

the divining rod

New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute

81-1

April 1981

OWRT FUNDING IN JEOPARDY

Secretary James Watt and the Office of Management and Budget have moved toward eliminating totally the funding for the Office of Water Research and Technology (OWRT), as well as the Water Resources Council. Watt has said that some of the two agencies' functions will be turned over to the States and private industry, while others will be taken over by a new Office of Water Policy in the Interior Department.

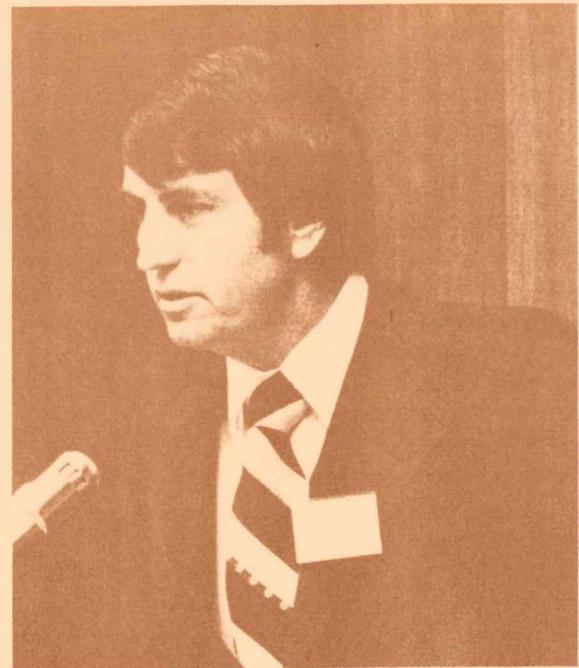
The Water Resources Council has been attacked by many in Congress who complain that its attempts to review the worth of water projects usurp the authority of congressional committees.

At hearings in the Senate Appropriations Committee on March 26, testimony was given by David Allee (Cornell University) and by Bartell Jensen (Utah State University) based on the results of a task force white paper.

Dr. Tom Bahr was a member of the committee which produced this white paper. He says that it includes excellent examples of water research payoffs to the economy, demonstrating the need for water research to continue.

The critical question is whether Congress will accept the elimination of these programs. Should Congress appropriate money to Interior for continuing the Institute program, it might be handled administratively through some office in Interior other than OWRT.

It is anticipated that if money is available, and because of the administration's view that more significant cost sharing by the States should be required, it is likely that the participation of some States will be precluded.



Garrey Carruthers, a New Mexico State University agricultural economics professor and former acting director of WRRRI, is President Reagan's nominee to be assistant secretary for land and water resources in the Interior Department. On April 8, Sen. Pete Domenici, R-NM, told a Senate hearing, "We have not had a more qualified individual recommended for this post."

WATER CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

On March 26 and 27, 1981, the 26th Annual New Mexico Water Conference was held on the NMSU campus in Las Cruces, NM. Sponsored by the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute, approximately 200 people attended the conference on "Water for a Growing and Changing Sun Belt State."

NMSU President Gerald Thomas gave the keynote address on the impact of population growth on resources of arid and semi-arid regions of the world. He warned that planning and conservation must become increasingly important in dealing with water resources if the growth is to continue in the Sun Belt states. "The rush to the Sun Belt may come to a screeching halt after a decade if we do not plan now to meet our water needs," Thomas said.

Lee Zink, Director of the University of New Mexico's Institute of Applied Research Services, addressed the opening session on the topic, "The US Sun Belt--Realities of the Future."

The luncheon was held at the Holiday Inn de Las Cruces. Dr. Ray Sadler was the guest speaker. He shared some of his favorite stories from the time of the Mexican Revolution under the title of "Blood on the Border."

In the Thursday afternoon session, four issue papers were presented in the major areas of emphasis: agricultural, municipal, industrial and recreational water needs and the conflicts these needs involve. Called "Contrasting Views to the Future," this session was moderated by Marjorie Burr, League of Women Voters of Las Cruces. Presenters were: Dr. George Dawson,

Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business, NMSU; Ken Needham, Director of Utilities, City of Las Cruces; Dr. William Stone, Hydrogeologist, NM Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources; and Dr. Frank Ward, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business, NMSU.

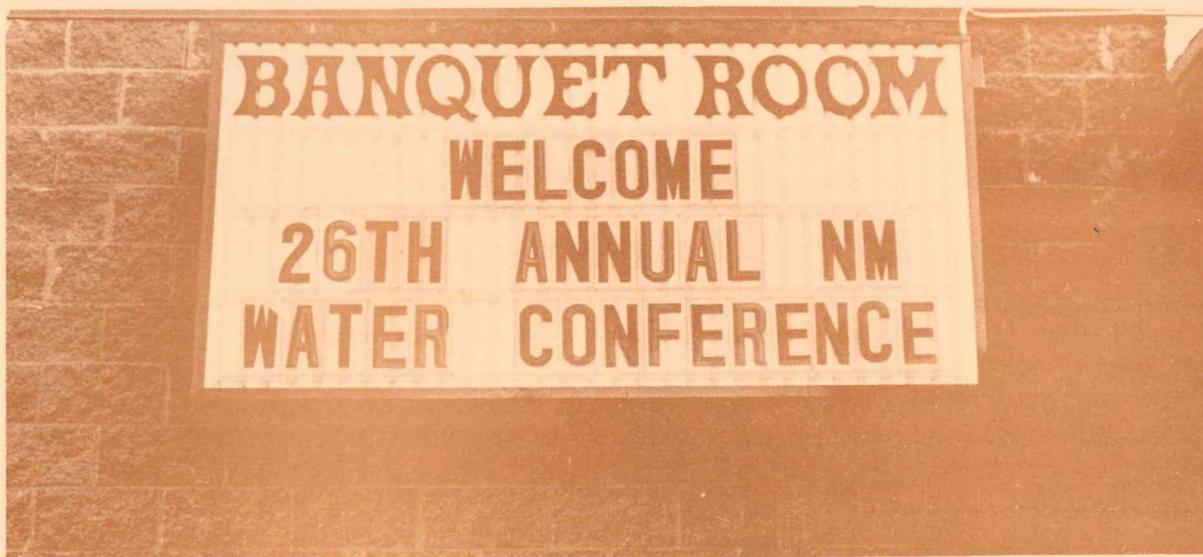
Following the issue papers, conference participants went to workshops which covered these same topics, the afternoon presenters serving as workshop leaders.

A buffet and cash bar were held at Fat Eddie's Best Western Motel on Thursday evening and proved to be lots of fun.

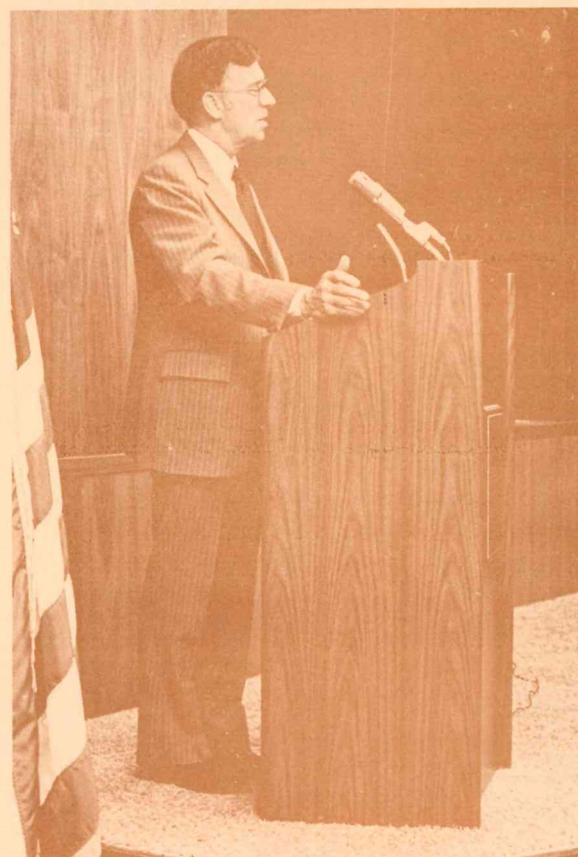


On Friday workshops resumed, followed by panel discussion and workshop reports. Steve Reynolds, State Engineer, served as moderator for this session. Panelists were: Col. Bernard Roth, District Chief, US Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque; Dr. William Stephens, New Mexico Secretary of Agriculture and Director, New Mexico Department of Agriculture; Jim King, Deputy Director, New Mexico Department of Natural Resources; and Fred O'Cheskey, Public Service Company of New Mexico. Workshop reporters agreed that more efficiency and better management practices are needed because the demand for water is increasing while most of it has already been claimed.

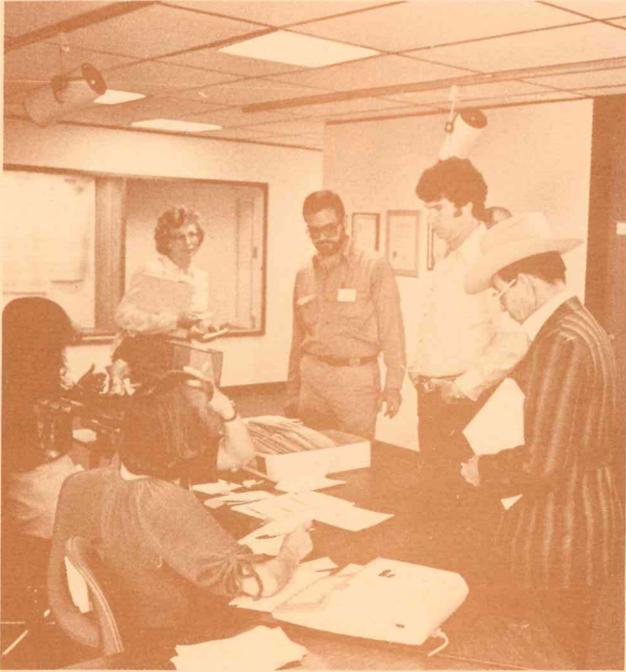
Agriculture must be more efficient in its irrigation practices, agricultural workshop reporter Fran Kaszeta told the conference audience and the panel. Fran is a civil engineering research associate at NMSU.



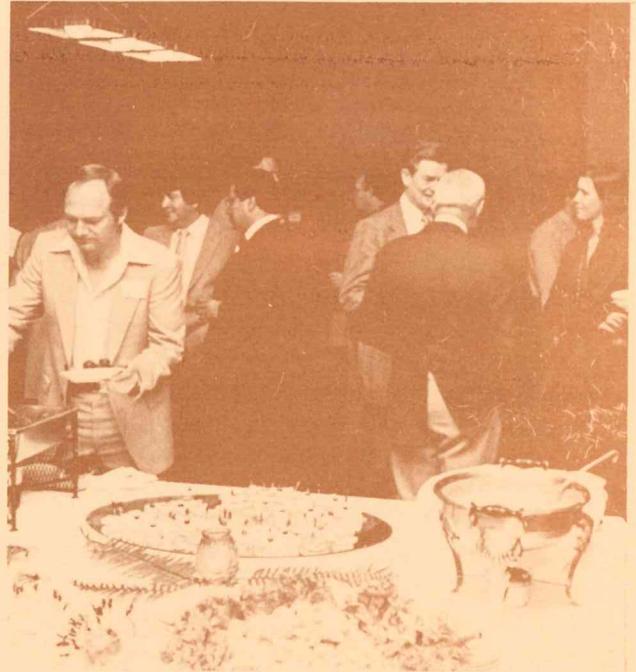
President Thomas, NMSU, was the keynote speaker at the 26th Annual Water Conference sponsored by WRI. His topic was "Water for the Sun Belt: A Global Perspective."



Lee Zink, Director of UNM's Institute of Applied Research Services also spoke at the opening session on "The US Sun Belt: Realities of the Future."



Approximately 200 individuals registered at Stucky Hall on March 26, 1981, for the two-day conference.



A social was held on Thursday night at Fat Eddie's Best Western Motel. Participants enjoyed an ample buffet.

Water Conference (continued)



The conference audience listened attentively to speakers, as well as participating in workshops on four principal topics: agricultural, municipal, industrial, and recreation.



Panel members Jim King, Fred O'Cheskey, Steve Reynolds, Bill Stephens, and Col. Bernard Roth, listened and responded to workshop reports at Friday's session.

Steve Hubert, while reporting on the municipal workshop, suggested that utility companies initiate escalating price rates to make it expensive to use excessive amounts of water. Hubert, an attorney for the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, said that most rates are determined strictly by delivery and maintenance costs. This workshop also suggested that communities begin to think about limiting growth, based on its water resources.

Gail Stockton, a Santa Fe engineer, reported for the industry workshop. This group called for more development and research of saline water, and expressed a need for stricter enforcement of government water quantity and quality regulations.

Thomas Moody, New Mexico Game and Fish Department, gave the workshop report on recreation. He said that water for recreation is hard to fight for because it is hard to fix a dollar value to it. To most people, recreation only has an aesthetic value. "But we have a saying in our work," he said. "Either provide recreation or build a lot of asylums." In the past, recreation departments have not had to compete strenuously for funding because they have been able to take advantage of other water programs. Panel member Jim King expressed his concern that the market will determine water use priorities, and that water recreation agencies and agriculture will not be able to compete successfully. Recreation agencies especially have not been able to be effective competitors for funds, according to King.

The conference drew an audience which was a mixture of citizens, water managers, and water

researchers. Although sensitive topics were discussed, everyone seemed to agree that New Mexico faces conflicts over water that will not easily be resolved. However, a forum like this conference was an important first step toward airing feelings about problems which must be solved in the future.

Gift to Institute

The Institute has received from Rogers Aston a copy of Senator Robert S. Kerr's book, Land, Wood and Water (edited by Malvina Stephenson and Tris Coffin, with an introduction by Lyndon B. Johnson). This autographed copy is a welcome addition to the Institute's library. Many thanks to Rogers Aston for his generosity.

Slide-Tape

Show Available

An 11 minute slide show entitled "Wetlands: A Case for Protection," is available on loan from all EPA regional offices. This slide-tape show discusses the role wetlands play in primary production, flood control, water purification, and shoreline protection. It also looks at the loss of wetlands due to dredging, draining, and filling activities. For further information contact: Eileen Hopewell, Librarian, NTOTC Lending Library, US EPA, Cincinnati, Ohio 45268; phone (513) 684-7503.

New WRRRI Reports

- 124 Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual New Mexico Water Conference, "A Quarter Century of Water Research" - August 1980
- 125 Basic Laboratory Skills for Water and Wastewater Analysis - Clark, D. W. - November 1980
- 126 The Energy Impact on Irrigated Agricultural Production of the Southwestern Closed Basins, New Mexico - Lansford, R. R., et al. - November 1980
- 127 Using Saline Water for Crop Production in New Mexico - O'Connor, G. A. - December 1980
- 128 Assessment of Water Supply Contamination Due to Underground Coal Gasification - Niemczyk, T. M. and Walters, E. A. - December 1980
- 129 New Mexico Residents' Attitudes Toward Water Use and Monetary Tradeoffs - Pratt, E. R. - December 1980
- 130 Effect of Saline and Alkaline Water on Growth and Survival of Rhizobium meliloti - Botsford, J. L. - January 1981
- 131 Case Studies in the Development of New Mexico Water Resources Institutions: The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and Urban Water Pricing - McDonald, M. B., et al. - January 1981
- 132 Transport Mechanisms in Sediment Rich Streams -- Heavy Metal and Nutrient Load of the Rio San Jose-Rio Puerco Systems - Brandvold, D. K.; Brandvold, L.; and Popp, C. J. - February 1981 (Appendix B of this report is available separately upon request from WRRRI for a copy charge of \$7.70.)

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