

Abed, George. "Water Pollution Control Policy in the Willamette Basin." Background Paper no. 5, Willamette Basin Land Use Study. Oregon Department of Commerce, Division of Planning and Development: Salem, OR, 1965. (Reviewed by Alletta Brenner)

The report begins with a summary of the water quality issues faces the Willamette at the time. Pollution is identified as resulting from a) industry, 2) municipalities, and 3) land management practices. In total, 95 percent of the pollution is attributed to industrial waste loading. At the then rate of increase, pollution load was expected to double by 1985 and redouble again by 2010. While some controls were already being carried out by specialized agencies, this report notes that these efforts lacked comprehensiveness and authority. As the free market process can be relied upon for pollution control, it is noted that a public policy must be created and enforced for the protection of the Willamette.

Following the summary, this report gives a greater in-depth analysis of water quality issues. Beginning with the past and present state of water quality, it goes on to examine the sources of pollution, the related costs, and existing programs from the local to the federal to deal with the problem. Then, it gives an analysis of some issues related to water quality, from usage needs, to quality standards. Finally, it provides a set of objectives for pollution control standards, and the means to achieve them.

Critique

This source provides a good look at the general issue of water pollution in the 1960s. Providing detailed information on the state of the river at multiple points and tributaries, along with a detailed analysis of the politics and economics associated, it gives a great deal of useful information on water quality and water policy at the time. Of particular use may be the series of data tables and maps of water problems in the basin that are included in this report.

Another useful aspect is that unlike others of this type, a significant portion of the report is focused on the costs, real and hidden of pollution on the economy, the environment, and human health.

One problem is that specific data are given and analyzed only for dissolved oxygen, bacteriological quality, and temperature. No data are given on the river's chemical composition (e.g., levels of nitrates, phosphorous, or metals), siltation and turbidity, or toxic substances, such as pesticides. Likewise, except for brief references to the effect of pollution on salmon, no data are gathered or provided on the river's biodiversity. Also, while industry is noted as a major cause of pollution, and certain discharges noted, such as pulp from paper mills, no detailed account is given of the precise kinds and amount of industrial pollutants discharged. Similarly, while the impact of toxic substances used in land management is noted, no specific details are given on what kinds of chemicals were is use, how they were being used, and what kinds of impacts resulted. Consequently, this report would be of only rudimentary use for those interested in a more detailed analysis of pollution levels during this period.

Overall, this report is a good source for anyone interested in a general overview of water pollution issues

during period prior to major remediating efforts.

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