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Integrated Catchment Value Systems

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ABSTRACT

Historic models of conservation are being superseded by the integration of ecological, economic and social dimensions into a simultaneously sustainable and supportive whole. This transition is evident as South Africa evolves from an apartheid history to novel governance including the equitable, sustainable and efficient use of water within an arid and increasingly climate-challenged landscape. The concept of 'value chains', established in industrial and government thinking, has been applied to water issues. We explore and extend 'value chain' thinking to cover various important dimensions of water management, taking account of both developed-world assumptions and developing world realities. This analysis exposes the limitations of linear 'value chains', and the need to join them up into cyclic systems if they are to protect or improve the capacity of water systems to support the sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing of people dependent upon diverse ecosystem services within catchments. Informed by practical work by the authors in catchments within South Africa, we develop an integrated catchment value system model to support action research dialogues for the delivery of sustainable water services.

KEYWORDS

Catchment, System, Ecosystem Services, Integrated, South Africa

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