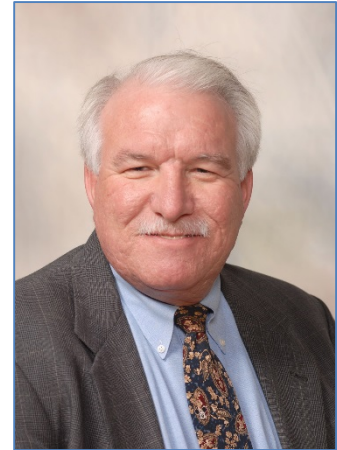


From the Director's Desk ...

Our spring water resources conference is upon us! It is scheduled for April 5-6 at the Hilton Jackson. Fourteen technical sessions and three plenaries are planned consisting of 57 individual oral presentations, as well as a poster session with 23 posters and presenters. Our plenary speakers are Marc Wyatt, Director of MDEQ's new Office of Oil Spill Restoration, who will discuss the status of oil spill restoration activities in the Gulf of Mexico; Mr. Mike McCormick, President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, who will provide Farm Bureau's perspective on a topic of statewide and national interest – waters of the United States; and Chris Wells, MDEQ's new Chief of Staff.



We are excited about the continuing growth of student involvement, and because of this growth and willing sponsors we will reinstitute our student oral presentation competition and student poster competition. 15 students are submitting posters and will be available to discuss their projects and 12 students have submitted abstracts and will be presenting orally during the technical sessions. Competition winners will be presented during Wednesday's lunch plenary.

I hope you are planning to attend the welcome reception scheduled for Tuesday evening from 5:00-6:30 which will include refreshments and hors d'oeuvres. This popular event provides opportunities for interaction among our various water resource communities – research, management, policy, and stakeholders.

Also, I hope you will consider serving as a conference sponsor and/or exhibitor. A *Sponsor and Exhibitor Reply Form* is included in this newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Respectfully,

Bill

Bill Herndon

Registration Open for 2016 Water Resource Conference April 5-6, Jackson Hilton

From water quality to water supply ...from groundwater to surface water ...from estuaries to uplands ...from the Gulf of Mexico to the Mississippi Delta ...from research to management ...a wide range of oral and poster presentations are scheduled during our upcoming 2016 Water Resources Conference to be held at the Hilton Jackson on April 5-6. Researchers and students from colleges and universities as well as water resources planners, managers, and policy-makers from state and federal agencies, industry, and other backgrounds will describe over 80 research projects and management programs. Presentations are organized thematically in 14 technical sessions, a poster session, and three plenaries.

Opening Plenary Session – Tuesday, April 5

Theme: **Status of Oil Spill Restoration in Mississippi (RESTORE Update)**

Speaker: **Marc Wyatt**, Director, Office of Coastal Restoration, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

Luncheon Plenary – Tuesday, April 5

Speakers: **Chris Wells**, Chief of Staff, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

Luncheon Plenary – Wednesday, April 6

Theme: **Farm Bureau Federation Perspective on Waters of the United States**

Speaker: **Mike McCormick**, President, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation

Technical Session Themes:

- Water Treatment/Management
- Delta Water Resources I and II (2 sessions)
- Water Quality I and II (2 sessions)
- Outputs and Outcomes
- Tools and Models
- Agricultural Water Management
- Mississippi Water Resources
- Ecology/Hydrology I and II (2 sessions)
- Water Use
- Collaborative Initiatives
- Policy/Planning

Student Competitions: (1st - \$100, 2nd - \$75, 3rd - \$50 in each category)

- Oral Presentation
- Poster



Welcome Reception: (refreshments and hors d'oeuvres)
Tuesday, April 5:00 – 6:30, Salons B&C

Sponsors and Organizers:

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation
Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine
Mississippi State University Extension Service
Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute
Pickering Firm Inc.
U.S. Geological Survey Mississippi Water Science Center
Weyerhaeuser Company

Early registration (through March 14) for the conference is \$225 for professionals and \$50 for full time students. After March 14, registration will be \$275 for professionals and \$100 for full time students. A block of rooms at the hotel have been reserved until March 7 for a conference rate of \$116/night. Registration and lodging information (and online access), agenda, abstracts, and other information is now available for review on MWRRI's website:

<http://www.wrri.msstate.edu/conference/index.asp> .

We are looking for conference sponsors as well as volunteers to judge the student poster competition. When you register please take a moment and include whether you would like to be a volunteer judge for the student competition. Sponsors and exhibitors should complete the forms on the conference website and return them to Jessie Schmidt, by email at jessie.schmidt@msstate.edu. Any questions should be directed to Jessie Schmidt by email or phone at 662-325-3295. We hope to see you in Jackson on April 5-6.

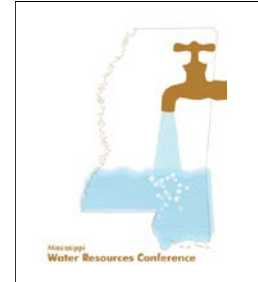
Register now at www.wrri.msstate.edu!

2016 Annual Mississippi Water Resources Conference

Hilton Jackson, Jackson, MS

April 5-6, 2016

Sponsor & Exhibitor Reply Form



Yes _____ I would like to sponsor a conference event

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **Email:** _____

There are multiple opportunities to become a sponsor or co-sponsor. Please indicate your preference below. In order to be included in the program book, all payments must be received no later than Friday, March 18, 2016.

Tuesday, April 5

	<u>Full Sponsor</u>	<u>Co-sponsor</u>
Breakfast - \$750 (full sponsor) or \$375 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Morning break - \$700 (full sponsor) or \$350 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Luncheon - \$1,000 (full sponsor) or \$500 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Afternoon break - \$700 (full sponsor) or \$350 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Welcome Reception - \$1,000 (full sponsor) or \$500 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____

Wednesday, April 6

Breakfast - \$750 (full sponsor) or \$375 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Morning break - \$700 (full sponsor) or \$350 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Luncheon - \$1,000 (full sponsor) or \$500 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____
Poster Session - \$1,000 (full sponsor) or \$500 (co-sponsor)	_____	_____

Exhibitor table/space only - \$500 (please indicate preference below)

Yes _____ I would like an exhibitor table _____ or space (for standup exhibits) _____.

- Sponsorships of \$500 and above will receive one (1) complimentary registration. A second person from the same agency can register for \$150.
- All sponsors and exhibitors will be recognized on the 2016 MWRC poster (company logo), from the podium, at luncheons, and in the program book as well as online conference website.
- Sponsorship Questions: Please contact Jessie Schmidt, jessie.schmidt@msstate.edu

**Please email this form to Jessie Schmidt, jessie.schmidt@msstate.edu
Or mail to MWRRI, Box 9547, Mississippi State, MS 39762**

Researcher Profile: Dr. Gary Ervin

Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Mississippi State University

Tell us a little bit about your background and your current position.

I have a B.S. and Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of Alabama and joined the Biology faculty at Mississippi State in August 2001. My doctoral research focused on the rush *Juncus effusus* and how it interacts with other plant species in freshwater wetlands. I've tried to expand on that general theme during my time at MSU, by continuing to do research that aims to understand how plants influence the structure and function of freshwater wetlands. Previous students in my lab have looked at plants, microbes, and insects, and I like to think we have contributed some important insights into the ecology and conservation of wetlands in Mississippi and beyond.



Some of the work of my earliest graduate students has been sought by biologists with the Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations as examples of tools that can help guide conservation planning. Interestingly enough, this work also was funded by grants from the Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute. My current students, Cory Shoemaker and Evelyn Windham, are examining how wetland plants respond to human activities in the northern Mississippi Delta and how the plant species present may influence quality of surface water as it moves across the landscape.

What are your current research activities?

Our main research currently focuses on restored wetlands in the northern portion of the Mississippi Delta. We are looking at how land use affects the species of plants occurring in these wetlands and whether the plant species present may be effective indicators of water quality. We have collaborated with Kevin Nelms, of the USDA NRCS, in identifying wetlands for the research, as well as in identifying important wetland and water quality questions that may help manage water resources in the Delta. The project has been an excellent fit for Cory and Evelyn,



as it has allowed each of them to explore areas of wetland ecology and management in which they are interested and to develop their own projects that contribute to the overall WRRRI-funded research.

How does the Water Resources Research Institute fit into your future plans? How can we help you be successful?

The Water Resources Research Institute has funded research in my lab since early 2002. The first project investigated managed wetlands on property in north Mississippi managed by the Audubon Society. That work grew into a broader investigation into the use of wetland plants as tools for estimating the overall quality of wetlands, using data collected in 50 wetlands scattered across the northern third of the state (a project also funded in part by MS WRRRI). Those first grants funded two graduate students and two undergraduates and resulted in approximately a dozen peer-reviewed journal articles and set the stage for other externally funded research that has been conducted in my lab. The two graduate students went on to enter doctoral programs at the University of Illinois and Oklahoma State. One currently is employed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the other just began a postdoctoral research position at the University of Arkansas.



Aside from the grant program administered by the institute, the annual conference has been an important venue for graduate student presentations; many of my students' first research presentations have been at the conference. It also is a terrific place to learn about current water issues within the state. I can safely say that much of the success I have had at MSU can be attribute in large part to the WRRRI, and I feel fortunate to have had access to this resource.

Notice of Advisory Board Meeting

Immediately following the water resource conference, we will hold a meeting of MWRRI's Advisory Board from 1:45-3:00 p.m. in the Port Gibson Board Room (take the elevator to the Penthouse).

104b Water Research Project Update

Based upon the recommendation of MWRRI's Advisory Board, the following projects were submitted for funding through USGS' 2016 104b Water Resources Research Program:

Oxbow Lake Wetland Systems as a Source of Recharge to the Mississippi River Valley Alluvial Aquifer – Dr. Greg Davidson, Dr. Andrew O'Reilly, Department of Geology and Geological Engineering, University of Mississippi

Wastewater Management in Mississippi Coastal Communities – Dr. Veera Gnaneswar Gude, Dr. James Martin, Dr. Dennis Truax, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Mississippi State University

It is anticipated that funding will be awarded in the near future.

About the Mississippi Water Resources Research Institute (MWRRI)

The institute exists as both a federal and a state research unit. Established in 1964, the MWRRI is one of 54 institutes (one in each state, The District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) that form a national network to solve water problems of state, regional, or national significance. In 1983, the Mississippi legislature formally designated the MWRRI as a state research institute. Federal funds designated for the institute are used to consult with state water officials to develop coordinated research, technology transfer and training programs that apply academic expertise to water and related land-use problems. These various activities are funded through an annual grant from the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Mississippi state appropriations provide additional funds for cost share. The institute also assists state agencies in the development of a state water management plan, maintaining a technology transfer program, and serves as a liaison between Mississippi and federal funding agencies.

If you or someone that you know would like to receive this publication please email jessie.schmidt@msstate.edu to be added to the MWRRI listserv.

Discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated. Discrimination based upon sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.