

Daily Courier 2012-09-21

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## **Editorial: Dear leaders - let the pipe dream go**

It's been more than eight years since the [City of Prescott](#) and the [Town of Prescott Valley](#) decided to buy the former JWK ranch in the hopes of pumping water to the two towns, water that would satisfy the needs of the tens of thousands of folks who would one day call this area home.



Back then, the municipalities, and Prescott in particular, took what can either be characterized as a legally sound while aggressive stance against those who argued with the viability and propriety of the project, or as a short-sighted adventure in heavy-handed politics. In doing so, those leaders exacerbated an us-against-them situation, pitting the western and eastern portions of Yavapai County against one another. Indeed, one needn't live in the Verde Valley to question the contention that ripping hundreds of acre-feet of water from the earth at a location near the headwaters of the Verde River would have no effect on the flow of one of Arizona's few remaining wild rivers.

Now, without blinking an eye, the leaders, some of whom are the same and some of whom have changed, have decided that, in order to avoid incredibly expensive lawsuits they could very easily lose, they will drop another couple of million dollars into this ill-fated project in order to gauge and monitor the levels in the Big Chino.

Monitoring is of course an admirable thing to do; knowledge is worth having. But does anyone truly believe that, in the face of all the opposition and in the face of overwhelming evidence, that the Big Chino Ranch will ever provide a single drop of water to this area?

Interestingly, when the Daily Courier's editorial board interviewed candidates for this year's elected positions, most all, including some who were involved in making the decision to buy the ranch and build the pipelines, allowed that the project is now little more than, excuse the expression, a pipe dream.

Now, with the possible production of water from this multi-million dollar investment again several years away, it is time for a new batch of bold voices to arise and speak the truth: the towns own a pretty nice cattle ranch that may some day support a limited number of homes and small businesses. That it is time to explore viable options, from expanded rainwater harvesting which on its own might bring us out of the safe yield quandary and into compliance, to creative solutions that could be as far-reaching as planning for future desalination plants drawing water from the planet's largest and most accessible water source.

Do the studies, yes. They will enhance the value of the land for a future sale. But get over believing that pumping water to Prescott and Prescott Valley from that ranch will ever become reality.

## Reader Comments

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **Walter Sobchak**

I'd like to see the 20,000,000 dollars put into a one year CD. Just to prove to all the liberals that conservatives really can go a year without spending it on something one of them isn't going to sue another one of them over.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **@ Tom Steele**

Ranchers can sell their property to developers all they want.

I do not want government interfering in my ability to make money.

If the water doesn't support new development then the consumer will have to make their decisions whether to buy a house on that eventuality.

Let the market decide on the best course of action.

Boo to you and your liberal concerns about water and nature.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **Chris Bergman**

Problem #1, they are not "Leaders", they are "representatives."

Problem #2, they are not very good "representatives." bergman\_blogs@yahoo.com

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **So the mayor and council bite the bullet. And acknowledge their short-sighted mistake.**

And take the loss on the water ranch, ill-vetted fiasco. Return it to the 'friendly' rancher who gloatingly sold it to them. And the city banks about \$20,000,000! And we fix our failing sewer system, our crumbling streets. Quit charging fees to use our parks and lakes and trails which we already paid for. Forget the indefensible idea of charging library users fees to use our free public library (we pay for it with our property taxes and grants erase most of the cost!) And then use the money to actually do something right now to better the quality of life of those of us who live here now! And to hell with their greedy, Verde River killer real estate developer buddies!

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **buy t**

Horay for Ron R Harvey - rainwater capture could help a lot, especially if it replaced using

the best treated water for outdoor watering.

The Courier, to thier credit, did mention a couple of alternatives in this piece. I think they lambasted the pipeline pretty good. But it is clear they never ever have the whole story. Read a Courier article about ANYTHING that you know about and alas the Courier has missed a lot of the picture. So, why would I believe the Courier is not missing a lot of the picture here?

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **Someone out there help me with this. Better memory hopefully.**

I seem to remember that when Ex-mayor Rowle Simmons and his buddies pushed to buy first one ... and then finally another water ranch there was a clause in the agreement that the town could buy back the ranch with a relatively small loss. Something like cost of \$24,000,000. And a loss of two million or so and thus be out of this hopeless, expensive mess. But wasn't there a time limit on this buy-back, return privilege?. Is it up? Or could w still jettison this waste and use the money in a less fiscally irresponsible way?

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **James Madison**

Rainwater catchment systems, solar panels on rooftops, Hybrid cars in driveways. Just what are all these people think they're doing? Pretty soon people who want to make the most out of what we already have will want to take over.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **Tom Steele**

The water issue is real. Experts have determined we are drawing more than 14,000 acre feet of water to service the current population that is not being replaced by Mother Nature. That amount of water will service 126,000 people for one year. So, permission to use the Big Chino Pipeline to bring 11,000 acre feet into Prescott and Prescott Valley to build new homes will be the answer? I don't think so. As for a new agreement with SRP, the test will be a legally binding mitigation agreement to keep a life sustaining flow to the Verde River. The residents of the Paulden area will be without help as they have to drill new 1,000 foot wells to hope to have water when the pipeline is open. Hopefully, the local large ranchers will find a way to provide new industrial parks and training schools in place of thousands of new homes. Such a use would not consume the water of family's in homes and would also provide jobs for the construction workers who need sustainable employment. Our legislature could make this happen for the best interest of Arizona.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **A few facts. We are not morons.**

Thank you, Courier. An excellent, factual, truthful editorial. We are all very tired of being treated like morons on this issue. A welcome reality check. The water ranch is way too far away. Always was... Prescott & PV are not growing. Actually losing population. No one will

ever loan Prescott & PV \$250,000,000 for a pipeline. The right- of-way and legal battles will never end. Never. Ever. A lot of the big fish in this little pond are sycophantic lackeys of the still hopeful investor, developer, construction trades cabal. Alas, we keep electing them to office so deserve to have to watch them beat a dead horse. Suggestion: Sell the cattle ranch along with the golf course and the Elks white elephant! And spend some time and revenue on repairing the town's failing infrastructure, and working to improve the quality of life of those of us who already live here.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **Ron R HarveyRH**

Since the pipeline debacle began, I have put in a rainwater catchment system. In the years that followed, I watched four different neighbors put in similar systems within sight of my house. The solution to our problems is falling from the sky. For less than half the cost of a pipeline, we could put a similar system on every house in the greater Prescott area. If every new home s required to have a system like this, we would never have to worry about water needs again, and the idea of pumping would be relegated to the history books.

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **The Dreamers Are Dead**

Imagine the "Daily Courier Editorial Board" in other eras of history:

We'll never be free from England, we might as well just pay the darn taxes. That's just somebody's pipe dream!

An interstate highway system that criss-crosses the country, are you crazy?! That's just somebody's pipe dream!

The Central Arizona Project? You want to pump millions of gallons of water to Phoenix from THAT far away? That's just somebody's pipe dream!

It seems the Courier Editorial Board is small minded and lacks vision. I'm glad they're just the ones reporting the news and not making it!

*Posted: Friday, September 21, 2012*

Article comment by: **The Jolt'n Courier**

This is a frustrated and almost angry 'in your face' editorial. The editor's forceful point of view is uncharacteristic of the Courier and in this regard, I'm happy to read such a spunky opinion whether I agree with it or not. If you guys have anything left after this masterpiece, please consider more of the same. Who needs a jolt of java when you've got this?!