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Coordination in Water Resource Management: The Impact of Water Rights Institutions

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Description / Abstract

This paper considers how water rights laws can shape the ways water providers coordinate when devising conjunctive water management programs. Conjunctive water management is a particularly useful tool for analyzing water management coordination because it involves certain physical and organizational complexities that may facilitate the need for coordination. It takes advantage of the natural storage capacity of underground aquifers for the storage of surface supplies during high flow seasons, allowing for recovery of those supplies when surface flows are limited. This paper compares conjunctive management programs across Arizona, California and Colorado. It identifies the distinct types of coordination associated with conjunctive water management programs across these states and shows that these forms of coordination depend upon the larger institutional setting governing rights to water resources.

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