

HIGH PROFILE

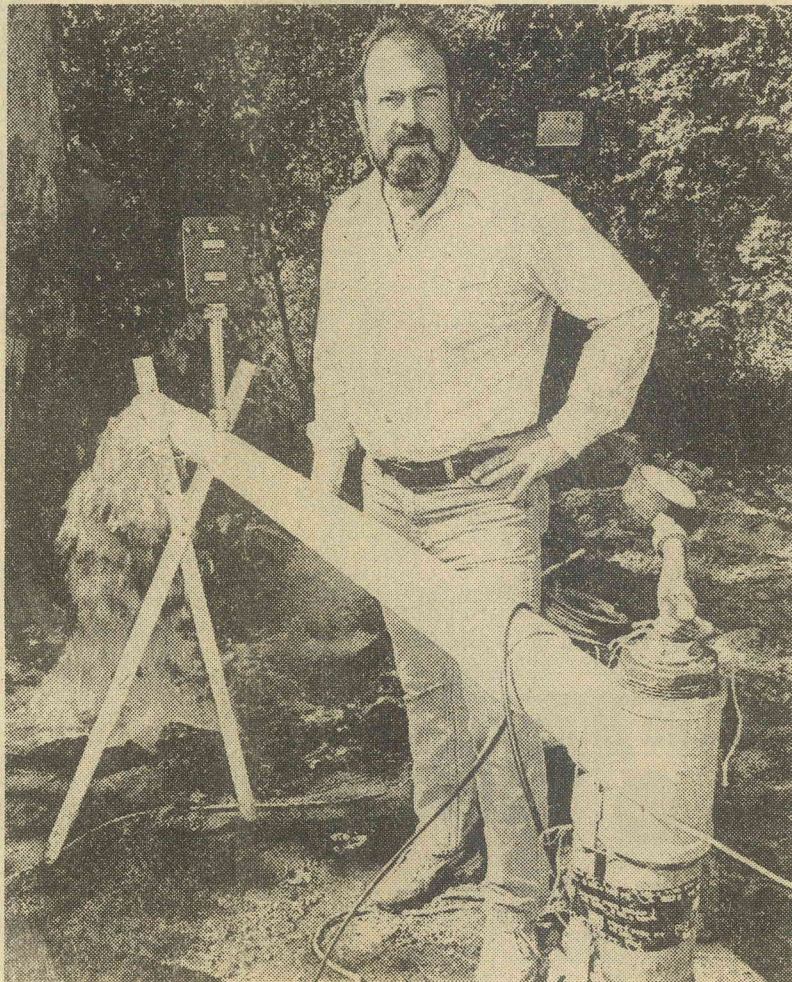
Geologist seeks out well sites

By Melinda Burns
News-Press Staff Writer

Like Dick Tracy to the rescue, Mike Hoover saves desperate farmers from the clutches of drought. He's dug for water in 26 canyons from Santa Barbara to Gaviota, and not a well has failed.

Hobver knows the faults, fractures and fissures that trap underground water. With maps and a practiced eye, he pinpoints blips in the parched landscape, a geologist's signposts for underground water.

Hoover recently tapped a 200-gallon-per-minute supply on La Paloma Ranch north of El Capitan Beach State Park. The water shot out of the ground like an Ok-



Mike Eliason/News-Press

Mike Hoover has dug for water in 26 South Coast canyons, and none of his wells has failed.

lahoma oil gusher.

"Here's a farmer jumping up and down, his avocado trees are

smiling and it's pretty exciting,"

Hoover said, recalling the moment. "It's not that hard. He

PERSONAL

Name: Mike Hoover
Born: May 6, 1949,
Pasadena
Education: B.A., M.A. in
geology from UCSB
Occupation: Engineering
geologist
Diversions: Fishing and
carpentry
Marital status: Single

"It's fun to be in charge of a resource that's very elusive. If you hit one every time you went out there, it wouldn't be half as exciting."

just has very good geology."

Hoover has drilled more than 300 successful water wells in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. In addition to farmers, the clients of Hoover's consulting firm include real estate developers, cities, oil companies and water districts. He studies landslides and earthquake faults and cleans up toxic messes from underground gas tanks.

But it's water that puts a gleam

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