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"...a clarion call to society for the need to balance human demands with the needs of our world's rivers, the arterial system of life on this planet. The authors describe the vanguard movement to restore rivers and to reconnect rivers with their flood plains, portraying the under-appreciated life support services our rivers perform, their ecological function, and the threats to riverine ecosystems." -Mike Dombeck, Cheif Emeritus of the U.S. Forest Service and Pioneer Professor of Global Environmental Management at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

"Finally! A book that pays attention to flow, not just pollutants, as central to river restoration. Blending science and readability, Rivers for Life offers refreshing insights into allocating limited water to meet the needs of humans and rivers." -James R. Karr, Professor, University of Washington, Seattle

The conventional approach to river protection has focused on water quality and maintaining some "minimum" flow that was thought necessary to ensure the viability of a river. In recent years, however, scientific research has underscored the idea that the ecological health of a river system depends not on a minimum amount of water at any one time but on the naturally variable quantity and timing of flows throughout the year.

In Rivers for Life, leading water experts Sandra Postel and Brian Richter explain why restoring and preserving more natural river flows are key to sustaining freshwater biodiversity and healthy river systems, and describe innovative policies, scientific approaches, and management reforms for achieving those goals. The authors:

explain the value of healthy rivers to human and ecosystem health

describe the ecological processes that support river ecosystems and how they have been disrupted by dams, diversions, and other alterations

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consider the scientific basis for determining how much water a river needs
examine new management paradigms focused on restoring flow patterns and sustaining ecological health
assess the policy options available for managing rivers and other freshwater systems
explore building blocks for better river governance,
They offer case studies of river management from the United States (the San Pedro, Green, and Missouri), Australia (the Brisbane), and South Africa (the Sabie), along with numerous examples of new and innovative policy approaches that are being implemented in those and other countries.

Rivers for Life presents a global perspective on the challenges of managing water for people and nature, with a concise yet comprehensive overview of the relevant science, policy, and management issues. It presents exciting and inspirational information for anyone concerned with water policy, planning and management, river conservation, freshwater biodiversity, or related topics.

Check out this New York Academy of Sciences Readers & Writers article on Rivers for Life.