



WHO IS INVOLVED IN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND HOW ARE PROJECTS STRUCTURED?

Ecosystem management (EM) is an approach to managing natural resources that considers multiple species in whole ecosystems, involves the collaboration of multiple participants, and balances social needs with ecosystem protection. Since 1995 the Ecosystem Management Initiative has been tracking EM approaches across the country to characterize and learn from this experience. Based on phone and written surveys of 100 cases in 1995, 1999 and 2003, here is a picture of *who is involved* in EM and *how these efforts are coordinated and structured*.

Cases at a glance

Age of a project ranges from two to 32 years old in 2003, with an average age in 2003 of 10-15 years.

Area ranges from 60 to 410,000,000 acres, with the majority of projects less than 500,000 acres, on both private and public lands, frequently with federally listed threatened or endangered species on site.

Ecosystem types vary widely, but most projects focus on wetland, river, forest and/or grassland ecosystems, while fewer are based on desert or coastal systems.

Resource use commonly in project areas includes development, agriculture, timber and/or recreation.

For more information and additional fact sheets see:

http://www.snre.umich.edu/ecomgt/research/em_trends.htm

Why are EM projects started and who initiates them?

Over half of the projects surveyed were initiated at least in part because of agency policies, such as agency-wide adoption of EM, or programs that provided incentives for an EM approach, such as the Forest Service's New Perspectives Program or the EPA National Estuary Program. Many projects also were triggered by a recognized uniqueness of areas threatened by development or over- use.

Who initiates an ecosystem management project varies by region

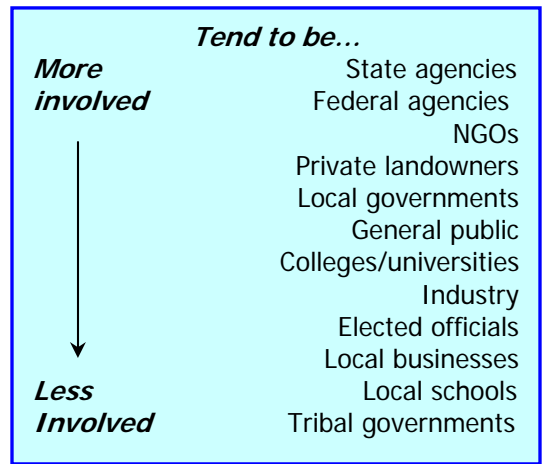
In the western U.S., where there is a large amount of public land, most initiatives were started by federal agencies. State agencies are more likely to start an EM project in the Midwest and non-profits in the northeast.

Who is involved and how does involvement change over the life of a project?

State and federal agencies, NGOs, and private landowners are involved in most projects, while fewer projects have involvement by local businesses, schools or tribal governments.

Local governments are more involved in projects that are younger or in the planning phase. Industries also tend to become less involved later in a project, suggesting they are not long-term participants.

State governments, on the other hand, become more involved in projects over time, and, like local schools, are more involved when a project is in full implementation than when it is in the planning stage.



How are projects managed or coordinated over time?

Just under half of the projects surveyed had a full-time manager or coordinator that was hired for the explicit purpose of organizing or facilitating the effort. In some cases, the project coordinator works for one partner organization and the project is only part of their responsibilities, while in an equal number of cases the coordination or management of project activities is shared among multiple partner organizations on a rotating or fixed basis. Very few projects operate in an ad hoc manner, without a designated manager or coordinator.

In early phases of planning and implementation projects are coordinated in many different ways. Later, they commonly have a designated full or part-time coordinator.

How are projects structured and decisions made?

The majority of projects is structured by a formal written agreement (such as an MOU, contract or set of by-laws) and/or has an agreed-upon mission statement. A quarter of the projects surveyed operate as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created to manage the effort.

To make decisions, participants of EM projects much more commonly use **consensus** rather than **majority votes** by partner organizations.

Sources

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Yaffee, Steven L. Ali F. Phillips, Irene C. Frenzt, Paul Hardy, Sussanne Maleki, and Barbara E. Thorpe. 1996. Ecosystem Management in the United States: An Assessment of Current Experience. Washington, DC: Island Press.