A Positive **Job Report**

By Clare Pierson

Any positive news regarding employment and jobs in these times is welcome news, indeed.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and highlighted by a recent *New York Times* article, demand for hydrologists is expected to grow 24%—much faster than the average occupation—between the years 2010 and 2016.

Traditionally, hydrologists' work is described as the study of the quantity, distribution, circulation and physical properties of water, in particular with its relation to land. Hydrogeologists focus specifically on groundwater. Today, their work revolves more around water quality, water quantity and supply—especially related to global warming and its effects.

Technology has also changed this type of work over the years, making certain computer skills essential for the job. Today's workers may use remote sensing technology, data assimilation and numerical modeling to monitor the change in water cycles. Surface water hydrologists use high-tech stream-measuring devices to assess flow rates and water quality. Familiarity with GIS programs, computer modeling, digital mapping, GPS and remote sensing is also a must.

According to the BLS report: "Job growth for environmental scientists and hydrologists should be strongest in private-sector consulting firms. Growth in employment of environmental scientists and hydrologists will be spurred largely by the increasing demands placed on the environment and water resources by population growth. Further demand should result from the need to comply with complex environmental laws and regulations, particularly those regarding groundwater decontamination, clean air and flood control."

Typically an entry-level hydrologist will spend more time out in the field learning the ropes, while more seasoned workers spend more time in the lab or office, according to the BLS report. Among hydrologists, 26% were employed in architectural and engineering services in 2006, and 18% worked for management, scientific and technical consulting services. The federal government employed about 28% of hydrologists, mostly within the U.S. Department of the Interior for the U.S. Geological Survey and within the U.S. Department of Defense. Another 21% worked for state agencies, such as state geological surveys or departments of conservation. About 2% of hydrologists were self-employed—most as consultants to industry or government. Median annual earnings of hydrologists were $66,260 in 2006, according to the BLS. WWD

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