



WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

Project ID: AZ982

Title: New Approaches To Addressing Tribal Water Rights

Focus Categories: Law, Institutions, and Policy, Water Use

Keywords: Indian Water Issues, Policy Analysis, Conflict Resolution

Start Date: 03/01/2001

End Date: 02/28/2002

Federal Funds: \$12,000

Non-Federal Matching Funds: \$24,080

Congressional District: Second

Principal Investigator:

Bonnie Colby

Professor, The University of Arizona

Abstract

Description of Problem: Large amounts of time and resources are expended addressing issues associated with Indian water rights in Arizona and other western states. Litigation and negotiations over tribal water rights are a primary concern among cities, rural communities, irrigators, tribes, environmental advocates and public agencies. There have been a number of new development in seeking to reconcile tribal claims and the needs of other water users over the past ten years.

Methods: The primary research tools are document analysis, including review of negotiated agreements and court rulings, interviews with parties involved in tribal water issues, and economic analysis of costs, benefits and financial obligation associated with different approaches used to resolve conflicts over tribal rights. Contributing authors in law, environmental science, hydrology, conflict resolution and other fields will assure high quality coverage of relevant expertise from differing disciplines.

Objectives: The primary objective of the proposed project is to undertake the research necessary for an updated and substantially revised edition of the 1993 publication "Indian Water Rights: Negotiating the Future." The proposed publication is designed to update policy makers, water users, public agency staff and the general public on current approaches to addressing Indian water rights. Such information, gathered from recent developments across the western U.S., will help those private and public sector stakeholders currently embroiled in water conflicts to resolve them more effectively, and to craft more durable, cost-effective and implementable solutions.

10,000 copies of the 1993 edition of the book were produced. All but a few of those have been distributed and the book is now out of print. The book was ordered regularly for use at national and regional conferences and workshops. While technical and legal articles that deal with tribal water rights are available, there is little material on this complex subject prepared for a more general audience. Through the use of revised and updated text, maps, graphics, photographs, sidebars, essays, and primers - a current and user-friendly resource on the subject will again be available. The book will be a valuable means to transfer knowledge from experts in many different disciplines to a largely non-technical audience.