Reshaping the Western United States, from Ag to Urban During the Drought

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Ag-Urban Transfers

• Food Production
• Cooperation
• Rotation
• Urban Reinvestment
Western Water:
Three Fundamental Principles

1. Beneficial Use
2. Diversion
3. Appurtenance
First Principle: Beneficial Use

“Beneficial use is the basis, measure and limit of all rights to the use of water.”
Second Principle: Diversion

Right to use water awarded to the first to divert it from the natural course

“First in time, first in right”
Third Principle: Appurtenance

Water right is appurtenant to the land where perfected.
Ag-Urban Transfers

Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley
Water Rights Characteristics Subject to Change

- Place of Use
- Point of Diversion
- Type/Manner of Use
- Season of Use
- Rate
- Duty
Southern California

- Imperial Irrigation District
- Oldest water rights
- 2014:
  - 12,970 acres fallowing
  - Savings 69,000 AF
Northern Nevada

- Truckee River Operating Agreement
- Settlement w/o all interested parties
- Water shortages and decades long litigation
Las Vegas

- Southern Nevada Water Authority
- Groundwater pipeline
- BLM approval, followed by litigation
Ag-Urban Transfer Impacts

• Rural economies
  – Communities
• Ecology
• Food Security
• Increased Imports
Conclusions

• Food Production Protection
• Cooperation
• Rotation
• Urban Reinvestment
Thank You
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