

Joint Principles of NPS and 303(d) Program Coordination on Watershed based Plans as Alternatives under 303(d) Program

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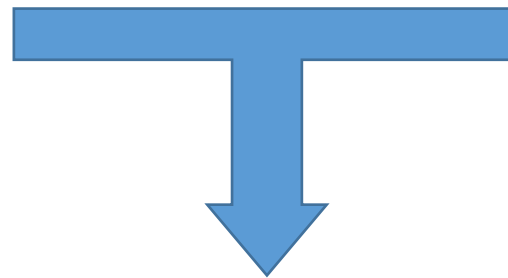
Background

- Some states have expressed interest in submitting 319 watershed based plans (WBPs) as alternatives in the context of the 303d program measure
 - Reporting alternatives approaches under the 303d program measures WQ-27 and WQ-28 is a new concept
- Bridges across 303d and 319 programs at all levels (State, Regional and HQ levels) are valuable to:
 - Make effective use of resources to restore waters,
 - Provide opportunities for program staff learn from one another
 - Highlight best practices

Focus of EPA's review of watershed based plans will differ for NPS and 303d program purposes

Primary role of regional NPS review of WBPs:

- Confirm that the plan meets the 9 minimum elements and is thus eligible for implementation with 319 funding



Plan Designed to Meet Water Quality Standards, in Impaired Waters

Purpose of the 303(d) staff review of WBPs:

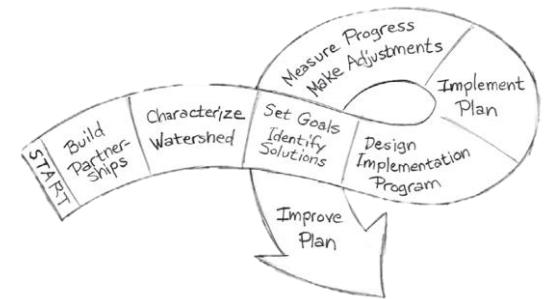
- Determine whether plan is consistent with the 303d Vision and would be counted under the 303d program measures

303d Vision alternatives

- 303d Vision alternatives -- Recognizes other plans designed to achieve WQS may be more effective in the near term in some cases
- WBPs is one type of a potential 303d Vision alternative

Watershed Based Plans → Roadmap for Water Quality Results in Nonpoint Source Program

- Watershed plans are not only the **technical** workplan guiding work related to:
 - Pollutant loads, sources, critical areas and practices that will have greatest impact on water quality
 - They are also a critical approach for **engaging** affected stakeholders and landowners in the process along the way. Basically, without local capacity/landowner engagement projects don't happen
- 319 watershed projects must be guided by watershed-based plans
- NPS Regional review minimum of 1 per year per state (per 319 guidelines)



Coordination between programs

- Regional NPS staff will continue to provide technical reviews of WBPs for 319 program and HQ NPS staff will coordinate with Regional NPS staff
- Regional 303(d) staff will take the lead for reviewing WBPs submitted as alternatives, and coordinate with HQ 303(d) staff, as appropriate
- Regional staff from both programs to develop their own process at the regional level for coordinating reviews for NPS and 303d program purposes, such as:
 - Outline of steps to review plans by staff from both NPS and 303d programs (steps may be sequential or simultaneous);
 - Development of a joint work plan to identify annually plans that are likely submitted as alternative and therefore potentially warrant consideration by both programs.

For Discussion..



More cross-program dialogue



Cross-program alignment

319 WBP used by State/ not reviewed by Region *

Regional NPS program accepts WBP for 319

Regional NPS program not inclined to accept WBP for 319

303(d) inclined to include WBP under 303d measures



303(d) not inclined to include WBP under 303d measures



Examples of Coordination between programs

- Nebraska and Region 7 collaboration
- Region 6 NPS and 303d Program Coordination