

U.S. EPA's Action Strategy to Strengthen Water Quality Monitoring

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Biographical Sketch of Author

Joan Warren is a program analyst in the Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. She has been in the Office of Water for over 15 years, with experience in the wetlands, watershed protection, total maximum daily loads, and monitoring programs. Prior to coming to EPA, Joan worked on water issues for the National Governors' Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Abstract

One of the highest priorities for the water program at EPA is the improvement of water quality monitoring. EPA has developed a strategy for the next three years to improve water quality monitoring, particularly as it relates to the implementation of the Clean Water Act. The action strategy seeks to respond to continued critiques of current approaches to water quality monitoring nationwide, as well as respond to the needs of regions, states, watersheds, and local entities as they address site-specific water quality issues: water quality standards development and revision; TMDL development; and water quality-based NPDES permitting.

The presentation will discuss major barriers, and opportunities identified in developing the strategy, and future actions to address these concerns. The issues raised in the course of developing the action strategy include the need for: devoting additional resources to water quality monitoring; helping states make the difficult choices regarding where to focus their limited resources; articulating more clearly consistent priorities from EPA; increasing the accessibility to and use of water quality monitoring data; obtaining increased and better analysis of data; and conveying this information in a manner that is more useful to decision-makers and the public.