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## **Mail Surveys as Tools for Assessing Local Officials' Water Management, Education and Technical Assistance Needs**

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### **Abstract Text:**

Local officials make decisions every day that affect water quantity and quality. Given trends in water demand, frequency and duration of droughts, and public concern about water, climate change and related issues, local decisions impacting water will increase in importance over time. The Local Government and Water Management Project's aim is to increase local capacity to manage water resources. Our goals are to identify critical water issues in Pennsylvania and document municipal officials' management activities and education/technical assistance needs. A state-wide mail survey was conducted in 2006 to measure local officials' attitudes toward these issues and management efforts. Regional analyses provided insights into geographic differences in issues and management. Trends were documented by comparing these results to data from a similar 1991 Penn State University survey. This presentation will highlight our findings and discuss mail surveys as tools for assessing local officials' educational and technical assistance needs and evaluating outreach programs.

### **Impact Statement:**

In addition to learning about our project's findings and policy implications, those attending this presentation will increase their familiarity with mail surveys as tools to assess local government officials' knowledge, management actions and educational/technical assistance needs. Understanding of the project's findings and experience with tools and analytical methods used will increase the abilities of researchers and education and technical assistance providers who are attempting to involve and work with local officials as part of comprehensive water management programs.