

**25th Biennial Groundwater Conference and 14th Annual GRA Meeting
October 25-26, 2005
Sacramento, CA**

Past Lessons and Future Prospects

By Vicki Kretsinger

Looking back, propelling forward, on October 25 and 26 at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento, California, it's "back to the future" with the "25th Biennial Groundwater Conference and 14th Annual Groundwater Resources Association of California Annual Meeting and Conference."

For 50 years, the Biennial Groundwater Conference has provided policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, and educators the opportunity to learn about the current policies, regulations, and technical challenges affecting the use and management of groundwater in California. Sponsors of this year's conference include the University of California Center for Water Resources, California Department of Water Resources (DWR), California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Groundwater Resources Association of California (GRA), Water Education Foundation (WEF), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Cooperating organizations include the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), California Groundwater Association (CGA), Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), and the National Ground Water Association (NGWA).

Beginning in 1950, the University of California held annual research conferences that focused on the important issue of "water spreading for groundwater recharge." As the conferences expanded to encompass broader groundwater issues, the conference frequency shifted to once every two years and became known as the "Biennial Groundwater Conference." In 50 years, California has come a long way with scientific advancements and steps toward active local groundwater management. At the same time, statements made during a 1957 keynote address by Harvey O. Banks, Director of the DWR, remain relevant today. In his address, Banks commented (excerpts follow):

"Ground water looms very large in the total water picture in California and the formation and implementation of plans to meet our needs for water in the future. Artificial recharge is one of the most important aspects in the planned operation of those ground-water basins. It is not the only one, however, by any means. ...We are seriously lacking in the data and information necessary for planned utilization of ground water. ... Another problem about which we know very little is the matter of proper salt balance in ground-water basins. That is a subject which needs thorough study. ...In planned utilization of ground-water basins, remember we are dealing not only with engineering and hydraulic problems; we are also dealing with legal and financial problems."

In light of the welcoming remarks by Banks in 1957, we have progressed, but we still have a long way to go.

This year's conference will celebrate 50 years of groundwater research and development in California. In honor of this special occasion, the conference theme this year is **“Past Lessons and Future Prospects.”** Historical scientific advancements, changing issues and policies, and new challenges will be discussed in policy and technical sessions that address groundwater resources at basin-wide, regional, and national scales.

The two-day conference features a plenary session, concurrent sessions with technical and policy presentations on current and future challenges for groundwater resource management and increasing water quality issues, and a final general assembly on climate change and the potential impact on California's water resources. On October 25, the featured luncheon speaker is Rita Schmidt Sudman, Director of the Water Education Foundation. Rita's presentation will highlight the history of *Western Water*, including feature stories that captured California's evolving water issues, and also the historical coverage of these issues by the media. An evening reception on October 25 provides networking opportunities with exhibitors and poster presenters. The luncheon program on October 26 includes a brief overview of GRA's annual activities and an update of California's legislative activities relating to groundwater by Chris Frahm, Legislative Advocacy Group Leader with Hatch and Parent. Following the luncheon, GRA's annual awards will be presented.

Rick Standiford, Associate Vice President of the University of California Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources, will open the conference plenary session on October 25. In keeping with the Conference theme, three invited plenary session speakers, David Todd, Professor Emeritus of the University of California Berkeley, Lester Snow, Director of the California Department of Water Resources, and Celeste Cantu, Executive Director of the State Water Resources Control Board, will take us back 50 years for a glimpse of California's groundwater history and then lead us forward with their perspectives on California's groundwater future.

Concurrent session topics and planned subject matter include:

- *Septic system discharge issues*: including a panel discussion on various state and national septic system issues and groundwater quality impacts.
- *Groundwater management plans – local examples*: including historical perspectives, AB 3030 plans, and SB 1938 plans and approaches.
- *Salinity issues – past practices and future strategies*: including identification of salinization processes in California's coastal aquifers, major sources of groundwater salinization, and examples of geochemical techniques used to characterize sources of groundwater salinization.
- *Modeling California's groundwater*: including evolving modeling tools and applications, expanding opportunities to advance the understanding of hydrologic processes, and identifying improved methods to assess complex basin management schemes.
- *Unregulated contaminants in groundwater*: including the role of drinking water source assessments in groundwater management programs, results of investigations conducted by the USGS Toxics Program, and challenges associated with communicating water quality information to the public.

- *Groundwater's role in stream systems and renaturalization efforts*: including discussion of the stream/aquifer interface and interconnected science and policy issues, the waterscape of California and the occurrence of wetlands from pre-groundwater development to the present, and Cosumnes River issues.
- *Groundwater tracers and age dating*: including current and future applications of environmental tracers and age dating, synthesis of the USGS data gathered for the Groundwater Ambient Monitoring and Assessment Program (GAMA) program, and illustrations of groundwater tracer methods and results.
- *Groundwater law and policy*: including a panel discussion on the history of groundwater development, policies, and management in southern California; the evolution of California case law; and the implementation of the Phase 8 program in the Sacramento Valley.
- *Groundwater quality and recycled wastes*: including biosolids applications, strategies for dairy waste management, and commercial/industrial wastewater disposal.
- *Emerging issues in groundwater resources – regional examples*: including fractured rock groundwater quality and quantity issues, coastal basins – seawater intrusion and other stressors, and Sacramento/San Joaquin River Basins – agricultural land use and growing urbanization.
- *Climate change and California's water resources*: including indicators of global climate change and implications for California's water resources, discussion of effects of global warming on a California watershed, and future policy and management considerations.

Call for Posters (Abstracts Due August 1, 2005): The Conference Planning Committee invites you to submit abstracts for Poster Presentations. Abstract subject areas are listed above. Abstracts are limited to a maximum of one page and should include a title, author's name and affiliation, contact information and subject area. Additional information on abstract and presentation policy and formatting requirements are available at <http://www.waterresources.ucr.edu>. Submit abstract and submittal form by email to: Julie Drouyor, UC Center for Water Resources at cwres@ucr.edu.

Registration: The special early registration fee is \$295 for those registering by **October 10, 2005**. Late (after October 10) and on-site registration is \$350. The registration for students will be \$100. The conference is at the Sacramento Convention Center located at 1030 15th Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, California. Special hotel room rates are available at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento at Capitol Park, located at 1209 L Street across from the convention center. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-233-1234, or you can log onto www.hyatt.com. **Until October 5, 2005, we have secured a special room rate of \$129 a night** (plus taxes and surcharges). By phone, mention that you are attending the 2005 Biennial Groundwater Conference.

Conference Program Information and Updates: Visit the University of California Center for Water Resources Center web site, <http://www.waterresources.ucr.edu>, for more details as they develop. For more information, contact Julie Drouyor at the UC Center for Water Resources, (951) 827-4327. Information will also be posted at www.grac.org.