



At the Commission's hearing in Atlanta, Georgia, County Commissioner George Bird of Candler County, Georgia, described the Georgia Water Management Campaign. The Campaign's mission is to enhance the abilities of local governments to manage and protect water resources by translating water management policies into local government decision-making capabilities,

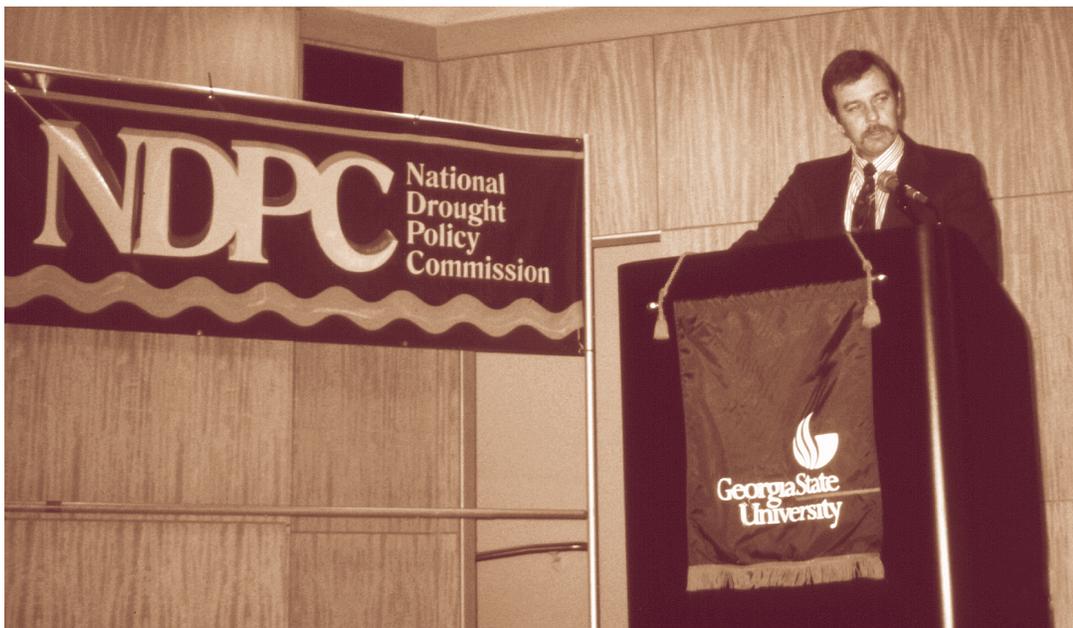
guidance, and technical assistance. To achieve this mission, the Campaign developed outreach tools such as public service announcements, videos, and case studies and convened summits on water issues for local officials. The Campaign's 21 members of the Local Government Advisory Board serve as ambassadors and provide overall guidance. The Campaign was

created through a partnership among the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia. As Commissioner Bird said, "Water issues are a developing priority for local governments. Education and public input are key to local decision making."

amount of planning large cities do. But emergency conditions—not enough water for minimal household uses—may still arise in small communities when droughts are longer or more severe than anticipated or when other factors unexpectedly interrupt or pollute water supplies.

Some cities use data from the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in developing and implementing their plans. And federal water agencies can sell space in existing federal reservoirs for urban water supplies. In cities near such reservoirs, this may be the least expensive way to get more water.

Small communities and the millions of "self-supplied" Americans, who rely on their own wells, are likely to have problems during prolonged drought. Small water systems tend to be vulnerable because they have only one source of water. Such systems may also face high per-customer costs to meet the latest federal safe drinking water standards. These factors have encouraged the takeover of small systems by large systems where it is economically feasible. But areas with very low population density remain at risk. Some small communities may be able to modify existing watershed structures, initially designed only for flood control, to provide storage for municipal and industrial water.



*George Bird, Candler County (Georgia) Commissioner at the Commission's hearing in Atlanta.*