



Can hydrologic scientists learn to speak up and with one voice?

J.L. Wilson

Department of Earth & Environmental Science, New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology, Socorro, New Mexico, USA

The hydrologic science communities in North America, Europe, and Asia have begun to organize. In the United States, the fifteen-year old roots for this organization lie in the work of Peter Eagleson's committee of the National Academy of Sciences, which eventually led to the organization of a consortium of over one-hundred American universities. The Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science Inc. (CUAHSI) has an ambitious agenda for the development of community facilities and programs. One of CUAHSI's original aims was to become the "one voice" which could speak for the university research community to the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and other national agencies. While this goal has been partially achieved, many of the community's messages are still conveyed through other channels, and the messages remain confused and unfocused. Perhaps for the better, this community mumbling is too soft, and for the most part is not being heard by scientific decision makers and politicians. We must speak up so we can be heard, but only when we have a focused message. Don't think that it is enough that our science is important and societally relevant. Without amplitude and focus we can't attract the attention that hydrologic science deserves, nor gain the respect and resources needed to advance it. It is also not be enough for organizations like CUAHSI to become accepted community representatives. Individual scientists must become vocally active in advancing the community agenda, subsuming their own individual interests. Key to this will be an open process, assisted by community organizations, in which that agenda is established and agreed to. Once that agenda is promulgated, it must be supported by individuals as well as community organizations, else one voice becomes many and no one will listen.