# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RISK MANAGEMENT INTERVENORS AND THE COMMUNITY*

Jenifer S. Heath** and June Fessenden-Raden***

Cornell University
Ithaca New York

## ABSTRACT

The management of toxicologic risk at the community level is a very complex process. It is generally construed as a centrally-directed activity void of interaction. Our observations in communities facing health risks as a result of chemical contamination of groundwater indicate that there is considerable interaction between centralized risk managers and community members. This paper introduces a systematic framework which can be used to describe the risk management process. We have found that the risk management process is iterative, interactive and layered in time, and that the pools of participants overlap. There also is feedback on two levels. We have disaggregated the process into individual decision units, each of which is then broken down into a series of four stages: identification of the decision question, emergence of interested parties, attempts to influence the decision outcome, and reaching the decision outcome. This framework for analyzing the risk management process helps to identify important events that otherwise may go unnoticed.

KEY WORDS: Groundwater, risk management, risk analysis, decision making, toxic chemicals, chemical contaminants, community

## INTRODUCTION

Successful risk management should not only satisfactorily deal with the specific risk that precipitated the response, but also provide a learning experience through which the community (and perhaps the outside

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** Graduate Student, Environmental Toxicology

*** Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Biology and Society, Program on Science, Technology and Society, Division of Biological Sciences, Institute of Comparative and Environmental Toxicology.