



Gary P. Merkley

Gary P. Merkley, PE, is the 2021 recipient of the Award for the Advancement of Surface Irrigation for excellence in research and teaching of surface irrigation, canal operation and maintenance, and significant impact on international irrigation and water resources development.

Merkley is a senior supervising engineer at Natural Resources Consulting Engineers, Inc. in Fort Collins, Colorado. In this capacity, Merkley manages and works as a water resources engineer for domestic and international projects, including agricultural irrigation and drainage, potable water systems, sanitation and hygiene. He developed commercial software for hydraulic simulations of branching and looping canal systems.

Previously, Merkley practiced and managed surface irrigation on a 2,000-acre farm in Northern California and he was also a professor of civil engineering at Utah State University. During his tenure at Utah State University, he served as the director of the International Irrigation Center and was a major professor and advisor for several dozen graduate students.

A renowned expert on surface irrigation, Merkley has worked on countless projects, both around world and within the US. He led a project on developing irrigation water user associations and the transfer of surface irrigation systems from government to farmer management in the Dominican Republic in the early 2000's. This work has had a huge impact on the irrigated agricultural sector of

within the Dominican Republic with most of the transferred systems still thriving and functioning. These projects were funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank.

Merkley has authored or co-authored more than 70 peer-reviewed articles, conference proceeding papers, and other publications. He also coauthored three books, including *Establishing Sustainable Farmer-Managed Irrigation Organizations*, *Irrigation Maintenance & Operations Learning Process*, and *Irrigation Fundamentals*. Merkley has served as an associate editor for the *Irrigation Science Journal*, the *Spanish Journal of Agricultural Research*, and *Irrigation & Drainage Journal*. He is currently an associate editor for the *ASCE Journal of Irrigation and Drainage Engineering*.

Merkley is a 16-year member of ASABE and is also a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Throughout his career, Merkley has received a number of awards. While at Utah State University, he received numerous teaching accolades including the Biological and Irrigation Engineering Department's Outstanding Teacher award four times.