

Funding for Data Collection and Analysis

The following is a list of ideas and options developed by the EC on December 13, 2002 to generate funds for needed studies. The following is a non-prioritized list of ideas generated during the discussion. Numbers are for organizational purposes only and do not imply priority. This is a working document and is for discussion purposes only.

1. Let the state do it
2. A block grant from NET could be given to DNR to be used in conjunction with other fees, general or matching funds from NRDs or IDs to be used for the purpose of establishing priorities.
3. Establish some kind of fee or water tax
4. Impose a smoking tax
5. The NRDs would probably need some relief on lids to come up with the money. Probably won't be only one source of funds available.
6. Basin-wide assessment per acre irrigated. Also must include towns etc. Need to determine how much money this could raise? But does this fly in the face of water being owned by the public? However a person's right to use is a property right.
7. Usage tax, as opposed to an acreage tax, which implies a tax only on agriculture. A usage tax would also include others, such as in stream flows, municipalities.
8. Irrigators will need to come up with some funding perhaps a user fee and rest would come with the remainder.
9. Go to other entities and come up with matching funds, such as was done for the Cohyst Study.
10. There should be an ongoing research program to start looking at these issues and provide background data for DNR as they look at these issues.
11. Between NRDs and DNRs, we probably have the data. Perhaps need money for special studies by outside consultant or the University for refinement. Emphasis should be on attempting to address data issues within the DNR/NRD structure for cost savings.
12. Maybe there are some funds that could be found in the Farm Bill, in the High Plains aquifer program or Harkin's program for conservation security program.
13. Bingamin's bill on the High Plains is earmarked for States to do work is there money available?
14. Is there money available in Equip for such studies?
15. Perhaps develop a research program to develop data.

Steve Gaul will convene a sub-committee to develop funding plans for 2004 that will examine the potential revenue sources for funding necessary studies. The sub-committee will look at various methods and determine for each method, how much money might be generated and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each. There is also a need to determine what the real costs might be. This would be part of the 2004 legislative package. Steve will meet with Ron Bishop, Don Kraus, Gene Glock, Jody Gittens, Art Brownlee, Dean Edson, John Turnbull, Senator Schrock and Jay Rempe to explore these options.