

## **ASSESSMENT/PLANNING PROJECTS**

Assessment projects are sometimes needed as part of specific watershed projects or as part of an overall statewide, regional, or ecoregional effort. They are also used for implementation targeting or program development. Assessments facilitate the development of watershed project proposals, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and watershed restoration action strategies (WRASs) and plans, help to more clearly identify and prioritize nonpoint source problems, and aid in developing and evaluating NPS management programs and Best Management Practice (BMP) effectiveness. A template showing the format for assessment/planning projects is provided on page 5. The following sections are included in an assessment/planning project report:

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The executive summary provides a brief overview of the project with start and finish dates, funding information, and a summary of accomplishments. The summary should outline the goals that were set for the project and include a statement of whether some or all of these goals were met. Project sponsors also might provide information on significant accomplishments and describe how high-priority issues were addressed and what products were produced.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

When developing the introduction, project sponsors are encouraged to consider multiple audiences in addition to states and EPA Region 8. The introduction should contain background information on the project, including the project area, HUC number, a description of data available from historical reports, and rationale for pursuing grant funds, especially the NPS problems in the project area. Much of this information can be derived from the statement of need and project description in the original section 319 proposal.

The introduction to a final report should contain the following information:

- Identification of the waterbody or watershed with HUC code if available, including details on the need for an additional assessment project and desired data endpoints (i.e., TMDLs). As each project begins collecting data, there should be some prethinking of what metrics will be used as TMDL endpoints—endpoints that will be used to judge the success of any watershed management measures. Endpoints could be any number of direct or surrogate measures related to the physical, biological, or chemical integrity of the waterbodies. The assessment part of the project should be sure to collect data relative to that metric that will eventually be used in the TMDL.
- Description of water quality problems, including identification of NPS pollutants of concern and water quality standards that are violated or threatened.

- A description of how the project was consistent with the state NPS management program and other state programs including 305(b) reports, Unified Watershed Assessments (UWAs), Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development, 303(d) listings, and source water protection reports.
- A general project description (keeping in mind the following section will explain the goals and objectives).
- A map of the region with the assessment project area highlighted and a site map with monitoring stations and assessment areas identified.

## **2.0 PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES**

It is important to describe the goals for the project. In general, the *goals* are broad statements about project needs that are achievable through *objectives*. An example of a goal statement is “to identify specific areas within Gunnison basin that are contributing the highest selenium loadings to the river system so remediation efforts and best management practices can be concentrated in those areas to reduce the selenium concentrations to protect fish and wildlife species, including some listed threatened or endangered species, while maintaining the viability of current land uses within the basin.”

A description of the objectives and tasks should immediately follow each identified goal. Objectives should provide more detail about the accomplishments that were identified and met for each goal. An example of an objective is “characterize the selenium loads for the tributaries of Gunnison and the North Fork of the Gunnison Rivers.” Each objective should have a description of the tasks that achieved the objective. Pictures, maps, graphs, or tables are useful to describe a task or objective.

### **2.1 PLANNED AND ACTUAL MILESTONES, PRODUCTS, AND COMPLETION DATES**

One method for presenting this information is a milestone table. Each table should list planned and actual milestones and product completion dates. A brief explanation should be provided when anticipated milestones were not met. A timeline-type figure may also be used to depict schedules and milestones.

### **2.2 EVALUATION OF GOAL ACHIEVEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE NPS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In this section, the project sponsor should provide a description of events leading to the achievement of each goal. The report should describe how the project helped implement the state’s NPS management program and other state program priorities as outlined in 305(b) reports, 303(d) lists, and UWAs. Project sponsors should describe how the project contributed to controlling NPS pollution as part of an integrated, watershed-wide approach.

### **2.3 SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

Any additional information the sponsor may want to add relating to achieving project goals should be included in this section. Project sponsors are encouraged to include BMP lists and descriptions of projects or programs implemented for each task. Pictures, maps, graphs, or tables may be used to better explain these projects and programs. Graphical elements are strongly encouraged because they help “tell the story” and increase the multi-purpose usefulness of the report.

### **3.0 MONITORING RESULTS**

This section should include a brief discussion of the monitoring strategy and sampling and analysis techniques used in the assessment project. Descriptions of the models used to analyze data should also be included.

The heart of the assessment report is the discussion of the analysis and summary of all the data collected using tables, graphs, or charts that show trends in water quality. The section also should describe any surrogate measures (environmental indicators) used to measure existing conditions or progress in controlling NPS pollution. Examples of effective graphs, tables, and other data presentation methods are shown in Section 3 of this notebook—*Final Project Examples*.

The monitoring results will be separated into the following categories:

- Surface water chemistry (3.1).
- Groundwater, including separate sections on metals, chemistry, and nutrients (3.2), if applicable.
- Stream physical, biological, or habitat monitoring (3.3).
- Other monitoring (3.4).
- Quality assurance reporting (3.5), if applicable. If there is an EPA-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) or Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP) for the project, describe briefly how the monitoring was consistent with the QAPP or SAP.

### **4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COORDINATION**

In this section any public involvement and coordination activities should be described.

#### **4.1 STATE AGENCIES**

This section identifies any cooperating state agencies and describes their role in implementing the project.

#### **4.2 FEDERAL AGENCIES**

This section identifies any cooperating federal agencies, such as the U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service and describes their role in project implementation.

#### **4.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, INDUSTRY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER GROUPS, PUBLIC-AT-LARGE**

This section describes local involvement and support from a variety of entities and the public.

#### **4.4 OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDS**

If the project received funding through other sources, such as a non-federal match of state and local funds, volunteer labor, and other federal funds, this section should provide a description of those sources. A budget table may be a useful way to present this information.

### **5.0 ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT THAT DID NOT WORK WELL**

This section should provide an explanation of elements of the project that did not work out as planned. For instance, this section may include a discussion of why milestones were difficult to meet. Was the failure due to lack of good data, inadequate funding, lack of sufficient technical resources, or “circumstances of nature?” Was there a need for a more thorough assessment or more advanced technology? Problems with organizational dynamics, an inability to contract assessment work, or other confounding factors also would be discussed here. This section can help others to avoid similar problems in the future.

### **6.0 FUTURE ACTIVITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section should be used to describe any programs, activities, and/or assessments that are or should be planned for the area of concern based on the results of the assessment. Plans for future coordination with other agencies should be indicated here. If the project is continuing, anticipated funding sources and continuation of the section 319 funding should also be discussed. This section provides an excellent opportunity to informally propose projects that will address NPS problems in the watershed or other area of concern.

SECTION 319 NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM  
ASSESSMENT/PLANNING PROJECT FINAL REPORT

(Project Title Here)

by

(Author and Project Sponsor Here)

(Date Here)

This project was conducted in cooperation with the State of \_\_\_\_\_ and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8.

Grant #

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT START DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT COMPLETION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FUNDING:

TOTAL BUDGET \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL EPA GRANT \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL EXPENDITURES  
OF EPA FUNDS \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SECTION 319  
MATCH ACCRUED \_\_\_\_\_

BUDGET REVISIONS \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \_\_\_\_\_

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