



# MP Module 3

## Abstract, Executive Summary & Website

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# Roadmap

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- Anatomy of an **Abstract**
- Anatomy of the **Executive Summary**
- Building a personal **Website**



# Purpose of an Abstract

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- Summarize your MP report
- Teaser for your report
- Abstract : Report :: Trailer : Movie

# Formatting the Abstract

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- 10 lines maximum
- Formal language
  - First or third person
  - No contractions
  - No slang/colloquialisms



# Content of an Abstract

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- **Background:** Context of the problem your MP addresses
- **Methods:** What you did and how you did it (briefly!)
- **Results:** Findings or products

# Abstract: Example #1

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## POLICY AND PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR INLAND MIGRATION OF LOUISIANA'S COASTAL WETLANDS

Louisiana contains over a third of coastal wetlands in the contiguous US but has seen a drastic reduction in total wetland area in the last century. These wetlands play a vital role in protecting and supporting Louisiana's economy and culture. Under natural conditions, wetland areas will move upland in response to rising sea level or sinking land. Advanced planning for wetland migration is needed to keep communities and infrastructure out of harm's way from encroaching open water and to mitigate future wetland loss. This project investigates the potential for wetland migration in Louisiana through 1) mapping and analysis of coastal wetland migration in three geomorphically unique parishes and 2) an analysis of policy options relevant to wetland migration. Findings from our case study approach suggest that in order to account for spatial and temporal variability in wetland migration potential, site-specific policies will be required for effective implementation.

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# Abstract: Example #2

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## CONNECTING WORKFORCE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND LIGHT RAIL IN NORTH CAROLINA'S TRIANGLE REGION

In many metropolitan regions across the country, higher housing costs around urban cores, job centers, and public transit are forcing lower-wage workers to move farther away to find affordable housing. The link between public transportation and affordable workforce housing is especially important to the Triangle Research region in North Carolina due to the proposed light rail line, which is expected to raise surrounding housing costs. Therefore in order to mitigate gentrification and displacement in the region, this report analyzes 15 possible policy tools related to the Triangle's housing infrastructure. Using multi-attribute utility analysis, a ranking of the 15 policy tools is generated; Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits ranked number one, Inclusionary Zoning ranked last. Going a step further, the best combination of policy tools is determined for workforce housing preservation and creation of rental and owner units. The product is a management and policy guide for client, local policy-makers, and housing developers to place workforce housing near light rail.

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# Roadmap

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- Anatomy of an **Abstract**
- Anatomy of the **Executive Summary**
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# Purpose of the Executive Summary

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- Summary of the MP
- States the problem that inspired the MP
- Describes all parts of the report: significance, objectives, methods, findings/results, broader ramifications of the work, and conclusion.
- Allows someone to read the executive summary instead of the entire MP and understand the main points of your MP

# Structure of the Executive Summary

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- Two-page maximum (700-1000 words)
- Single- or 1.5-spaced
- Unnumbered or numbered with small Roman numerals (e.g., i, ii, iil)
- May include bullet points

# Content of the Executive Summary

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- Background/Context
- Significance
- Objectives
- Methods: brief description
- Findings: stated clearly and in context
- Implications
- Conclusions





## Executive Summary

This report is a follow-up to *The Ripple Effect: Water Risk in the Municipal Bond Market*, published by Ceres and Water Asset Management two years ago. *The Ripple Effect* examined hidden risks facing investors who buy the municipal bonds that finance much of the country's vast water infrastructure.

For decades water utility bonds have been considered among the safest possible investments, an assessment that rested on two flawed assumptions: that fresh water supplies would always be plentiful and that demand for water would always increase. Neither investors, credit rating agencies nor the utilities themselves fully questioned these assumptions.

*The Ripple Effect* proved controversial at the time, but in the two years since it was published we have seen mounting evidence of the risks facing water utilities and their investors, as well as some encouraging actions by bond market participants.

- **Water stress has continued to intensify.** Back-to-back droughts in 2011 and 2012 brought increased attention to the vulnerability of the nation's water supplies, especially as the impacts of climate change grow. Though the droughts caused billions in economic losses, most water providers were able to meet demand. Hard-hit Texas was a different story: cities with strong water efficiency programs already in place saw supplies and revenues from water sales remain stable; those that did not, such as Midland, Texas, saw both their reservoirs and their credit ratings drop. Water supply security continues to challenge much of the West, and is forcing states such as Nevada, Utah and Colorado to consider hugely expensive pipeline projects to tap new water sources.
- **The market is beginning to change the way it prices water risks.** For years, investors financing public water systems viewed the sector as low risk an investment as you could find. But that perspective is changing. Since the market crash, more water systems have had their credit ratings downgraded than ever before. The economic downturn brought with it a significant drop in water demand as foreclosed homes went vacant and connections for new homes plummeted. Water revenues went down, but the obligation to repay the investors who bought bonds to finance new water projects did not. Consequently, credit rating agencies have begun boosting their focus on these growing risks. Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's released a number of special reports highlighting water availability constraints. In contrast, the largest of the credit rating agencies, Moody's, has neither upgraded its credit rating methodology for the water sector since 1999 nor issued special reports of relevance to the water sector.

- **Declining revenue and rising costs are exacerbating water supply challenges.** Credit risks associated with water providers are being heightened by four factors: growing needs for new investment to shore up old or failing infrastructure; a dearth of federal funding to support such projects; slow economic growth; and—most surprisingly—a pervasive trend of declining municipal water demand across the U.S. Together, these four factors have created a widening imbalance between borrowing costs for utilities and the revenue needed to cover those costs. Reduced water demand is desirable, but for utilities dependent on volume-based sales it often leads to rate increases, which in turn can further depress demand—a vicious cycle that is neither financially nor politically tenable for utilities.
- **Projecting future water demand is a highly uncertain proposition.** Building costly infrastructure—such as water pipelines like those currently proposed in Nevada, Utah and Colorado—to meet future demand that doesn't materialize could cost ratepayers and investors billions. And while investments in water efficiency and demand management may reduce the need for costly investments in new infrastructure, the urgent need to maintain and repair existing infrastructure will likely drive higher rates for customers regardless. In short, water is going to cost more: the only question is, *how much more?*

Since the publication of *The Ripple Effect* we have seen encouraging progress by investors, credit rating agencies and water utilities to address these issues, but much more remains to be done. Key focus areas should include:

- ✓ **Not waiting for a dry spell to manage water demand.** Conservation measures, such as lawn watering limits and tiered pricing must be done on an ongoing basis, not simply when drought hits, if water utilities are to protect their financial viability and keep costs to consumers stable over the long-term.
- ✓ **Questioning water demand projections.** Water use is changing and investors, credit rating agencies and policymakers should approach water systems' demand projections with a healthy dose of skepticism.
- ✓ **Boosting understanding of how water rate structures influence demand.** Investors and credit rating agencies should seek more information on the ways water rate structures influence demand and affect the stability of long-term revenue streams.
- ✓ **Building political support for sustainable water rates.** Environmental and consumer advocates should take a far more active role in building political support for sustainable water rates by making the case that it helps consumers ensure long-term future water security and affordability.

Ceres will continue to work closely with water utilities and bond market participants to elevate these issues. Our work will continue to evolve around three key pillars: 1) increasing market transparency and achieving better disclosure by water utilities about how they assess and manage these risks; 2) helping water utilities and investors better value and price water so that water supplies and required revenue streams are sustainable; and 3) leveraging the capital markets to finance water efficiency across municipal, industrial and agricultural sectors.

# Executive Summary Review

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- Look at Olander *et al.* 2014's executive summary on Sakai.
- Make a reverse outline of the executive summary
- Does the executive summary include these parts?
  - Background/Context
  - Significance
  - Objectives
  - Methods
  - Findings
  - Implications
  - Conclusions

# Separate Executive Summary

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- Hard copy of the Executive Summary for official records
- Same as executive summary, but printed
- Goes into book of all project summaries
- Signed by advisor



# The “Executive Summary +”

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- Additional version of the Executive Summary as defined NSOE
- Not required but encouraged
- 2 to 4 pages
- Select text from the Executive Summary and add figures
- Good way to show the products of your research to potential employers!

# Roadmap

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- Anatomy of an **Abstract**
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# Purpose of MP Website

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- Describe your MP progress
- Introduce yourself to potential employers
- Showcase your final products



# Content of MP Website

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- Updates page
- Abstract/summary page
- Client/background
- Methods
- Findings/product
- About you

# Format of MP Website

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- Professional - fairly formal
- Updates and About You can be less formal
- Remember your audience!

# Examples of MP Websites

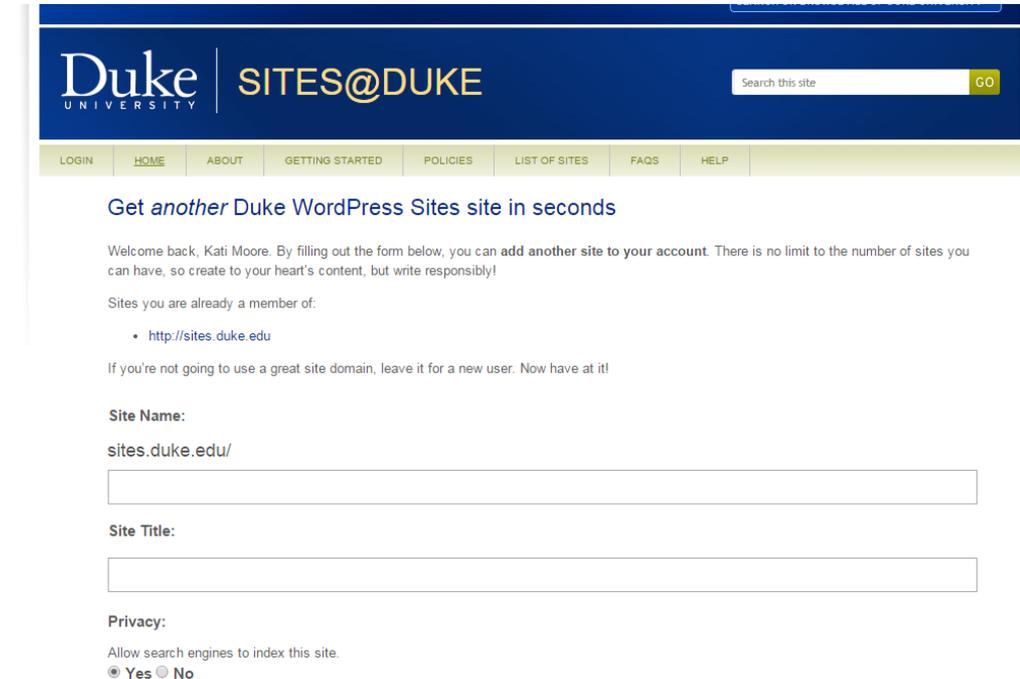
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- <http://sites.duke.edu/fisheriesvaluechain/>
- [http://sites.duke.edu/nsoeclientgmp\\_coffee/](http://sites.duke.edu/nsoeclientgmp_coffee/)

Links available on Sakai → Resources → MP Module 3

# How to Make an MP Website



The screenshot shows the 'SITES@DUKE' sign-up page. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the Duke University logo and 'SITES@DUKE' in gold. A search bar is located in the top right of the header. Below the header is a light green navigation bar with links: LOGIN, HOME (underlined), ABOUT, GETTING STARTED, POLICIES, LIST OF SITES, FAQs, and HELP. The main content area has a blue heading: 'Get *another* Duke WordPress Sites site in seconds'. Below this is a welcome message for Kati Moore, stating that users can add another site to their account. A list shows the user is already a member of 'http://sites.duke.edu'. A note suggests leaving a great site domain for a new user. There are two input fields: 'Site Name' (with 'sites.duke.edu/' pre-filled) and 'Site Title'. At the bottom, there is a 'Privacy' section with a radio button selected for 'Yes' and 'No' options.

**Duke** | SITES@DUKE

Search this site

LOGIN | HOME | ABOUT | GETTING STARTED | POLICIES | LIST OF SITES | FAQs | HELP

## Get *another* Duke WordPress Sites site in seconds

Welcome back, Kati Moore. By filling out the form below, you can **add another site to your account**. There is no limit to the number of sites you can have, so create to your heart's content, but write responsibly!

Sites you are already a member of:

- <http://sites.duke.edu>

If you're not going to use a great site domain, leave it for a new user. Now have at it!

**Site Name:**  
sites.duke.edu/

**Site Title:**

**Privacy:**  
Allow search engines to index this site.  
 Yes  No

# Reminder - Course Requirements

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- Attend and participate in **all three** class sessions
- **Visit the NSOE Communications Studio once** during the semester



Thank you!

