

Principles of Hydrologic Literacy

A water-literate citizen will have a broad understanding of these overriding principles:

- Water is crucially important in creating all the familiar surface characteristics that make our “Blue Planet” unique in the solar system.
- Water exists in discrete reservoirs that are connected to one another; water is continually exchanged among these reservoirs through the *hydrologic cycle*.
- Water is essential to life on Earth.

A water-literate citizen is able to make informed and responsible contributions to public policy formulation related to water availability and quality. Water literacy requires understanding of the following specific principles:

- I. Water exists in three states: Solid, liquid and gas.**
- II. Water in its different states is found in nearly every place on Earth**
- III. Water moves among the atmosphere, ocean, rock layers and living things in a continuous cycle**
- IV. Water is essential to life on Earth**
- V. A watershed is the unit of land that drains a single contiguous area**
- VI. Water shapes the land around us and in turn the land shapes the distribution of water**
- VII. Human actions have an impact on water quality and quantity**
- VIII. Water in the ocean, atmosphere and on land moderates weather and climate.**