

Pre-Endorsement, Watershed Action Planning Document Analysis 2004

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I. Introduction

A qualitative analysis of documents from state funded watershed planning efforts created between 2003-2004 (see Appendix I) was completed to inform:

- program delivery to watershed organizations;
- the 2005-2010 Nonpoint Source Management Plan Work Group in developing community led and sustainable watershed action planning and implementation **targets (hyperlink to [WAPtargetsoverviewjumppage.html](#))**.

II. Methods

The documents analyzed include **functional reviews (hyperlink to [functionalreview.html](#))** of state funded watershed organizations, **reviewer comments (hyperlink to [WAPreview.html](#))** on draft watershed plans, participant comments at state sponsored satellite conference on watershed planning, and watershed planning meeting minutes from one state funded organization. Documents were coded and analyzed during a qualitative data analysis class (Education Policy and Leadership 967) and using an approach for pattern analysis and interpretation outlined by Erikson (1986).

III. Findings

The patterns that emerged from this document analysis fall under three major areas: stakeholder involvement, organizational sustainability, and educational and technical assistance. The two most relevant to the NPS Management Plan 2005-2010 targets are stakeholder involvement and organizational sustainability.

A. Stakeholder Involvement in Community-led Watershed Groups

Some examples of recorded responses from functional reviews and plan review comments regarding stakeholder involvement include:

- **“...people most interested are consistently attending meetings and providing comments.”**
- **“Working on getting local health department involved.”**
- **“Citizen involvement difficult because of time commitments”**
- **“Perhaps the health departments could get more involved.”**
- **“Need more out of meeting participation and contribution from current members;**
- **more assistance/research from [AAT \(hyperlink to applicable term in definitions.html\)](#).”**
- **“...solidly link water quality problems in critical areas to recommended actions.”**

- **“A process for defining goals and objectives not clear, with respect to inventory information used, people involved, and how decisions were made.” (OEPA/ODNR, plan review comments, April 2, 2004)**

Strategies to engage stakeholders in analyzing data sources for watershed planning were discussed in the review of the satellite broadcast and technical committee meeting minutes. At the 2/10/04 live telecast, a watershed coordinator described a stakeholder involvement process. Local expertise and aerial maps were used to create a table of ditches that was useful in determining where restoration activities should take place. In the review of the watershed planning meeting minutes, a database of on-site sewage systems in the watershed was created with the help of municipal officials. The data-base was used by local health departments to target areas for on-site system upgrades in a Clean Water Act Section 319 grant application.

Recorded responses from functional reviews indicate some difficulties with the level and quality of stakeholder involvement. This information may indicate an area to explore for educational programming and a local focus on reporting specific activities (e.g. meetings and events) and types of participants during the functional review, versus the process of stakeholder involvement. However, the satellite program and watershed action planning meeting minutes describe specific strategies for involving stakeholders in data analysis, interpretation, and decision-making.

As with the findings on educational and technical assistance (discussed later in this document) recorded functional review responses may indicate that:

- the functional review question needs to be modified to promote more discussion on the process of stakeholder involvement;

As stated the question reads: “Elaborate on processes being used for watershed plan development (e.g., What sectors are represented on the steering committee, which partners have you been unable to reach, how is their input being utilized?)” Many of the responses focused on the example and stated who has been involved and not involved in the planning efforts.

It may be that there are so many potential discussion points captured in this question that process is not discussed in depth. To inform the NPS Plan watershed action planning and implementation targets, the question may need to be broken down into a series of questions to encourage discussion specifically on the stakeholder involvement process; or

- this key issue should be addressed in more detail using a method other than the functional review, since the functional review is designed to cover a broad list of topics in a short time period.

B. Organizational Sustainability

The following approaches were mentioned to sustain long-term funding for the watershed coordinator position as state funding declines over the 6-year coordinator grant period.

- Job sharing and use of private sector local match. This strategy was described as allowing for more focused time on fundraising by a half-time coordinator.
- Obtaining local funding for a watershed coordinator position from the county commissioners.
- Fundraising through membership dues, raffles, contracting with municipalities to assist with Phase II implementation.
- Conducting an organizational retreat to develop a fund raising plan.

The following comments about local stakeholder willingness to “own” and implement the watershed action plan in relation to the [state endorsement process \(hyperlink to endorsementprocess_04.html\)](#) were offered at the satellite telecast.

- **“In my plan, I have a sheet with their titles and signature, that they agree to implement it.”**
- **“I’m trying to get people involved in writing the plan. Groups developing goals and integration.”**
- **“...met with some resistance; afraid of blank line with a request for signature.”**
- **“...Goals based on relationship building in the community; the locals need something to buy into. I hate to bring them together if there’s nothing to connect to...”**
- **“Endorsement can work in either direction state—local or local to state; prefer to leave it up to group. Review USEPA federal guidance on watershed planning with stakeholders.”**

C. Education and Technical Assistance

Question three of the functional review asks for a list of programs that the watershed organization conducted and would like to highlight, including target audience, outcomes, and methods of evaluation. Only two of the ten functional reviews analyzed, mentioned an evaluation involving tracking something other than number of participants or programs and materials. One mentioned evaluating knowledge changes, and one practices adopted. Responses typically

did not include a description linking outreach activities and organizational and or water quality goals.

When asked how the [Area Assistance Team \(AAT\) \(hyperlink to applicable term in definitions.html\)](#) can most effectively assist the coordinator, one review mentioned providing assistance with evaluation of educational programs. These findings may indicate that program development, particularly evaluation, is an area worth exploring further with watershed coordinators and their boards.

The findings may also indicate that the functional review question guide could be modified to capture more information on program development and/or that this key issue should be addressed in more detail using a method other than the functional review, since the functional review is designed to cover a broad list of topics in a short time period. The functional review analyzed seemed to focus on the breadth of programs watershed organizations are involved in versus depth on program development approach. For example, most of the functional review reports mentioned a number of educational programs that were being conducted.

Other requests for technical and administrative assistance mentioned in the functional review reports include assistance with load allocations, endorsement process, grant seeking, identifying appropriate sources of funding for local match, an updated list of AAT members, and tracking down data. Specific comments include:

- **“STEP L program somewhat difficult”**
- **“Lack of definition of BMPs in Region 5 Urban areas.”**
- **“Help with loading models and reduction numbers.”**
- **“Follow up assistance with tracking down data.”**
- **“Our major concern is endorsement of the watershed plan.” (**

References

Erickson, F. (1986). From Practice to Grounded Theory. Qualitative Research in Nursing. Chenitz, W.C. and Swanson, J.M. Addison-Wesley: Menlo Park: CA

Appendix I: Document List

1. Watershed Planning Telecast on Endorsable Watershed Plans (2/14/04)
2. Watershed plan meeting minutes from a state funded group (eight meetings were held between 2003-2004)
3. Thirteen Functional Reviews (2003-2004)
4. Seven Watershed Plan Review Comments and Conditions for Endorsement (2003-2004)