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Hydropolitical Vulnerability and Resilience along International Waters
NORTH AMERICA

The main problem in North America is the location of water resources relative to large population centers where the majority of the freshwater drains away from the bulk of the population. Climate variability and change is a reality. It raises the impact on variability and availability within the continent, which is characterized by its different climatic regions.

The hydro-vulnerability of North America is tempered and governed by the agreements, laws and institutions such as International Joint Commission (IJC) and International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), which have been created to resolve transboundary water issues in a cooperative manner for over a century, resulting in minimal conflicts in the region. Despite short-term regional vulnerabilities, no long-term vulnerability of the transboundary basins in North America is found to exist. Water management is governed and influenced by internal laws that control water use, water development projects, and other projects that may impact the environment. The internal laws of the three countries also reduce the potential impact that individual actions can have on international transboundary waters and have helped sustain cooperation between countries.

This publication will promote and disseminate assessed information and data for policy-making.

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For further information

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Hydropolitical Vulnerability and Resilience along International Waters: North America is the fourth of a five-part series of continental reports. This volume was compiled in collaboration between UNEP-DEWA, OSU’s Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, OSU’s Institute for Water and Watersheds (OSU-IWW), OSU’s Department of Geosciences, and the University of New Mexico, Water Resources Program (UNM-WRP). “Hydropolitical Resilience and Vulnerability: Series Introduction” (Chapter 1) was authored by Aaron T. Wolf, OSU Department of Geosciences. The following chapters were authored by Alyssa M. Neir and T. Geoffrey Klise, UNM-WRP; and Michael E. Campana, OSU-IWW and OSU Department of Geosciences: “The Concept of Vulnerability as applied to North America” (Chapter 2), “North America’s Water Resources” (Chapter 3), “Internal Laws and Their Potential to Influence International Water Management” (Chapter 4), “International Conflicts and Cooperation that Influence Regional Hydropolitical Vulnerability” (Chapter 5), and “Conclusion” (Chapter 6). Maps throughout the report and tables in the appendices were compiled by the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database (TFDD) Research Team (Department of Geosciences, OSU), which includes Marloes Bakker, Melissa Carper, Ryan Dey, Nathan Eidem, Barbara Geren, Samuel Littlefield, Erick Stemmerman, Yoshiko Sano, Kendra Hatcher, and Patrick MacQuarrie.

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We regret any errors or omissions that may have been unwittingly made.

Cover photo: Child tossing rocks into Jenny Lake, Snake River basin, Wyoming, by Terrence E. Davis.

Title page photo: Rock Island Dam, Columbia River, Washington, by Terrence E. Davis.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	xi
FOREWORD	xiii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xv
CHAPTER 1. HYDROPOLITICAL VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE: SERIES INTRODUCTION, BY AARON T. WOLF	1
1.1 Hydropolitical Vulnerability and Resilience	1
1.2 Water and Security	5
1.2.1 International Waters	5
1.2.1.1 Examining the Record	5
1.2.1.2 Tensions and Time Lags: Causes for Concern	9
1.2.1.3 Institutional Capacity: The Heart of Conflict Management	10
1.2.2 Intranational Waters	13
1.3 Regional Instability: Political Dynamics of Loss of Irrigation Water	14
CHAPTER 2. THE CONCEPT OF VULNERABILITY AS APPLIED TO NORTH AMERICA, BY ALYSSA M. NEIR, GEOFFREY T. KLISE, AND MICHAEL E. CAMPANA	17
2.1 The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and the International Joint Commission (IJC)	17
2.2 International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC)	19
2.3 Comparison of the IJC and the IBWC	21
2.4 Hydrovulnerability	21
CHAPTER 3. NORTH AMERICA'S WATER RESOURCES, BY ALYSSA M. NEIR, GEOFFREY T. KLISE, AND MICHAEL E. CAMPANA	23
3.1 Climate	23
3.2 Water Quantity and Use	23
CHAPTER 4. INTERNAL LAWS AND THEIR POTENTIAL TO INFLUENCE INTERNATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT, BY ALYSSA M. NEIR, GEOFFREY T. KLISE, AND MICHAEL E. CAMPANA	27

CHAPTER 5. INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS AND COOPERATION THAT INFLUENCE REGIONAL HYDROLOGICAL VULNERABILITY, BY ALYSSA M. NEIR, GEOFFREY T. KLISE, AND MICHAEL E. CAMPANA	31
5.1 Background Information on Conflict and Cooperation	31
5.2 The Hydrological Situation in Selected North American Basins	31
5.2.1 Examples of Conflict and Conflict Leading to Cooperation	31
5.2.1.1 Rio Grande/Río Bravo del Norte Basin	31
5.2.1.2 Tijuana River Basin	33
5.2.1.3 Colorado River Basin-Salton Sea	36
5.2.1.4 Colorado River Basin-Upper San Pedro Basin	38
5.2.1.5 Conflict and Conflict Leading to Cooperation Summary	40
5.2.2 Examples of Cooperation	41
5.2.2.1 Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer	42
5.2.2.2 Missouri-Mississippi River Basin	43
5.2.2.3 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin	46
5.2.2.4 Rio Grande/Río Bravo del Norte Basin	48
5.2.2.5 Colorado River Basin	49
5.2.2.6 Cooperation Summary	51
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION, BY ALYSSA M. NEIR, GEOFFREY T. KLISE, AND MICHAEL E. CAMPANA	53
ATLAS OF HYDROLOGICAL VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE	57
Biophysical Parameters	58

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