

An Examination of the Use of Information and Communication Technologies by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine non-governmental organizational (NGO) frameworks for information and communication technology use and management in relationship to integrated watershed management. A comparison of the information and communication technologies approaches and strategies among small, intermediate and large scale NGOs will be provided, as well as an examination of the inter-linkages within NGO networks across organizational scales and settings. NGO decision-making frameworks will be considered as based in a unique set of concerns related to integrated watershed management and associated water quality monitoring processes. In contrast to government sector planning entities, whose missions may also include water quality monitoring, NGOs typically address the watershed management concerns that help to round out government environmental protection and monitoring programs from the perspective of membership and advocacy coalitions. Often the emergence of advocated interests correlate and support the creation of new governmental policies, programs and entities as has been the case within the Chesapeake Bay watershed area – the example I will focus on as a case study. This different focus that NGOs have in comparison to other watershed management actors contributes to a unique beginning point for the use of information and communications technologies as well. This paper will discuss how a network of NGOs involved in the complex dialog existing among economic sectors, environmental quality interests, and public health concerns related to monitoring the Chesapeake Bay watershed and episodic crises that periodically emerge within specific locations across the watershed approach the use of information and communication technologies.

Keywords: NGO, Chesapeake Bay watershed, information and communications technologies

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