

ABSTRACT

Optimizing Collaborative Strategies for Improved Watershed Management in Trinidad WI

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This research investigated suitable strategies for optimizing collaborative watershed management in Trinidad WI. It identified various stakeholders' perceptions of the main watershed management problems, causes and solutions; determined stakeholders' willingness to collaborate on various solutions to address watershed management problems; elaborated on stakeholders' views on watershed management problems, causes and solutions and described the institutional roles, requirements and limitations regarding watershed management. Findings contributed towards recommending suitable strategies for optimizing collaborative watershed management in Trinidad WI. A mixed-methods approach was utilized to collect data for this study. Interviews were conducted with 266 stakeholders to identify their views on the main watershed management problems, causes and solutions and to get their views on collaboration. The main watershed management problems, causes and solutions were ranked in order of perceived importance and, cross tabulation analyses sought to identify similarities among the various stakeholder groups' perceptions on watershed management problems, causes and solutions. A modified Wilder's Collaboration Factor Inventory was used to create a collaboration index to determine stakeholders' level of willingness to collaborate to address watershed management issues. Focus group discussions were also conducted in four watershed communities to further validate the findings obtained from the stakeholders' perception and willingness to collaborate survey. Thematic analysis was used to compare the themes across the four focus groups. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from nine key institutions with a role in watershed management to be able to describe institutional roles, requirements and limitations regarding watershed management activities. The roles of the institutions interviewed, institutions' perceived level of importance regarding watershed management activities were summarized, and institutional requirements and limitations were ranked in order of importance. The findings were consistent with collaborative theories and a model, which proposes new protocols to optimize collaborative watershed management, is presented.

Keywords: collaborative management; optimizing strategies; stakeholders perceptions; Trinidad; watershed management; willingness levels.