



December 17, 2008

## City shouldn't be next Phoenix

How many proponents of the Glade Reservoir have been to the Phoenix area and observed the Salt River?

There's a river in Phoenix?

The Salt River once flowed year round through the Phoenix valley. That's what drew early settlers there, just as the Poudre drew settlers to this area. Now in place of the Salt River is a little centerpiece lake with freeway traffic whizzing by. It is a massive evaporation pan.

Once, there was a rich cottonwood bosque along the river, not unlike that along the Poudre, but now 100 percent of the river goes into a pipe upstream of the metropolis to be used for the city's population. People in the city accept this, because most of the year they would rather be inside or in their private swimming pools.

How many Phoenicians know or care that once there was an oasis along the Salt River? Does the city have any thoughts of managing growth? Construction is a big industry. In 1950, the population of Phoenix, now the fifth-largest city in the country, was less than the current population of Fort Collins.

Once, there was a healthy agriculture industry around Phoenix, but the city needs the land and water now. Almost all the citrus farms are gone, as well as the flower and vegetable farms. Temperatures have risen along with the amount of asphalt. Cottonwoods are now rare in Phoenix. They can't be justified because they use so much water. The same is true in Tucson. What could the residents have done?

Now the potential for similar change is on our doorsteps. Proponents of the Glade Reservoir point out that the water will be taken only at seasons of high runoff. But it is that high water that nourishes the water table and allows our cottonwoods to flourish. Reduce that water and the cottonwoods die. For a time, there will be a small creek left going through town, but what about during droughts? As the population grows, won't it need all of the water all of the time?

The changes happen a little at a time. The trees won't all die at once. But the wetlands will go. Can you say a dry river bed is beautiful? I lived 26 years in the Phoenix area and know what a wasteland an empty river bed can be. Do you care enough about your beautiful river to use it wisely, or will you let it gradually disappear?

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