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Scientists urged to offer water economic data to decision makers

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IMMEDIATELY

stewart/forestry/nw
west mont plus local

SCIENTISTS URGED TO OFFER WATER
ECONOMIC DATA TO DECISION MAKERS

MISSOULA, MONTANA--

Scientists need to help the decision makers by providing adequate data about the economics of water and water transfer, stated Bruce Beatty the fifth speaker in the University of Montana School of Forestry's 10-lecture series on the water problems of the Pacific Northwest.

Beatty filled in for Dr. Emery N. Castle, chairman of the Department of Agricultural Economics and director of the Water Resources Research Institute at Oregon State University, Corvallis.

Beatty, who is a Ph.D. candidate under Dr. Castle, holds bachelor and master degrees from Montana State University, Bozeman. He spoke on the subject of his doctoral thesis: "The Economic Consequences of Interbasin Water Transfers."

He said that water has been secularized historically in our society. It has been isolated from market influences and as a public resource, it is looked upon as an end and not a means. More recently, however, water development have directly stimulated other developments.

Beatty said current water needs call for rational consideration of public policy and objectives. Interbasin water transfer is feasible if the value of distant development exceeds cost of transfer and the value of the water at its point of origin.

The public, however, must decide on its values, such as, is the subsidized regional growth of the Southwest for the public good and can the public benefit if the cost of development is greater than the value of utilization?

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