

Executive Summary

Water is increasingly in demand and increasingly threatened. The intertwined issues of land use, water quality, and water quantity are best addressed in concert, and the most efficient approach is to use watersheds—delineated by the natural boundaries of flow—as the units in which to plan management solutions. The Kentucky Watershed Management Framework is designed to do just that. The framework is a dynamic, flexible structure for coordinating watershed management across Kentucky. A statewide basin management calendar establishes a sequence for key management activities in each river basin. Coordination of activities takes place on three levels: state, river basin, and watershed. The framework process is explicitly cyclical: watershed data are analyzed at five-year intervals, and watershed planning is extended and improved in each cycle. The framework thereby will connect existing state and local programs in a new geographic focus—the watershed—and will eventually promote new and more comprehensive efforts mobilized around watersheds.

This document is the product of the first cycle in the first basin. It summarizes how agency activities will be coordinated in the Kentucky River basin during the next five-year cycle, beginning in July 2002. Participating programs have prepared management plans that outline how each program targets activities to specific locations within the basin. Part one of the Kentucky River Basin Management Plan consists of these program management plans and the plans for framework activities at both the basin and watershed levels. Part two considers each of the 97 11-digit HUC watersheds within the basin in more detail. Watershed summaries present the status of each watershed, as documented during the first cycle, for use in implementing programs and outreach activities during the second cycle. The overview section explains how the cyclical approach of watershed management will be applied in the Kentucky River basin.

Among the basin's major challenges are controlling fecal contamination of the water, reducing sediment problems that disrupt physical and biological functions of our streams, and managing household and commercial water supply. Changes in land use that alter the flow of water through watersheds must also be considered.

This report is not a comprehensive, prescriptive plan for management of water and waterways in the basin. Instead it sets out the criteria and processes that guide state and federal programs to take particular actions, and it summarizes relevant conditions in each watershed. We envision that as the watershed approach is more fully implemented the basin plans will become more fully integrated and will provide geographic priorities articulated in greater detail. However, the present format provides a tool for anticipating and guiding resource management, by providing a watershed-by-watershed profile of the basin and by documenting the indicators and procedures each program uses to target activities.