

communities to help assist and promote the development and implementation of watershed-based plans. The planning and development of such watershed-based plans should be done in coordination with local communities, Conservation Districts, agricultural producers, and other watershed stakeholders in a cooperative way that will result in locally led partnerships, with USDA support, choosing to implement the plan. Achieving local buy-in and commitment to implement watershed-based plans once they are complete is key to successful watershed planning and implementation.

USDA's primary conservation funding programs (Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Reserve Program, and Wetlands Reserve Program) are particularly well-designed to support the implementation of both agricultural best management practices (BMPs) and a suite of conservation, restoration, and land retirement measures for wetlands, riparian areas, and other areas of critical importance to the success of watershed-based plans. States should strive to work with the agricultural community to accomplish win-win situations whereby Farm Bill funds are actively used to support the implementation of watershed-based plans developed under Section 319. Where this approach is successful, Section 319 funds could be focused (in addition to monitoring, planning, and providing coordination support for projects) on the implementation of agricultural BMPs that are not eligible for Farm Bill funding (e.g., BMPs that are not in the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Field Office Technical Guide of conservation standards); implementation of agricultural projects in concert with other agencies and groups to help solve watershed problems; and promoting and testing emerging technologies.

EPA recognizes that situations will arise where a State appropriately places a high priority on implementing agricultural components of a watershed-based plan for which Farm Bill funding is not being provided, or is available at only modest levels that require supplementation with Section 319 funds. State and watershed managers should certainly take advantage of whatever funding sources and mechanisms are the best available and most appropriate to accomplish their watershed goals. In most cases, the resources needed to implement an entire watershed-based plan will be significant, and success will depend greatly on enlisting and obtaining the support of all important stakeholders and the resources that they can provide,

including especially the resources made available by Congress through the Farm Bill.

Other Environmental Programs

In addition to USDA-supported programs, many other programs that are implemented at the Federal and State level have common and overlapping areas with the Section 319 program. States' activities to upgrade their nonpoint source programs in recent years have strengthened their links with these various State and Federal programs. Today's guidelines particularly encourage the integration of State nonpoint source management programs with other environmental programs by providing for increased Section 319 funding support for the development and implementation of watershed-based plans. Such integration provides a vehicle for cooperative design and implementation of watershed-based plans in a coordinated manner that employ the resources, authorities, and expertise of all relevant programs.

A number of EPA/State programs are closely related to nonpoint source pollution control and to watershed protection. To maximize effectiveness, State nonpoint source programs need to continue to be well integrated with these other State programs to best meet States' water quality needs. These include:

- The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) point source program, particularly with respect to urban runoff, construction, inactive and abandoned mines, concentrated animal feeding operations, and marinas;
- Coastal protection programs, including especially coastal nonpoint pollution control programs under Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 (CZARA, co-administered by EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and co-implemented by our State counterparts), as well as the National Estuary Program;
- Wetlands protection programs implemented under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act as well as pursuant to a variety of other Federal and State authorities and programs;
- Source water protection programs under the Safe Drinking Water Act;
- Clean Lakes programs and wetlands protection and restoration programs under the Clean Water Act;
- Watershed planning programs; and
- Ambient monitoring programs.

In addition to coordinating program implementation with these various programs, State NPS program managers

should coordinate their funding needs with other CWA sources of funding. Most significant is the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) under Title VI of the Clean Water Act. The SRF is currently providing over \$200 million annually to control pollution from nonpoint sources and for estuary protection. However, most States have under-utilized this resource to date. EPA believes that the SRF is particularly well suited to assisting in the implementation of nonpoint source projects requiring capital investment. States are encouraged to increase their use of this copious financial resource to help implement their nonpoint source watershed-based plans and other nonpoint source projects. For more information on the SRF program, see <http://www.epa.gov/owm/cwfinance/cwsrf/index.htm>.

In addition to coordinating with these water quality programs, States should coordinate with programs administered by the Federal land management agencies (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and National Park Service), water management agencies (e.g., Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and Tennessee Valley Authority), and resource management agencies. For example, Section 319 funds may be used to benefit Federal lands, which strengthens the ability of States to coordinate nonpoint source and TMDL implementation with Federal land management programs and policies.

Finally, two other Federal agencies whose policies and practices can greatly influence and/or protect riparian areas, wetlands, and other sensitive areas and corridors are the Department of Transportation and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Both of these agencies have programs that can help protect these areas or mitigate potential impairment to these areas, and both have funding programs that can be used to benefit water quality. EPA strongly encourages States to work with these partner agencies to achieve common goals.

D. Watershed-Based Plans

These guidelines promote the use of Section 319 funding for developing and implementing watershed-based plans to protect unimpaired waters and restore impaired waters. Watershed-based plans to restore impaired waters are required, as described above, for all projects implemented with incremental dollars. However, even for watershed projects implemented with base funds, EPA recommends that whenever feasible, watershed-based plans be developed