

Woods, Penelope D

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To: Woods, Penelope D
Subject: submitting comments on DEIS
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A Game of Monopoly

I am a fifth generation resident of Lincoln County. My ancestors were with the 1865 pioneer expedition that settled the village of Eagle Valley (now called Ursine). A year later another one of my 2nd great grandfathers led the expedition to settle Spring Valley located five miles north. You can see where he stopped, the stone houses he built still stand. They came with their families and herds, young men to build communities and raise families. They succeeded, prospered and we have been good stewards of the land for almost 150 years. We are still here. When I lead one of my great grandchildren up the trail to a valley overlook, they walk the same path that their grandfathers walked and I tell them the history of their roots in this place. Members of the extended family have and do participate in every industry in the county.

The planned water grab by SNWA will negatively impact every one of us. Can we even imagine the “build out” (I hate that term) result? A 200-mile swath of our land dried out and devastated. Even if the onset of desiccation does not occur within my lifetime or even that of my sons it is certain that within a generation or two none, or only a few of us will be able to survive here. How can that agree with the Mission Statement of the BLM?

“The BLM’s multiple use mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.”

The BLM has performed a real service to the public in preparing the DEIS. In clear language they have portrayed the near and long term effects of the Water Grab in eastern Nevada and nearby Utah from pumping alternatives planned by SNWA. The results are frightening, nearly impossible to imagine. However, the DEIS is premature. The plan, the actors, the possible results change almost every week. Whatever the original scope of the EIS effort, it no longer exists.

What does exist is like the children’s game of Monopoly: Fold out the board, identify some players and roll the dice. The present DEIS is the result of one roll of the dice. The game must be played again. There are new players and choices to be considered.

- The biggest change is the Las Vegas economy. The LV game has changed, moved away to the east coast, to Indian reservations and most significantly, to Asia. The LV game may never return. Has anyone, can anyone given the present world economy and isn't trying to sell something, hazard a guess for the future of LV? That uncertainty must be accounted for in an EIS.
- REALLY big news is a tentative pipeline budget of \$15 billion, which will increase. Who would loan anything (or buy SNWA bonds) in the foreseeable future?
- Water rights have not been granted. At the present time hearings before the state engineer are in progress. The EIS can't be completed until the water rights are granted or denied. Whatever action the SE takes will change the game. No matter what the SE does there will be litigation that may take years to settle.
- A big user/partner of the pipeline is in disarray. There are no plans for a specific time period to build a large community at Coyote Springs. Some of the principal participants are suing each other.
- The rights of the Indian tribes have been neglected. Their claims and considerations must be included in the EIS.
- A number of endangered species, some found only within the boundaries that would be affected by the Water Grab, will be very difficult to mitigate and probably result in litigation. These cases usually last for years.

Given all these uncertainties any decision of the BLM may be the wrong one. Therefore

TAKE NO ACTION.