

Socio-Economics and Management

Management of the Ohio River Basin's water resources for effective and efficient use and maintenance of environmental quality involves a wide range of decision makers and stakeholders with differing values and objectives. Numerous units of local, state and regional government are involved in water use, management and regulatory decisions on an ongoing basis. These decisions impact water supply, waste disposal, transportation and recreational uses of the Ohio River and its tributaries, directly impacting the physical, chemical and ecological character of the waterways.

Numerous national trends in river management and environmental protection have important implications for the Ohio River Basin. Renewed focus on watershed-based management supports the need for a broader approach to problem evaluation in the Basin, as well as new institutional partnerships.

To promote a more effective knowledge base for decision support and decision-making processes in the Basin, research is needed on the socio-economic, political, technological and institutional factors which now, or could in the future, affect how decisions are made. This includes broad studies of decision-making across the Basin and studies of particular problems.

Examples of Research Needs:

- Evaluation of prior successes and needs for basinwide management approaches
- Understanding public values and perceptions as a guide for setting water quality goals
- Development of Geographic Information Systems and inter-agency data sharing for decision support
- Improvements in communications for spill response and fish consumption/recreation advisories