Public Input on Stream Monitoring in the Willamette Valley, Oregon

The goal of environmental monitoring is to track resource condition, and thereby support environmental knowledge and management. Judgments are inevitable during monitoring design regarding what resource features will be assessed. Constraining what to measure given a complex environment is a crucial question since it delimits analysis potential of the resulting data. Although public resources are managed for diverse public interests, difficult monitoring design choices are often left to natural scientists, although such decisions could represent a wider set of interests. We used focus group techniques to gather public input on what data is important to collect on rivers and streams. Sessions were conducted in urban and rural locations of the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Input was obtained from nearly one hundred participants of diverse sociodemographic and geographic backgrounds. We used qualitative data analysis techniques to identify prevalent themes of public interest. These themes were then translated into specific river metrics useful for monitoring, or other applications. Our goal is to establish river themes and metrics of high relevance to the public in order to contribute to a stronger basis for river management.