

Integrated River Basin Management

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Abstract

Water connects us all, and in many different ways

The quality of water reveals everything, right or wrong, that we do within the entire ecosystem. Every decision we make – whether housing, transportation, energy, agriculture, or economic development – is potentially linked to the use of our water resources. The need to protect and manage water resources properly has never been greater. In contrast to other resources used by humans, there is no substitute for water.

The river basin is the fundamental unit for managing water resources and our actions within those basins are the key to sustainable freshwater management. Each basin contains different types of land cover and land uses, both natural and human related. It also contains wildlife, human beings and livestock. River management is not about managing the river itself but the activities on the land areas within the entire basin. As an important source of freshwater supplies, rivers management presents a great challenge to the managers and requires a group of agencies to work together in a coordinated manner.

The obstacles that prevents effective, holistic, participatory river management include the promotion of short term rather than long term perspectives in decision making, the existence of values and attitudes that underestimate communities skills and intelligence; and the lack of necessary funding to implement policies and decisions.

Education, training, and the strengthening of local organizations and decision making authorities can help to overcome some of these obstacles.