



## **USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Collaborative River Management on a Watershed Scale**

Managing water resources is a collaborative process, involving multiple stakeholders, with varying interests, priorities and objectives. In this presentation, the framework and results of a structured stakeholder process using multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) and conjoint analysis are presented. MCDA provides a well-established family of decision tools to aid stakeholder groups in arriving at collective decisions. In this study, the MCDA tool, PROMETHEE is used to frame multi-stakeholder discussions of river management and conservation alternatives for the Upper White River of Central Vermont. Stakeholders met over ten months to evaluate river management alternatives, create a shared vision of an ideal river and its services to communities; and develop a list of criteria by which to judge whether river conservation strategies are achieving this vision. Conjoint analysis was used to elicit individual stakeholder preferences for the various characteristics used to rank the river conservation strategies. The procedure helped to frame the collaborative process that made stakeholder preferences explicit and made substantive discussions about long-term river conservation and management possible.

Author: Carolyn Hermans