

Do We Need A 21st Century National Water Resources Vision?

AWRA National Water Policy Dialogues

- Four Sessions – 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008
- Need for an assessment of the Nation's water resources to include the current status of the resource, the future needs for water and identification of gaps that exist in fulfilling these needs

AWRA National Water Policy Dialogues (Cont.)

- Increasing need for mechanisms to better coordinate the water related activities of federal agencies and among congressional committees. The absence of effective coordination is apparent in the conflicts and overlaps that exist in legislation, programs, and agency activities

AWRA National Water Policy Dialogues (Cont.)

- The relationship among the federal government, state and local communities is changing and must be addressed. The federal government's role in water resources, long seen to be a driving force, must be reevaluated in light of growing state attention and direction of water resources activities

AWRA National Water Policy Dialogues (Cont.)

- Federal actions with regard to water resources must be taken in a watershed context where the underlying planning is conducted in partnership with the state and local entities
- The federal government, in cooperation with state and local agencies, needs to develop a national vision and overarching principles to guide water resources development activities supported by the federal government

Many Others Interested

- Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP)
- Clean Water America Alliance (CWAA)
- Environmental Water Resources Inst. (EWRI - ASCE)
- National Wildlife Foundation (NWF)

Some Results--Eastern Conference

- Federal agencies should work together to develop a toolbox that can be used by states
- A Shared National Water Resources Vision
- National Data Clearing House
- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)
- Interstate Cooperation
- State Top Needs for Assistance
 - Instream Flow Requirements
 - Watershed Approach
 - Data sharing and model development

Needs

- A National Water Resources Vision Statement
- A Vision without a Plan is just a Fairy Tale
- Leadership
- Principles
- Strategy
- Policy

The “What”, Not The “How”

- Set policy, direction, outcomes
- Set schedule and funding (hopefully)
- Allow different regions to establish the “How”
 - Due to differences in East / West water law
 - Due to differences in issues
 - Some regions further along than others

Potential Issues To Be Addressed

- Water quality and quantity
- Groundwater and surface water
- Human needs
- Natural system needs
- Droughts and floods
- Holistic, systems approach
- International water sharing
- Public involvement

Example Vision Statements

1

“We will manage the Nation’s waters holistically to benefit the living world. We will protect our natural systems and manage land and water resources in a sustainable manner to provide for potable supplies, agriculture, industry and recreation.”

Example Vision Statements

#2

“We will manage the Nation’s waters and related land resources holistically to provide groundwater and surface water of sufficient quality and in adequate supply to protect our natural systems and provide for potable supplies, agriculture, industry, and recreation in a sustainable manner. Through enlightened planning for and management of water resources, the health, safety and welfare of citizens will be safeguarded during times of flooding and drought and an informed public will be involved in resolving water resources issues.”

Potential Next Steps

- Obtain consensus that a National Water Vision/Policy is a priority and is endorsed by Western, Eastern and Central States
- If so, pull together a small, representative team to prepare a draft Vision Statement based on the two examples and outlined process for developing a National Water Policy that supports the implementation of the proposed Vision
- The work should be presented at the National conference in August