

DIALOGUE ON WATER & CLIMATE IN THE SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN, COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA



INTRODUCTION:

The Dialogue on Water and Climate (DWC) in the San Juan River Basin of Costa Rica and Nicaragua is financed by the Government of the Netherlands. Under the auspices of the International Secretariat for the DWC a series of activities were undertaken to collect the experiences and practices of the populations of this zone to confront the challenges of climate variability. These activities included a field investigation and a binational workshop attended by the major users and other stakeholders in the management of water in the Basin.



FIELD INVESTIGATION

Objectives

To identify the different alternatives to confront climate variability by the users of water in the study area of the San Juan River Basin.

(a) objectives, (b) area of work, and (c) major stakeholders. The campaign sought to gather information during a trip to the zone by six investigators (three in the north and three in the south of the Basin).

Definition of the Work Area

The earlier description of the area served to identify the priority areas and sectors in relation to threats from climate variability such as hurricanes, droughts, floods, and the recurrence of El Niño and their influence on social and economic activities in the Basin. Sixteen municipalities in Nicaragua and seven cantons in Costa Rica were selected.



Methodology

Questionnaires directed to groups of principal users of water were developed. The questions were designed to learn the impact of phenomena related to climate variability and the response of the users before, during, and after the occurrence of extreme events. The investigation consisted of a field campaign to complement the information received from the participants in the binational workshop on water and climate, which was held September 3-4, 2002 in San Jose, Costa Rica. The following aspects were considered in the design of the campaign and the later analysis of the data:

Contact

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COPING WITH CLIMATE VARIABILITY IN THE SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN: THE FIELD CAMPAIGN

Results of the Investigation

In order to raise consciousness concerning water and climate variability, the results of this campaign will soon be available at the Web site of PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN. It is hoped that all water users in the zone will begin to care for the resource and become involved in actions for the mitigation of natural disasters that have their origin in climate variability.

Analysis of this information identified several coping practices that are used in the zone:

- Move livestock to other sites with better conditions for surviving flooding or periods of drought.
- Use special treatment plants for potable water.
- Store water for use during periods of scarcity.
- Change the dates of seeding, taking weather predictions into account, to permit better conditions for plant development.
- Plant during only one period to take advantage of weather predictions.
- Create water committees among the people.
- Monitor for contamination, chlorinate water, clean dirty pipes, and look for new sources of water.



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