

# CONFLUENCE

FEBRUARY 2010: CARPE DIEM 2.0  
CARPE DIEM PROJECT NEWS



**Carpe Diem**  
WESTERN WATER & CLIMATE CHANGE  
A PROJECT OF EXLOCO - PATHFINDING IN THE NEW WEST

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A CONVERSATION WITH KIMERY WILTSHIRE

## Carpe Diem 2.0



"It's amazing and heartening that so many people with such different views have come together to work on this shared problem."

### NEW!

#### CARPE DIEM POLICY BRIEF

Peak Water,  
Peak Energy,  
Climate Crisis:  
The Collision Ahead

#### Q: A lot seems to be happening at both Exloco and Carpe Diem. What's the latest?

**KW:** Carpe Diem is moving forward on several fronts, and we're hoping to add some staff later this year to help us keep up. We're calling this next stage Carpe Diem 2.0 because we really are moving out of the phase we've been in for the past two years to a new level. We're starting up the Healthy Headwaters Initiative, and there's also a group thinking about the 2007 Colorado River Accord. Right now I'm excited about this week's release of our water, energy and climate change policy brief "**Peak Water, Peak Energy, Climate Crisis: The Collision Ahead.**"

The subject is so complex, and the findings even at this point are so far reaching. Water and energy require an integrated approach and that's just not reflected in the way we manage these resources or in policy. Just one of the few points from the report I could highlight is that in the Pacific Northwest, most models suggest that hydropower peak demand is likely to shift from winter to summer, but that is when all the electrons are already heading south to meet demand in other, warmer parts of the West. And that is also when the models show that stream flows are going to be dropping because runoff is occurring earlier than it has historically, which will cut hydropower right when it's needed.

A second point the brief makes is that we don't even know yet what the water costs of bringing all these new renewable energy sources online are going to be. We know the costs are there, but they haven't been quantified, and we don't know how they play out in the context of how much new energy will be made available for each new acre-foot of water demand. Another thing is that a lot of water agencies rely on gravity to feed them their water, but with new sources needed, they will have to pump, and there's another interlocking water and energy demand scenario that no one, outside of California, has yet quantified. The good news is that integrated efficiency programs can save both water and energy at the same time. It's a win-win effect.

These are things we need to get out in front of. The Carpe Diem Project has been trying to keep an eye on the big picture ever since we started. That makes sense because most of the other Carpe Diem Network participants by definition have to concentrate on their own concerns. The Carpe Diem process makes it possible to start talking about the seemingly intractable problems because, as a network, we're not working from the point of view of any one member.

**Q. OK, let's back up and talk about that for a minute. How did the Carpe Diem process spotlight this water and energy issue and then start to define it in this new policy brief?**

**KW:** This policy brief is a great example of what develops from the Carpe Diem process. The subject was a small blip on the radar when we started two years ago. As a result of last year's meetings and conversations, the leadership network noticed that the water, energy, and climate change interconnection kept coming up as an area of concern. We could see it was a fast-moving issue, especially with the Obama Administration pushing for new renewable energy production, but we didn't know how the pieces fit together.

So, we identified a Water, Energy and Climate Change Working Group, and they started to look at the issue. We wrote the water, energy, and climate change policy brief to frame the issues and the policy choices that lie ahead. Under Carpe Diem 2.0 we are bringing together leadership from all different sectors of the western water and energy field to develop an understanding of the long-term policy implications and then come up with smart, pragmatic policy options and new ways of managing systems. We're hoping an alliance forms out of this process to push for policy changes.

**Q: Is anybody else working on these issues with policy changes in mind?**

**KW:** Carpe Diem fills a real need. While some great work and thinking is going on, its not connected. No one else is addressing these critical problems from a regional point of view. It takes extraordinary people to address it, and we have pulled extraordinary people into the project. The thing that keeps us up at night is that there are no quick solutions to climate change impacts but rather a series of evolving, complex, intertwined choices. Carpe Diem provides a process for identifying those choices and finding ways to navigate them.

Carpe Diem is built on the principle that everyone who participates contributes, everyone has a say, and everyone benefits. But that doesn't mean we don't have any goals. We're saying that western water interests have to recognize that they have this huge problem, its effects are already being felt. Our goal is to mobilize people to do something about it. Even for those who don't think that climate change is the culprit, demographics alone are having an enormous effect on water demand.

Carpe Diem starts with getting the best information and the best science out to the leadership. We pull a representative group together, making sure diverse sectors are represented, and we say, "You have the best information available. What are we going to do?" We began the summer of 2009 with the "[Report from the Field](#)." That identified trend lines. At the same time, the Project Team said, "After one and a half years we've identified leadership who agree on the problem set. Now it's time to move beyond that to developing a set of solutions."

Carpe Diem is not a consensus process, and it's not an education process, though we're all getting quite an education from each other. Carpe Diem is providing a voice and a vehicle for considering these fast-moving issues.

**Q: How did the Carpe Diem Project get started?**

**KW:** Three years ago I heard Governor Schwarzenegger's State of the State speech in which he said we had to build new dams now in response to climate change. I started thinking about that, and not long after I was having lunch with Steve Whitney of the Bullitt Foundation, and I was telling him how I thought the governor's approach was an old response to a new set of conditions. Steve said, "Well, would a small grant help you get some people thinking about this in a new way?" And that's how I got into this.

I'd been involved in western water issues for quite a while, first through heading up the river

protection initiatives that the Kenney Foundation funded. That one taught me the vital importance of having a diversity of points of view at the table. Then Exloco helped start the Western Water Alliance, which was a trade association for progressive water interests, and that reinforced the need for diverse voices. It was good, but it wasn't encompassing enough.

When the initial Carpe Diem Project Team started looking at climate change effects, we all knew there had to be a different path forward. The one we were on was a dead end. As I've said many times before, the old "I'm going to solve my water problem by taking your water" approach just won't work now. Climate change is the game changer. And sticking with the old, balkanized, conflict and competition way of dealing with water will lead to disaster.

The other thing is that if we're going to tackle these issues, if we're going to take solutions to scale, the development process must be one that builds trust. We get some of the smartest people, the best science available, and we put them together and rely on their collective wisdom to navigate through the tough choices that have to be made. It's a lot of hard work, and it takes time, but we've had successes and no one has come up with a shortcut or a better way to start mapping out the path ahead.

The thing I'm proudest of so far is the development of the Carpe Diem Network. We have over 600 participants now. It's amazing and heartening that so many people with such different views have come together to work on this shared problem. I'm inspired by their generosity with their time, expertise, and support, and I can't say enough about how much I value their commitment and willingness to think and act in a new way.

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The [Carpe Diem - Western Water & Climate Change Project](#) is a network of experts and decision makers dedicated to addressing the unprecedented challenge that the impacts of climate change on water resources pose for the western United States. The Project is housed at [Exloco](#), a nonprofit organization with expertise in spotlighting critical issues and facilitating strategic thinking.

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