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# Cumulative impact assessment in environmental planning: A coastal wetland watershed example

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### Abstract

Several theoretical, analytical, and institutional difficulties have impeded the development and application of the assessment of cumulative environmental impacts. Watershed development on coastal wetlands offers an ideal context for evaluating the land disturbance target approach to cumulative impact assessment. A model land use planning system involving a time series approach was developed for Elkhorn Slough in California. The approach included four major components: evaluation of erosion susceptibility, measurement of land disturbance, establishment of a land disturbance target, and a comparison of existing and target land disturbance values. Further research is needed to test the transferability of the approach in a wide range of coastal watersheds and to verify the applicability of the methods to other cumulative impact problems.



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