

## PREFACE

In the past year New Mexico has been faced with the problem of record flows in the Rio Grande. While that might not be considered a problem in a semiarid state like New Mexico, it does complicate a river management system designed to deal with water scarcity, not water surplus. In July 1985, and for only the second time since Elephant Butte Reservoir was built, the Rio Grande flowed over the reservoir spillway. High water also taxed the storage capacities of reservoirs upstream. With those events as a backdrop, the 31st Annual New Mexico Water Conference explored the topic of "Managing the River."

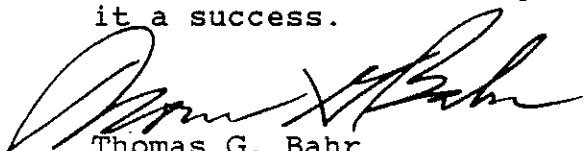
The first speaker, Albuquerque Journal reporter Nolan Hester set the tone for the conference with his speech, "Who are the Outsiders?" The "outsiders", he said, emerged during the water surplus to challenge the laws and the institutions created by the "insiders". The rest of the speakers then gave the participants an insider/outsider overview of the problems surrounding the water surplus.

Those talks, presented here, provide insight not only about the problems of managing the river, but also about the cooperation between the agencies and groups solving those problems.

The second day of the conference was devoted to a Roundtable Discussion magnificently led by Jerry Sherk of the Department of Justice. The roundtable consisted of a dozen of the region's top water leaders engaged in lively debate as they answered questions submitted by the audience. The transcript of that part of the discussion is printed here. Following the question and answer session, Sherk then posed additional questions to the panelists based on real and hypothetical water management situations.

This year's water conference accomplished two things. It confirmed the complexities of managing the river that serves many uses and many users, and it gave those users a better understanding of each other's special interests.

Special thanks should go to the Water Conference Advisory Committee, which suggested the theme for this year's conference and provided the support necessary to make it a success.



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