

**Welcome Remarks
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**2008 UF Water Institute Symposium
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida
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Good Morning. I'd like to welcome you to the inaugural UF Water Institute Symposium. We are excited by the great response we have had to this event. It shows that a meeting like this... designed to bring together academics, practicing professionals, students and the public to exchange interdisciplinary knowledge and perspectives on water issues... is badly needed in the state of Florida!

We have two major goals for this meeting....

First, to define and share the state of our knowledge regarding both the challenges to water resources sustainability and the latest developments in science, technology, policy and education that may provide solutions to these challenges.

Second, to take advantage of the wealth of experience and knowledge that is gathered at this symposium to develop priorities for interdisciplinary research and education programs needed to ensure water resources sustainability for Florida and beyond.

We have designed the meeting to have a variety of formats... from traditional 15 minute science/engineering-style presentations.... to popular academic-style poster presentations.... to more interactive issue oriented panel discussions. If everyone feels a little uncomfortable from time to time we will know we have achieved our goal of bringing people out of their disciplinary hideouts, to mix with people they are not used to talking to, in somewhat unfamiliar venues. Hopefully it will be intellectually stimulating.... not dull or intimidating.... and no-one will feel uncomfortable all of the time!

A few house keeping issues...

The schedule is quite full and some breaks are on the short-side (we had so many great presentations contributed to the conference, and so many interesting people who wanted to attend, that we really had to work hard to fit everything in). However you should never go hungry.... there will be food and beverages continuously out in the prefunction area and a buffet lunch in Albert's Restaurant is included in your registration fee. BUT...we only have an hour for lunch... and a lot of people to move through the buffet line...so no lolly-gagging around!

As I mentioned before...we want to be sure to stimulate interdisciplinary dialog during this conference ...in your Symposium bag (which by the way is made of recycled materials and perfect to take grocery shopping...) you should find an envelope containing several index cards. This is not a symposium evaluation tool, it is an idea sharing tool. If throughout the symposium you have any questions that you feel remain unanswered or ideas you do not get a chance to share in a session, please

- Write them on these cards and drop the cards in the boxes provided at the back of the room for each session and at the registration table.
- Use one card per question or comment. If you feel comfortable please also write your name and contact information on the cards. Additional cards will be available near each drop box.

Questions and comments will be shared with moderators and addressed as appropriate in the panel sessions tomorrow, including the Symposium Synthesis and Town Hall meeting. We will also use these materials as we prepare the follow-up symposium documentation. Using ideas generated at the symposium we plan to establish priorities for collaborative interdisciplinary Water Institute research and education programs that are important to Florida Stakeholders, of widespread National interest, and within the expertise of our faculty and our partners.

I would like to recognize Progress Energy for sponsoring this introductory plenary session of the Symposium. In fact we are grateful to Progress Energy and the Carl S. Swisher Foundation for helping to make the UF

Water Institute a reality by creating the Institute's first endowment funds. I would also like to recognize the support of Vice President Win Phillips, Senior Vice President Jimmy Cheek, and President Machen for their important role in creating the Water Institute. Without the generosity of Progress Energy and the Swisher Foundation, and the support of UF's senior administration we would not be here today.

And now I would like to introduce University of Florida President Bernie Machen to officially welcome you to the Water Institute Symposium, the University of Florida, and to Gainesville.

Welcome President Machen, and thank you for coming today!