

The Role of Water Planning

Purpose:

- The purpose of planning is to protect our water supplies and to make our uses more resilient, for the long term.
- Planning is to balance the interests of the individual with those of the community – subject to legal constraints
- Planning must address goals and policies
- Planning is the tool to assure competent water governance.
- Planning is the means to decide how to deal with problems
- Planning must be used to drive subsequent development and operational decisions

Attributes:

- Planning has to articulate goals, objectives, issues and problems at the appropriate level, especially the elephants in the room.
- Planning must be an ongoing process to deal with evolving situations
- Planning must continually involve a wide array of stakeholders and the general public, and clearly show how the benefits exceed the costs of participating
- Planning must recognize hydrologic reality and have a sound scientific or technical basis
- Planning must identify and evaluate alternative approaches to address the issues and problems, including forecasting the outcomes or impacts from the no-action alternative.
- Planning must address a wide array of topic areas including:
 - land use decisions, water quality standards, recreational needs, environmental protections, agricultural uses, urban growth demands, tribal requirements, and climatic changes
- Planning must prioritize among recommendations (desires always exceed resources)
- Plans must be coordinated across neighbors and disciplines
- Plans must be acceptable and approved at higher levels (subregion at region, region at state)
- And again the planning must have impact; strong incentives for all to adhere to plans (or to modify them when needed)