



Water is for Fighting?!?

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Bridging the Gap: Collaborative Conservation from the Ground Up
Center for Collaborative Conservation

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Wind River Alliance

Our mission: To promote a healthy Wind River watershed, and by that, assist in restoring justice and health to our communities.



Wind River Alliance

- An independent, cross-cultural organization founded in 2001
- A unique, reservation-based non-profit (501c3)
- Free membership to all who care about the health of the Wind River watershed
- Supported by individual donations and grants from charitable foundations



Wind River Alliance

- Watersheds are determined by topography not political divides
- Guiding principles:
 - our waters are the lifeblood of all living things
 - a healthy watershed is the foundation of healthy communities
 - wise stewardship of the watershed promotes long-term viability before short-term gain
 - community education and involvement are essential
 - the Alliance will fairly reflect the various cultures of the watershed, and shall include elders, for their wisdom and experience, and youth, for their wisdom and promise.



Wind River Alliance Goals

- **Promote education** about and understanding of a healthy Wind River watershed.
- **Encourage and empower** residents of the Wind River watershed to participate in activities and policy making that promotes the health of the ecosystem and communities.
- **Facilitate communication** among individuals, cultures, institutions, governments and communities with a common concern for a healthy Wind River watershed.
- **Advocate for policies** that protect or restore the health of the Wind River watershed and communities that depend on it for sustenance, livelihood, recreation, or spiritual and aesthetic benefit.
- **Promote research and disseminate information** regarding the watershed, its management and health.
- **Recognize and address cultural, political, economic and racial inequities** that affect the health of the watershed.



From the conference website:

- One of the persistent challenges is sustaining these efforts over time
 - ✓ keeping partners at the table
 - ✓ working through bureaucratic inertia
 - ✓ adapting to changing government policies
 - ✓ securing resources.



Collaboration

- **col·lab·o·rate (kə-lāb'ə-rāt')**
 1. To work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort.
 2. To cooperate treasonably, as with an enemy occupation force in one's country.

- From www.dictionary.com (accessed 9/1/09)

Western Water Law

Tribal Water Code

Federal Reserved Indian
Water Rights

Safe Drinking Water

Conservation Districts

Eastern Shoshone

Water Quality

Northern Arapaho

Office of the Tribal
Water Engineer

Other Federal Agencies

TO WORK TOGETHER?

Wind River Environmental
Quality Commission

Environmental Protection Agency

Tribal General Councils

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Bureau of Reclamation

Air Quality

Treatment as State Process

Government-2-Government
Relationship

Tribal Business Councils

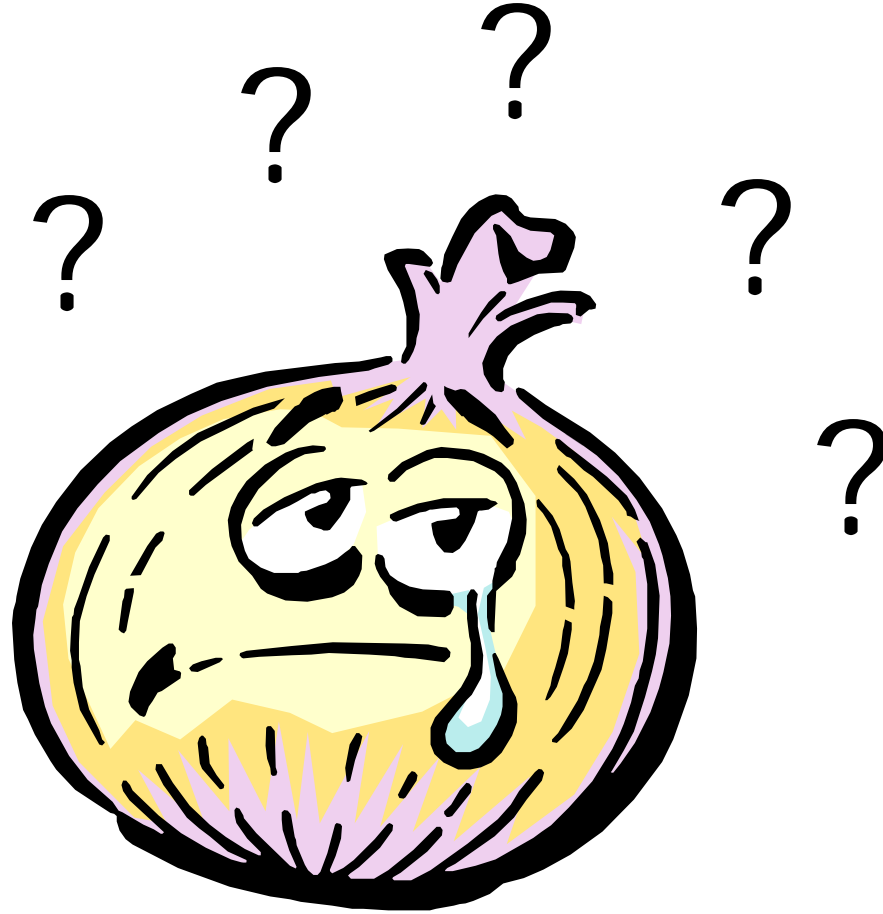
TO COOPERATE TREASONABLY?

State Water Engineer

Irrigation Districts

Oil and Gas Industry

Royalties





The Heart of that Onion



Community Ownership



What is Water?

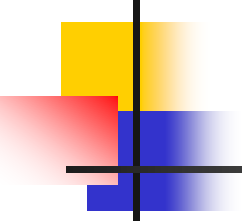
- Scientific definition, H₂O
- The basic ingredient to beneficial use
- “Water is for fighting, Whiskey is for drinking”



What is Water?

- Water is a sacred and powerful gift from Creator
- WATER IS LIFE





...Water is truly one of the few essential ingredients necessary for planetary life, the other essentials being Food/ Sustenance, and Air. An elder once shared these thoughts, that, human Beings can live about 60 days without food, about 10 days without water, about 5 minutes without air; that is the order of human survival...We should always approach Water with such awareness... Many times in our Fasting, water has been the most honored, prayed to, Being, as well as the most enjoyable fruit in breaking our Fasts....

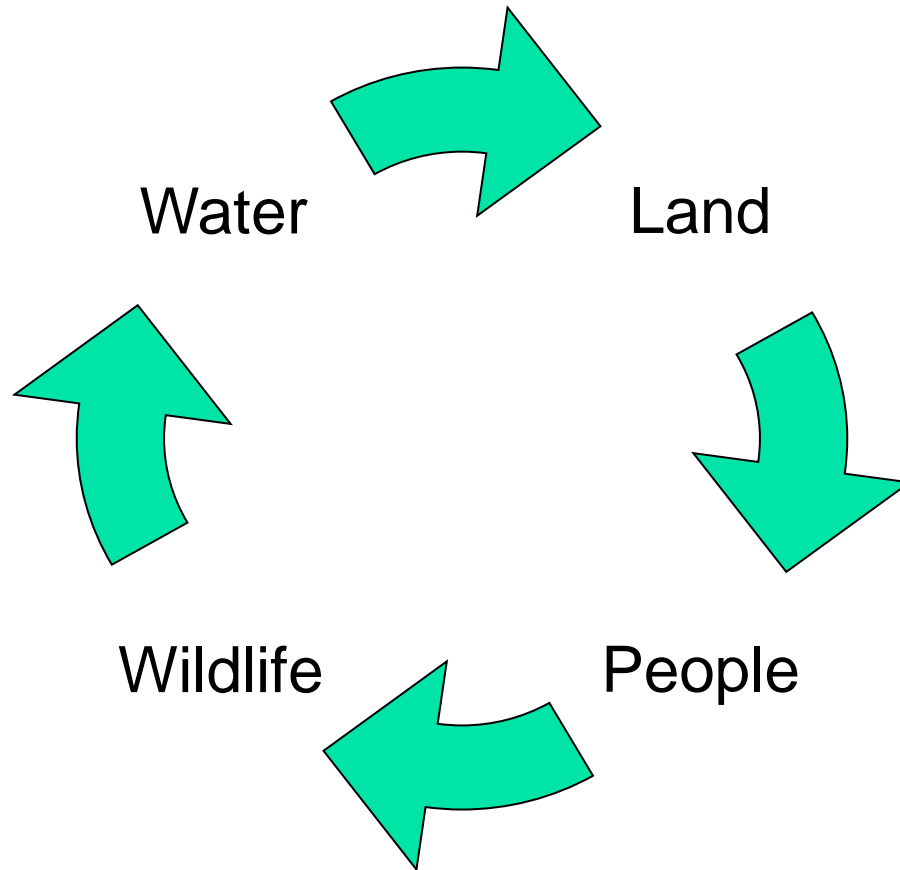
Gkisedtanamook
Wabanaki Nations

What is a watershed?

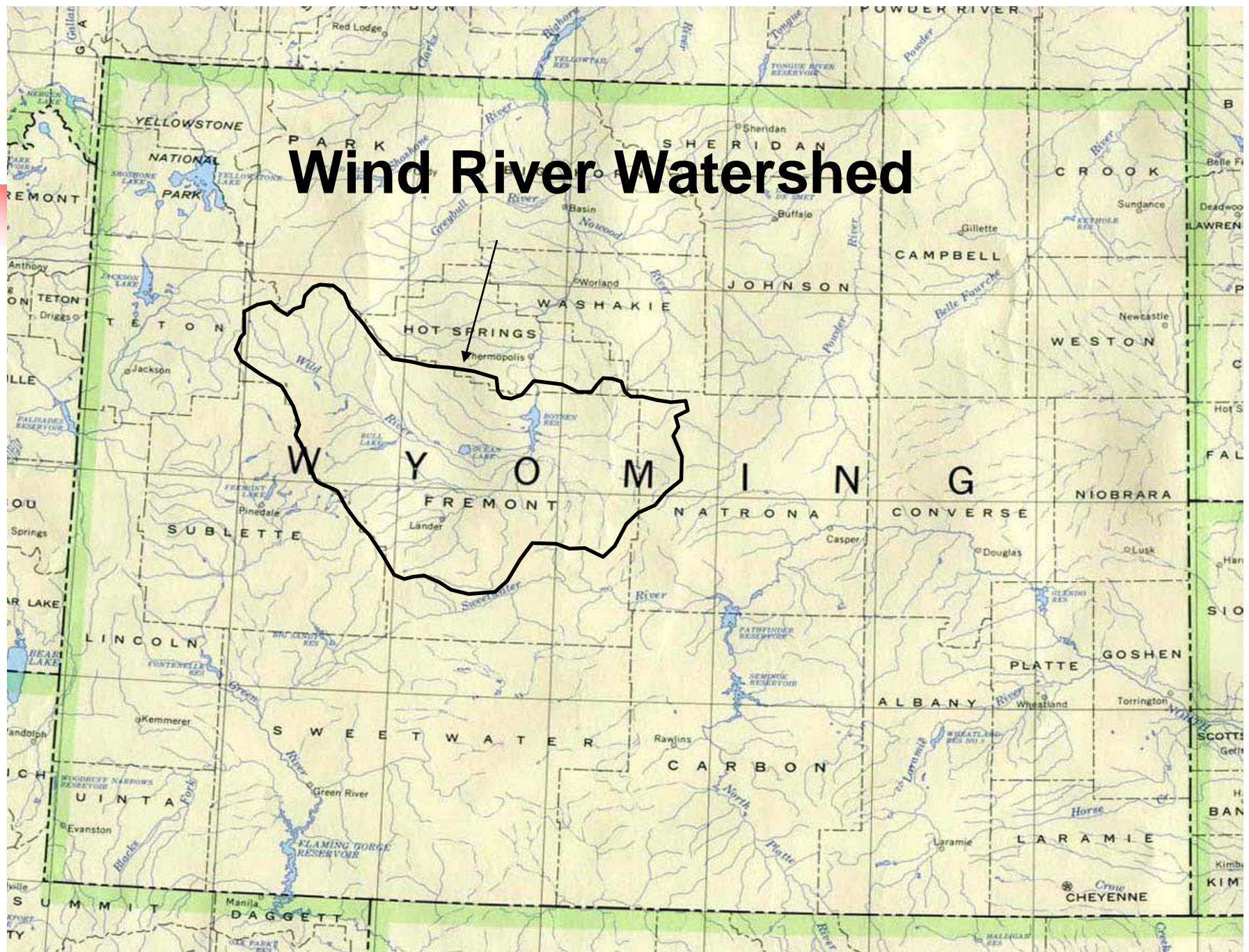


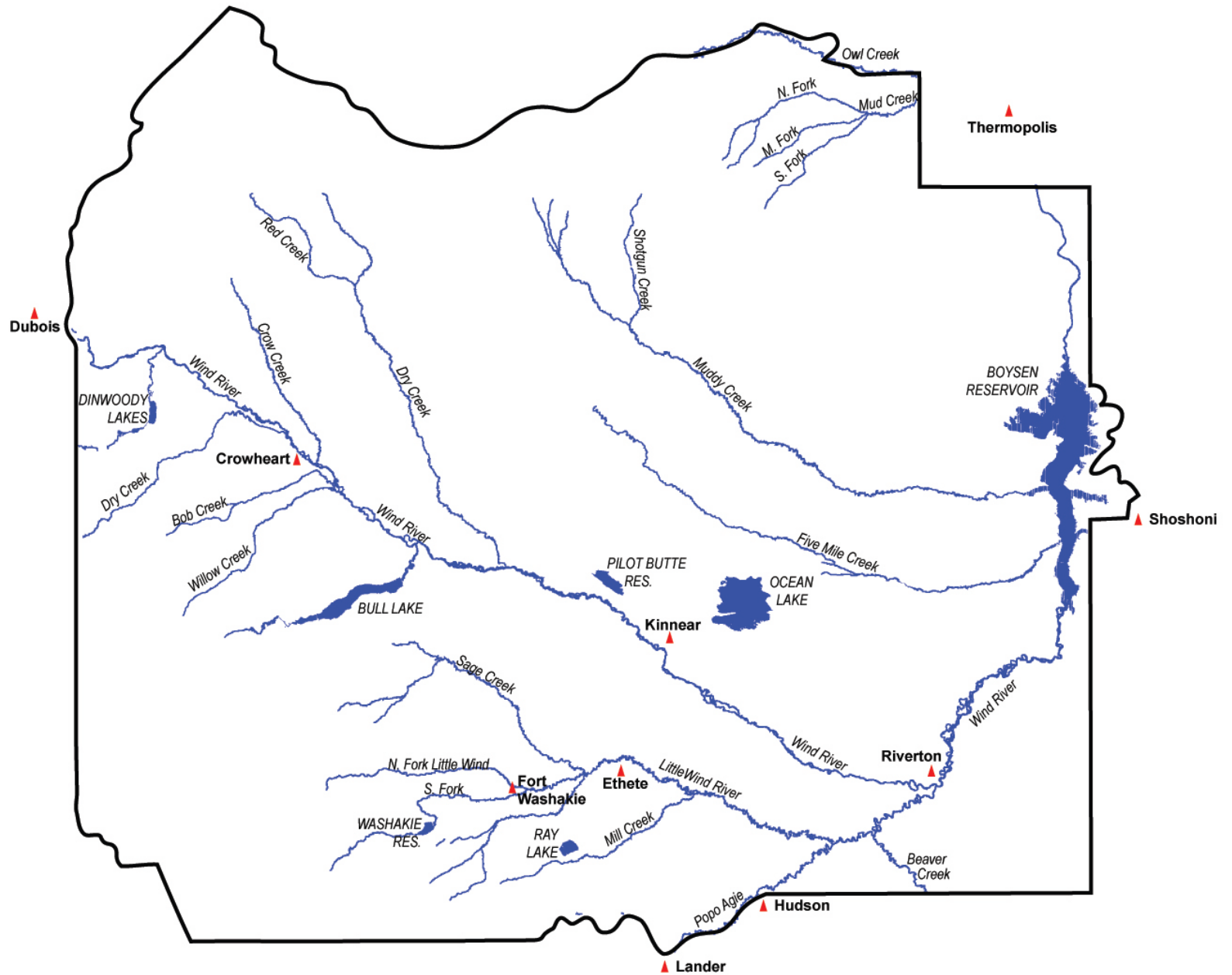


Watershed Relationships



Wind River Watershed





Biggest Issues in WR Watershed

- Dewatering

- Creates higher water temps, bacteria growth, harms fisheries, water quality for human consumption, affects aquifer recharge

Wind River above Riverton 1930s-40s



Wind River below RVID today





Other Issues

- Increased Energy Production
- Climate Change
- Engaged Communities
- Communication
- Legacy Waste from Uranium Mill Tailings



What WRA Does

- Developing a youth council that works directly with elders
 - Promote Leadership Values
 - Respect, reciprocity, relationship, resilience, redistribution, resolution, etc.
 - Recognize that we live our lives surrounded by historical trauma and intergenerational grief
 - Understand by showing, pictures, interviews, the environmental picture



What WRA Does

- EPA Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) Grant, Level 1
 - Core Community Group
 - St. Stephens area
 - Dispute Resolution
 - Other Environmental Training



What WRA Wants to Do

- Watershed monitoring program
- Stakeholder roundtable convened by youth council
- Develop projects that continue to build ownership























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