

Expert Report on dealing with local water shortages



The Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) provides support for the cantons in dealing with local water shortages. EBP drafted an expert report for this purpose, setting out the various principles, measures and problem-solving approaches for dealing with exceptional water shortage situations.

Even Switzerland, which is known as the water tower of Europe, can be affected by temporary problems of local water shortage. Illustrations of this were seen in the summer of 2003, the spring of 2011 and more recently, in the summer of 2015. FOEN is therefore supporting the cantons in dealing with local water shortages, both on a preventative basis for the long-term management of water shortages, as well as when dealing with exceptional water shortage situations.

On behalf of FOEN, EBP worked together with RWB Jura in drafting one of the three expert reports focusing on dealing with exceptional situations. In close collaboration with the representatives of cantonal specialist units and major water-resource user groups, practice-based principles were developed that will help the cantons to prepare for times of water scarcity and to deal appropriately with exceptional situations.

Designed as a toolbox, the report contains practical information along with examples of actual situations. It includes in particular:

- The principles and criteria for comparative evaluation and prioritisation of the various interests of different uses and

Client

Swiss Federal Office for the Environment
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Facts

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entitlements to water resources in exceptional situations

- A set of more than 20 real-life examples of possible measures for dealing with the conflicts between water conservation and use and for avoiding harm to the interests of water users the aquatic ecology. The measures can be introduced on a precautionary basis or implemented at short notice during an exceptional situation.
- Four cantonal case studies with specific organisational forms and approaches for dealing with conflict situations. These range from recommendations for preparations and processes to communications activities during an exceptional situation.

This practical guide is aimed at cantonal offices responsible for water conservation, water provision, water use, agriculture, the energy sector, etc. as well as water utilities and different water user Groups.