NRCS National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

Briefing for EPA April 10, 2012

Team Members

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Objective

- Accelerate targeted funding in FY 2012
- Small watershed (12-digit HUC) emphasis
- Water quality that is impaired, threatened, has TMDL plan in place, or is critical
- No less than 1 watershed, and no more than 3 (exception requires
 Regional Conservationist approval)

<u>GOAL</u> – Remove streams and other water-bodies from 303d list, from threatened status, from contributing to impairments, or adequately addresses a TMDL plan

Watershed Selection Criteria

- 303d listed, threatened, TMDL Plan, and/or critical stream segments and water-bodies
- 12-digit HUC watersheds
- Impairments that NRCS can effectively address through voluntary action
- Agricultural sources (nutrients/sediment)
- State Water Quality Agency input, then State
 Technical Committee input

NWQI Focus (WS Selection)

Priority Pollutants

- Nutrients
 - Low Dissolved Oxygen
 - Ammonia
 - Algal Growth
- Sediment/Turbidity

Other Eligible Pollutants

- Pesticides
- Temperature
- Salinity
- Habitat Alteration
- Cause Unknown –
 Impaired Biota

Conservation Practices

- Follow MRBI Established Approach
 - •12-digit HUC
 - Core and Supporting Practices
 - Partnerships/Leveraging
- Conservation Activity Plans

Ranking Criteria

- Screen Applications (High, Medium, Low)
- National Program Questions for Consistency
- State Questions for Specific NWQI Objectives
- Local Questions from State Technical Committee
 Input

Schedule

- 02-23-12 EPA Coordination
- 03-16-12 Program Announcements
- 04-20-12 State WQ Agency/Tech Committee Input
- 04-20-12 State Selection of W'Sheds
- 04-24-12 Selected Watersheds to RCs Office

Schedule (Cont'd)

- 04-27-12 - Sub-Accounts for Tracking Established

- 05-18-12 - Application Period-1 Ends

- 06-15-12 - Application Period-2 Ends

- 07-02-12 - Obligation Deadline

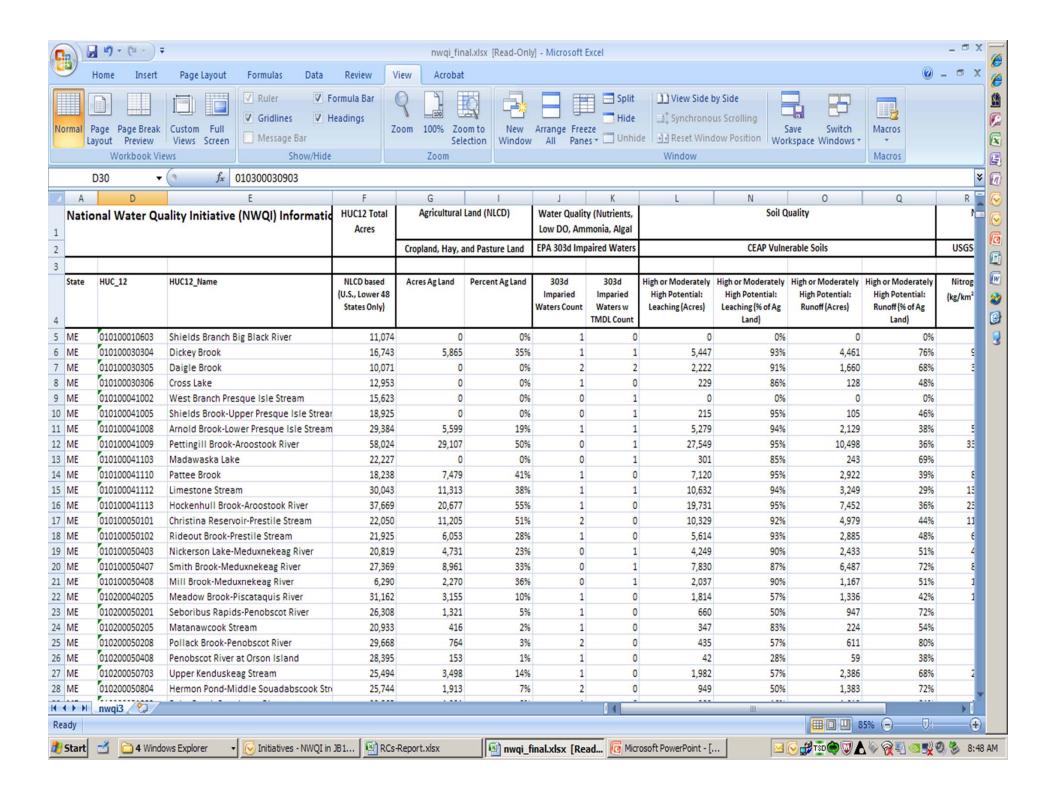
– 07-30-12 – Outcome Training Completed

Tracking

- \$33 Million in EQIP FA Dedicated to this Effort
- States establish ProTracts Sub-Accounts
- STCs may add additional FA > original 5%
- Unused FA < 5% returned to NHQ for re-allocation to other states for this purpose

Payment Schedules

- Follow regional protocol for FY-12
- On very limited basis, Add practices/scenarios as needed for this effort with RC and Deputy Chief for Programs concurrence



Outcomes

- NRCS uses many tools (CEAP-APEX, SWAT, SPARROW, WQlag, etc.)
- -Each tool has Pros and Cons
- Use WQlag in Selected Watershed for FY-12 (Training Required)
- Develop Team to Focus for FY-13