



Carpe Diem

WESTERN WATER & CLIMATE CHANGE

A PROJECT OF EXLOCO – PATHFINDING IN THE NEW WEST

October 17, 2008

Dear Kimery,

My friend [Dorothy Green](#) died this week - a passionate, informed activist who, over the past four decades, helped define California water issues. She was the founder of [Heal the Bay](#), [POWER](#) (Public Officials for Water & Environment Reform), and [C-WIN](#), a Los Angeles Department of Water & Power board member, leader and 'den mother' in countless water campaigns. Many people disagreed with her point of view; no one could doubt her integrity and determination.

In 1982, I was fortunate to be taken under her wing - a thoroughly 'wet behind the ears' activist, working on California's Peripheral Canal campaign. In the years since, Dorothy was one of my lodestones on western water - to her, I give my thanks - as do so many others - for shaping my work.

A year ago, after a few decades of my own working on western water issues, I helped start Exloco's [Carpe Diem - Western Water & Climate Change](#) project - an initiative that asks: "How do we ensure that the West has water for people, for agriculture and for rivers in the century of climate change ahead of us?"

Carpe Diem: Nose-to-Nose with the Adaptation Challenge

The past year has seen a 'sea change' in our understanding of the impacts climate change has, and will have, on water supply and rivers in the western United States.

Western water interests have dug themselves deep foxholes - rivers vs. water development; agriculture vs. fish; urban vs. rural communities - the list goes on. Climate change is rapidly re-drawing these old battle lines, ignoring watersheds and political boundaries, forcing us to start thinking differently. *Climate change*

is an external driver of reform that will so disrupt the status quo that a fundamental shift is inevitable.

Three of the key trend lines emerging:

- **Adaptation "vs." Mitigation:** While we need to mitigate - and quickly - our carbon footprint, we also know that even if emissions stopped tomorrow, the earth's weather would continue to significantly change. Developing field analysis points to the need - and the opportunities - to develop joint mitigation and adaptation responses, especially at the intersection of energy and water.
- **Bad Moon Rising:** Climate change impacts are accelerating - and many changes will come abruptly, not gradually, and the incidences of 'extreme' weather events (e.g. multi-year droughts, '100 year' floods) will increase.
- **Everything Hinges on Water:** In the western United States, water is the primary delivery mechanism for effects of climate change. The impacts on water resources and supply are directly tied to economic prosperity, wildfires, agricultural production, community viability, human health, ecosystem health, and energy development. Climate change impacts will not affect everyone equally, and as competition for water increases, the vulnerable human populations and ecosystems will most immediately experience a disproportionate burden.

Over the past year, the [Carpe Diem - Western Water & Climate Change](#) project, through its convenings, stakeholder interviews and field surveys, has been scoping and assessing trend lines, system disconnects, and 'tipping points' - identifying a rapidly evolving set of challenges and opportunities. The project's new report: [Field Assessment Analysis, October 2008.](#)

The **Carpe Diem** project is building on and connecting current work to develop a pragmatic, common ground, West-wide framework to address climate change impacts on western water supply and ecosystems, developing joint strategies, projects and best practices.

Two weeks ago, while under hospice care, Dorothy wrote a last Op-ed piece for the Los Angeles Times, ending with a quote from Anne Frank: *"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."* *'I agree. Let's start now.'*

Carpe Diem.

Regards,
Kimery Wiltshire

About Exloco

New strategies for a healthy and vibrant West

ex·lo·co (ex'loco) adj., beyond the place [Latin]

Exloco incubates new campaigns and initiatives, developing solutions to environmental sustainability challenges in the western United States. We partner with investors - venture philanthropists, social change organizations, progressive public agencies and for-profits - committed to advancing new strategies for a healthy and vibrant West. www.exloco.org

Join the foundations, businesses and individuals who have their 'eye on the prize' - a West where our children and all human beings have access to clean water, where food is still grown and where living rivers thrive. Support Exloco's Carpe Diem - Western Water & Climate Change project with your tax-deductible contribution www.exloco.org/invest

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