



## **Is the groundwater scientific community responding to social demands?**

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Water-related problems are growing worldwide. It is widely acknowledged that the way water resources were managed in the 20th century must change. Society demands (e.g., EU WFD) a paradigm shift in the approach to understand subsurface processes that emphasizes: (1) a holistic view of interactions; (2) increased available resources; (3) improved water quality and protection of available resources. In no uncertain, but often varying terms, fears are expressed about climate change, water scarcity, loss of water quality, degraded rivers, or the like. Subsurface hydrology is central to most of these issues. Yet, a cursory analysis of citing trends in the top journals points out that dominant research topics in subsurface hydrology are stochastics and modeling. The link between these topics and what Society appears to need is not immediate (sometimes, it is far fetched!). The immediate question is whether a closer link should be sought. Jim Shuttleworth (2007) posed the issue as “Stakeholder-driven, enquiry-driven, or stakeholder-relevant, enquiry-driven science?”. The individual researcher freedom to address such question is probably an essential part of science. Still, it is probably the scientific community duty to check whether the trend is correct. A session on “Visions, trends and directions in subsurface hydrology” may be the best place to discuss these issues.