

MYTH VS. REALITY

1. **MYTH:** The Unicameral can pass legislation, or the State Supreme Court can issue rulings that will guarantee surface water flow in the Republican and Platte Rivers.
Reality: Neither the Unicameral nor the Supreme Court can impact the weather. The lack of snow pack in the Wyoming Rocky Mountain region for the past eight years has the major negative impact on stream flow and reservoir levels.
2. **MYTH:** Bureaucrats in Lincoln will make more responsible decisions than locally elected officials.
Reality: Non-elective bureaucrats making decisions in state office buildings are immune from local control and are responsible to no one except appointed department heads and the Governor, if he is a strong manager type.
3. **MYTH:** State officials are necessary to make statewide decisions to save the groundwater from depletion.
Reality: The ranchers, farmers and other citizens that make their living in the country can and will make wise decisions by exercising local control and adopting rules and regulations best suited to each particular river basin. The boards of directors of each natural resource district are elected from the district where each resides.
4. **MYTH:** If one area of the state experiences mining of groundwater, eventually all areas will mine groundwater.
Reality: The contrast between Chase and Dundy counties and Fillmore and Saline counties is illustrative of the falsehood of myth 4. Without groundwater irrigation and center pivots, only desert plants would flourish in the semi-arid climate of Chase and Dundy. By contrast, agriculture production with modern technology can flourish in Fillmore and Saline without irrigation.
5. **MYTH:** Groundwater, like oil and coal, is billions of years old and when it's used up it will be gone.
Reality: Unlike oil and coal, groundwater in the Ogallala aquifer is moving on its own and is self-renewable. The sandhills act as a giant natural sponge catching practically 100% of the rainfall and allowing the rainwater to percolate down to the highest level of groundwater. When the soil profile is full, a lake forms.

Courtesy of David Capok, Ph.D., Milligan, Nebraska

COMMENTARY ON THE GO ALONG GET ALONG APPROACH

"The political art of compromise in many cases has become quick acquiescence for political expediency. This often comes from organizations representing everyone on everything. These groups often proclaim to be the voice of California agriculture, but are more like chameleons. They are good at selling insurance and giving discounts on trucks. Things like that are their primary motivation and they don't want to stir up any controversy by taking hard lines.

Others who have nothing to sell also represent many different groups and often look for the position that will get the least resistance. That often leads to cures worse than problems.

The last thing California agriculture needs today is representation from organizations that simply go with the flow. That avenue is bleeding red ink for most farmers.

Agriculture needs junkyard dogs today. Williams and the cotton growers and ginners he represents became one of those junkyard dogs with his No More Mr. Nice Guy speech.

And he has tossed a bone to other commodity groups to join him in the junkyard. He is not interested in clinging vines, afraid to ruffle feathers.

Agriculture needs more like Earl Williams to step up and bare some teeth. We don't need any more Casper Milquetoasts. We don't need timid, meek, unassertive leaders. It took guts for Earl to tell it like it is. It will not be popular in some circles, but as Wright pointed out, it needed to be said."

Comments of Harry Cline (Western Farm Press) about Earl Williams, CEO, California Cotton Growers Association.