

Colorado River Water Users Association –NEVADA

TAPE #8

Pat Mulroy (Tape #1)

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

December 13, 2007

kb – Kay Brothers

ps - interviewer Pam Stevenson, Agave Productions, Inc

ps Let's start by identifying on the tape that today is December the 13th, 2007. And, we're in Las Vegas, Nevada, doing oral histories for the Colorado River Water Users Association. I'm Pam Stevenson doing the interview; Bill Stevenson is running the camera. And, I'd like to let you introduce yourself.

pm My name's Pat Mulroy. I'm the General Manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

ps I like to start with a little background about each person. Tell me, when and where you were born?

pm I was born in 1953 in Frankfort, Germany.

ps Did you grow up there?

pm I lived for 21 years in Germany. My dad was a civilian in the Air Force. My mother was a native German. And, I moved to Las Vegas when I was 21.

ps And....what was it like growing up in Germany? Did you grow up with the Air Force? Your father was in the Air Force?

pm My dad was a civilian in the Air Force. He was one of the first civilians to land on German soil....he *was* the first American to land on German soil in the waning years of World War II. And, I grew up bilingually. Living in a very German environment, but attending American schools.

ps Very dual.

pm Very dual.

ps So, why did you come to Las Vegas?

pm Well, since I had been in the American school system essentially. I had gone all the way through high school in the American system. And then I had gone for two years to the University of Maryland in Munich. They had an extension campus down there.

And then, for my third year I went to the University of Munich, but was garnering American college credits through Lewis and Clark in Portland, Oregon. I needed a place to go for my senior year. My dad had given up his residency in New York, because he was retiring overseas. And, didn't want to pay New York income tax anymore. Understandable. And so, I had no in-state tuition anywhere.

That was also the same time when the dollar crashed from four marks to the dollar, to two marks to the dollar, cutting our income in half. So, my folks really couldn't afford to send me as an out-of-state student anywhere.

So, one day, the head of the program for Lewis and Clark, who was best friends with the Dean of Arts and Letters at UNLV. And, I got a phone call one day offering me a full scholarship for my senior year, and a guaranteed teaching assistance-ship for my master's.

So, I went to a map to see where Las Vegas was. And, then got on a plane and came by myself in August of 1974 to Las Vegas. The closest person I knew was in Pensacola, Florida.

ps That was a long way from Las Vegas. (laughs)

pm It didn't look that bad on the map.

ps Well, you say you had gone to the schools there and already had your bachelor's?

pm No, I needed one more year.

ps What were you studying?

ps German Literature. My objective...after I got my master's at UNLV, I went on to Stanford to get my doctorate on a teaching assistance-ship. And, my objective was to ultimately end up in the State Department. I was starting ... going to start weaving political science into this.

My family situation got worse, and I didn't get to finish my PhD. And, I came back to Vegas, and started working for the County. And then in 1985 went over to the Water District as Deputy General Manager. And then, in 1989, became General Manager of the Water District. And then, when the Southern Nevada Water Authority was created in 1991, I became its first General Manager. So, I really am General Manager of two agencies. Both the Las Vegas Valley Water District, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

ps Let's back up a little. You covered a lot of territory.

pm Yeah, I did! (laughter) Get through the boring part fast!

ps I think that's the interesting part. You get a little personal background of how people's lives sometimes take them ...where they never intended to go. (laughs) You were studying literature and political science. (pm – Hm, hmm.) And you say your family situation deteriorated...

pm Financially. My mother asked me if I was going to be a perpetual student for the rest of my life or was there any chance that I might be willing to go to work and help put my

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sister through school? So, I said, yeah, all right. I'll run on a leave of absence for five years. And, never went back.

ps You never did go back and get you PhD?

pm Nope. And I've never regretted it. I went in a completely different direction, and, I never regretted it.

ps So you have your master's then...

pm I have my master's in German Literature. Yeah.

ps Well, what did you think you were going to do with that degree? You say, you were going to go to the State Department?

pm Well, yeah. I was either going to really start focusing on the political science, international studies...with the language background. Or, I was going to teach German Literature at a university. One of the two.

ps You didn't do either of those?

pm No, I didn't.

ps So, you...what made you decide to come back to Las Vegas then? I mean, San Francisco's a pretty nice place!

pm Yeah, but I didn't know anybody that well. I mean, I had, over the three years that I had lived in Las Vegas, I'd...you know...struck some roots. And, I really loved the town. And, it was so different from where I'd grown up. And it was so unique. That's where my friends were, that's where my connections were. And, it had become home for me. So, I went back.

ps What did you think when you first arrived here?

pm Oh, my goodness!

ps In August yet.

pm Yeah. I'll never forget it. I landed at 10:30 at night. And, in those days...My dad had given me...it was a Saturdaymy dad had given me 50-bucks to spend the night in some hotel room before I could check into the dorm the next day.

And, in those days there was a big board in the baggage claim area at McCarron, and you could push buttons and be directly connected to the front desk of hotels. Which was a little bizarre to begin with. But, everything was full. It was a Saturday night. I didn't know that you couldn't get a room in Las Vegas on a Saturday night. There was one room left, and it was in what was called the Desert Rose Motel. Which stood where the New York, New York stands today. It was across the street from the then Marina Hotel,

where the MGM Grand is today. And, I got the last remaining room. I walked into this room. I had never in my life seen a round bed, let alone a round bed with a mirror on the ceiling. I went...oh, my goodness. This is really weird. And then, the next morning I woke and...remember, in the motels, they'd have these narrow little windows above the bed? So I jumped up on the bed and I opened the curtains, and I went, huh! I'm on Mars. Oh, my goodness, I'm on Mars! It was... it took me a year to get used to it. Took me a year. Germany's very green. Very, very green!

ps And, in August, it would be very hot!

pm Yes, it was a little warm for me, too.

ps But you, you settled in, and...

pm I've lived here 33 years now.

ps At what point did you decide that you liked it here?

pm I think when I made the decision to come back. When I had to leave Stanford for five years, and I decided to come back here. And the longer you stay in a place, you grow with it. I mean, Vegas was a very different town then. We had just barely 300-thousand residents. If that. And, I was just in the right place at the right time. There was a new County Manager in town, and he was building a whole new team. And, I ended up very quickly working on the legislative side of things. And, represented the County in Carson City for umpteen years. And then, took the opportunity to be the Deputy General Manager over Administration at the Water District.

ps So, you came back here then, looking for a job...

pm Oh, yes.

ps You stayed... Las Vegas is a unique place...

pm Absolutely. There's no place like it on earth.

ps So, rather than getting involved in the casino part of the town, you decided to look for a County job?

pm Well, I kind of fell into it. Over the summers, while I was going to UNLV, I worked for the Center for Business and Economic Research. And, friends of mine had been hired by the County, by this new...developing County Manager's office. And said, you really should apply. That's how it happened. It was connections, friends that I had made. Friends that are still my friends today. While we were slaving together, for better or for worse, during the summers at UNLV.

ps And who was the County Manager then?

pm Richard Bunker.

ps So, tell me, you, you applied with him personally? Or, how did that work?

pm No. It was through the standard personnel process. And, it was really funny. When I applied for it, they said, well, it's a good thing you don't have your PhD or you'd be over-qualified. For the position. So. Some good things come of that.

ps And, what was your position?

pm I was kind of a junior management analyst, is probably the best way to describe it. You know. Very green, very young. Um. So.

ps What were you doing at your first job?

pm First I was... they quickly found out that I could write. And so, I was quickly brought into the legislative team to begin doing research, writing reports, drafting legislation. And worked at the home-front on the legislative team. And then, by the end of that first session in 1979, I was spending the vast majority of the time up in Carson City.

ps That's where the legislature meets...

pm We only allow them to meet every other year. (laughs) For 120 days. That's it!

ps In Arizona the legislature says they're going to meet 100 days, but it always runs longer.

pm Well, the voters here passed a ballot question. It's embedded in the constitution. They can't. But, when I first started though, that didn't exist. They draped the clock. And... you know...everything was pretty humorous in those days.

ps A lot more informal in those days?

pm Oh, much more informal in those days! Las Vegas was a small town, and Nevada was a small state. I mean, I've really been lucky. I've been able to be in the middle of Las Vegas's growing up process. You know. My husband is one of the few natives. You know. Born in 1947. Can remember, you know, Fremont Street. Cruising Fremont Street was the big deal in those days. And I'm considered a native, having been here for 33 years.

ps So, as you moved up to working as a lobbyist What was your title?

pm Of the county? Yeah. I mean, it was a management analyst position. But, it was on the legislative team. I wasn't a paid, you know, one of those hired-gun lobbyists. But I, yeah.

ps So, when did you first get involved with water issues?

pm In 1985 when I moved over to the Water District.

ps So you didn't deal with water at the county level?

pm Las Vegas was living in like an alternate universe in those days. We had been told by Reclamation...by 1982, we'd open the second stage of the Southern Nevada water system. And, in those days, the Bureau of Reclamation estimated that that water supply would last us until 2025. That we now could fully develop Southern Nevada's full entitlement. And we were set and ready to go. So, water was never a reality. I remember vividly people, elected officials, telling people, we've got all the water in the world. Water's not an issue.

In, what was it? By 1989, when I became General Manager, we had an all-out water war in Southern Nevada. There was a transition that happened in 1987 in Las Vegas, where Las Vegas re-defined itself for the first time really. That's one of the secrets of this community. It is extremely agile. It's extremely pragmatic. And, will react to economic realities pretty quickly. It can transform itself on a dime.

We had spent the early 80s, thanks to Richard Bunker. He was on the Gaming Control Board for a long time. In the later 70s. And, he and Senator Reid essentially ran the mob out of Las Vegas. And, once the mob left and corporate gaming became a reality, it began to transform the Strip. When Steve Wynn build the Mirage, it triggered a renaissance on the Strip, and a whole new sense of place. You then saw MGM pop up. And, you began to see Treasure Island pop up. And, all of a sudden, these mega-resorts were being built.

Well, with those mega-resorts came a wave of new employees, of spin-off businesses. And growth had just exploded in Southern Nevada. I mean, we'd always been a growing community. We were growing roughly about four-percent a year. Well, by the end of the 80s, we were seeing increases in water use of 17 and 22 percent. And we realized that our water supply was going to run out pretty quickly. And we had all out war.

We had a very arcane system on how we aggregated Colorado River credits amongst ourselves. There's five municipal water agencies. And, we, I mean, it got so bad at one point that Boulder City opened its fire hydrants and let the water run down the street, because they were a growth control community, and they didn't see their usages increase drastically. And, they were afraid everybody was going to steal all the water before they had a chance to get any. And, the mantra in those days was, the more you use, the more you get to claim as yours. So, they just opened the fire hydrants, and let the water run down the street. I mean, when you look back on it, sitting here in 2007, you go, oh, my God. I don't believe they did that. After a lot of chest-beating, and a lot of yelling and screaming...amongst ourselves, we came to realize that it was pretty academic when we were all going to run out of water. And that we really needed to sit down at the table and figure this out.

So, we brought in an outside consultant to begin to look at what the overall inventory, water inventory, for the Valley was. And, after two grueling years at the negotiating table, essentially created the Southern Nevada Water Authority. And, when we did, we re-defined water management in Southern Nevada. We took all our priority water rights...threw them out the window. Said, they make absolutely no sense between cities. It was ludicrous to assume that one city can have water running down the street, and, across the street, a new city begins, and they are going without. I mean, that makes no

sense whatsoever. So, we said we thought we would, we would replace that priority system with a shared shortage agreement. Never, ever, thinking we would have to use it. We weren't really quite sure how we would implement it, but, we knew we were going to share shortages somehow.

Once the Authority was created, it then gave us all the flexibility and strength, because we had now all pulled together, to start making some other changes. Now, we could embark on a, on a real conservation plan. Now, we could enter into a contract with Interior to use our return-flow credits. Now, we could collectively enter into deals with like the Edison Power Plant down in Laughlin. And, other ventures that we were now into. And begin to take a seat on the table of the Colorado River.

Right after the Authority was created, we went to Carson City, and Governor Miller was governor of Nevada at the time. And, we re-constituted the Colorado River Commission. It previously had been five individuals, appointed by the governor. And now, it is seven individuals. Four appointed by the governor and three that are members of the Southern Nevada Water Authority Board. Now Nevada could speak as one voice. And, unlike other states, we didn't have the internal bickering. We were on the same page, and we were going to work in tandem. Because, we're so small, that if we didn't come together, we would never be successful. So, that started what ended today in the "Great Signing Ceremony."

ps Let's back up a little bit and talk about how you came to get in a position to put all this together. You left the County. And, what was the position you took with the Las Vegas Water District?

pm I was Deputy General Manager. Over Administration.

ps Why did you make that move?

pm Because it was an opportunity to move up in the management structure. The Board of County Commissioners is the ex officio board for the Water District. So it was the same board. And, they had just hired a new General Manager. The predecessor had left. And, the new General Manager was someone who had originally worked in the County Manager's office. And he asked me to come over and take that position. And, I think the other thing is, I'd taken a brief sojourn over into the court system. And created the position of Justice Court Administrator over there, and straightened out the Justice Courts for a two year period. And, after an 18 months of working with judges, I said, I'd rather have my wrists slit, than do this much longer.

So, I'll take a Board that has to vote and reach an agreement, and then we move forward, rather than, you know...judges' meetings and everyone agrees in the room, and then you come back and they go, okay, by, the way, not in my courtroom! So.

ps And what year was it that you moved over to the Water District?

pm '85.

ps That was right after the flooding, the flood years?

pm Of '83. Correct.

ps There was lots of water then.

pm There was still lots of water. It was spectacular to watch them open the bypass on...you know, the spillways on Hoover and watch that water cascade over. But, I, you know, in those days I still was pretty detached. And then, we all believed still we had an unlimited water supply. And, you know, I don't think any of us truly appreciated what the limitations were.

ps Instead of droughts, you had floods!

pm That's true. Oh, we spent the whole 90s talking about surpluses, because the 90s were a very wet decade. And, some of us kept saying, to Bruce Babbitt, shouldn't we be talking about shortages as well? And Bruce would go, no, that's way too complicated. And, I went, oh, okay. So, here we are in.... it was like the minute we signed the surplus guidelines, in 2000, the drought began.

ps So, you went to work for the, the Water District and there was plenty of water. Did you really think... I want to start working on water issues, or was it just a chance to move up in management.

pm It was a chance to move up in management, and I was working on administrative things that are pretty much the same across the board. You know. I had all the finance personnel. All those administrative... it just happened to be water.

And then when everything fell apart by 1989, the Board said, this really is a political job. This really is not an engineers job. The issues that separate us are political. So, we want a General Manager who can maneuver the political landscape. You know, you can hire someone to design pipelines and pump stations and reservoirs. But, what we need is someone who has relationships and who understands the community and understands the political dynamic and can maneuver through the local and the state politics. Which is, I think, is why I got the job. That was what the training I'd been having since 1978!

ps You'd wanted to work with the State Department. It's kind of....

pm Working with the Basin states probably is more difficult than working in the UN.

ps And, by then, had you learned how complex water is?

pm It can be very complex, but, when you cut through all of it...it's the same political dynamic that exists on a lot of issues. It's a lot of state to state stuff. And, in many ways, water...because there are always ways of solving it. It's just getting people to be willing to find those solutions.

ps When you came up with the idea of the cities uniting, with the Southern Nevada Water Authority, what reaction did you get to that initially? That was kind of drastic.

pm Well, it kind of grew out of the assessment that we were doing as a group. I mean, the Water District hired the consultant. We paid for the consultant. But, we said to everybody, everything that he creates, all the models that he builds...you can have them. I mean, it was a wide-open process. It was the only alternative we really had. When you really looked at it and cut away.... everybody was able to come up with any option that they wanted. It coalesced that this was the only logical way for us to move forward.

ps And people just all agreed with that?

pm Well, actually my Board at the Water District was the hardest to convince. And, the reason is....they were the 800-pound gorilla. They served both the unincorporated county in the City of Las Vegas. They were almost 80-percent of the service area in those days. And, they had to give up a lot. They gave up their priority. They gave up their perception that they were King of the Hill. They shared in power... that they weren't used to sharing. And I... the individual who...the Chairman of the Board at that time...who is now ironically Chairman of the Colorado River Commission...said that it was a modern day political miracle. I think what helped it though, was...and in this town they still laugh about it. On February 14th, 1991, I shut off all future will-service. They still call it the Valentine's Day Massacre.

There were about five years worth of projects that had already received will-serve letters, and commitments to serve. And we had, we had no idea what had been given out. And what hadn't been given out. Nobody was accounting for this stuff at the time. So we said, that's it. We're done. And, it required change amongst all the agencies to re-open those doors. And, once we closed the doors, you can imagine the political pressure from the constituents was pretty significant in the other communities for them to close their doors. So, by the time 1991 was over, there was a, essentially a moratorium in and every one of the city's in Southern Nevada. And the economic pressure was beginning to build.

ps So that was the, that was the key?

pm That helped.

ps And, to create this new organization, did the group just agree to go to the legislature?

pm No, we did it through Joint Powers Agreement. We did not want the legislature involved. We loved them dearly, but we'd rather solve these issues on our own. We find that the solutions are much more to our liking.

Under Nevada law, any two governments can come together and create a third government and bestow upon it any and all powers they themselves have. So, we used that mechanism and combined the powers of the cities, the county, and the Water District to create the Southern Nevada Water Authority. And, it was quite the day when all those documents were signed and that agency was born.

ps I would think that was pretty major.

pm Pretty major.

ps And then, you weren't satisfied with that. You had to go and re-make the Colorado River Commission, too.

pm Well, we were beginning to have a disconnect there. And, the Colorado River Commission in Nevada is funded ...the water activities...are funded 100-percent by the Water Authority members. The Colorado River Commission always functioned as the mediator between us. Well, once we created the Authority, we didn't need a mediator. We didn't need anybody that would play parent to us. Because we'd grown up. And, the Colorado River Commission represents the governor. And the governor's activities on the Colorado River. However, the bill is paid for by the Southern Nevada Water Authority and its member agencies. We pay 100-percent of their budget. There's not a state general fund dollar in that budget.

So, rather than have a situation where you had all kinds of opportunity for conflict, because, you know, those that pay would disagree with those that set policy... And, you can get into these turf issues pretty quickly. We said, you know, this makes no sense. And so, we sat down with the governor, and had a long conversation with the governor. And, he agreed that this. And, it would have a tremendous political force, if sitting at the same table, speaking as one voice, were those that had the money to make things happen, and the representative of the governor as one unit. And so, now we have three elected officials that sit on the Colorado River Commission. And, we've got a great partnership with the CRC. We do everything together.

ps I have a full list of kind of generic questions that we ask everyone. Some are kind of redundant, but let me go through some of these. Looking back over Nevada water history, what projects or legal development do you see that were the most significant to prepare Nevada to be what it is today?

pm Creation of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. Without a doubt. The creation of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, re-defining how we managed water in Southern Nevada. Throwing away our old priority water rights. Pooling our resources, sharing shortages. Partnering with the Colorado River Commission. Those were the key ingredients.

ps What part of these milestones did you play a part in? I think you've described that, but I don't think you've described what you personally did to bring this together.

pm I don't, I don't ever like taking credit myself, because it's always more than one person. There was a very solid group of city managers and county managers and myself, that spent a lot of time forging trust. Looking beyond the moment. Looking beyond the acrimony. Essentially not listening to our electeds who love to grouse. And, putting a blueprint together, and then, going out and selling it. That's what did it. And, it was all of us together.

ps But, did you sort of lead ...were you kind of the catalyst to bring them together?

pm I think that was....because we're a single purpose agency, we're the only water district. The rest are departments within city government. So we're the only statutorily created water district. Whose only mission it is...we're not in economic development. We don't compete on taxes. We have none, none of those other factors that cause acrimony between local governments. So, because of that, it was much easier for us. And, the minute that the city saw that we were willing to cede power, it changed everything.

So, to the extent that we stepped out first, and began to cede power, and were willing to share power, down to not even arguing how the Board was going to be composed. We weren't going to have a structure the way Metropolitan has, where, you know, it's by assessed value, or by population. Every member agency has one representative, from every water and wastewater agency. And, anything that affects large capital expenditures, or water resources....or anything that really implicates the future of that particular jurisdiction, they have a veto. So, you have to build a consensus. You have to move forward as a group. It's embedded in how the Authority works. You cannot go your own separate way.

ps You probably had a lot to do with that though.

pm I've been around the community a long time. And, there...I still have to go back. We had the right people in the right places at the right time.

ps Probably had people telling you that it couldn't be done.

pm Oh, absolutely. But, we were told that constantly. But, we were told that for...I've been in this job, what, 23 years. I've been at the District 18 in this job. I'm told that on a regular basis. What can't be done.

ps Why don't you believe them?

pm Because it's not true. I have discovered...if I've learned nothing else...anything can be done if the parties in the room want it to happen. Once you've got everyone pulling in the same direction, looking for the same outcomes, you can find the way to do it.

You have no idea how many times we were told this agreement that we signed today could not be done. There could not be a Seven States Agreement. We would never be storing water in Lake Mead. We would never be banking water in Arizona. We would never be building a reservoir structure in Southern California. These things could not happen. And, that's nonsense. Of course they can. If you're willing to do it.

The Compact lets seven states do what seven states can agree to do. It will preclude any one state from rolling the rest.

ps I've heard you described as the Water Czar of Nevada. I'm sure you've heard that term?

pm Yeah, I've heard that term.

ps And, what do you think of that term.

pm I think it's silly. There's no Water Czar. It's a shared authority. You know what it is? I have a big mouth. And, I just say things that others won't say. I've always had a very jaded...I just let people say it, but I think it's silly.

ps Well, what were the biggest challenges that you've confronted in trying to do all this?

pm The drought in 2000 killed us. When the drought started in 2000. We had in 2000, taken a Water Resource Plan to the Board, that gave Southern Nevada a 40 or 50 year water supply. By 2002 we had nothing.

ps The Board of...?

pm The Water Authority. Every year we adopt a water resource plan. And then, there was nothing. That being the case, we needed to re-tool real quickly. So, within one year, that shortage arrangement and that shortage-sharing plan that we thought we'd never have to use, we had to bring to life.

Which meant the Water Authority adopted a Valley-wide conservation plan, that every city council had to adopt. Had to implement the same codes, the same restrictions. Change their water rates. Put the same water waste restrictions in. They had to change all the building codes. Other zoning codes. To where you couldn't have grass in the front. That was a Herculean effort. And then, we had to turn around and we had to re-do a lot of the agreements that we'd entered into on the Colorado River. And we had to begin developing our in-state resources. I mean, on a dime, everything changed overnight.

And, over the last seven years, we've come to realize that it's not just an extraordinary drought, that this is probably more than normal. Moving forward. And that, we are beginning to see the real impacts of climate change in the Western United States. Which is a pretty scary proposition.

ps It certainly is. So, the solutions that you found were more than just changing codes and things. Who were your allies in trying to accomplish those changes?

pm I think the management team of all the entities were. We had to do it together. We have a conservation group that meets every month, from all the entities that belong... that are member agencies of the Authority. And, together we forged this plan with a very targeted reduction. And, it was so successful, that within 18 months we reduced the amount of Colorado River water we were using, from 325-thousand acre feet to 270-thousand acre feet.

ps So, that was by conservation...

pm All conservation.

ps Who were the opponents you had to overcome?

pm On our conservation plan? Oh. Well, probably, the biggest opponents were probably old curmudgeons like my husband, who had a very different attitude. Who believed, you know, I'm here first. I'm a native. When everyone leaves, talk to me. And, I went, okay, now that you've gotten that off your chest, can we start again, and can we talk about this again? That's where the problem came in.

It's a generational issue. The younger generation was much more willing to embrace it. And, I think the biggest lesson I learned was...in this community, given its dynamics, never try to restrict fountains. And, never get between a senior citizen and a car wash. Those are not safe places to be. Out of the entire drought plan, those two had to be modified. I mean, we went to the lengths of saying, okay, there are two different kinds of fountains in this community.

If I shut off Bellagio fountain, or I dry up the canals in the Venetian...the Venetian, I'm going to affect the economy. That will have a huge impact on the economy in this town. Because, who's going to come and stay at the Venetian with dry ditches? It's just not going to happen. If, however, a fountain in a grocery store is shut off, okay, I'm going to shop at that grocery store, whether that fountain is on or not. I'm going to go see my dentist whether he has a babbling brook in that business park, or he doesn't. It's pretty irrelevant to me.

Oh, but they didn't see it that way. One psychiatrist yelled at me that his patients needed the sound of that...of a babbling brook to calm them down so that he could work with them effectively. I sent him a sound-soother CD. I figured that would work just as well. We finally, after much harangue...and this community went nuts! People who have little bubblers in the backyard, little fountains and ponds. And, the mayor has this pond with these strange fish in it, that he...God forbid, you know, put water in this pond. I said, okay, fine. We reconnoitered and said, all right. If you are willing to take out enough grass to equal 50 times the amount of water that that fountain uses, you can keep your fountain. So, that's the rule today. But, you have to take the grass out. Somewhere.

ps Each individual that wants a fountain? Or business that wants a fountain.

pm You got it.

ps Grass has to be taken out?

pm You got it.

ps What if they don't have that much grass?

pm They can pay for someone else to take it out. But, they have to do it.

And then we said to the senior citizens...well, we said to the whole community...no more car washing in the driveway. We started with just a shut-off...you have to have a shut off hose. Okay, we really want you to take it to a carwash where they re-cycle the

water. Where there's no real loss of water resources. Oh, my God. The seniors marched on us. Every Wednesday they wash their car. And, it's part of their schedule. And it's part of their routine. And, you're not going to upset their apple cart. And they don't want any stranger scratching their car. I went, okay, fine. With the shut-off hose, you can continue to wash your car. It was not a safe place to be. (laughs)

ps I never knew it was that important to wash your car?

pm I didn't either. We were very naïve. We were walking into this for the first time. But, we learned where the quicksand pits were, real quickly.

ps And, what about the golf courses?

pm We put the golf courses on a water budget. And we said, you know, because we had golf courses that ran the gamut. Everything from target courses that used five acre feet per acre of golf course, to ones that were using 12 acre feet of water per acre of golf course. And, it was all a function of how much ornamental grass did they have on the property, as opposed to just playing surface. So we said, all right, you're on a budget of 6.3 acre feet of water per acre of golf course. And, if you exceed it, you will pay a penalty that is a multiple of your highest monthly bill. Which runs in the millions. So, they began to take all the necessary turf out. Hundreds of thousands of square feet of grass started flying out of golf courses. Because water's their biggest price commodity. Unlike other states, where golf courses buy their water from agricultural districts, they buy it from us. And, they have to use reclaimed, and we charge 'em for it. At a pretty steep price.

ps think that was a pretty huge project.

pm Oh, yeah, they weren't...we weren't real popular with them either.

ps So, how did you see your role in accomplishing all that? Making compromises, or...what was your part in that?

pm What do you mean? Amongst the agencies? Or, with the community?

ps With the community, I guess.

pm I'm the messenger. I'm the flak-catcher, and the messenger. It's my job to make people want to do it. Or, at a minimum, understand and accept why it has to happen. I'm also the one they shoot at when they disagree and they don't like it. So.

ps I guess when you're not an elected official they're not much they can do?

pm And, guess who's been pushed out there? (laughs)

ps I bet the elective officials dodged that pretty quickly.

pm Yeah... I have more freedom to do it than they do. But, you know, there are sideboards on that. I can't go too far in either direction or they'll find a new General Manager.

ps One of the questions I have here is to talk about how Western water issues have changed during your career.

pm Oh, my goodness. I've often laughed and said, nothing moves slower than the Catholic Church, but the Colorado River. When I started working on the Colorado River, it was....the law is the law. You know. People didn't realize that what Moses was handed on etched tablets, was the law of the Colorado River. I mean, it was rigid. It was inflexible. And nothing was possible.

And, look what happened today. I mean, you couldn't live in different universes. The first time we began to talk about allowing water from the Virgin River to move through Lake Mead, and to take it at Saddle Island, and not build the diversion work on the Virgin, the guns came out. I mean, it took the drought to really begin to make people look at it differently. And, we had started, you know, working with one another during the 90s, during the surpluses. We went through the whole QSA issue together.

ps What's QSA?

pm The Quantification Settlement Agreement in California, where the California users actually quantified how much water they each had. And, they forged a plan to get down to their allocation of four-four. That was unbelievably painful. Then we moved right into this drought. And, it's been difficult. But, everything has changed.

And, I think the most important change is that rather than simply being horribly acrimonious, especially in the Lower Basin, between ourselves, whether it's driven by economic competition, or whether it's being driven by that state chest-beating, you know, that inherent political competition between states. You now have, I think, in the Lower Basin, three states....particularly among the municipal agencies. The CAP, Metropolitan, and ourselves. The big population centers, and their districts, understanding that we really are tied at the hip with one another. And that, in order to get all of our communities through what climate change is going to dish out, we've got to work together. And, we've got to start working much more closely together than we ever have before. I mean, it was only in the 60s when Arizona and California went to the Supreme Court. That's not the case anymore.

We used to have...when I first began, you can't believe how many times I got the speech that...I just needed to accept the fact that there are winners and there are losers. And, there are haves and there are have nots. You won't hear that anymore. We either all win or we all lose. We finally have come to figure that out. That, in and of itself, makes me very optimistic about what's going to happen in the future. Very optimistic.

I mean, that Nevada and the Arizona cities have a shared-shortage arrangement, across state lines, to where, when the Arizona cities are shorted, we will take a pro rata cut in what we can take out of the bank. That we are building a reservoir on the All-American Canal, and that we're sharing the proceeds, and the savings, with Metropolitan and the Central Arizona Project. That we're looking together at opportunities around the Yuma desalter. That we're looking together for opportunities on solving the Mexican issue and

perhaps building desalters in Mexico and finding solutions for Mexico, is a unbelievable change from where we started. An unbelievable change.

ps \Better that spending years in the court cases....

pm \Absolutely. We learned. I don't think, if we had to make the decision today, do we go to court on *Arizona v California*, I don't think anybody would go. I think we've learned that you never really win when you go to court. All you're doing is, at best, setting the stage for tomorrow's fight.

ps And making the lawyers rich.

pm You're making the lawyers rich. You're creating some deep-seated animosities. Because someone has to lose in those court battles. Or, at least perceive that they've lost. And, the person that lost will do nothing but look for that opportunity to gain back some of that ground that they lost in court. So, you really can't move forward together. You're like stuck. Because you keep fighting the same battle. Different people fight it, and it's got different labels on it, but it's that same deep-seated battle between communities that takes decades to disappear. I think today we finally put *Arizona v California* to bed.

ps Forty years later.

pm Forty years it took. Yep.

ps Do you want talk about, a little more about the seven state agreement and what the significance of that is?

pm Well, I think I've already said it. It not only are there benefits for everyone in the state on pure pragmatic water management issues, but I think the relationships that it's created and the willingness to work together, and the realization that we're all tied at the hip. And, the agreement to not go to court. Those are the important parts. Those are the ones that will allow us to look for tomorrow's solution. To look for the next opportunity for the Basin states.

ps And, Seven States Agreement, it what we've been calling it, it that the official title?

pm Well, it's the record of decision on operation of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Which is an Upper, Lower Basin issue. It is a shared-shortage arrangement in the Lower Basin. It is a conservation, river conservation arrangement. It is an augmentation plan or at least a process under which we'll look at future augmentation of the system. It settles a lot of the uncertainties in the Lower Basin. So...it carries a lot.

ps What does it do for the Upper Basin?

pm It protects them from a call. They have always feared that the Compact provided an opportunity for the Lower Basin to, quote, "make a call on the Upper Basin". And, ask them to cut back their uses in order to meet their Mexican Treaty obligation. And meet their delivery requirements. It assumes there is insufficient storage in Powell, which is

the Upper Basin's buffer. And that, in order to meet delivery requirements to the Lower Basin, and to Mead, and to the country of Mexico, they would have to go into their states and cut, start cutting back uses.

Now, what makes that difficult is that, if the Lower Basin is in that bad a shape, the Upper Basin's already been ravaged by Mother Nature. They've already...their reservoirs are no where near as large as ours are. So now you're compounding the pain in the Upper Basin. You've got 21 points of diversion, in Colorado alone, from the west slope to the east slope, where they move water across the Continental Divide to the other side. So, you've got all those front range cities in Colorado. Hugely dependent on Colorado River water. Denver being the largest one of those.

You've got the whole San Juan Basin. The Farmington area. Their deliveries to Albuquerque and that. There's Indians...Indian tribes. The Navajos have a huge claim on San, San Juan water. In the Farmington area. You've got water through the Central Utah Project. Going to agricultural districts, into the Wasatch front cities to Salt Lake-Provo. That whole area. And, you've got Wyoming, which is moving water from the Colorado to Cheyenne now. As Cheyenne is growing. And, you've got large agricultural users up in Wyoming. So, how do you begin...I mean, they've already been hit.

So, the Lower Basin would then say, you've got to cut back further? So that we don't have shortages, or we don't have to feel any pain? But the wording in the Compact is obtuse enough to whether or not you could do that was a huge question mark. That was a big fear for the Upper Basin. And this resolves this for them. There isn't going to be a call. And, we're not going to go after the Upper Basin.

ps One of the interesting things in Colorado...I've heard a lot of kind of folksy sayings.... I'd rather be upstream with a shovel, than downstream with a law book. And things like that.

pm Well, but that's really folksy. But, and those really great folksy statements were created prior to an Endangered Species Act. Prior to an Environmental Impact Statement having to be done. Prior to an environmental movement that is not particularly keen about reservoirs and dams and diversion structures. So, just because they have a shovel these days, that and a quarter will buy them a cup of coffee. And that's just about all.

ps Then, one of the questions...you mentioned about the Compact, that I've been asking everybody. Would Nevada advocate to re-open the 1922 Compact?

pm No. No. There area people in Nevada that would advocate that. We love to feel like we were, really were had. You know. but, when you go back to 1922, there was no one in Southern Nevada. We were a whistle-stop on the Union Pacific Railroad. Buggy Siegal wasn't even alive yet. You know. What did we know?

ps The Nevada representative didn't go to the meeting! (laughs)

pm \Well, that's what the Upper Basin keeps telling us. That our representative from Carson City just never even attended because we were the Outback. I mean, that's essentially

what we were. We were tantamount to the Australia Outback. And, they thought 300-thousand acre feet was more water than Southern Nevada would ever need. No one expected a city. We were the city that was never supposed to happen. Let alone the city that...

ps Even until the early 70s you thought it was enough water.

pm Until the early 80s we thought it was enough water! Absolutely. And then, Las Vegas exploded. You know? Absolutely exploded. I mean, when you imagine next year there are 27,000 hotel rooms more that are opening on the Strip. Don't ask me where all these people come from. I have no clue. All, I know is that, every Friday night, if I have to fly back to Las Vegas, they're all on my plane. (laughter)

ps You don't want to fly in on Fridays.

pm No, you do not want to come into Vegas on a Friday night.

ps What's the greatest surprise for you about water in Nevada?

pm The greatest surprise for me. About water. I don't know. That's a very good question. I'm not sure anything really surprised me. Because it kind of evolved and happened. I don't know. You stumped me. I absolutely I don't know.

ps From the time you got involved, the drought probably was something you hadn't expected.

pm Oh, that was a shocker. I mean, we all anticipated droughts, but, nothing like what we've experienced.

ps You mentioned the Arizona Water Bank a couple of times. But, why don't we talk more specifically about it. What it is and how it did it come about?

pm It came about originally during the 90s. Arizona had created the State Groundwater Banking Authority. They were looking to replenish their over-drafted groundwater basins, along the CAP alignment. And, quite frankly, they were looking for people that were willing to pay for water to put in those...you know, it doesn't come without a cost.

The Arizona cities were only willing to do so much. And, I think Arizona...I have to give Arizona credit. They recognized early on, that a partnership with the only state that was going to share a shortage with them, was probably necessary in order to protect themselves.

The original concept that was entered into in the later 90s, was one where, if Arizona had additional unused apportionment, or unused Colorado River water, that nobody else was planning to buy or bank, then Nevada could buy it. Well, what...the first thing that happened when the drought came along, was SRP made a call on the Colorado River allocation, and Arizona informed us, there wasn't going to be anything to bank.

So, we went back to the table with Arizona, and re-tooled the agreement, where it is now a guarantee of one-point-two-million acre feet. But, we paid an additional hundred-million, which allows the state of Arizona to buy additional water for banking purposes. And, we paid that up front. So that they could protect their users and protect the bank. Embedded in that agreement is also the shared-shortage between ourselves and the Arizona cities.

ps So, you can now take the water out of Mead...

pm Until Arizona cities are shorted, and then we will be reduced pro rata. And, the beauty of the bank is, not only can we use that water for additional needs, as the community grows, we can also use it during shortages. So, even the first round of cuts, for example, when the Arizona cities aren't going to be going short, if we get cut, of four percent, we can replace it, taking it from the Arizona Bank.

ps You're actually taking it out of Lake Mead.

pm Right. Right. It's a forbearance agreement. They will put the water that's in the Groundwater Bank, in the aqueduct of the Central Arizona Project, deliver it to a customer in Arizona, and will not take that much from the Colorado River. And, we will take it at Lake Mead.

ps How important is the Arizona banked water in your over-all plan to provide adequate water?

pm Oh, it's huge. It's a huge piece of our plan. It's a temporary supply. It's a bridge supply. And, we recognize that. But, it is a large enough block to buy us many years in good years. I mean, what makes all of this spin out of control is when we start going into shortages. And if those shortages deepen. And, in order to make Arizona comfortable, that we weren't going to develop a permanent reliance on their water, we're developing our in-state groundwater resources.

ps Do you see arrangement, that banking water agreement, as setting precedents for other agreements with other the states.

pm I think it was the precursor to the Drop Two Agreement with California. Where we're building the reservoir on the All-American Canal, and we're getting a block of water in exchange for our investment.

And, I think you're going to see more of these kind of arrangements. I think the conversations we're having around the Yuma desalter, and helping pay to operate the Yuma desalter will ultimately end up with a similar agreement.

ps I think we need to change tape.

END of TAPE #1

**Colorado River Water Users Association –NEVADA
TAPE #9**

**Pat Mulroy (Tape #2)
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
December 13, 2007**

kb – Kay Brothers

ps - interviewer Pam Stevenson, Agave Productions, Inc

ps This is Tape Two of Pat Mulroy's interview... Tell us about your first Colorado River Water Users meeting.

pm Yeah. It was when I'd just become General Manager of the Water District, I came here. I think the only two women in water in those days was Betsy Rieke who was director of DWR in Arizona. And myself. Newly appointed. And, I walked into one of the sessions, and this very nice elderly gentleman came up and tapped me on the shoulder and said, ma'am, the Spouses Lounge is down the hall.

ps And, what did you say?

pm I said, thank you. My husband will....I'll tell my husband where to find it. (laughs) And then it became, the Spouse's Program became my pet peeve with CRWUA. The first couple of years, especially when I went on the Board, they kept having lingerie shows and fashion shows. And I went, uh! Excuse me! I am not letting my husband sit through a lingerie show. It isn't happening! We need some alternative entertainment. And, they all looked at me as if I'd just landed from Mars. I went, no!

ps Do you know who that elderly gentleman was?

pm No. Even if I did, I wouldn't tell you.

ps So, you made some changes. When did you go onto the Board at the Colorado River Water Users?

pm I want to say 92 or 93. Yeah. Long enough to stir the pot. Then I left again.

ps Tell me, what do you do on the Board? What was their role?

pm There are three reps from every state. And essentially it's looking at the resolution that the Association is going to support for that year. Looking at what the program is. And planning the program for Colorado River Water Users is always a big deal. And, managing what...what is the Association going to be for? What are they going to be opposed to? Those kind of things.

ps Well, is it an opportunity to get to know people from every state?

pm Yes. It is...at the user level, particularly. Because, even though you might be meeting state representatives or the heads of the large agencies, you don't get to meet all the Colorado River Water Users. So, in this form, you not only get to meet, you know, representatives from all the various districts and organizations on the Colorado River, but the Indian tribes are here. The environmental community is here. And they're their own constituency.

ps Now, when did they start including the Indian tribes?

pm I think the Indians have been around this organization for a long time. They're not on the Board. They're not in the formal structure, I don't think. I don't know if they've changed recently or not. But, they're always in attendance at these.

ps How about the environmentalists?

pm The environmentalists...ever since the Delta emerged as an issue, down in Mexico, the environmental community has really engaged on the Colorado River.

One of the things that surprised me when I first got into this was how little attention the environmental community was paying to the Lower Basin. They were paying a lot of attention to the Upper Basin, and to Glen Canyon Dam. And, you know, the spirit of David Brower was alive and well, and we needed to tear down Glen Canyon Dam. And, we needed to, you know, let the river run wild.

And, there was a Habitat Restoration Plan that was put together for endangered fish on the upper reaches of the Colorado. And, it was always the Upper Colorado was still wild and undeveloped, while, the Lower Colorado was a plumbing system. I mean, you stair-step from one reservoir to another reservoir until you get down to this trickle that moves on through at Morales. And, the emergence of the environmental community came with the MSCP process.

ps What's that?

pm Multi-Species Conservation Plan. On endangered fish in the Lower Basin. And, this real call to action by the environmental community to restore the Delta. There are two endangered fish at the mouth of the Colorado. The Totoaba fish and the Piquito. You have an Indian tribe in Mexico that's been decimated because of all the plumbing that's been put in in the Colorado River Basin. You have the Cienega de Santa Clara which is fueled by the Welton-Mohawk slue. Which is just an ag diversion out of Arizona that flows into Mexico and has created an amazing wetland habitat. I've been on it on a flatboat going through the weeds. They must have every specie of bird in the world there. Those are the things that awoke the environmental community. And, they began to speak very forcefully and very loudly that we in this country have to address this issue.

And, I think the stumbling block for us has been...we can send all the water we want across the border into Mexico. That doesn't guarantee it gets to the Delta. It can be diverted at Morales. It's going to be sent to Mexicali, and that will just grow more cotton and more alfalfa.

ps So, the environmentalists have come to the meetings, but they're not official...

pm No, but they participate in a lot of conversation. And I think...I have to give Sid Wilson a lot of credit. Sid really reached out and brought them in to the whole, as he was starting to deal with the Yuma desalter. And wanting to re-activate the Yuma desalter. And, that will take water away from the Cienega de Santa Clara. So, he brought them to the table. And, they're still at the table. And we're working very well with the Environmental Defense Fund, and with the Sonoran Institute. On looking for solutions for both the Limitrofe (sp?), the Cienega and the Delta.

And, I've always been very much in favor of including them in the dialogue. Their constituency isn't a traditional constituency, but they're a stake holder. And, just like the tribes, they're stake holders.

ps You mentioned the Yuma desalter a couple of times. I like that much better than the desalinization plant. (laughs) Desalter. I like that.

pm That's what it does. Removes salt.

ps Well, talk a little bit about that project. What do you see for it's future. It has had a rocky past.

pm It's had a very rocky past. I mean, the Bureau built it in order to meet the water quality requirements on the treaty with Mexico, because the run-off from the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District are so saline, and they're right on the border. Then what happened was, it opened right during a high flow period, when the water quality was a lot better. So, they never ran it. They built it and then mothballed it.

Then they built this slue which is essentially a diversion channel that captures the run-off from Wellton-Mohawk, and prevents it from getting to the Colorado River, and moves it over land into the desert of Mexico. Where it has, over time, aggregated and created this huge wetlands out there. The desalter, in an environment where we're looking for additional resources, where conservation of the river, in and of itself, and where Arizona's looking for every drop of water that they can find to replace what they'll lose in shortage years has garnered new interest again. And so, how do you run that desalter and still have the Cienega? Because, the Cienega is an unbelievable environmental value. I mean, it is a major stop-over on the Pacific Flyway. It is a huge bird habitat area. I can't imagine it being destroyed.

The Limitrofe area, which is the area between the northern and southern boundary, with Mexico, between the California border and the Arizona border...that area has some real environmental values that need to be protected as well.

So, the desalter will have to be run, and I think it will be run. But, there is so much saline groundwater in the Yuma area that there's some opportunities, and Sid made it happen. He forged this agreement with the environmental community. The communities of Yuma. And, with his counterparts in Mexico to commit to protect the Cienega, while,

at the same time allowing the Yuma desalter to run. And, it goes right back to what I said at the very beginning. There are always solutions. It's the willingness to go there.

ps Now, you sound a lot like an environmentalist, protecting the Cienega.

pm I think anybody who's in the water business, has to be an environmentalist. You can't sit here and say, oh, my God, we're being decimated by climate change. Be the stewards of the scarcest resource in the West, and one of the most precious resources to human life, period. I mean, it's the one thing we cannot do without. Water and air. We may not like living without energy. It would be inconvenient. But, there were lots of generations of human beings that have lived and survived without energy, without gas, without coal, without a lot of things we take...and, without computers, believe it or not. That we take for granted today. But, human life ceases in the absence of water. Human food supply ceases in the absence of water. There's nothing that's more quintessential to human existence on this planet.

So, if that's the case, why would you destroy the eco-system that you have to rely on for that water supply? And I think all of us who are in the water business, if you will, have evolved from being dam builders, and, and reservoir builders, and pipe and pump... building pipes and pumps and treatment plants, to also having to be stewards of the environment. It's embedded in what we do. You'll always have the extremes on either side. There are those that believe that human life is possible in the absence of another... of a greater environment. That we're here and the environment's over there. And, there are those that understand that it's all part of a much larger eco-system and that we're not bubbles. You know, we don't live in a bubble, and that we're very dependent on a healthy eco-system for human survival.

There's a balance point that has to be struck. And, every day that we manage water resources, we look for that balance point. To protect the environment, to protect the species, to protect the water sheds. And, at the same time, provide sufficient water supplies to our customers. What constitutes a sufficient water supply, however, has to change. We in this country are the most voracious users of natural resources, bar none. And, we use water like drunken fools. I mean, we have an addiction to green lawns. We all moved to the desert and then we bring Kentucky and Florida with us. And, we go, let's plant Kentucky Blue Grass. Let's plant magnolias. Well, I don't think there's a single magnolia in the Mohave Desert. And, I'm no sure there are any in the Sonoran Desert.

And, because of the way the West developed, where it was the federal government building the infra-structure, man conquering the land, making it productive, making it fertile, making it succumb to its will, it created a very distorted reality for those of us who moved to the West. Man is superior, man doesn't have to adapt. Man will force his environment to adapt to his needs.

This century is going to be defined by how well we can adapt to the place we call home. And live much, in much greater harmony with the environment we've chosen to live in. I mean, if we moved to Sitka, Alaska, would we insist on wearing shorts and a tank top in March? No. Why is it that we move to the desert and we...conquer? It's the spirit of the

19th Century. It's the spirit of the 20th Century. Where we built these enormous structures. And, you know, mastered these rivers. Conquered these rivers. Made them work for us. And now we have to step back a little. And, we have to say, there's too many of us any longer.

You know, the human population is exploding all over. We heard Secretary Kempthorne say we're going to be nine-billion on the planet. This country's going to have 300 million more people, in the next 15 to 20 years. They're going to go where the jobs are. Invariably a lot of them are going to end up, hopefully not too many, but a significant portion are going to end up in the West. We're talking about our children. We're talking about our grandchildren. Something's got to give.

So, we've got to become much more miserly in how we use water. Whether it's our indoor fixtures, whether it's how we landscape...which is the biggest user in the West. Those things have to be looked at, and they're part of, part of a bigger solution.

ps Some people say that we've seen the end of the era of big water projects. The ones you've been talking about. The dams...

pm I think there will still be some built, but it will be much more difficult to do it. And, they'll be very deliberative. They won't be built the same way they used to be built. They're going to very much have to have an environmental piece to it. Those kind of projects....we can't get through climate change without building some of those. But they will only be those that are absolutely needed.

And, as we're experiencing here in Southern Nevada, trying to build our big project, there will be a huge demand put on by everybody that, at the same time you're doing this, or even before you start, you start using water differently. And, you become much more frugal in your water use. You can't build your way out of this alone.

ps Which project are you talking about?

pm We're building our in-state project, which is... The main trunk is 250 miles and when you add all the well-connectors to it, it's about 500 miles of pipe. It's an enormous project. Three billion dollars, plus. For Southern Nevada. When one hotel costs eight-billion, you know, three-billion for...to protect the water supply for the community looks kind of like, okay, so what's your problem?

ps That's to bring the water from the North?

pm It's North Central....from Central Nevada into...

ps Groundwater.

pm Groundwater project. Right.

ps Some people have suggested that what we really need to do is build a canal or pipeline from the Mississippi River to the West.

pm You would have to have Armageddon in the West. You would have to be at a point, and I'm not saying it can never, I've learned to never say never any more. The word is erased from my vocabulary. The West would have to be in an absolute Armageddon of a drought. Mead and Powell would be at virtually useless levels. The Sierras would be dry. The ocean has risen. It's backed into the Sacramento Delta. Fresh water's turned to salt water. Now you're talking about the fate of, by then, what 35, 40 million people? What are they going to do? They're all going to move to Cleveland? They're all going to move to Detroit. I don't think so. Now, how do you start moving water around? What kind of exchanges are possible? Where has climate change created floods? What kind of partnerships are available out there? But, the West will have had to drastically change its water use consumption.

And, unfortunately, we will also be having a conversation about export costs. How much of it do we need to keep for food supply in this country? And can we afford to continue to have exports of alfalfa, Sudan grass, and cotton into the larger global economy, or are there ways to re-tool economies, provide more jobs, more economic benefit, and use less water? And, as unfortunate and as harsh as that's going to sound, to a lot of people watching this....before we can have a conversation about those kind of large movements of water within the United States, that conversation will happen. It will be forced on us.

ps Looking back over all that you've been involved with for the last 20-some years, what accomplishments are you proudest of? In relation to water.

pm You mean aside from today? (laughter) That one was huge. That was like the culmination of 23 years of work. Today.

ps The Seven States Agreement.

pm The Seven States Agreement and the opportunities that it creates moving forward. I think the other is the creation of the Water Authority. Absolutely. And then, as the District...we just opened the Las Vegas Springs Preserve. And it is 180-acre site that is a journey through time. We journey through the cultural history and the natural history of Southern Nevada, and you journey into the future. And, it's all about sustainability.

It's the first two platinum green buildings built on the desert. It has an eight-acre desert botanical garden. It has an amphitheater with artificial turf. It has a desert living center that is all about sustainability. All its various facets. The largest sustainability library. It has a wet lab and a dry...and a design lab. If you want to re-tool your house, re-build your house. Where can you buy renewable products? What products are out there on the market? We'll help you re-design your house. We'll help you re-design your landscaping. It is all about creating sustainability.

But, the thing is with Southern Nevada is that, we have so many new residents. It's such a young town, that nobody has a sense of history. Everyone thinks our history began with Bugsy Siegal. They have no concept of where...what the natural history of Southern Nevada is. And that there were Indian tribes. Through this property runs the Spanish Trail, runs the Mormon Trail. It has relics. It's on the National Historic

Register. It's got the relics of the old original ranch houses. It's where the Paiutes and the Pitians had their, uh, their dwelling units. It's where the springs were. That's what brought people to Las Vegas ironically, were the springs that existed on that property.

And so, we've interpreted them through a big museum. We've built the Desert Living Center as a free-learning...free-style learning center. Where you can begin to think about sustainability. We have a sustainability gallery. We're now in the process of developing joint exhibits with the Smithsonian. The first is on exhibit there. And, what little changes people around the world are making to begin to think differently about where they live and how they live. And, we don't stick to water alone. It's energy, it's trash. It's everything that we do that's going to have to be different if we're going to change and continue to allow this planet to be inhabitable by human life. Human life.

ps How did that come about to restore that area?

pm Well, again, it was a fluke. There's nothing worse in Las Vegas than having 180-acres of undeveloped land. The vultures were circling. And, we were having suggestions... everything from expanding the mall that's across the street to a golf course. Well, it's also an active well field for us still. We use it to re-charge. We're still very much a part of the Water District's operation. And, it also has a large section that's on the National Historic Register. There's endangered plants on that property. Endangered animals live on there. Naturally. And so, we began to say, wait a minute. This area has to be protected.

Well, the state was trying to widen the freeway and they were going to intrude on that property that's on the National Historical Register rather than take homes on the other side of the road. So, one morning I was brushing my teeth, getting ready to work, go to work, and we were in the middle of this battle. And, a gentleman who owned a house on the other side of US-95, did an interview, and said, you know, if this property is so damn valuable, then why can't anybody see it? And I went, you know what? He's right. You could kill two birds with one stone.

So, we reached out to the old families that have done very, very well for themselves. I'll never forget. Elaine Wynn hosted the first conversation around building a Central Park... and a testament to Las Vegas's history there. At Shadow Creek. And, all the large families ... they're in their second, third generation...have started coalescing around it. They created a foundation. That is our money-raising arm. Water District put money into planning it. And, we created a real community planning process. I mean, as you can well imagine, people's imagination started running wild. Las Vegas has no Central Park. It had nothing like that. It has nothing that creates a sense of place in Las Vegas. And creates a historical grounding. And so, you had everything from Disneyland to do nothing.

I mean, there are archaeological digs that go on in that property. We think we have the last remaining spring mound in the Valley. And the archaeologists are convinced that the oldest Anasazi dwelling unit in the Mohave is in that spring mound somewhere. Because of the springs. And...so, there's archaeological digs going on. So, what we ended up with, was the perfect balance. We protect the area that's on the National

Historic Register where we have all the environmentally sensitive area. And, the disturbed area, we then created this campus. There's a state museum that's still under construction. The first real state museum in Southern Nevada.

The minute we started...we opened it in May...and the minute we started booking school classes through there, we were full within 48 hours. We had to add a new Teach the Teacher Program to educate the teachers so they could bring their kids in themselves. I couldn't hire enough staff to, to manage all that. It has become a real success story.

ps So that's one of the things you're proudest of. Is there anything that you would have done differently?

pm Anything I would have done differently?

Well, I've probably said a lot of things I wished I hadn't said over the years. But, you know what? I've been very fortunate in so far as it's...I'm not a loose cannon on deck and I don't go out there and do things by myself. And, the Water Authority is very much a consensus-driven process. It's been a safety net for me. It's protected me against my wilder and crazier inclinations. And so, I think that everything that's happened has happened for, for a good purpose. And, it's, it's worked well.

I know what I'll never do again! I'll never talk about fountains, and I'm never going to talk about car washing. Ever again. I'm done with it. And, I'm never going to declare a moratorium in Southern Nevada again. Shoot me and put me out of my misery now.

ps I think I've asked most of the questions. We could go on for a long time, but, is there anything that you wanted to be sure and talk about that I didn't ask you?

pm No, I think we, we covered some...we covered a lot of important ground. You know, I gather this is going out to all the constituencies in the larger Colorado River community?

ps The transcripts will be on the website of the Colorado River Water Users Association.

pm You know, the Colorado River community's been really fortunate. The states have some amazing talent, and some passionate people who love this region. It goes beyond the academic. It goes beyond the bureaucratic. The people that sit around the table to talk about the issues of the Colorado...this area of the country is their love, it's their passion. And, they will do everything to protect it and the constituencies that they represent.

And, I think, everyone that lives in the Colorado River Basin is extremely fortunate. At the level of commitment and the level of passion. And, the, the ability to look into the future and look toward future generations and what their potential needs are going to be.

ps Is that what you're doing now in Nevada is looking long-range into the future?

pm Yeah, we are. But, I was talking about all my counterparts in the other states. I mean, as much as we love to sit around and beat our chests and, you know, threaten to go to court..

ps Instead of looking back to the Compact of 1922, they're all looking forward?

pm My favorite incidence, incident, is still Arizona deploying its Navy. I'm sorry. First of all, why does an inland state have a Navy, that has no coast? That...I've never been able to get an answer to that question. And that...when they deployed it, in order to stop California from building the Imperial Dam...I'm sorry. That's my favorite folklore on the entire river.

ps And there was a woman leading that, too.

pm That figures. That figures. But...that to me. And, over the last two years, I have seen some great computer renderings of Arizona's Navy on Lake Mead. With...

ps Yeah. I never understood the Navy part. But, Nellie Bush is famous for being out there with a gun on a boat trying to stop California.

pm That's right. That was the Arizona Navy. Well, now Herb (Guenther) has a real Navy. He has aircraft carriers, and he has pontoon boats, and, you know. And so, he shows great slide presentations. How the Arizona Navy is going to protect Arizona's water supply. And, my favorite retort to him is, I says, your Navy's pathetic! I said, I'm going to take every showgirl in Las Vegas and put them on the banks of Lake Mead, and your Navy will go under. That'll end you Navy real fast!

ps The other thing I've heard, too, is that...in protecting Arizona....that they're building this fence along the border, to keep out the immigrants. But, they're building along the fence on the wrong border. It should be the border with California. (laughs)

pm Gosh, I hope not.

ps Okay. Anything you want to add?

pm Nope. I think we're good.