

Water Supply Planning: Current Issues

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The background of the slide is a solid blue color. In the lower right quadrant, there are several concentric, light blue circles that resemble ripples on water, creating a decorative effect.

Definition of Water Resources Planning

“If Planning Is Everything, Maybe It’s
Nothing”

– Aaron Wildavsky

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Definition of Water Resources Planning

Acquisition and use of information to facilitate choice among alternative courses of action regarding society's relation to the water resource.

- This definition encompasses water availability analysis but has broader dimensions.

Scope / Nature of Planning

Planning is a scientific process involving technical evaluation using physical data

but

It is also a political process that must recognize policies, laws, and institutional arrangements and is dependent on political authorizations and funding.

Scope / Nature of Planning

Planning is a governmental function where all levels of government have roles:

- International organizations.
- **FEDERAL.**
- Interstate regional organizations.
- **STATE.**
- Intrastate regional organizations.
- **LOCAL.**
- Special districts.

Scope / Nature of Planning

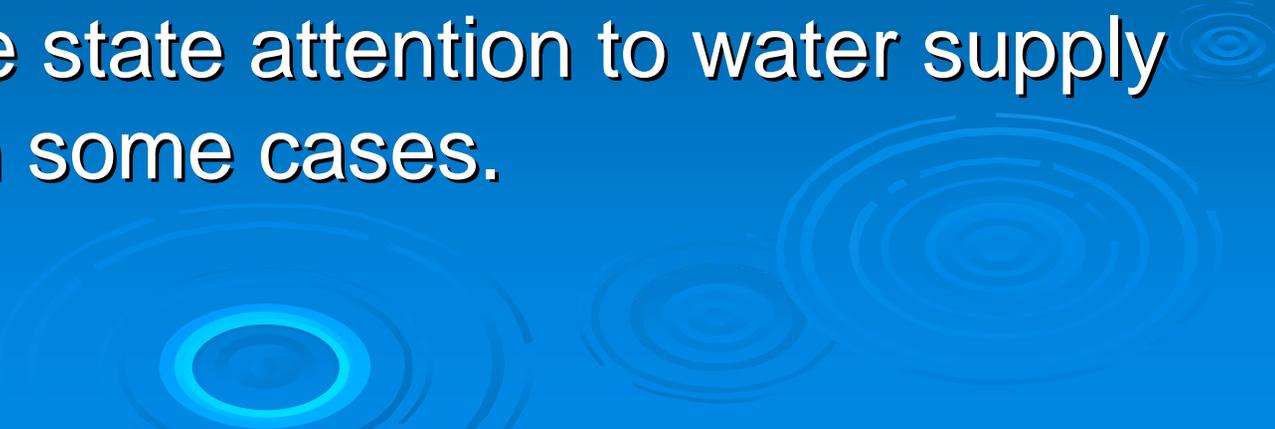
Planning often tends to be crises oriented, with continuous, long-term aspects viewed as discretionary.

- Therefore, planning adequacy varies with time and location.

Examples of Planning Successes

- The USGS/state cooperative data collection program.
- The programs established by the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 (1965-early 1980s).
 - Enhanced state planning programs.
 - Created river basin planning programs.
- Individual state planning programs.

Current Areas of Concern

- Limited federal recognition of the importance of public water supply planning and maintenance of adequate public water supplies.
 - Inadequate levels of data collection and analysis.
 - Inadequate state attention to water supply planning in some cases.
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Limited Federal Recognition of Public Water Supply

- Termination of WRPA programs.
- Absence of a general federal water supply mission and advocacy mechanism.
 - Safe Drinking Water Act focuses on quality, not adequacy of supply.
 - Water supply security initiative is narrow.
 - Water Supply Act of 1958 is passive.
- Constraints on water supply operations imposed by environmental controls.

Adverse Impacts of Environmental Programs on Water Supply

- Clean Water Act sec. 404 permit process:
 - Environmental Protection Agency makes veto decisions based on a single criterion – acceptability of environmental impact.
 - EPA veto does not require evaluation of water supply need or availability of alternative supplies.
- Constraints on permit issuance apply in an uncoordinated, redundant manner.

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Inadequate Data Collection and Analysis

Cooperative federal/state program has provided a firm foundation for planning, but program is falling behind the need for information. Needs include

- Maintenance/expansion of gaging stations.
- More assessment of instream flow needs.
- Improved understanding of the impacts of development on hydrologic processes.
- Better definition of the ground water resource.

Inadequate State Water Supply Planning

- Some state programs have declined with
 - Reduced federal support / state budget cuts.
 - Increased water quality planning mandates.
- Regulatory proceedings have become a default substitute for planning.
- Renewed activity is evident in some cases
 - PA - state water plan mandated.
 - VA - local and state water plans mandated.
 - WV - new water use reporting required.

Recommendations

- Increased standing for water supply in federal policies.
 - E.g., require consideration of water supply needs and alternatives (and other relevant issues) in CWA sec. 404 veto decisions.
- More aggressive data collection and analysis in priority areas.
- Increased state water planning.

Recommendations, continued

- Increased state water planning issues:
 - The state perspective is critical.
 - Local view often too narrow, federal too broad.
 - Coordination is a basic state function.
 - A continuous planning process is needed rather than preparation of a “plan.”
 - Intergovernmental relations need emphasis.
 - Staffing / resources must be maintained.

Conclusion

- Effective planning becomes more important over time as
 - Population continues to increase.
 - The range of water values expand.
 - Future water resource conditions become less certain due to climate change.
- Enhanced planning is the key to ensuring that water's benefits to society are maximized.