

PREFACE

The cultural, emotional and economic symbolism attached to water has made water conflicts inevitable. Given the scarcity of water in the arid west, conflict resolution and negotiation have become necessary vehicles for dealing with such a precious resource. Whether we face water issues from a manager's, developer's or user's perspective, each party brings to the table different interests and a multitude of attitudes. The 38th Annual New Mexico Water Conference attempted to examine the negotiation process and the best ways to get the various players to work together.

We heard different perspectives on how to manage water conflicts: an academic dean's view on how engineers might reduce water resources conflicts citing three examples where conflicts have existed or may occur in the future; several experienced water attorneys' thoughts; a professor's experience in environmental mediation of Virginia's instream flow; and a water manager's experience in a major water rights settlement. We also learned from speakers who have been involved in water conflicts and were able to provide some "dos and don'ts."

We headed south to Carlsbad this year. Mayor Bob Forrest welcomed participants and encouraged us to take time to discover Carlsbad's charm. Some participants took advantage of tours at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and everyone seemed to enjoy the Thursday evening dinner at President's Park on the banks of the Pecos River.

The WRRI is grateful for the suggestions and support of the Water Conference Advisory Committee in planning the conference. We look forward to working with them as we plan the 39th Annual Water Conference.



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