



## Editorial: Water money may go down the drain

**Saturday, September 20, 2008**

The joint effort of the [City of Prescott](#) and [Town of Prescott Valley](#) to pipe water from the Big Chino Water Ranch to their respective municipalities is starting to look like a spider caught on an anthill.

The Arizona Department of Water Resources said this past week that it has received more than 50 protests against the application by the City of Prescott for a designation to increase the amount of assured water supply available to the city.

ADWR Assistant Director Sandy Fabritz-Whitney said the great number of protests is unusual.

The onslaught of ants swarming over the spider include the Arizona Game & Fish Department, the City of Phoenix, the City of Tempe, the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, the Salt River Project, Nature Conservancy, the Town of Camp Verde, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Yavapai Apache Tribe.

Many of those protesting, such as Michelle Harrington, manager of the Center for Biological Diversity, want ADWR to conduct a hearing on the application.

Even if ADWR conducts the hearing and grants the designation, then the Center for Biological Diversity will head to the courts, along with the queen of the ants, the [Salt River Project](#).

Anyone familiar with the way things work in Arizona knows: What belongs to the SRP belongs to the SRP, and what belongs to you belongs to the SRP if it decides to apply its considerable legal staff and political clout to get it.

The City of Prescott and the Town of Prescott Valley so far have spent about \$35 million of a projected \$170 million or more on the project to bring in water from the Big Chino Water Ranch.

In the worst case, that could end up a considerable sunk cost the municipalities probably cannot recover if ADWR denies the designation and the opponents prevail in the courts.

Then they still will need to find another source of water.

No matter what happens next, it won't be pretty.

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