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## Public Policy: Integrated Approaches to Environmental Policy

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Wetlands  
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# Technical Report

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## Public Policy: Integrated Approaches to Environmental Policy

*by Karla S. Havens*

Two studies “*Environmental Policy and the Role of the University*” and “*Environmental Policy: Contributions to Development and Implementation*” support the notion that universities are uniquely well-suited for contributing to state environmental policy formation. Universities have certain characteristics which make them useful players in the development of environmental policy. Traditionally, they foster new ideas and new problem-solving approaches and maintain links to environmental policy through multiple activities. They also serve a major role in educating the public.

Universities that function well as support for policy-makers have tailored their teachings and research to encourage service. To support the policy process, faculty should receive departmental recognition as well as personal reward. Support should be provided to individual faculty who chose to assist policy-makers in their endeavors. Finally, the university should produce educational programs for the interdisciplinary study of environmental management.

Unquestionably, universities are great reservoirs of knowledge and skills which are relevant to the issues of environmental policy, yet barriers exist between the policy-makers and the universities. Existing concerns must be resolved in order for the linkage between the universities and the policy-makers to be productive. To advance their potential contribution to environmental policy-making, universities should:

1. Sustain their commitment to innovative work
2. Encourage and support applied and policy-oriented faculty research
3. Focus on their role as “honest broker” of information
4. Develop programs to train professional environmental policy-makers
5. Encourage faculty involvement in policy and management bodies
6. Strive for neutrality.

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### Editor's Note:

*During the Spring of 1998, VIMS produced and published the document entitled, “Compendium Report: Workproducts of the Wetlands Program, Comprehensive Coastal Inventory and the Coastal Ecosystem and Remote Sensing Program.” Over sixty research papers were summarized, categorized and drafted into one final document. This compendium report was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a Wetlands Protection State Development Grant. In addition to the study, EPA funded a two-day seminar where selected topics from within the compendium document were presented and discussed by state and federal natural resource managers.*

*This Technical Report is the first in a series that will summarize a variety of the topics covered within the compendium document. Future Technical Reports will include studies that have been completed pertaining to the following topics: Functional Assessment of Wetlands, Wetland Creation and Restoration, Wetland Management, Change Detections Within Wetlands, Monitoring of Wetlands, and Coastal Zone Land Use.*

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Together, universities and state policy-makers may optimize their effectiveness by seeking to establish university-based centers for environmental policy research and uphold continuous funding for long-term scientific analysis within the university. State policy-makers may realize the benefits of the university input by developing and maintaining ongoing communication with university resources.

(some nice little drawing here for separation)

Eight different case studies were compiled from the College of William and Mary's Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy. The authors discuss integrated approaches to environmental policy making at the local, state, and federal level. Similar cases are presented which discuss environmental permitting in Germany and problems that Brazil is experiencing due to a lack of an integrated approach to resource management.

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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NOAA or any of its subagencies or DEQ.

*Commonwealth's Declared Policy: "to preserve the wetlands and to prevent their despoliation and destruction..."*

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In "*The Role of Academia in Environmental Policy Making*," results of a survey conducted on twelve North American universities and affiliated research centers are presented. The results of their detailed survey are as follow:

1. The university can play a definite role in the integrated approach to environmental policy making
2. Many roles are available in the environmental policy making arena
3. The university is mainly involved in environmental policy making as information gatherers and enlightened discussion facilitators
4. Cooperation is required by academics, industry, federal/state/local governments, and public interest groups for the integrated approach to work.

"*Washington Environment 2010: An Example of the Integrated Approach to Environmental Management*" discusses the 1988 decision by then-governor Booth Gardner to overhaul existing programs to address changing environmental problems. A twenty-one member task force comprised of federal employees and heads of state agencies was created to determine critical problems and future problems. The committee projected the condition of Washington's environment by the year 2010 if usage trends continued with current environmental policies.

A "State of the Environment Report" resulted from their efforts with a two-fold purpose: to continually refine the evaluation of environmental threats, and to report on any progress toward implementation of the recommendations. As a result, many legislative initiatives have been and will need to be passed. Ultimately, the Washington Environment 2010 emphasizes the need for:

1. Environmental education
2. A strong relationship between environmental media and non-environmentally specific concerns
3. Environmental improvements and positive changes in attitude.

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The study *"A Report on the Elizabeth River and Common Ground Projects - Community response to Environmental Issues"* reviews the action of two citizen groups. The Common Grounds Consensus Project (CGCP) was a two-year problem-solving process in Illinois designed to develop policies and legislation on environmental and agricultural issues. The CGCP sought to address problems that had divided the agricultural community and environmental community for years.

A task force was created, roles were defined, and together solutions were devised into an action plan. This plan fostered trust and cooperation between the agricultural and environmental communities, resulting in securing governmental support for their proposals.

The Elizabeth River Project (ERP) hoped to address and provide solutions for remedying the current pollution problems of the Elizabeth River, as well as increase local appreciation of the river. This was completed through a report addressing the river's condition and an approach to problem solving. Committee groups, built in an atmosphere of cooperation, determined that the improved health of the river was dependent upon:

1. A comparative risk program
2. A public awareness program, and
3. A community-based restoration.

*"New York's Integrated Approach"* discusses the problems associated with reviewing individual pollution problems as distinct and separate entities as opposed to interconnected, non-boundary or border respecting problems. Federal leadership had failed in the past, due mainly to single-medium programs, legislative restrictions, and a narrow focus toward policy.

An integrated legislation bill was proposed and supported by the environmental community which strengthened the standing environmental regulations. The business community supported the changes as well, citing the prohibition of having to seek state and federal licensing. Through the incorporation of multimedia pollution prevention teams and the establishment of an industry-government data base, the amendments served to facilitate coordination between industry and government regu-

latory agencies. This resulted in a dramatic step toward improving the health and living conditions of its citizenry.

*"California Air Quality: The Regulations and Market Incentives of the South Coast Air Quality Management District"* reviews the need for a comprehensive approach to attack regional air pollution problems. A regional regulatory agency was created to conduct a five year review of all air pollution sources. This agency, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) involved the public as well as informed the public.

Then, in 1991, the governor of California devised a Regional Clean Air Incentives Market (RECLAIM) designed in the mold of marketable pollution permits systems that combat acid rain causing emissions, involving the use of transferable emission credits. This resulted in a smooth transition to Zero Emission Vehicles, stimulating investment in new technology and the infrastructure needed to support change.

*"Integrated Pollution Control and Environmental Protection in the Great Lakes Basin: The Political and Institutional Challenge"* reviews the serious environmental and natural resources problems found within the Great Lakes Basin (GLB). The political boundary of the GLB contains eight states of the United States, as well as the province of Ontario. Policy making decisions involve state, the United States federal, and Canadian federal governments.

The most serious problems within the GLB involve wetland losses of over 80 percent, an increase of birth defects in animals and humans, threatened fish habitat, and the reduction in migratory bird habitat. The paper examines two primary binational initiatives to address these problems: The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. These are two successful interdisciplinary approaches used to solve multiple problems within the GLB.

*"Environmental Permits in Germany: An Integrated Approach to Pollution Abatement"* discusses the lack of a single comprehensive act or agency to provide nationally consistent programs or policies. Currently, Germany has two distinct levels of government. The Lander is equivalent to the state government, having broad authority over internal affairs and responsibility for the implementation of most environmental

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legislation. The Federal government is the authority able to enact legislation, but has very little ability to conduct oversight or programs once enacted. To add confusion, levels of environmental administration differ through Germany's states.

In the 1980's, a decision was made to remedy current problems with Phase II of environmental legislation. An integrated approach was selected which involved closing existing loopholes, and creating and abiding by the "Precautionary Principle" and the "Security of Rights" guiding principle. These principles helped provide continuity to German environmental policy and remedied the problems of earlier legislation.

"Brazil: An Integrated Approach Case Study" discusses how the integrated approach remains an unrealized goal in Brazil. The reason for this is two-fold. First, Brazil has concentrated on its booming population's needs, leading to relegating environmental concerns to minor importance. Second, Brazil's existing structural conditions - centralized government, inadequate management of human resources, economic instability, and a weak legal system - all contribute to the blockage of environmental progress.

A study by the World Bank suggests the following measures be implemented:

1. Remove subsidies that distort prices and incentives
2. Improve land use planning
3. Clarify resource ownership and land tenure
4. Expand education programs for girl and employment opportunities for women
5. Expand investments in and maintenance of rural infrastructure.

Wide-scale participation is essential for the evolution of Brazil's development policy and surmounting structural obstacles. Participation by state and local governments as well as the general public is required. The people and the government must sense that there are benefits to be gained by protecting the environment.

## Suggested Reading

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