

Wetlands Governance in Rural Land Use Planning and Management: A Strategic Approach for Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Due to their nature, wetlands are regarded as one of the most productive ecosystems offering a wide variety of ecosystem services. In rural setups, wetlands are most recognised for supporting agriculture and providing water to local communities. Despite their significance to rural populations, wetlands degradation remains a challenge due to less sustainable land use planning and management. The article explores the potential of wetlands governance as a strategic approach in rural land use planning and management in Zimbabwe. The study employs a comprehensive literature search and review from databases such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, Scopus and PubMed. The review concludes that incorporating wetlands governance into rural land use planning and management presents an opportunity to enhance sustainability and resilience in the rural landscapes of Zimbabwe. Literature has demonstrated that addressing governance gaps, fostering stakeholder participation, resolving land use conflicts and integrating conservation into land planning, are key steps towards sustainability. However, there is need for a more coordinated all-stakeholder involvement, including policy-makers, environmental agencies and local communities who directly interact with and depend on wetlands, in decision-making, implementation of conservation efforts and monitoring. To strengthen wetlands governance in rural land use planning and management, the article presents three key recommendations. First, clear legal statutes must be established to define the roles and responsibilities

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