and the general public.



**American Water Resources Association's
National Water Resources Policy Dialogue
Washington, D.C.
September 17-18, 2002**



**AMERICAN WATER RESOURCES
ASSOCIATION
Second National Water Resources Policy Dialogue**

Tucson, Arizona

February 14-15, 2005



Sponsoring Organizations

The first three Dialogues were sponsored by the following water resources agencies and organizations:

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Natural Resources Conservation Service

NOAA, National Ocean Service

NOAA, National Weather Service

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

U. S. Bureau of Reclamation

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U. S. Geological Survey

31 NGOs and Non-federal organizations



Dialogue 2002

- **Develop a national [not federal] water vision:** working with all levels of government, and the private sector, lay out a framework for the future for water resources; address competing goals and objectives, and establish broad priorities for resource expenditures.
- **Formulate policy principles for translating the vision into action:** focus principles on shared responsibilities at all levels of government, as well as the private sector for addressing our water resources challenges in an integrated, holistic, and cooperative fashion.
- **Insist on appropriate coordination and cooperation among federal agencies and** with other levels of government about water resources issues.
- **Develop formal coordination and cooperative relationships** among agencies to pursue common water resources goals and objectives.
- **Create or support watershed organizations** with the involvement and support of federal water agencies.
- **Establish river basin commissions** to achieve the key themes that were discussed throughout the policy dialogue.
- **Re-establish a formal coordination council or commission** with the job of coordinating and integrating water resources organizations at a national level.
- **Use incentives to encourage local watershed organizations** and grass-root involvement.

Dialogue 2005

- **Address the Nation's water issues in an integrated manner**, focusing not on single projects but on programs and watershed and basin level issues.
- **Reconcile the myriad laws, executive orders and Congressional guidance** that have created a disjointed, ad-hoc national water policy and clearly define our 21st century goals.
- **Recognize the fiscal realities facing the Nation**
- **More effectively coordinate the actions of federal, state, tribal, and local governments in dealing with water.** Collaboration instead of competition will provide better and more fiscally efficient use of scarce resources and will assist in overcoming decision gridlock on key water programs.
- **Clearly focus the Nation's superb scientific capabilities and cutting edge information technologies** to support water-related decision making.

US Water Resources Priorities – 3rd Dialogue

The 3rd Dialogue focused on those priorities identified during the first two:

- ***Setting a Direction*** – resolving the current ad hoc national water policy
- ***Working Together Holistically*** – multidisciplinary approaches to water resources issues using collaboration
- ***Building on Science*** – the need for good science to support sound policy decisions

Third Dialogue Deliberations

A high level group of speakers including congressmen, current and former administration officials, state officials, presidents of NGOs, CEOs of water districts, tribal representatives, along with 10 different federal agencies weighed in on these three issues.

More than 150 attendees participated in facilitated discussions to determine the best verbiage and best ways of presenting the gathered information to policy makers.

Provocateurs, including a Northwest Tribes representative, a former chief of the EPA Office of Water and a former Commissioner, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, challenged the attendees with their individual takes on the issues and discussions.


Third Dialogue Results

- Dialogue results were made available to policy makers in the Administration, Congress and at the state, local and tribal levels
- Letters were sent to the President, Congressional Leaders and the Governors stating the results and suggestions for further action
- No formal response from the Bush Administration, but
 - the Dialogue Chairs were invited to testify at a Senate Committee hearing on water resources in the west
 - the Dialogue Chairs briefed a variety of Administration and Congressional staffers, all of whom acknowledged the findings and verbalized support for the Dialogue results
 - several Governors responded with letters of support

American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Letter to the President, Congress and Governors
Third Dialogue - Feb 2007

February 20, 2007



CLARENCE G. GORREY
President
John D. Hanks
President
Michael H. Howell
Executive Director

DAVID M. REYNOLDS
Director

THOMAS E. JOHNSON
President

ANDREW W. MCKENNA
President

WILLIAM D. PAUL, CEO
President

The Director of the United States
The White House
1700 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 205000001

Dear Mr. Director:

The water resources of the United States are at risk and concerted action needs to be taken at all levels of government and within the private sector to deal with the challenge. The United States faces periodic severe drought, increasing flood damage, challenges involving the 1972 Endangered Species Act, nonpoint runoff, and threats to water, the continued loss of aquatic species, and a badly neglected and deteriorating water infrastructure. Climate change has become a reality and will force us to adapt to new conditions.

The purpose of the Dialogue is to bring us together with the Congress, government and tribal leaders, to focus attention on these water problems so that we have the resources to enjoy our water in the future. The economic, social and environmental threats with the conditions of these resources. Because they are in the background of our daily activity, the issues surrounding water are only occasionally in the headlines - and yet each day the problems grow.

Water resources challenges that impact our quality of life and economic activity have been identified by numerous groups and government agencies over the last decade. Many policy initiatives were identified in two National Water Resource Policy Dialogues conducted by the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) under the sponsorship of the federal agencies and many of state, local, business, and government leaders. It is important to thank you, the Congress, and the governor in 2002 and 2003. Let us hope the National Water Resource Policy Dialogue conducted last month in Denver, Colorado, and the National Water Resource Policy Dialogue conducted last month in Denver, Colorado, will continue to address these water issues and to bring us together to address these water issues and to bring us together to address these water issues.

Our Nation's approach to dealing with water is neither innovative nor effective. The National Academies, other nonpartisan organizations, and both the Administration and the Congress agree to "develop a water policy." To address problems as they appear or as they are a problem is a good start. But it is not enough. We need to take a long-term view. Taking these problems as a national issue will require that the Nation - the Administration, the Congress, state, tribal, and local officials, and the public - develop a water strategy that provides a national water policy program on water resources. There was a strong consensus in the Dialogue that the center of gravity for national water action should be at the state level and be led by appropriate representatives of the federal government.

The participants in the 2007 Dialogue focused on identifying areas that need to be taken to develop an effective approach to dealing with water resources. The members identified several significant areas that, if taken, would help to meet the need for a national water policy program on water resources. The Administration and Congress should

Stewardship of the Nation's water resources is being neglected and the manner in which we deal with water issues is dysfunctional

The center of gravity for national water actions is shifting to the state level and should be backed by appropriate support from the federal government.

Letter to the President, Congress and Governors



- The Administration and Congress should work with governors and tribal leaders to **establish broad principles for water management – a national vision.**
- The Administration and Congress should **better coordinate water resources activities and address the urgent requirement for a national assessment of water resources needs.**
- The Administration, Congress, and the governors must **encourage policies that promote watershed planning** and change policies that do not.
- The Administration, Congress, and the governors must **ensure that the Nation's vast scientific knowledge about water is available to all**, clearly presented, and fully considered in making decisions on key water issues. Critical data about water resources must be collected and maintained, and research and development on critical water issues must be supported.

Fourth Dialogue – September 2008

Discussion to Action

- Purpose was to determine those actions to recommend to the new Administration and Congress to face national water challenges
- Attended by 56 invited water resources professionals representing federal agencies, state agencies, local entities, congressional staff, and NGO's
- Strong support from congressional staff and House Water Caucus
- Discussions centered around results of the first three dialogues
- Recommendations developed by attendees



American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Recommendation 1

- There is an immediate need for an **assessment** of the Nation's water resources to include the current status of the resource, the future needs for water and identification of gaps that exist in fulfilling these needs



American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Recommendation 2

- The federal government, in cooperation with state and local agencies, needs to develop **a national vision and overarching principles** to guide water resources development activities supported by the federal government



American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Recommendation 3

- There is increasing need for mechanisms that will **better coordinate the water related activities** of federal agencies and among congressional committees. The absence of effective coordination is apparent in the conflicts and overlaps that exist in legislation, programs, and agency activities



American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Recommendation 4

•The relationship among the federal government, states and local communities is changing and must be addressed. The **federal government's role in water resources**, long seen to be a driving force, **must be reevaluated** in light of growing state attention and direction of water resource activities

- Defining the Integrator
- Resting on National (not federal) Policies



American Water Resources Association's National Water Resources Policy Dialogue

Recommendation 5

• **Federal actions** with regard to water resources **must be taken in a watershed context** where the underlying planning is conducted in **partnership** with the states and local entities

- Comprehensive Planning
- Collaboration

4th Dialogue – the next steps

- Consensus recommendations prepared
- Recommendations were reviewed by dialogue attendees
- Finalized recommendations were furnished to the transition team of President-elect Obama, to congressional leaders and to the nation's governors for action
- Positive response received from Obama transition team



Thank you

Questions?