



## WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

**Project ID:** 2003AZ19B

**Title:** Integrating Research and Education to Assist Watershed Initiatives: A Survey of Three Arizona Watershed Organizations

**Project Type:** Research

**Focus Categories:** Management and Planning, Education, Law, Institutions, and Policy

**Keywords:** Watershed Management, Resource Planning, Education, Groundwater Management, Institutional Relationships, River Basin Development, Socioeconomic Issues, Water Resources Development

**Start Date:** 03/01/2003

**End Date:** 02/28/2004

**Federal Funds Requested:** \$12451.00

**Matching Funds:** \$48962.00

**Congressional District:** 5

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**Abstract:** While Arizona watershed initiatives hold great promise for improved water management basin wide, rural communities and the ADWR have identified the need for evaluation of watershed initiatives in terms of their capacity to achieve their goals. Specifically, rural communities and the ADWR want to know if watershed initiatives are effective mechanisms for improving resource governance, management, and problem-solving. An assessment of commonly identified areas of concern: 1) organizational and process outcomes related to ecological concerns and water quality or quantity, 2) representation of all interests, 3) the privileging of local stakeholder demands over scientific and state interests, and 4) addressing contentious issues through a consensus-based approach, would indicate what strategies have proven most successful for the watershed initiative performance. The evaluations of watershed groups in California and the Northwest provide potential models for adapting surveys to watersheds within semi-arid regions (Kenney, McAllister, Caile and Peckham 2000). While the current 17 Arizona Rural Watershed Initiatives are extremely diverse in terms of scope, structure, and function, selecting three that

have had sufficient time to develop clear missions and objectives, attract basin representation, and implement water-related projects provides an opportunity for a comparative analysis of their effectiveness. This watershed initiative evaluation tool would benefit state and municipal water managers, legislators and local elected officials, the ADWR Rural Watershed Initiative Program, environmental organizations and other water stakeholders, and help them to collaborate more effectively in addressing water-planning and management conflicts. This assessment would also help the University of Arizona Department of Renewable Resources, the Extension Division, and the Udall Center develop planning and outreach programs for watershed initiatives to insure their success. Potential long-term research benefits include the creation of a prototype assessment tool of watershed initiatives throughout the state that would help water stakeholders and managers determine what makes watershed initiatives work and what does not. The need for greater documentation and accountability on the part of watershed groups remains central to determine the effects of these experiments on resource management.

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