

April Interview with Gerry Walker

1. What is your current job title?

My current job title is Deputy Assistant Director for Water Planning for the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

2. In what field is your academic background or training?

My academic background is primarily life science based. I have a BS in Biology from ASU, a MS in Forestry from NAU (my emphasis was Wildlife Biology) and a PhD in Environmental Design and Planning from ASU.

3. How long have you been involved in AZ natural resources management?

Basically my entire professional career. My first job following completion of my masters was with the U.S. Forest Service working for a fisheries biologist and a riparian ecologist. That work involved a lot of time in the area where the Dude Fire had burned and also in the headwaters of the Little Colorado River. My second professional job was at ADWR and I have been here almost 24 years.

4. What is your role with the Governor's Water Initiative?

I am the ADWR staff person responsible for implementation of the water initiative. I participated in the development of the initiative concepts and I currently supervise staff working on both tracks of the initiative. It has been satisfying

5. What do you enjoy most about your current job?

That is a tough question to answer because I enjoy a number of things. I think first and foremost I enjoy my job because I believe that the things we are doing can make a difference. Sometimes it seems like the process is very slow, but when a successful outcome is reached and I know that it can positively impact a number of people, it is very rewarding. Right now I am also enjoying working with all of the new people that are being hired at ADWR. They are coming in the door with new ideas, fresh perspectives, and tons of energy and it is very exciting to see a new generation of ADWR developing.

6. What are some water related projects that you've been working on recently?

Everything I do during the work day is water related. So, outside of the workplace, my water related project is trying to get a small pump motor to work so that the little fountain I have in my garden will function!

7. What are some important water issues that you currently see facing the State of Arizona?

I think the biggest issue Arizona, and all the western states, is facing right now is identifying how to plan in the face of change. We've seen population growth fluctuate greatly over the past decade, technologies are changing, precipitation patterns are changing, and human attitudes and perceptions

are also changing. I think our biggest challenge is figuring out how to incorporate all of this change into the planning process.

8. What are some possible solutions to these issues that could be proposed?

I am dating myself here but I consulted the Magic 8 Ball and the response was "Reply hazy try again".

9. Just for fun! If you could magically fix one water resources issue in Arizona, right now, what would it be?

I would fill Lakes Powell and Mead!