

Preface

Watersheds are the primary planning unit being used for resource management, as well as the natural unit for research studies on surface water hydrology and water quality. The First Interagency Conference on Research in the Watersheds (ICRW) was conceived by a group of federal agencies (ARS, USGS, USFS, BLM, EPA, NRCS and NSF) to bring together researchers working at the watershed scale and stakeholders working on watersheds to bridge the gap between the two groups. The intent was to have researchers present what they are doing now, what more they could do, and how the research is being applied for management purposes. In turn, the watershed stakeholders would articulate how current research is helping them and the additional steps that are needed to help them make better decisions about managing their watersheds. The meeting organizers specifically designed this conference to be a one-stop shopping point for stakeholders to get a comprehensive overview of watershed research by all of the major federal agencies conducting watershed research.

To achieve these goals, the format of ICRW was unique. First, the conference was located at a small facility within the San Pedro River Watershed in the town of Benson, Arizona. All meals were catered on site to encourage informal interaction between researchers and stakeholders. Second, the first plenary session consisted of invited speakers from federal agencies to review their watershed research programs and from the Upper San Pedro Partnership to present an example of research scientists and decision makers working together. This set the stage for the nearly 150 volunteered presentations of research on watershed-scale topics such as hydrology, erosion, water quality, economics, instrumentation, ecology, sociology, remote sensing and fire. Third, the ICRW was scheduled to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the renowned USDA ARS Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed (WGEW) near Tombstone, Arizona. To celebrate 50 years of research at this experimental watershed, a half-day field tour and evening BBQ at the watershed were scheduled.

This book contains the proceedings of the First Interagency Conference on Research in the Watersheds in Benson, Arizona, October 27–30, 2003. The proceedings begins with six invited papers describing the current and future watershed research programs of ARS, USGS, USFS, BLM, EPA, and CUAHSI. Following these, the proceedings provides an overview of watershed research organized by the topics of erosion, hydrology, watershed modeling, watershed networks and data management, water quality and quantity, ecology, integrated management and integrating science with watershed decision making.

The organizing committee would like to express its gratitude to BLM, ARS, and EPA for their financial support, and to ARS for publishing this volume. We also express appreciation to all the presenters who contributed to these proceedings and to all participants who made the conference a success. Plans are underway to hold the Second Interagency Conference on Research in the Watersheds in 2008.

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