

Ethnography & public policy

- **Ethnography:** the qualitative research and holistic analysis of human social experience.
 - Community based
- Informing public processes from the local to federal levels.

See: *Ethnographic Studies Can Inform Agencies' Actions.*
GAO-03-455: 3/31/2003.



Department of Anthropology: Watershed Engagement Lab
Newkirk Center: Engaged Scholarship & Community Relationships

Why ethnography for a community water strengths & needs study?

- **Ethnographically informed interviewing & listening sessions**
 - Community members are experts
 - Fosters partnership: government, NGO, CBO
 - Implements community inreach
 - Open-ended questions in social contexts yield “water stories”
 - Patterns, connections, “hidden” factors
 - Community-specific & comparative
 - “Thick data” for technical assistance programming



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Products

- Evidence base to guide Technical Advisory Committee project selection
- Best practices procedures for water agency community engagement
 - Appropriate social processes: “disadvantaged communities”
 - Accountability: listening, report back, responsive relations
 - Baseline: ongoing program & project evaluation