

Thanks and Farewell

Jack Schmidt, Chief at Grand Canyon Monitoring and Research Center (GCMRC) is retiring from his post to return to teaching. He made the remarks below at the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group meeting on August 28, 2014.

I REALLY WANT TO THANK Anne, Lori, and Bob Snow, absolutely wonderful people that are supportive at the highest level. Dave Lytle, my boss, who has made it possible for me to be me and still keep my job. I want to thank all the stakeholders who I've gotten to work with. And I really mostly want to thank the staff that I work with, because all I've been is the shill, or spokesman, for the hard-working staff of GCMRC.

I've been part of this river for 35 years. The only person in this room who has worked longer on the Colorado River is Larry Stevens, and I'm honored to be on the same page with Larry. We've come such a long way. I've been part of so many things. Whatever you think of him, this program wouldn't be where it is without Dave Wegner, and what he started way back then. The whole cast of scientists who didn't really know what they were doing back in the 1980s, who did their science and also sat around on sandbars and beaches and said "well, this could be a better place than it is." The program's evolution has partly been due to good scientific work and partly taking the time to sit with river guides and other folks concerned about the river.

A bunch of us sat around the campfire during one trip and wrote the first draft of what we called the Beach Bill that ended up being an early draft of the Grand Canyon Protection Act. Others of us came up with the idea that we ought to have floods in Grand Canyon, and then we worked on that issue for many years before the first flood was implemented. I've had wonderful students to work with. And it's one of my greatest satisfactions that some of those folks are now on the staff at GCMRC and others work throughout the basin or on other rivers.

The reality is that the Colorado River has given me much more than I've given it. It gave me a career. It gave me a passion. It gave me an entire professional life. I'm now returning to life as a university professor, because I think that's a good place for me to be. I've gotten so much from the River. What I've learned from all of you in these three years is the depth of dedicated service provided by government civil servants, government appointees, and stakeholders who represent agencies. I didn't realize just how much work goes on behind the scenes, how much selfless behavior and

actions occur to make the world a better place, that you are all part of. Maybe I was a little cynical about that once, but I have learned so much and I appreciate what all of you have done.

You all know that Larry, I, and others wrote in a paper in the late '90s in *Bioscience* where we said that, "America could have whatever kind of Colorado River it wanted. It just needed to figure out what it wanted." We said that in an unambiguous way, and we published that a long time ago. I still believe that statement, and I have tried to work hard to get GCMRC to contribute the basic information so that you, the stakeholders and policy people, could decide. Sure, I have my own personal opinions on these things. Some of you know what my values are, but the bottom line is that GCMRC must give you the best information we can, and we must ask the most insightful scientific questions so that we as a society can all make the best decision. I have a great belief in the fact that we have the best river science in the world right here in the United States, and I believe that we have a wonderful democratic republic in which transparent and open decisions can be made. I celebrate diverse opinions, and it's been a great honor to be part of this program. Thanks an awful lot.



Jack Schmidt

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A 1984 USGS sediment sampling trip. From left to right: Tim Whitney, Jon Stoner, ?, Julie Graf, Richard Wilson, ?, Jack Schmidt (sitting).