

7-20-2004

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This is the abstract of a presentation given on Tuesday, 20 July 2004, in session 6 of the UCOWR conference.

Recommended Citation

Van Riper, "Creeks and Communities: Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management" (2004). 2004. Paper 111.
http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ucowrconfs_2004/111

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Creeks and Communities: Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management

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Although riparian-wetland areas comprise a relatively small percentage of the total land base, they provide communities with a variety of ecological, economic and social benefits. Today, it is well known that the successful management of these areas is dependent upon bringing diverse groups of people together and building the capacity needed to confront and manage complex and contentious issues. The *Initiative for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management* is a Federal level, interagency strategy that was created in 1996 to achieve this goal. The initiative's mission is '*Healthy Streams Through Bringing People Together*,' and it is designed to integrate the bio-physical and social dimensions of riparian-wetland management in order to achieve results that benefit both creeks and the communities that depend on them. This strategy works to build ownership and commitment in those individuals who must accept and often voluntarily implement management decisions by incorporating scientific and technical information into collaborative decision-making processes. This presentation has two objectives: (1) to describe the interagency strategy and the approaches and tools used to achieve its goal, and (2) to review the recent evaluation process, highlight key findings and outline the manner in which the original strategy has been revised to enhance effectiveness.