



Community watershed management organizational structure styles

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Introduction

The word “community” can have different meanings to different people; thus what one person views as a community may vary from what someone living next door perceives as a community. Community boundaries may be determined by many different parameters including social factors, economic factors or geographical factors. However, for this guide the word “community” includes parties who:

- derive their drinking water from the same body of water
- derive their livelihood from the area draining into the same body of water
- process, sell or distribute drinking water from the same water body
- otherwise have a vested interest in watershed activities and the drinking water supply

One of the trends observed by those involved in the Public Water Supply Watershed Management Education Project is the need for community-specific approaches to watershed management.

This guide gives three approaches and a set of guidelines to be used as a checklist for determining which approach may be best suited for any given situation. Please note, however, these are only guidelines. Furthermore, at this time the establishment of watershed management groups is a voluntary effort not required by federal or state regulation.

Three approaches to watershed management organizational structures

If the guideline fits your circumstances, mark the blank to the left. If a majority of the guidelines in any

particular style is checked, it may be the right approach for you.

Style I. Watershed Management Steering Committees (Large and all inclusive)

- Dominated by local citizenry
- Meets regularly and are self sustaining
- Encompasses large geographic area — more than 10,000 acres
- Diverse population — supplies water for multiple entities (several thousand consumers)
- Represents all facets of the community
- Multiple water quality issues
- Contains groups that can potentially handle finances and evolve into private, nonprofit corporations
- Drafts and implements a comprehensive watershed management plan

Style II. Data/Activity Oversight Committees (Mid-sized and selectively inclusive)

- Dominated by agency personnel, elected officials and municipal employees
- Meets semiannually or as needed
- Contains 1,000 to 10,000 acres
- Homogeneous clientele: supplies water to one or two municipalities or vendors; 1,500 consumers or less; 20 or less landowners/operators
- Regularly reviews available data for tracking water quality issues to be proactive in emerging challenges
- Has immediate access to mitigation plans

Style III. Individualized Consultation

(Very small and highly selective)

- ___ Dominated by an agency or private sector representative who can convey to the key landowners/operators how and why prevention or mitigation of the situation is necessary. This must be done in a non-confrontational, nonthreatening manner.
- ___ Contains 1,000 acres or less
- ___ Less than 10 landowners/operators in the watershed
- ___ Water-quality issues are episodic rather than chronic

This information should be used as general guidelines in formulating approaches to watershed-management issues. As with any situation dealing with multiple personalities, there will be “gray areas” and exceptions.

Other Considerations:

A programmatic committee that is related and may interact well with any of the three preceding structures is the research/information collection committee. This committee collects data or conducts research and should not be confused with the management committee. The management committee's purpose is to address, from a prevention or mitigation standpoint, tangible ways of dealing with drinking-water quality issues.



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