

# Water Resources Planning

MANUAL OF WATER SUPPLY PRACTICES

M50

*Second Edition*



American Water Works  
Association

The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

Advocacy  
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# Water Resources Planning

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*Second Edition*



**American Water Works  
Association**

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## ***Science and Technology***

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AWWA unites the entire water community by developing and distributing authoritative scientific and technological knowledge. Through its members, AWWA develops industry standards for products and processes that advance public health and safety. AWWA also provides quality improvement programs for water and wastewater utilities.

MANUAL OF WATER SUPPLY PRACTICES—M50, Second Edition

## Water Resources Planning

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# Contents

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<b>List of Figures, vii</b>	
<b>List of Tables, xi</b>	
<b>Foreword, xiii</b>	
<b>Acknowledgments, xv</b>	
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction to Water Resources Planning . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
The Water Resources Planning Process, 2	
References, 11	
<b>Chapter 2 Public Involvement for Water Resources Planning . . . . .</b>	<b>13</b>
Introduction, 13	
Planning for Public Involvement, 15	
Prepare Public Involvement Work Plan, 18	
Implement the Public Involvement Plan, 20	
Case Studies, 22	
Supplement to Chapter 2, 35	
Public Consultation Addressing Historic/Cultural Resource and Environmental Justice Issues, 35	
Public Involvement and Consultation Regarding Historic and Cultural Resources, 35	
Public Involvement and Consultation Regarding Environmental Justice, 36	
Consultation/Collaboration with Federally Recognized Native American Tribes, 37	
<b>Chapter 3 Water Demand Forecasting . . . . .</b>	<b>41</b>
Forecasting Methods, 43	
Data Requirements, 47	
Identifying Water Use Patterns, 52	
Compiling a Demographic Database, 60	
Naturally Occurring and Programmed Conservation, 61	
Identify System Losses, 63	
Complete the Integrated Forecast Model, 63	
Sensitivity Analysis, 67	
Summary, 71	
Suggested Additional Readings, 72	
Supplement to Chapter 3: Summary of IWA Best Practices for Water Loss Control, 76	
Features of International Water Audit Methodology, 76	
Magnitude of Savings Potential, 77	
Major Components of Effective Loss Control, 78	
<b>Chapter 4 Water Rights and Policy . . . . .</b>	<b>81</b>
General Water Rights, 82	
Federal Water Rights, 86	

The Public Trust Doctrine, 88	
AWWA Water Policy, 90	
Water Quality Impacts to Water Rights, 91	
Suggested Additional Readings, 93	
<b>Chapter 5 Evaluation of Surface Water and Groundwater Sources . . . .</b>	<b>95</b>
Surface Water, 95	
Groundwater, 103	
Aquifer Storage and Recovery Wells, 107	
Conjunctive Use of Groundwater and Surface Wells, 112	
Identification of Timing and Magnitude of New Source Development, 115	
References, 117	
<b>Chapter 6 Evaluation of Other Sources . . . . .</b>	<b>119</b>
Conservation, 119	
Reclaimed Water, 138	
Project Siting, 146	
Desalination, 151	
Water Marketing and Transfers, 162	
References, 168	
<b>Chapter 7 Water Quality . . . . .</b>	<b>171</b>
The Hydrologic Cycle and Water Quality, 171	
Surface Water Quality, 172	
Groundwater Quality, 172	
Physical, Chemical, and Biological Components Influencing Water Quality, 173	
Sources of Contaminant Loading in Water, 177	
Water Quality Sampling and Monitoring, 181	
Summary, 184	
Suggested Additional Readings, 184	
<b>Chapter 8 Hydrologic Modeling . . . . .</b>	<b>187</b>
Hydrologic Models: What, Why, How, and When, 188	
Hydrologic Models and Their Use, 191	
Models and the Hydrologic Cycle, 195	
Hydrologic Models: Data, Calibration, Sensitivity, and Errors, 211	
Suggested Additional Readings, 226	
<b>Chapter 9 Regulatory Issues . . . . .</b>	<b>227</b>
Clean Water Act, 228	
Drinking Water Quality Standards, 230	
1986 Amendments, 235	
1996 Amendments, 240	
Summary, 246	
References, 259	
<b>Chapter 10 Environmental Impact Analysis . . . . .</b>	<b>261</b>
Environmental Impact Planning, 261	
Preparing Environmental Impact Documentation, 264	
Information in Environmental Impact Documents, 268	
Permits and Approvals in the Environmental Process, 270	

<b>Chapter 11 Watershed Management and Groundwater Protection . . . . .</b>	<b>275</b>
Surface Water Source Protection, 276	
Groundwater Source Protection, 286	
References, 297	
<b>Chapter 12 Economic Feasibility . . . . .</b>	<b>299</b>
Multiobjective Decisions: Economics as One of Several Objectives, 299	
Economic Factors, 299	
Economic Variables: Costs and Benefits, 300	
Time and Discount Rate, 305	
Comparison Methodologies, 308	
Summary, 313	
<b>Chapter 13 Integrated Resource Planning . . . . .</b>	<b>315</b>
Overview of the IRP Process, 316	
Plan Outline, 322	
Forming Resource Combinations, 327	
Evaluating Resource Combinations, 330	
Selecting and Implementing a Plan, 334	
References, 339	
<b>Chapter 14 Case Studies . . . . .</b>	<b>341</b>
Case Study #1: City of Newport News, VA and the King William Reservoir Project, 342	
Case Study #2: Case Study for Regional Water Planning in Texas, 345	
Case Study #3: Portland, Oregon, Regional Water Supply Plan, 347	
Case Study #4: City of Colorado Springs, Colorado, Integrated Resource Plan, 348	
Case Study #5: Denver, Colorado, Metropolitan Area, 349	
Case Study #6: Kentucky–American Water Company’s Integrated Resource Plan, 353	
Case Study #7: Wichita, Kansas, Integrated Resource Plan, 355	
Case Study #8: Ware Creek Reservoir, Virginia, 356	
Case Study #9: Southern Nevada Water Authority Integrated Resource Plan, 357	
Case Study #10: Eugene, Oregon, Water and Electric Board Water Supply Plan, 361	
<b>Appendix A Preliminary Cost Guide for Water Supply Dams . . . . .</b>	<b>365</b>
Selecting the Appropriate Dam Type, 365	
Establishing Dam Profile Layout, 366	
Profile Layout and Basis for Estimating Quantity, 367	
Earth Fill Dam Assessment—Preliminary Layout and Opinion of Cost, 370	
Earth Dam—Opinion of Cost, 372	
<b>Appendix B A White Paper From the American Water Works Association     Source Water Protection (approved April 11, 1997) . . . . .</b>	<b>373</b>
Statement of Principles, 373	
The Road to a Source Water Protection Program, 374	
Developing Resources For Source Water Protection, 375	
Recommendations, 375	

**Appendix C State Wellhead and Source Water Protection Contact List . . . . . 377**

**Index, 379**

**List of AWWA Manuals, 391**

# Figures

---

- 1-1 Water resources planning process, 3
- 3-1 Information flow in forecast model, 42
- 3-2 Single family residential—typical seasonal index, Mesa, Ariz., area, 55
- 3-3 Effect of weather on consumption, typical to Mesa, Ariz., area, 56
- 3-4 Illustration of single family residence water use model components, water utility in Tualatin Valley Water District, Beaverton, Ore., 59
- 3-5 Illustration of monthly forecasting with conservation; water utility in Tualatin Valley Water District, Beaverton, Ore., 64
- 3-6 Total historical forecasts with and without conservation for rapidly growing utility in the Phoenix, Ariz., area (includes system water losses), 65
- 3-7 Total and indoor water history and projection, excluding water losses, including natural and programmed conservation, for rapidly growing utility in Phoenix, Ariz., area, 66
- 3-8 Forecasting sensitivity related to joint probability of water use and household projections, 70
- 3S-1 The International Standard Water Audit Format, 76
- 5-1 Safe yield of on-stream sites, 100
- 5-2 Safe yield of pumped-storage sites, 101
- 6-1 Mean daily per capita water use, 12 study sites, 124
- 6-2 Indoor per capita use percent by fixture, 12 study sites, 125
- 6-3 Determine market penetration, 129
- 6-4 Example of delay downsize facility based on demand forecast accounting for conservation effects, 130
- 6-5 Benefit–cost analysis methodology, 132
- 6-6 Demand forecast with and without water conservation, 133
- 6-7 Wastewater hydrograph, 142
- 6-8 Supply sized for average month demand, 143
- 6-9 Supply sized for daily demand, 144
- 6-10 Integrated/satellite system layout, 149
- 6-11 Basic electro dialysis unit (adopted from USDI, 1982), 154
- 6-12 Typical regulatory compliance plan procedure, 161



- 7-1 Point source pollution, 179
- 7-2 Nonpoint source pollution, 180
- 8-1 Model: activities sequence and utilities, 190
- 8-2 Data–decision hierarchy, 192
- 8-3 Hydrologic cycle, 196
- 8-4 Schematic of hydrologic cycle, 198
- 8-5.1 Developing successful models, step 1: Determine need for a model (Is a model needed?), 219
- 8-5.2 Developing successful models, step 2: Select a model, 220
- 8-5.3a Developing successful models, step 3: Build a model, 221
- 8-5.3b Developing successful models, step 3: Build a model (continued), 222
- 8-5.3c Developing successful models, step 3: Build a model (continued), 223
- 8-5.4 Developing successful models, step 4: Calibrate the model, 224
- 8-5.5 Developing successful models, step 5: Perform sensitivity analysis, 225
- 8-5.6 Developing successful models, step 6: Use a model, 225
- 9-1 Permit process flowcharts, 231
- 11-1 Watershed protection plan development and implementation flowchart, 277
- 11-2 Watershed area (USEPA, 1997b), 293
- 11-3 Watershed area—segmented for assessments (USEPA, 1997b), 294
- 13-1 Integrated resource planning, 318
- 13-2a Integrated resource planning—why?, 319
- 13-2b Integrated resource plan, 321
- 13-3 Water resources management planning study framework, 321
- 13-4 Example of service reliability probability distribution for a specific future year, 333
- 13-5 Consideration and ranking of many alternatives is a feature of integrated resource planning, 336
- 13-6 Determining the optimum (least-cost) level of water supply reliability, 337
- 13-7 Effect of environmental costs on water supply reliability, 338
- A-1 Dam profile layout, 367
- A-2 Profile layout for estimating quantity, 368
- A-3 Typical RCC dam geometry, 368

- A-4 RCC unit cost, 369
- A-5 Earth fill unit cost, 371

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# Tables

---

- 3-1 Example of water demands for raw water customers with per capita use—  
San Francisco Bay area agency, 52
- 3-2 Example of baseline demand for treated water customers, disaggregated by  
customer type and land use, 53
- 3S-1 City of Philadelphia 1991 Water Audit; Summary Performance Results, 77
- 4-1 Summary of water rights of the 50 states, 83
- 4-2 Comparison of riparian and appropriation water rights systems, 86
- 6-1 Overview of benefits, 121
- 6-2 Energy used to deliver water, 122
- 6-3 How water system elements are affected by consumption, 122
- 6-4 How wastewater system elements are affected by conservation, 123
- 6-5 Characteristics of significant CI categories in five participating agencies, 126
- 6-6 Efficiency benchmarks for schools, 127
- 6-7 Unit water savings of conservation measures, 131
- 6-8 Examples of drought plan conditions, 137
- 6-9 Example industrial wastewater constituents\*, 139
- 6-10 Reclaimed water use by treatment level, 141
- 6-11 Water reclamation plant flexibility and reliability requirements, 148
- 6-12 Representative water reclamation capital costs, 150
- 6-13 Desalination process chart, 152
- 6-14 Pretreatment methods for desalination systems, 152
- 7-1 Water states and qualitative characteristics, 178
- 7-2 Summary of the minimum parameters to be analyzed in water quality tests  
(Bloetscher, et al., 2005; AWWA, 2003), 184
- 8-1 Interception percentages for various crops and forests, 201
- 8-2 Representative values of vegetation parameter “a”, 205
- 8-3 Representative values of infiltration capacities, 206
- 8-4 Groundwater terms, definitions, and representative values of parameters, 207
- 9-1 Removal–inactivation as a function of raw water contamination, 237

- 9-2 National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (current contaminant listings can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/index.html>), 248
- 9-3 National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations, 1998, 259
- 11-1 Categories of water quality threats, 282
- 11-2 Threat assessment, 284
- 11-3 Number of public water systems in the United States, 288
- 11-4 Population served by public water system type in the United States, 288
- 11-5 Community water systems by source in the United States, 288
- 11-6 Advantages and disadvantages of WRP delineation methods, 290
- 13-1 Utility experience with IRP, 317
- 13-2 Comparison of traditional supply planning and IRP, 322
- 13-3 Model drought demand management plan, 328
- 13-4 Evaluation of resource sequences, 335
- A-1 Considerations for selecting dam type, 366
- A-2 Embankment dam alternative layout selection factors, 370

# Foreword

This publication is the second edition of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Manual M50, *Water Resources Planning*, originally published in 2001. The manual provides information on how to develop a plan for new water supplies to accommodate projected future water demands.

This second edition significantly enhances the basis of water resource planning provided in the first edition. Additions and improvements include:

Emphasizes the role of successful public involvement in water resource planning with a new chapter on the topic.

Expanded treatment of water losses in the Water Demand Forecasting chapter along with examples.

New section on conjunctive use as a water source option.

Update on drinking water regulations.

New section on Native American Consultation in environmental impact analysis.

Additional case studies on Integrated Resource Planning.

The impetus for M50 stems from the fact that many of the water supplies serving the current population were developed decades ago. During the 1930s through 1960s, the US Bureau of Reclamation, the US Army Corps of Engineers, some state agencies, and water wholesalers actively developed water projects. Environmental regulations were minimal, federal and state money was relatively plentiful, and the public was not greatly involved in water supply decision making. All this changed in the 1970s. Since then, we have seen

- heightened public interest in water resources planning (WRP)
- extensive promulgation of environmental regulations
- greater scrutiny of large public works projects
- an emerging understanding of water conservation, efficiency, and demand management benefits
- a better understanding of how water supply projects affect the environment (and our ability to model the impacts)

As a result of these changes, far fewer water resource projects have been built since the early 1980s.

The traditional mission of AWWA member utilities has been to distribute treated drinking water from sources often developed by predecessors or outside entities. In most cases, the utility's role is now being expanded to include the development of major new water supplies. As noted, limited source of supply development over the past two decades has been influenced by expanded environmental regulations. These regulations have constrained new source development projects, while creating a concentrated focus on capital-intensive treatment process and water quality enhancement upgrades. Increased demand for new sources of supply can be seen in every region of the country. This manual is designed to provide information, previously unavailable through AWWA, to help member utilities meet their customers' needs and the demands of the marketplace in an effective, organized, and responsive fashion.

Water resource planning for potable water supply is a very broad topic. No single manual could cover all possible technical topics needed by resource planners. Issues range from estimating future water demand to evaluating possible new sources of water and dealing with expanding environmental regulations. One method for preparing a water resources plan is integrated resource planning (IRP). Developed in the 1990s, IRP shows promise as a way to tie together all the loose ends through a planning process that usually results in a reason-based, cost-effective, and environmentally sound plan the public can support. But this manual discusses much more than IRP; it provides utilities with substantial detail on how to develop and evaluate the information they need to make informed decisions on the best time and method to expand water supplies.

It should be noted that a standard exists that covers the essential requirements for the effective protection of source waters, AWWA Standard G300, *Source Water Protection*. Successful source water protection programs may vary widely in their details, but it is a premise of this standard that successful programs share six fundamental elements:

1. A source water protection program vision
2. Source water characterization
3. Source water protection goals
4. Source water protection action plan
5. Implementation of the action plan
6. Periodic evaluation and revision of the entire program

Within this generalized framework, individual utilities may establish and maintain source water protection programs that account for their unique local conditions, incorporate the interests of local stakeholders, and reflect sustainable long-term commitments to the process by all parties.

The AWWA Water Resources Planning and Management Committee, which helped prepare this manual, welcomes input on its content and usefulness. Planning is an ever-changing process. Techniques are being refined, and new techniques are being developed and gaining acceptance in the planning and engineering marketplace. Subsequent versions of manual M50 will provide an effective framework for WRP for the beginning of the 21st century.

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