

# Ensure the Future of Water



**Martha Narvaez,**  
President, AWRA  
president@awra.org

**MY HUSBAND AND** I recently met with a financial advisor. Our take-home message was the importance of strategically investing in the unexpected (life insurance) and the long-term (retirement). A large part of me wasn't the least bit excited about this approach. Investing in the unexpected and long-term, I don't reap any real benefit in the here and now, yet I have to pay for it. Meanwhile, the logical part of my brain realized this strategy is essential. Once I came to terms with this approach I began to realize how similar my personal situation is to investing in water resources.

As water resource professionals, like financial planners, we understand how important it is to invest in the unexpected threats and the long-term health of water resources. If we strategically invest, we can minimize the unexpected—main breaks, lead contamination, algae outbreaks, flooding and the list goes on. Long-term investments, such as reuse and recycling, maintenance, research, education, infrastructure improvements, pollution reduction and water storage and security, are another critical piece of the water resources investment strategy. Water resource professionals understand the importance of this investment strategy, yet there is often a lack of public support for investing in water resources. Those investments may not be appealing because, like life insurance and retirement investments, they don't always provide an immediate and tangible benefit. Yet without these water resource investments—as with personal investments—our future is in jeopardy.

Water reuse and recycling is a great example of investing in our future. Long ago, recycling

was complicated, confusing and not something that the average citizen did. Today, we commonly have recycling bins in our homes, work spaces and lining the streets. Recycling has become second nature to many and has become the law in many places. It is in our best interest, and in the interest of our water resource investment strategy, to continue this trend and to make water reuse and recycling as simple as recycling glass bottles and aluminum cans. Investment in this long-term strategy is critical to the health of water resources.

As you read this issue on water reuse and recycling, challenge yourself to think of innovative ways we can reduce the unexpected and invest in the long-term health of water resources. We need to put our heads together and challenge ourselves to find innovative and new ways to ensure the future of water resources. Now is a great time to be in the water resources field. It's exciting. It's challenging. Collectively we have great ideas and the expertise. It's all about clean water. But clean water for our future means strategic investment now.

Please consider sharing your ideas with our water resources community on [Conversations.awra.org](http://Conversations.awra.org). This is a member benefit that provides a platform for water resources knowledge to be shared, enhanced and searched. It is the new home for all of AWRA's online conversations and provides an immediate connection to more than 2,200 of your AWRA colleagues.

I also hope many of you will join us in July for AWRA's Summer Specialty Conference on GIS and Water Resources, and Orlando in November for AWRA's Annual Conference, so that we can continue this discussion. ■

“ Now is a great time to be in the water resources field. It's exciting. It's challenging. Collectively we have great ideas and the expertise. It's all about clean water. ”