

---

# Action-to-Outcome Mapping: A Facilitation Methodology That Integrates Systems Thinking and Indicators

**Drew Jones**

**Sustainability Institute**

Developed with Don Seville, Hal Hamilton,  
Beth Sawin and Phil Rice

14 March 2003

[sustainabilityinstitute.org](http://sustainabilityinstitute.org)

# Two Challenges Motivate this Approach

---

- ◆ Classic Systems Thinking Asks:
  - What are the system-wide drivers and inter-relationships that are creating the long term trends that we see?
  - Where are leverage points for improving the trends?
- ◆ However, Many Teams We See Are:
  - Focused on strengthening their **current** strategy and/or
  - Interested in building on an effort where they've identified key indicators
- ◆ Therefore we adapted our classic systems thinking facilitation methodology to incorporate indicators and start *where the group is*

# The Territory to Cover -- Five Stages

**1. Causal theory: How actions lead to goals and then to outcomes**

## **Actions**

Steps we take intended to improve the system

## **Intermediate indicators**

The changes we expect to see over the next 1-3 years to show we're on the right path

## **Outcomes**

Changes we want to see in the long term

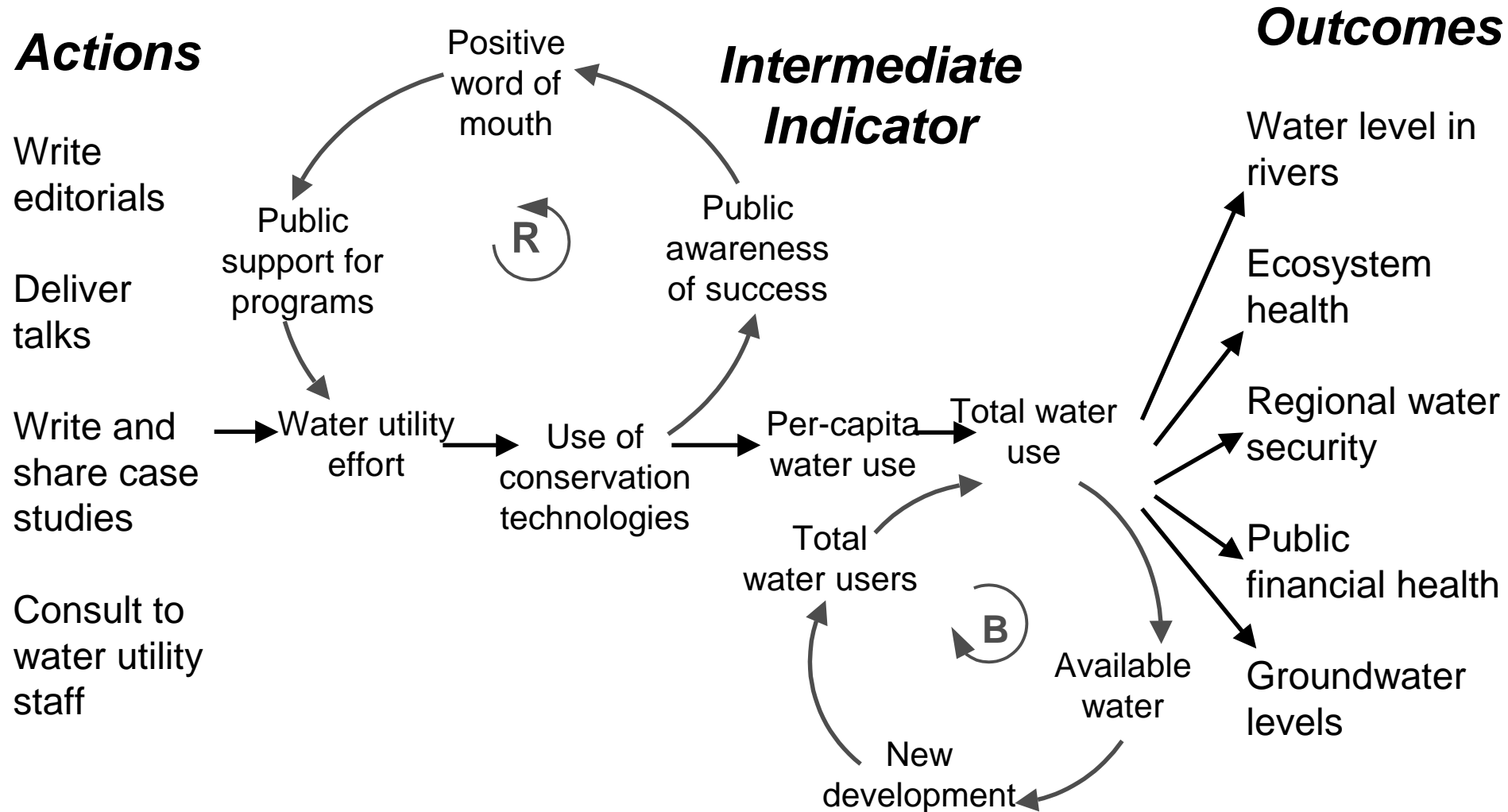
**3. Mindsets slow or accelerate change**

**4. External forces push on the outcomes**

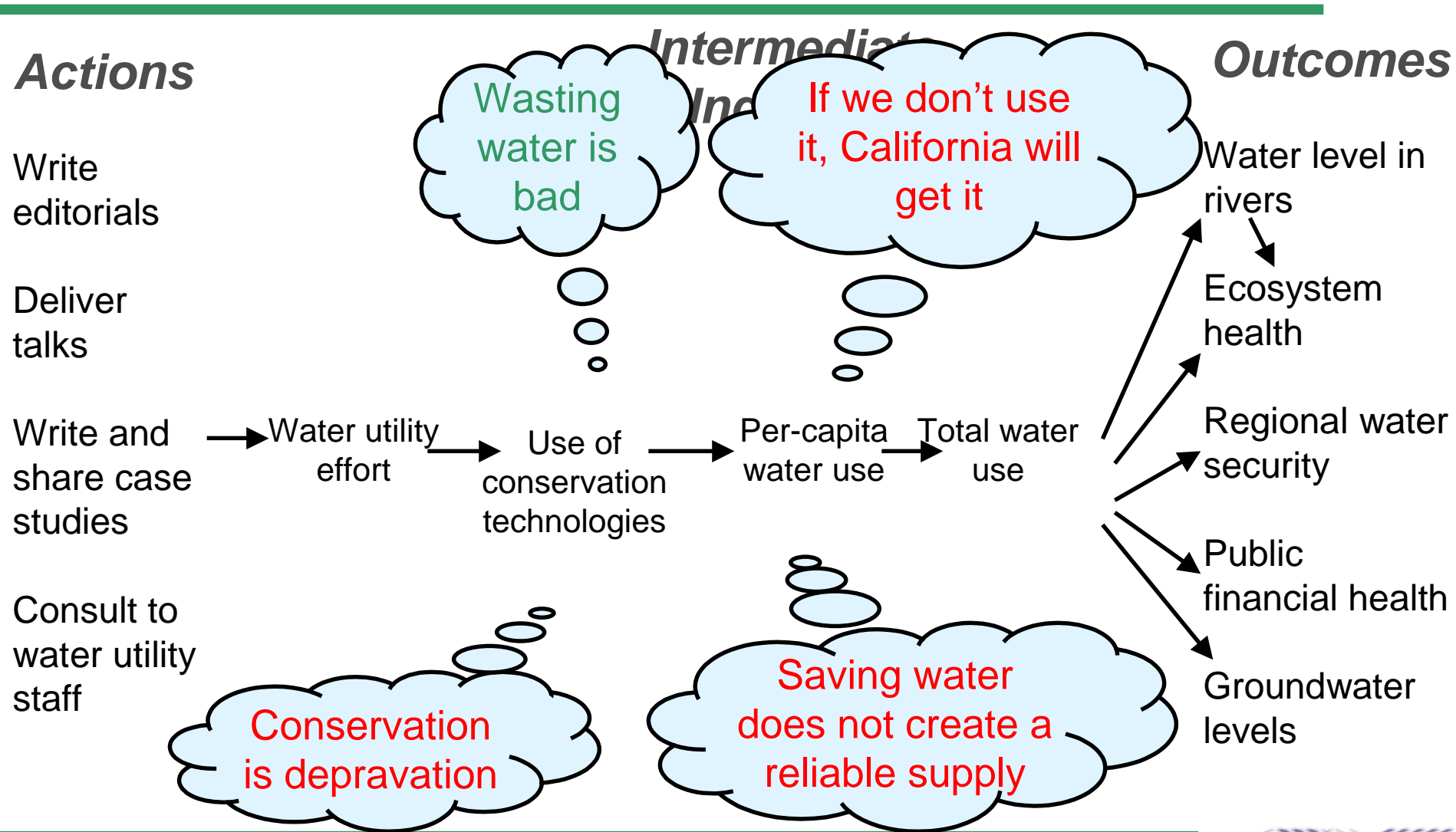
**2. Feedback: the system pushes back or amplifies your efforts**

**5. Explore the opportunities for learning and action**

# A Case Study from Water Conservation in the Southwest US



# Mindsets are Important Beliefs and Assumptions that Support or Slow Progress



# Next We See How External Forces Affect the Intended Outcomes

