

Durham, Caryn. Riverine flood risk reduction in the Western Cape: A case study of the Baths River (MPhil thesis in Disaster Risk Science, 2007)

Since 2003, the Western Cape has annually been affected by devastating flood events. Projected climate change suggests that populations will become increasingly vulnerable to flooding. A critical factor exacerbating the flood risk of the province is the inadequate management of the river catchments with respect to flood risk. As river catchments are single systems, flood risk management must be coordinated for the entire catchment area. As catchments do not adhere to political boundaries, managing them as a single system is problematic. In South Africa Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs), required in terms of the National Water Act (36/1998), are currently the only organisations covering the entire spatial extent of catchments, but do not perceive flood risk management to be within their mandate. However, in terms of the Disaster Management Act (57/2002) CMAs are required to manage flood risk within the catchments under their jurisdiction or, in cases where CMAs have not been established, River Management Committees fulfil this role. Using the Baths River, within the Overberg District Municipality as a case study, this thesis investigates the policy interface between risk reduction and catchment management. Applying the ISDR's Disaster Risk Reduction Framework to the town of Caledon, the study illustrates the prevailing constraints in both human and institutional capacity at municipal level that significantly limits the effective implementation of policy to reduce flood risk.