

# **Report for 2004DE47B: Undergraduate Internship: An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, Environmental, and Recreational Benefits of the Christina Basin**

- Water Resources Research Institute Reports:
  - Hastings, Steven E., Gerald Kauffman, Steven T. Ernst, 2005, An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, Environmental, and Recreational Benefits of the Christina Basin, Delaware Water Resources Center, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, 25 Pages.
- Other Publications:
  - Boyd, Amy, ed., Fall 2004, Delaware Water Resources Center WATER NEWS Vol. 5 Issue 1 "DWRC 2004 Internship Update: Christina Basin Governance Analysis", <http://ag.udel.edu/dwrc/newsletters/Fall2004-P4-8.pdf>, p. 7.

Report Follows

## **Undergraduate Internship Project #7 of 9 for FY04**

**Steven Ernst's** project explores water resources governance practices and related benefits for the Christina Basin, home to more than half of Delaware's population. His **Delaware Water Resources Center / University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration Water Resources Agency (WRA)** co-sponsored internship is entitled "An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, Environmental, and Recreation Benefits of the Christina Basin." UD Department of Food and Resource Economics' Dr. Steve Hastings and the **WRA's** Gerald Kauffman are the project advisors.

**"My goal is for Christina Basin residents to experience more effectively coordinated stewardship of their watershed resources. I will recommend approaches to help shareholders best succeed with their proposed conservation programs and policies."**  
-- Steve Ernst

### **Abstract**

Managing transboundary resources, particularly water, is one of the greatest challenges facing experts in the field of natural resource management. The various agencies and organizations involved in any given region make decision-making and consensus building very difficult. In the past, different water agencies were delegated authority over separate areas of water policy; however, in the last 20 years there has been a movement toward watershed based management strategies. This movement resulted in the creation of the Christina Basin Water Quality Management Committee, later renamed the Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership.

The Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership was created with the objective of bringing together local watershed groups and organizations to improve the Basin's water quality. In the ten years since the Partnership's creation, water quality has greatly improved and coordination within groups has increased. However, the Partnership is now at a point where it must decide whether to grow in size and influence or stagnate and risk missing an opportunity to further improve the watershed.

Organizations that manage transboundary resources come in many different forms; the goal of this paper is to find the form that would best suit the future goals of the Partnership. Much has changed since the first interstate water agreements were created nearly 300 years ago, but many of the problems these plans worked to improve, like pollution control and funding, were the same then as they are now.

The most common transboundary governance structures include authorities, consolidated districts, commissions, partnerships, and partnerships with coordinators. Each of these structures has advantages, disadvantages, and information we can use to find the structure that best suits the Christina Basin. Upon analyzing the attributes of each option, the partnership with coordinator structure best fits the current and future needs of the Basin.

The coordinator would handle the day to day business of the Partnership and would act as the contact person between the group and the community. The Partnership would also benefit from more secure funding in the form of a state line item. These improvements would allow the Partnership to spend less time handling administrative

tasks and creating grant proposals, and provide more time to work on meaningful policy objectives within the Basin.

The Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership has made great progress in the last ten years and will continue to do so in the future. The current arrangement of the organization has served the Basin's needs well, however, a few changes will greatly increase the effectiveness of the Partnership. By making these improvements, the Partnership can insure that it will continue to play an increasingly important role in the conservation and protection of the Christina Basin's valuable water resources.