Watershed Protection Plans – State Perspectives

Texas Watershed Planning Short Course
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Introduction: TCEQ Reorganized

- Nonpoint Source (NPS) Team (319h + 604b)
  > Planning and Implementation Section
    + TMDL, Bays and Estuaries Programs
      Important link to TMDL process
    > Water Quality Planning Division
      + Monitoring: Clean Rivers, SWQM, Standards, Laboratory
    > Chief Engineer’s Office
    > Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Watershed Planning Steps

Watershed Approach

The watershed approach is commonly characterized by four principles:

- Active stakeholder involvement at a local level.
- A specific geographic focus.
- Action driven by environmental objectives and by strong science and data.
- Coordinated priority setting and integrated solutions.

Striking a Balance

- Need enough information to understand the problem and measures necessary to achieve goals.
- Balanced approach between gathering information and beginning implementation.
- Preliminary information and estimates will probably need to be modified over time.
- Often will require a number of years of diligent implementation for a project to achieve goals.

Issues 1: Priorities

Getting a Handle on an Enormous Task
- Data: Survey Available Data & Ground Truth
- Sources: Largest, Most Easily Measured & Isolated
- Analysis: Get a Handle on Relative Contributions
  - Proportional comparison of known & unknown sources
  - Linkage between source loading and water body load
- Geographic: Identify Critical Areas
  - Riparian and contributing zones
  - Unprotected wetlands and sensitive areas
  - Any concentration of potential sources
  - Any area vulnerable to primary stressors
Issue 2: Get Help!
Getting a Handle on Information and Process
- **Data Sources**: TCEQ, River Authorities, Other Agencies, …
- **Ground Truth**: Diverse Stakeholders
- **Analysis**: TCEQ, Universities, Consultants, Other WPP Lead Organizations, …
- **Planning**: Councils of Government, River Authorities, …
- **Facilitation of Stakeholder Process**

Issues 3
Sustainability of the watershed effort
- Watershed Coordinator
- Dedicated public or nonprofit organization
- Diverse ongoing & temporary funding sources
Sustainability of the state program effort
- Tracking and reporting successes and opportunities for improvement (PAMs, 303(d), 4b)
- Adaptive management

Key References
- **Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect our Waters**
  [http://www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook/](http://www.epa.gov/nps/watershed_handbook/)
- **2004 NPS Program and Grants Guidelines**

Questions
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