



Is power politics affecting the affordability of Vail's champagne drinking water?

Letters to Vail

VAIL HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

Resource Management

December 7, 2023

Vail Water Supply, Usage Tracking and Community Demographic Marketing:

[Owners of Vail water taps are required to link by December 31st to an internet digital water metering system operated by the Eagle River Water and Sanitation District \(ERWASD\).](#) Increased surveillance of water usage is intended to be used as a punitive incentive to hasten restrictive water conservation practices.

The detail of the data collected will inventory usage in real time. The ERWASD (District) has not yet adequately explained the security safeguards and the need for mandatory on-line digital registration.

The data collected could track and analyze personal usage habits in meticulous detail. The amount of water usage, duration and the number of people using a water tap could be calculated. Other residential utilities have similar approaches to metering.

The co-mingling and analysis of user data is a method of calculating the occupancy profile of a rate payer, neighborhood and community. The micro detail of the information gathered may raise privacy and property rights issues for some users.

Vail has adequate water resources to provide for the community's needs into the future. The reverse holds true for downstream users within the District and beyond.

The State controls how utility rates are assessed. Residential usage rates must be the same for both part-time and full-time homeowners. Rates are based on consumption categories for full or bulk users. The District is making

volume adjustments in consumption rates and categories. Larger homes will no longer be eligible for a preferential discounted rate.

There are broader social and environmental implications at play. The District intends to have different rates for indoor and outdoor water usage. A separate outdoor usage rate is being used as a means of encouraging reduced residential irrigated landscape.

Drying up Vail’s landscape may have unintended consequences beyond water conservation. Strategically positioned and properly maintained residential landscape and native open space habitat gives added protection against wildfire and the intrusion of man-made pollution. Vail open spaces define neighborhoods and are also intended to prevent the appearance and consequences of urban sprawl.

Back to the future: Incentives can be used to balance populations through segmented demographic marketing initiatives. The segmented demographic categories are workers, residential or commercial owners and their tenants. Community occupancy goals can be synchronized to yield efficient resource consumption, replenishment and restoration.

For decades, the ERWAS District has collected data on sewer flows through the waste water treatment plants that serve the Vail community. Data mining of macro sewage flows yield information sufficient to calculate and analyze population densities. Monitoring water consumption was utilized in Vail’s earlier years by recording sewer output records as one means of evaluating land use and development policies. The same approach is as valid today as it was then and is made more so today by technological advancements that can report population profiles in much greater detail.

Highly successful social media tourism marketing such as VRBO, (Vacation Rentals By Owner) can be turned to community marketing that incentivizes dwelling owners and property managers to take advantage of the best times to live full time and rent short or long term. There is no reason that VRBO cannot be turned to a lower cost for LRBO (Local Rental by Owner).

Vail’s current workforce housing initiatives focus on incentivizing new construction and deed-restricted purchase of residential property to house Eagle County workers. A less costly and less disruptive approach could be achieved through marketing initiatives targeting Vail only homeowners and workers.

The success of Vail’s social media consumer marketing could be turned to attracting and holding the loyalty of guests, part-time residents and skilled workers whether they are seasonal or permanent. The suggested approach is market sensitive within capitalistic norms and technically feasible. [It is less divisive and contentious when compared to the punitive and invasive trends that current regulatory legislation and litigation appear to be taking.](#)

VHA strives to provide clear and concise discussions of matters affecting the Vail community in the belief that an informed citizenry will be an engaged citizenry. Our intent is to promote more citizen involvement and community discussions of issues facing the Town. If these are issues that concerns you, please make your views known to candidates and [town officials](#). By joining with VHA, as a member, paid-subscriber or reader, you can add your voice to sustain what is good about our community and to shine a spotlight on important issues. See back editions of VHA communications on the Association’s website.

To receive VHA letters and reports as a Reader, Paid-Subscriber or Member.

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