

Position No. 281  
(See also No. 232 and 254)  
adopted October 20, 2000 and reaffirmed August 1, 2003

**POSITION STATEMENT**  
**of the**  
**WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL**  
**in support of**  
***RECLAMATION'S WATER CONSERVATION FIELD SERVICES PROGRAM***  
***AND "BRIDGING-THE-HEADGATE" PARTNERSHIPS***  
**Breckenridge, Colorado**  
**July 21, 2006**  
*(revised and readopted)*

**WHEREAS**, the Reclamation Reform Act of 1982 (RRA) directed the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to encourage water conservation on federal water projects throughout the seventeen western states, and required districts receiving water from those federal projects to develop water conservation plans; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 1996, Reclamation adopted an approach to promoting water conservation that would focus on the development of an incentive-based program of technical and financial assistance to districts in lieu of mandatory regulations and other top-down, command-and-control approaches to conservation; and

**WHEREAS**, Reclamation's Water Conservation Field Services Program (WCFSP) was established in 1997 to encourage the efficient use of water on federal water projects and, in cooperation with States and other entities, provide a non-regulatory, incentive-based approach to assisting water districts, in accordance with state law, develop and implement effective water conservation plans required by the RRA; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1997, Reclamation's 21 Area Offices have offered local programs that provide assistance and non-binding guidance to districts in four areas of emphasis: 1) water management planning; 2) conservation education; 3) demonstration of innovative conservation technologies; and, 4) implementation of effective conservation measures; and

**WHEREAS**, the WCFSP's incentive-based conceptual approach is well-received by water districts and other stakeholders at the local level as an appropriate role for Reclamation in encouraging water conservation on federal water projects and fostering improved water management on a watershed, statewide and regional basis; and

**WHEREAS**, in July 1998, as part of the program outreach under the WCFSP, Reclamation initiated a "Bridging-the-Headgate" conservation partnership with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA), and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), three organizations that have traditionally worked very closely together to support and encourage conservation and resource stewardship among private landowners, farmers, and water users on the "on-farm" side of the water use's headgate; and

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**WHEREAS**, the partners re-affirmed their commitment to the Bridging-the-Headgate-Partnership by signing an updated “Declaration of Cooperation” in August, 2005; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Interior launched their Water 2025 Initiative in 2003 to address areas with critical water issues; and

**WHEREAS**, both the WCFSP and Water 2025 address water management and water conservation improvements.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Western States Water Council supports Reclamation’s commitment to a proactive, but non-regulatory, approach to administering the water conservation provisions of the RRA, and to the continuing development -- with further state and local input -- of the WCFSP as an incentive-based program of technical and financial assistance, through voluntary federal-state-local partnerships, as the appropriate long-term role for Reclamation in encouraging water conservation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Western States Water Council supports the overall objective of the “Bridging-the-Headgate” partnership to work together as federal-state-local partners for the sustained and efficient use of western agricultural water supplies; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Western States Water Council, representing western governors and state water resource agencies throughout the 17 western states, be included as supporting the concepts underlying the Bureau of Reclamation’s Water Conservation Field Services Program; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Water 2025 Initiative is complementary to the WCFSP, but in no way nullifies the need for the WCFSP; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Bureau of Reclamation, in its promotional materials for the program, may use the Council’s name as a supporter of the program’s incentive-based approach subject to review and approval of promotional materials by the Executive Director of the Council.