

To: Watershed Projects funded under the State Watershed Coordinator Grant and their Area Assistance Team Representatives

From: David Hanselmann, Chief, ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation

Date: February 9, 2005

RE: 2005 Functional Review

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our local watershed partners for the work they do to improve their lakes, rivers and streams. Ohio has a goal of eighty percent of streams in attainment with aquatic life use standards by 2010, and we realize that our only chance to make significant progress towards this goal is to support the efforts of local watershed partners both technically and financially. The annual functional reviews are an excellent tool to help achieve this.

Before the 2005 functional reviews take place, I'd like to reiterate some program policy that is in place under the watershed coordinator grants program:

- ◆ Watershed Coordinators employed under the watershed coordinator grant have 2 years from receipt of the grant to complete the compilation of a watershed plan. Watershed Projects will utilize "A Guide to Developing Local Watershed Action Plans in Ohio" to assist in plan creation. For a detailed listing of what should be included in the plan, see Appendix 8 of the Guide at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/soilandwater/docs/watershedprograms/Appendix8update.pdf>
- ◆ If a plan has not been turned in by the two-year deadline, the project must have submitted a signed request in writing for an extension or they are not in compliance with their watershed coordinator grant agreement.
- ◆ A plan must be submitted as a grant deliverable. (For projects funded in '00 and '01, the state endorsement track is optional, but please know that this will decrease the ability to compete for funding in several state and federal programs.) Project sponsors who do not choose the endorsement track must still submit a watershed action plan that includes the objectives in their original workplan and grant agreement.
- ◆ Projects entering Year 5 without a watershed action plan and no currently active 319-implementation grant will have their watershed coordinator fifth year payments held until such time that the plan is submitted.
- ◆ If the sponsor deems that the project area being covered is too large to plan adequately, watershed projects can propose to change the size of watershed covered by their project. They should initiate this discussion with Rosida Porter at (614) 265-6647.

- ◆ Once the local project has comments on their watershed action plan back from the state, they should be updating the plan to address the comments. For comments that take time to incorporate, the project needs to set an implementation strategy with timeline in place. Once these items are completed, the project should resubmit updates and timelines to Rosida Porter to continue the endorsement process.
 - ◆ At least one water quality impairment (e.g. acid mine drainage) or one subwatershed must meet all Ohio and USEPA guidance in order to be considered endorsed. (See Attachment 1). Work conducted on deficient areas then becomes the endorsement conditions, and the project needs follow through on these endorsement conditions.
 - ◆ Remember, the endorsement conditions set timelines to incorporate changes. The project should be making progress towards satisfying those conditions.
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Each year, the State of Ohio undertakes a functional review of individual watershed coordinator grant projects to produce the following outcomes:

1. Allow the State to express appreciation to the local projects for their water quality work to date, and identify ways that the state can provide additional assistance.
2. Clarify purpose/goal of Coordinator grant to sponsor, with an emphasis on administration and fiscal responsibility;
3. Reconcile project undertakings with watershed plan production and other grant deliverables;
4. Identify barriers/challenges to attaining intermediate (process and structure) and long-term (water quality) goals;
5. Develop a shared responsibility for success of the grant program between members of the Area Assistance Teams, Ohio EPA/DNR funders, and the watershed project participants;

The functional reviews will take place mid-February to May 1st, scheduled by the DNR Resource Management Specialists for the watershed coordinator grants. The functional review will consist of a half-day or one-day meeting between the Area Assistance Team, the watershed coordinator, project sponsor, steering committee and any project partner receiving more than 10 percent of project implementation funds. At least one sponsor and steering committee representative must commit to attending the regular functional review, or the functional review will be cancelled and rescheduled. The RMS position should print and bring copies (one for each meeting participant) of the watershed coordinator program outcomes table and matrix, and the OEPA NPS Liaison should have a copy of the “Guide to Developing Local Watershed Action Plans in Ohio” (including Appendix 8). Each reviewer should take notes that will be utilized by the OSU Extension Watershed Agent to write up the review summary.

There are two forms to be completed this year. The first is a Watershed Coordinator Program Outcomes Table, which will give the state a snapshot of progress being made under this project. The second form is a matrix with table to offer qualitative information on how things are progressing with the project.

Utilizing the second form, a report of recommended actions from this meeting will be generated by the OSU Extension Watershed Agent, and forwarded to the project, with copies to State funding agencies OEPA, ODNR Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and the Division of Mineral Resources Management (in AMD impacted watersheds only) by June 15, 2005.

Serving on the State Watershed Coordinator Project Functional Review Team that helped to revise this process on February 2, 2005 at ODNR were:

Rosida Porter, DSWC (Chair)
Constance White, ODNR, DSWC
Katie McKibben, Ohio EPA
Rob Hamilton, ODNR, DSWC

Dana Oleskiewicz, OSU Extension
Matt Adkins, Coastal NPS Coordinator
Eric Akin, Upper Tuscarawas WC

Attachment 1 - 2003 USEPA Guidance for Watershed Action Plans

(Appears in context at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-WATER/2003/October/Day-23/w26755.htm>)

Appendix 8 detailed one approach to including 2003 USEPA Guidance in Watershed Action Plans. It should be followed when starting from scratch creating an action plan. If the organization is not starting from scratch and pursuing endorsement, please ensure that the plan contains these 9 elements:

a. An identification of the causes and sources or groups of similar sources that will need to be controlled to achieve the load reductions estimated in this watershed-based plan (and to achieve any other watershed goals identified in the watershed-based plan), as discussed in item (b) immediately below. Sources that need to be controlled should be identified at the significant subcategory level with estimates of the extent to which they are present in the watershed

(e.g., X number of dairy cattle feedlots needing upgrading, including a rough estimate of the number of cattle per facility; Y acres of row crops needing improved nutrient management or sediment control; or Z linear miles of eroded streambank needing remediation).

b. An estimate of the load reductions expected for the management measures described under paragraph (c) below (recognizing the natural variability and the difficulty in precisely predicting the performance of management measures over time). Estimates should be provided at the same level as in item (a) above (e.g., the total load reduction expected for dairy cattle feedlots; row crops; or eroded streambanks).

c. A description of the NPS management measures that will need to be implemented to achieve the load reductions estimated under paragraph (b) above (as well as to achieve other watershed goals identified in this watershed-based plan), and an identification (using a map or a description) of the critical areas in which those measures will be needed to implement this plan.

d. An estimate of the amounts of technical and financial assistance / needed, associated costs, and/or the sources and authorities that will be relied upon, to implement this plan. As sources of funding, States should consider the use of their Section 319 programs, State Revolving Funds, USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Reserve Program, and other relevant Federal, State, local and private funds that may be available to assist in implementing this plan.

e. An information/education component that will be used to enhance public understanding of the project and encourage their early and continued participation in selecting, designing, and implementing the NPS management measures that will be implemented.

f. A schedule for implementing the NPS management measures v/identified in this plan that *is* reasonably expeditious.

g. A description of interim, measurable milestones for determining whether NPS management measures or other control actions are being implemented.

h. A set of criteria that can be used to determine whether loading reductions are being achieved over time and substantial progress is being made towards attaining water quality standards and, if not, the criteria for determining whether this watershed-based plan needs to be revised or, if a NPS TMDL has been established, whether the NPS TMDL needs to be revised.

i. A monitoring component to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation efforts over time, measured against the criteria established under item (h) immediately above.