CWA 303(d) Program Vision – Prioritization Goal

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2015 National Training Workshop on CWA 303(d) Listing and TMDLs

Overview

➢ Vision Prioritization Highlights

➢ Prioritization – the Lynchpin Goal of the Vision

➢ State Flexibility in Setting CWA 303d Priorities

➢ Relationship to CWA 303d requirements

➢ Prioritization – Basis for the new Program Measure WQ-27

➢ Tools to help State Prioritization

Vision Prioritization Highlights

➢ States to set CWA 303(d) <u>long-term</u> priorities from 2016-2022

➢ Long-term priorities set in the context of state's broader overall water quality goals

   ➢ Opportunity for <u>state to tell its own story</u> on what is most important regarding water quality

   ➢ Puts in context the state programmatic activities

➢ Reflects <u>strategic use of resources</u>

➢ States to identify <u>priority watersheds or individual waterbodies</u> for restoration and protection

Prioritization – Lynchpin Goal of the Vision

➢ Foundation for other Goals

➢ Assessment Goal

- Importance of communication with monitoring program to inform priorities and to determine progress in priorities

➢ Alternatives and Protection Goals

- Priorities could include alternative restoration and protection approaches, as well as TMDLs

- TMDLs will be the dominant tool, may not always be the most effective approach to get to WQS more rapidly

Prioritization – Lynchpin Goal of the Vision (cont'd)

➢ Integration and Engagement Goals

- • Integration with other programs to achieve environmental results (TMDLs and other plans are not self implementing)

- • Engagement of public on setting of priorities and implementation actions in priority areas

State Flexibility in Setting CWA 303d Priorities

➤ Flexibility in setting priorities

- States likely to consider a range of factors – from public interest to environmental considerations to resource implications

- There is <u>not a prescriptive checklist</u> of factors, other than statutory factors of severity of pollution and uses

- Prioritization/Rationale will be <u>state-specific</u> –> it is about what is important to the state

➤ Flexibility in describing priorities

- e.g., may describe priorities by geographic units, by pollutants, or by designated uses

- Ultimately priorities (whichever way described) will be linked to a geographic address

A Few examples - Not "one size fits all"

- State goal → Address nutrient impairment

- State identifies watersheds with nutrient impairments

- Using 303d list, State selects priority <u>watersheds</u> for TMDL or alternative plan development, from 2016-2022

- State goal → Protect and Restore Drinking Water Uses

- State identifies watersheds not meeting DW uses, or high quality watersheds for DW

- State selects priority <u>waterbodies</u> for TMDL development, alternative and/or protection plans, from 2016-2022

- State goal → Address NPS impairments in coordination with 319 program

- Using 303d list, State identifies NPS impaired watersheds

- With 319 program, State selects priority water <u>segments</u> for TMDL or alternative plan development, where there is local interest in improving water quality

All Priorities will have a geographic address

Prioritization -- Relationship to CWA 303d requirements

➢ Long term priorities serve as the framework to implement 303(d) program responsibilities

➢ Existing program requirements continue including:

- Identification of impaired or threatened waters; listing of such waters; priority ranking of listed waters; TMDL development for impaired waters

➢ Focuses <u>location and timing</u> of the TMDLs, alternative restoration or protection approaches from 2016-2022

➢ Priorities reflect what States hope to accomplish under 303d program between 2016 - 2022 to support their broad overall goals

Vision Priorities vs. Required Priority Ranking

Vision Priorities

- Will not likely include <u>all</u> listed waters;

- If a state is only focusing on TMDL development, then its Vision priorities would likely be a subset of the required priority ranking

- Includes high priorities for TMDL development as well as alternative restoration or protection approaches

- Not required but the basis for program measure

Required Priority Ranking

- Ranking of <u>all</u> listed waters (e.g., high, medium, low priorities

- Only TMDL development ranking

- Includes a two-year TMDL development schedule, which changes every 2 years

- Required by regulation biennially - 40 CFR 130.7(b)(4)

- High ranked waters likely to be part of Vision priorities

- Some medium/low ranked waters may be ranked high under Vision priorities for alternative

Prioritization – Basis for the new Program Measure WQ-27

➢ Key Milestone for Prioritization – <u>2016 IR</u>

- In 2016 IR, States <u>include</u> or <u>reference</u> long-term priorities and rationale

- Priorities/rationale could be in other documents and referenced in IR

- More detail tomorrow on timing for reporting priorities for measure purposes in FY16

➢ Priorities are not expected to substantially change from 2016-2022

- Some flexibility to make adjustment under measures

Tools to Help State Prioritization

➢ Recovery Potential Screening (RPS)Tool

- 7/2014: RPS Tools for lower 48 states (200+ watershed indicators)

- 22 states have had Recovery Potential projects;10 state projects about nutrients prioritization

- Andy Somor (RPS contractor) here at "tools table"

➢ Healthy Watersheds Program

- Active effort to better integrate HW and RPS activities underway

- Grants program new for 2015 will fund assessments and protection activities

- National Healthy Watersheds Preliminary Assessment (see Roy Weitzell at "tools" table)
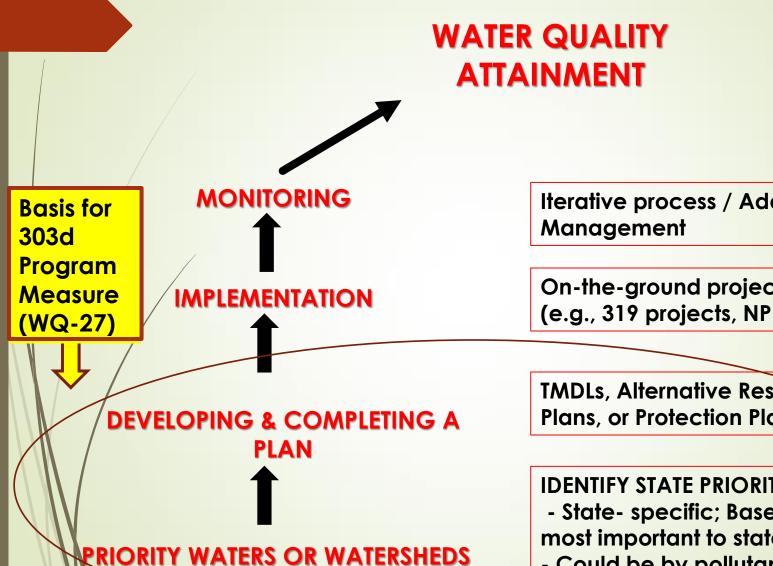
Tools – cont'd

➢ WATERSCAPE

- This GIS-based tool to aid State TMDL Prioritization efforts was introduced in beta form at last year's meeting

- Now final and operational for all 50 States plus DC, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands

- States asked for several additional HUC12 watershed property layers in addition to those available last year

  - Previous data layers targeted: Drinking Water, Environmental Justice, Impaired Waters, Designated Uses, Impervious Cover, Incremental Nutrient Yield, and Economic Stress

  - New data layers: Discharges from Point Sources, Habitat, CWA Section 319 Grant Activity, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), and Superfund and RCRA Sites

- Dwight Atkinson and Seth Mann once again staffing a "booth" outside the main hall for demos and consultation

How it all fits together!

WATER QUALITY ATTAINMENT

MONITORING

Iterative process / Adaptive Management

Basis for 303d Program Measure (WQ-27)

IMPLEMENTATION

On-the-ground projects and others (e.g., 319 projects, NPDES permits)

DEVELOPING & COMPLETING A PLAN

TMDLs, Alternative Restoration Plans, or Protection Plans

PRIORITY WATERS OR WATERSHEDS From 2016-2022

IDENTIFY STATE PRIORITIES
 - State- specific; Based on what is most important to state
- Could be by pollutant, watershed, waterbody, non-point source, etc.)