

Monitoring & Assessment Partnership

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Background on the EPA/State Monitoring and Assessment Partnership

- Initiated FY 2010
- Members - State, EPA, and Federal Agency staff and managers from monitoring, assessment and standards
- Objectives
 - Improve national and state-scale assessments to support state-wide and nationally consistent reports on the nations waters
 - Facilitate the implementation of state monitoring strategies

National Aquatic Resource Surveys (NARS)

- Response to critiques of EPA's & States' inability to report on condition of nation's waters
- Accomplished through EPA/State joint efforts as one component of 106 monitoring initiative
- Provides information on condition of waters (streams & rivers, lakes, coastal waters, wetlands)
 - Indicators of biological integrity (percent good, fair, poor)
 - Major stressors such as nutrients, excess sedimentation, habitat
 - Indicators of recreation, human health (e.g., fish tissue)

Situation Assessment: What and How

- What: A view from a neutral corner
 - Perspectives and interests
 - Diagnostics
 - Options to consider
 - Ideas for moving ahead
- How: Conversations with knowledgeable people who have a point of view
 - Twenty-one interviews (25 people)
 - Thirteen state; eight federal
- Neutral assessment of the *situation* not legal, technical or policy merits.

Results of Situation Assessment

- Generally three different perspectives
 - States with long-standing monitoring, rich in data (most often for streams)
 - States ramping up their programs with less investment and data
 - EPA with need to report on water conditions nationally and across jurisdictions

Results of Situation Assessment: Areas of General Agreement

- Strong commitment to aquatic resource monitoring across states and EPA
- NARS regarded as positive, even among those concerned
- Communications among EPA/States are improving, stronger relationships developing
- Different objectives depending on spatial scale
- Probabilistic and targeted monitoring both have value
- Need to make NARS data more useful for states

Results of Situation Assessment: Mixed Perspectives

- Federal interest in consistency; state interest in flexibility
- “Ski trail” issue (black diamond slope in Massachusetts ≠ one in Colorado.) Absolute vs. relative frames of reference.
- Some scientific concerns remain about NARS
- NARS concerns vary across resource type
- Most favor “integration,” but wonder if there are a set of assessment questions that transcend spatial scale

Monitoring and Assessment Partnership

➤ States and EPA Agreement in Denver

- The National Aquatic Resource Surveys are necessary/important and will continue
- We will work to optimize the usefulness of the national assessment for states while meeting the national survey objectives

Next Steps June 2010 – July 2011

➤ Design Workgroup

- Define criteria for integrating state scale surveys to national assessment
- Examine implications of multi-year survey implementation

➤ Assessment Workgroup

- Examine assessment questions
- Examine data comparability

MAP and NARS

- Provide technical and programmatic recommendations to EPA
 - High-level issues that cross all resource types
- Discuss recommendations with NARS Steering Committees
- Provide neutral setting to fully explore areas of disagreement

Topics for Discussion with NWQMC

- What role should the Council play in MAP?
 - Should MAP be a Council workgroup?
 - Much overlap in charge and membership
 - Opportunities to leverage Council efforts?
 - Comparability of methods
 - National Monitoring Network for Coastal Waters
 - Opportunities for greater coordination with other Federal Agencies on NARS?
 - FS, FWS, NPS, USGS