

PREFACE

A lot can change in a quarter century. That is certainly true of water law. Even the best of laws must reflect the needs of the society it governs. Pressures on water resources from outside the state as well as demands from competing uses within the state call for a renewed look at how law affects water resources in the West. With that in mind, the 29th Annual New Mexico Water Conference returned to a topic that was covered 25 years ago at the 1959 New Mexico Water Conference--water law.

This year's conference, entitled "Water Law in the West," was held April 26-27 before an attentive audience of 267. Because of the popularity of the conference topic, registration was full more than two weeks before the conference.

Participants were not disappointed. The first set of speakers provided a clear and informative history of water law in the Southwest as well as in New Mexico. The second group of speakers dealt with the important issues facing western water law--El Paso, Indian water rights, and interstate water disputes. A third session covered other economic and environmental issues affecting water development.

Former WRRRI Director Garrey Carruthers made a quick trip from his post at the Interior Department in Washington, D.C., to give the conference luncheon address. He followed his tongue-in-cheek review of his proposed book How to Survive in Washington with a serious assessment of state and federal responsibilities in water resources management.

For the first time in nearly a decade, students presented research papers at the conference. Water Conference Advisory Committee members Fred Allen, Lynn Brandvold, Jim Daniel, Charles Hohn, Brian McDonald, Tom Moody, Merle Niehaus and Doug Schneider screened the entries and judged the presentations. Ben Greene, an NMSU graduate student in chemistry, presented the winning paper. The papers of the four student finalists are included in the proceedings.

A successful water conference requires the cooperation of many individuals and organizations. Special thanks goes to the Water Conference Advisory Committee for its advice and support.

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Director



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