



Wyoming Water Association

# Wyoming Water Flow

*Water Is Wyoming's Gold!*

Volume LXVIII, Issue IV

December 2005

## **2005 Association Conference Well Attended and Received Conference Theme of "Transitions Ahead" Explored in Diverse Panel Discussions and Presentations**

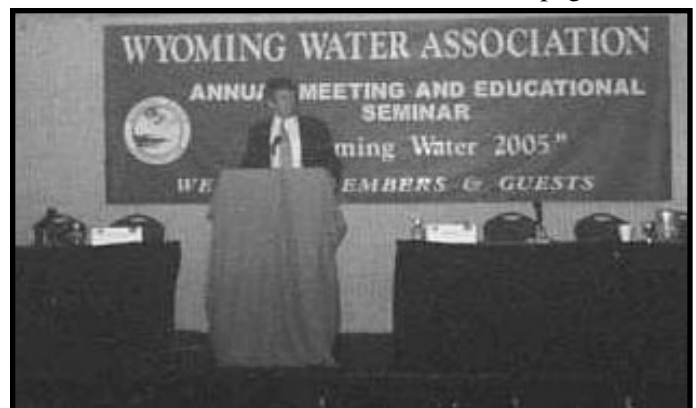
The Wyoming Water Association's 2005 Annual Meeting and Education Seminar was held on November 2nd through 4th at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper. The conference provided many opportunities to discuss the conference theme of "Wyoming's Water - Transitions Ahead."

The Annual Meeting keynote address was delivered by former Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science Bennett Raley, who challenged Association members to "consider where you want to be." He noted that the Federal administrative template after the next Presidential election is unknown - hence time is of essence between now and the fall 2006 election to accomplish desired policy actions - such as putting the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program in place. He urged judgments to be made as to what is attainable and what is not.

Raley noted that there are some very agonizing choices to be made on account of the wartime and natural disasters that the country is facing. These choices are definitely going to affect the availability of federal funding to assist with maintenance of western water infrastructure in his view. Raley commented on the status of water resource - endangered species conflicts across the West. He noted in the Pacific Northwest and Columbia River Basin the administrative and legal Endangered Species Act situation is in "freefall," whereas the Colorado River Basin is in better shape than elsewhere on account of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program. Raley noted his obvious pleasure with how the Department of Interior's Water 2025 Initiative - developed and gotten underway during Raley's tenure at DOI - had demonstrated the ability to make a difference on the ground with grant funding directed to resolving conflicts before they become crises.

Pat O'Toole, Wyoming rancher and current President of the Family Farm Alliance addressed the challenges of maintaining western irrigated agriculture in the face of increasing competition for water supply. He warned, if the current trend continues (and there does not seem to be a countertrend forthcoming), of an impending crisis directly resulting from losing irrigated agriculture through the irrigation water supply being sold off, taken and put to meeting municipal and other urban water demands. In addition to the food self-sufficiency issues created for the United States by the loss of hundreds of thousands of acres westwide, there are tremendous implications for wildlife, habitat and ecosystem health. Irrigated agriculture is - and needs to be treated as - a strategic national resource in this country

The conference featured many truly excellent presentations and panel discussions that space here won't allow summarizing. However, WWA members can view and download many of the individual speaker presentations by visiting the Association website: [www.wyomingwater.org](http://www.wyomingwater.org) and clicking "See '05 Presentations" in the blue box on the home page.



*Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science Bennett Raley addressing the Wyoming Water Association's Education Seminar on November 2, 2005.*

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### **2005 Officers of the Wyoming Water Association**

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## **Wyoming Water Flow**

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# **2005 – A Year of Danger and for Thanks Water Much in the News – Throughout the Year**

*by John Shields, Executive Secretary*

As the end of each year approaches, it is both natural and habitual to think back on the events of the year just ending. Many may be tempted to say “goodbye and good riddance” to 2005 if they choose to reflect on the litany of natural disasters and human tragedies and suffering that occurred around the globe since the 2004 Christmas holiday, including the Indian Ocean tsunami, Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma, Pakistan's earthquake, and war, famine and drought around the world.

Consider how much of the past year's news was dominated by man's relationship with nature and in particular with the raw power, crushing weight and unpredictable movement of water - in the oceans and as it travels around the planet within the ever changing hydrologic cycle. It is hard to recall a year during which so much of the world's attention was directed to water-related events.

The day after Christmas, 2004, the world was again reminded of mankind's frailty in the face of nature's - water's - might, when the strongest earthquake experienced in forty years struck the floor of the Indian Ocean and hours later, walls of water, which we know as tsunami, wreaked unbelievable havoc in twelve countries and left an estimated 226,000 people dead or missing. Here in the United States, during the 2005 tropical storm season, there were 26 named storms; surpassing the record of 21 set in 1933. Seven of this season's thirteen hurricanes were considered major. “Katrina,” as found in the baby names book, means “pure.” The devastation and mess left by that storm is mind-boggling and left an aftermath that is anything but pure. As we close this year heavy rains in California have led to flooding in the Russian River Basin and the prospect of major mud slides. It's been a tough year for too many folks.

Despite the temptation to leave the narrative there, it seems appropriate to be **thankful** for many things that happened during 2005 as well. We were blessed to have a near normal runoff season across most of Wyoming during the 2005 runoff season and build storage in Wyoming and other western reservoirs, including Boysen Reservoir, Yellowtail Reservoir, Bear Lake, Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Wyoming folks proudly dedicated a new reservoir, High Savery Dam and Reservoir, on August 30, 2005 - significant in being the first state-owned new storage reservoir built by the Wyoming Water Development Commission and in demonstrating that multi-year tenacity can overcome modern bureaucratic permitting hurdles. While the permitting timeframe and costs were much longer and higher than anticipated, High Savery Dam and Reservoir will now be providing needed storage water in the Little Snake River Valley. There was much to be thankful for in terms of water supplies and water management in the year now ending.

We know water will continue to be in the news in 2006 - and all hope for far more good water stories and much, much less of the bad.

# Small Water Project Benefits Far Reaching

*By Dave Freudenthal, Wyoming Governor*

*NOTE: The following article was a guest editorial published in the November 21, 2005 edition (Vol. 17, No. 23) of the Wyoming Livestock Roundup and acknowledgement, credit and appreciation is hereby extended to the publisher and staff of the Wyoming Livestock Roundup.*

Here in the arid West, small water projects have held tremendous importance for literally generations of agricultural producers and for the continuing viability of wildlife populations. From providing alternate water sources in areas of compromised water quality to supplying needed water and forage for livestock and wildlife in otherwise water short areas, Wyoming's small water project program has undoubtedly played a significant role-in shaping the state that we know today.

We have all shared in those benefits, and they can and should continue.

With the funds provided by the small water program, the state can help fund projects whose benefits range from improved agriculture to habitat for fish and wildlife to increased recreational opportunities. Priority is generally given to projects that benefit livestock, wildlife, the environment and the recreational community and are supported by state and federal natural resource management agencies and related technical resource agencies.

Examples of these small water projects might include the construction or rehabilitation of small reservoirs and stock watering ponds, wells, pipelines and conveyance facilities, springs, windmills, and wetland developments. Irrigation projects may also be included as long as the potential public benefits associated with the project are documented in a conservation district's existing watershed plan or state or federal agency's resource management plan or environmental evaluation.

Public benefit lies at the heart of any discussion of Wyoming's small water projects program. Legally, our state constitution is very clear that public funds are only to be spent for public benefits, that the state cannot make gifts of its resources solely for private profit or gain.

Practically, water is simply too valuable a

resource in this state for these public funds to go to support only private gain. We need to develop water, and we need the limited dollars allocated to the program to benefit as many uses and people as possible. To do so, we must ensure that the program remains driven by public need and benefit.

For my part, I understand that defining what constitutes a public benefit is not always easy; in most cases, it could come down to the judgment of the members of the Wyoming Water Development Commission.

But such is their responsibility. There has been some discussion recently of simply mandating that public access be a part of any endeavor supported by Wyoming's small water project program. I do not support preconditioning the funding of all small water projects on the granting of public access.

Where mutual agreement can be encouraged, I can certainly see a grant of access providing evidence that a given project has a public benefit. But there are plenty of other ways to demonstrate a public benefit, and we should not narrow our focus to the point of excluding these other gains.

For example, a small water project may provide an off-channel water source on private land adjacent to a stream that is in danger of being listed as an impaired waterway under the Clean Water Act. A project could contribute to maintaining grazing and other recreational uses along stream segments, both on the private lands of the project proponent and on adjacent public lands, perhaps of a separate federal permittee. A downstream municipality would benefit from clean water, and wildlife would benefit from the additional off-channel water.

Another example: If a small water project helps provide a water source for sage grouse, in the form of a guzzler, it contributes to keeping that species off the federal list of threatened or endangered species. That, in turn, could mean that agricultural and oil and gas producers would not be subject to the burdensome restrictions of the Endangered Species Act.

Unfortunately, this consideration of public benefit as not been historically as much of a driving factor n

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granting state funds as it should or must be. In fact, the program has been the focus of much discussion over the last several months, with some calling for reform or even a dismantling of the program.

For my part, I can certainly see room for improvement in the way the small water program has been administered. I remain concerned that some projects have been crafted for the sole benefit of the private proponent. Ultimately, the good judgment of the Wyoming Water Development Commission in granting projects that have a demonstrable public benefit is going to be the best response to these assertions and calls for the small water program's demise.

## WWA Annual Business Meeting Held:

### ***Officers Elected and Resolutions Approved During November 3rd Business Meeting***

The assembled membership of the Wyoming Water Association convened their 2005 business meeting on November 3rd and approved resolutions for the year upcoming. The membership also elected as your officers and Board members the same slate as had served during 2005 (list found on page 6 of this newsletter).

President Alan Dugan expressed his pleasure with the progress made by the Association during the year. He encouraged the members to help build the Association by bringing a neighbor, a colleague, a fellow business or water district to join the Association. Executive Secretary Shields reported on improvements made in the Association's website, the successful July 15th Water Resources Tour, progress made in implementing the Student Membership and sponsorship program.

The dates and location of the **2006 Annual Meeting and Education Seminar** were announced and will be **November 1, 2 and 3, 2006** and will again be held at the Ramkota Hotel in Casper.

**The next Board meeting of the Association will be held on February 14, 2006.** The Board will convene its meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Water Development Commission offices at 6920 Yellowtail Road in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

## Resolutions Committee Volunteers Sought: ***Resolutions Committee Seeking Assistance With Wording Changes***

At the WWA Board meeting on Nov. 1, 2005, it was suggested that the WWA needs a resolution regarding return flows and their value. Resolutions Committee Chairman Rebecca Mathisen has researched this matter and provides the following report how return flows have been referenced in the WWA's past resolutions and statements in support of objectives. Her records go back to 1992.

From 1992-2000, WWA's Statement in Support of Objectives included: "RETURN FLOWS: The WWA supports the concept that historic water rights based on return flows be protected in utilization of water within the State of Wyoming."

From 2001-2004, this item said "RETURN FLOWS: The WWA supports the concept that water rights that appropriate return flows be protected within the State of Wyoming." In the fall of 2005 this statement was removed on the basis that Wyoming water law already accomplishes this. Neither of the above versions expounds on the benefits of return flows to late season river flows.

Resolutions Committee Chair Mathisen suggests a committee be formed to draft a resolution for presentation to the Board at the 2006 Summer Board meeting and for consideration by the general membership at the 2006 Annual Meeting.

WWA members willing to assist with this task are requested to contact Becky Mathisen by calling her at 777-6148 or 634-7305, or by sending an e-mail to [bmathi@seo.wyo.gov](mailto:bmathi@seo.wyo.gov).



*Among those enjoying the Thursday, November 2nd Wyoming Water Association Annual Meeting Banquet at the Ramkota Hotel were (right to left): After dinner speaker and WWA Member John Barnes, long-time WWA Board Member Don Brosz and Scholarship recipient Nick Smith and his dinner guest, a fellow University of Wyoming student, for the evening.*

# Thank You!

The Wyoming Water Association gratefully acknowledges the following firms who each donated funds to underwrite the costs of the beverage and snack breaks at our 2005 Annual Meeting and Education Seminar. Financial support and sponsorship of the Association is greatly appreciated and is the reason that we have been able to hold our registration fees for the conference to the same, affordable rate for a number of years. You'll recognize these firms and companies as they are your fellow Wyoming Water Association members - many have donated funds multiple years in a row to help sponsor our conference. We thank them and urge you to thank them as well!

## **States West Water Resources Corp.**

1904 East 15th Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  
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675 Reed Street  
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## 2006 WWA Officers and Board Members

During the 2005 Annual Membership Business Meeting held on November 2nd, the Association's membership approved the roster of proposed officers and Board members presented to the members by the Board.

The members of the Board serve in a voluntary capacity and give of their time and talents freely without compensation. The Board holds at least three Board meetings per year, fall, winter and summer. In addition, the Board has several standing committees that include: Scholarship, Resolutions and Conservation and involve additional volunteer efforts. Please take the time to thank these people for all they do for Wyoming's water. For reference purposes, the Board and Officers of the Wyoming Water Association are listed below:

<b>President</b>	Alan Dugan
<b>1st Vice-President</b>	Ron Cunningham
<b>2nd Vice-President</b>	Nick Wambeke
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jack Meena
<b>Secretary</b>	John Shields
<b>Board Members</b>	
<i>Agriculture</i>	Neal Payne Klodette Stroh Bryant Startin Dennis Schroeder
<i>Industry, Business &amp; Education</i>	Wendy Hutchinson Robert Johnson Evan Simpson Don Brosz
<i>Recreation &amp; Conservation</i>	Kathy Buchner Laurie Goodman Tom Annear Barry Lawrence
<i>Labor &amp; Civic</i>	Harriet Hageman Jane West Bill Stafford Frank Grimes
<i>Local Government</i>	Tim Wilson Bruce Barnard Robert Taylor Scott Schmidt

## The Water Planner: Water-Related Upcoming Events and Activities of Interest

To help inform WWA members about upcoming meetings on Wyoming's water resources, the Water Planner is included in newsletters and can be viewed on our website ([www.wyomingwater.org](http://www.wyomingwater.org)).

- **December 13 - Snake/Salt River Basin Advisory Group Meeting.** More info at [waterplan.state.wy.us](http://waterplan.state.wy.us) or by calling 777-7626.
- **December 14-16** - Annual Meeting of the Colorado River Water Users Association, Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada. More info at [www.crwua.org](http://www.crwua.org) or by calling (760) 398-2651.
- **December 25, 2005** - Wishing all a very merry and joyous Christmas holiday!
- **January 1, 2006** - Happy New Year!
- **January 3, 2006** - State Water Forum Meeting, SEO Conference Room, Herschler Building, 4E, Cheyenne. More info by calling 777-7803.
- **February 7, 2006** - State Water Forum Meeting.
- **February 14, 2006 - Wyoming Water Association Winter Board Meeting**, WWDC Offices, 6920 Yellowtail Road in Cheyenne. The Board meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m. and will be followed by the first 2006 Legislative Review Session.
- **March 7, 2006** - State Water Forum Meeting
- **March 9-11, 2006** - 11th Xeriscape Conference & Expo, Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, NM. Major water conservation conference will feature ~ 400 professionals from 12 southwestern states and ~ 170 exhibitors on all aspects of landscaping, water and plants. More info at [www.xeriscapenm.com](http://www.xeriscapenm.com).
- **March 28, 2006** - Green River Basin Advisory Group Meeting. Green River, Wyoming. Meeting will run from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. More info at [waterplan.state.wy.us](http://waterplan.state.wy.us) or by calling 777-7626.
- **April 4, 2006** - State Water Forum Meeting.
- **May 2, 2006** - State Water Forum Meeting
- **November 1-3, 2006 - Wyoming Water Association Annual Meeting and Education Seminar**, Ramkota Hotel, Casper, Wyoming.

### NOTICE:

In accordance with Title 17 United States Code Section 107, this material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving this information for research and educational purposes.



# Wyoming Water Association 2006 Membership Form

*Water is Wyoming's Gold!*

## Membership Class:

## Annual Membership Dues:

Student	\$15.00 (includes one-day of annual conference)
Individual	\$35.00
Small Businesses	\$50.00
Medium Businesses	\$100.00
Large Businesses	\$250.00
Associations	\$50.00
Irrigation Districts	\$0.01 per acre ... Minimum of \$50.00
Conservation Districts	\$25.00
Drainage Districts	\$50.00
Special Districts (Including water and sewer, improvement and sanitation)	\$50.00
Municipalities of 100 to 1,000 population	\$100.00
Municipalities of 1,001 to 5,000 population	\$200.00
Municipalities of 5,001 and over population	\$300.00
County Governments	\$250.00
Joint Powers Boards	\$300.00

Please fill out the short form below and return it, along with your dues payment, to the WWA today.

Yes, please renew my Wyoming Water Association membership for the 2006 Calendar Year.  
I have enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as my/our dues payment for the coming year.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: If you attended the 2005 Annual Meeting and/or Educational Seminar in Casper, your registration fees included your membership dues for 2006 - and you do not need to submit this renewal form. Membership dues invoices will be sent out in early 2006 - avoid being billed by sending your payment today.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

*Please mail this form and your dues payment to:*

**Wyoming Water Association, P.O. Box 21701, Cheyenne, WY 82003-7032**

Should you have questions, please call the WWA at 307-631-0898 or send an e-mail to [wwa@wyoming.com](mailto:wwa@wyoming.com).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



## Wyoming Water Association

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Cheyenne, WY 82003-7032  
307-631-0898 Fax: 307-632-0299  
Website: [www.wyomingwater.org](http://www.wyomingwater.org)  
Email: [wwa@wyoming.com](mailto:wwa@wyoming.com)

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**The next Board of Directors' meeting of the  
Wyoming Water Association  
will be held on February 14, 2006  
in the WWDC Offices in Cheyenne.  
Legislative Review Session to follow.**

**Mark your calendar now: 2006 WWA  
Annual Conference November 1-3, 2006  
Casper, Wyoming.**