

Flood Risk Integration: Lessons from U.S. experience

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Abstract. A global shift is evident toward use of the broad paradigm named flood risk management as an integrated approach reducing consequences of flooding. In addition to combining non-structural and structural measures, it requires the sharing of roles and responsibilities among water resources managers, disaster managers, and communities. The degree of sharing differs for flood events in large rivers, urban areas, and coastal regions, as well as for flash floods, but in all cases delineating them requires advance assignment of jurisdictions and roles. Evolution of flood policy shows increasing recognition of the need for the integrated approach, and responses to historical flood events show that improvements are still needed to foster context-sensitive integration. Making improvements will require organizations to move past stovepipes, establish networks, and develop effective risk communication systems. Ultimately, success of flood risk management depends on how well government, communities, and civil society work together to address the shared problem of flood risk reduction. The paper outlines the elements of integrated flood risk management and draws from several recent U.S. floods to illustrate lessons learned.

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