US Army Corps of Engineers®

"Watersheds cross political boundaries and require Federal, state and local agencies to develop effective teams to deal with problems on a watershed basis." *Woburn Session**

Environmental sustainability can be achieved through river basin planning.

Watershed Perspective

- "Watershed" refers to a geographically defined drainage area and all the human and ecological resources and processes there. A watershed can range from a few square yards to more than 1 million square miles.
- In the U.S., over 2,000 small watersheds fall within 21 large river basins.
- Activities in small, upstream watersheds impact processes in larger, downstream watersheds.
- Project cost sharing requirements and political boundaries can and often do complicate the adoption of a holistic focus.
- Full watershed impacts are generally not considered when developing local projects.
- The Water Resources Development Act of 2000 broadened the Federal watershed perspective to include the full range of water resources (for example, groundwater, storm water, non-point source pollution, water supply, wetlands, sedimentation, and ecosystem restoration).

Balance economics and the ecosystem with "big picture" planning

Many participants noted the interconnected nature of activities that occur in a watershed. Generally, they felt that water resources and activities, such as land use, that impact water resources, should be planned and managed on an integrated, comprehensive basis. Considering the cumulative, regional impact of individual changes in the watershed was also important to participants.

Comments from the Listening Sessions

"Protecting the Nation's watersheds with a proactive 'holistic' approach. This is the START!" *City Government, Phoenix Session*

"Recognize the need for comprehensive and regionally cooperative water resources planning." *Atlanta, Session*

"Adopt a proactive, flexible adaptive management approach that fully engages communities and agencies at all levels." *Research Center, Honolulu Session*

"Comprehensive planning and working together with uniform information. The less duplication of effort, the better."
State Department (EQ), Williamsburg Session

"Development and advocacy of regional visions from legislative support."
City Government (Mayor), Chicago Session

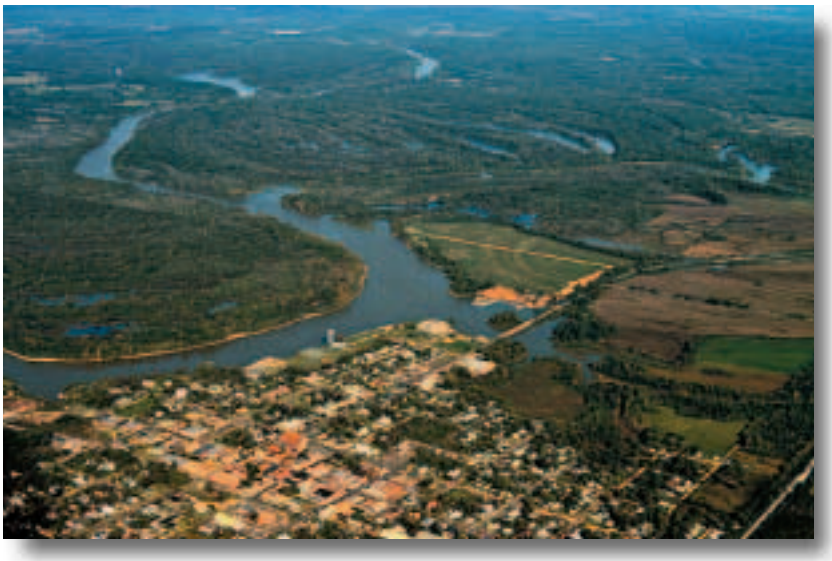
"The Federal government should support initial meetings and encourage joint river-basin authorities to be formed." *National Laboratory, Atlanta Session*

"Take inventory of all existing water resources and analyze the long-term control prospects." *Waterborne Industry, New Brunswick Session*

"A regional approach is necessary, but implementation needs to include local ideas." *County Government, Vancouver Session*

Issues that participants mentioned as needing integrated management and planning included stormwater, non-point source pollution, water supply, wetlands, sedimentation, data collection, and ecosystem restoration. Many participants believed that a balanced, holistic approach to economic and ecosystem needs is important to water resources management and planning.

** Topics in this paper were identified at 16 Listening Sessions between June and November 2000. The purposes of the Listening Sessions were to start a dialogue and to provide citizens an opportunity to tell us what they believed the Federal role should be in addressing water resources.*



Upstream planning affects downstream life. River life, city life… life in all its forms.

Developing watershed visions requires input from all stakeholders.

Several participants felt that a "vision" should be developed for a region's water resources. Inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional coordination was discussed as an essential piece to achieve this vision because of the range of issues and jurisdictions involved in water resources management and planning. It was noted that such coordination could increase the efficiency of management and planning activities in the watershed.

Participants felt that an important component of coordinated water resources management was the involvement of all stakeholders in the planning process.

Many participants noted that the Federal government, in particular the Corps of Engineers, is in a unique position to encourage or coordinate regional management and planning activities that span multiple jurisdictions. However, a few participants expressed concern that regional plans could override local interests, and several felt that any Federal plan should be implemented at the local level.

Regional Concerns

Integrated water resources management and planning was identified as an important challenge in Phoenix, Arizona; Honolulu, Hawaii; and St. Louis, Missouri. In Phoenix, participants commented on the need to bring stakeholders to the table to cooperatively develop a long-term, "big-picture" plan for the region. A unique perspective on integrated water resources management and planning was raised in Honolulu, where participants felt that a "mountaintop-to-seabed" perspective was needed to adequately address water resources in an island context. Honolulu participants also discussed the integration of varied stakeholder interests into an overall plan. St. Louis participants mentioned the need for a consensus-based vision for the Mississippi River watershed.

Americans Say the Federal Government Should:

- Analyze water resources comprehensively at a watershed level.
- Assist in the development of regional "visions" for each major watershed.
- Help identify watershed-level goals that can be implemented locally.
- Seek water resources solutions for ecosystem restoration and environmental sustainability along with economic development.
- Coordinate watershed planning involving all stakeholders and agencies (Federal, state, and local).
- Create forums and conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Help to identify issues for integrated management and planning, including storm water, non-point source pollution, water supply, wetlands, sedimentation, and ecosystem restoration.