

the Grants Reporting and Tracking System, discussed below.)

5. A summary of the available information on the amount of improvement in water quality (including aquatic habitat quality) as the result of nonpoint source program implementation. (More detailed information would be provided through the Grants Reporting and Tracking System, discussed below.)

6. Where information is not yet available under items 4 and 5 above for waters or watersheds where implementation is being assisted, surrogate measures of environmental progress (such as environmental indicators) should be used and progress should be reported in terms of the degree or percentage of completion of the project.

In the past, some States have chosen to include additional information in their annual report, using the report as a means of assessing progress to date and the need to modify the program; providing case studies of particular projects; and conveying information to a broader audience on the activities being conducted by the State. States may continue to include such additional information, as a supplement to the basic information required by law. States may wish to include the following types of information in their reports, or to include such information on their Web sites and refer to the information in their reports:

1. Listing of further actions necessary to achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act, including any recommendations for future State or national programs to control nonpoint source pollution.

2. Brief case studies of any particularly successful nonpoint source control efforts.

3. Information on increases in public awareness of nonpoint source pollution and public involvement in addressing it.

4. Copies of products produced by the State program (e.g., outreach materials or BMP documents).

The Results Workgroup of the State/EPA Nonpoint Source Partnership has discussed ways in which annual reports can be written and presented in a manner that (analogous to contemporary corporate reports) promotes greater public knowledge and understanding of nonpoint source pollution and of States' efforts to prevent and reduce nonpoint source pollution. Several States have begun to do so, and the results are promising to improve communication with both the public and decision-makers about nonpoint source pollution. Possible outputs of that workgroup include guidance, suggested formats, and examples of such annual

reports. Another option may be to do a separate shorter, reader-friendly annual report that is designed specifically for public education. EPA encourages all States to consider how their annual reports can be improved in terms of content, format, presentation, and style to enhance public support for their programs.

c. *Financial Status Reports.* 40 CFR section 31.41(b) requires grantees to submit financial status reports using Standard Form 269 or 269(a) to report the status of funds under each grant. At a minimum, States should submit financial status reports annually. Final financial status reports are due within 90 days after the expiration or termination of the grant agreement.

2. Reporting Procedures and the Grants Reporting and Tracking System

EPA has developed a computerized system, which States and EPA Regions may now access directly on the World Wide Web, to manage and report data on Section 319 grants. This system, known as Section 319 Grant Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS), provides States with the capability to fulfill grant reporting requirements and has created a database of nonpoint source program information which can be used to enhance State, Regional, and national understanding of nonpoint source projects and programs.

States are required to use GRTS to report the specific nationally mandated data elements listed in Appendix C. This list consists of information needed by EPA and the States to account successfully to Congress, State legislatures, and the public for our accomplishments in implementing the national nonpoint source program. A memorandum, *Modifications to Nonpoint Source Reporting Requirements for Section 319 Grants* (September 27, 2001), that discusses each of the mandated data elements in detail, as well as other improvements to GRTS, is available on EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/section319/grts.html>.

The most important new features of the modified GRTS are: (1) Precisely geo-locating Section 319 projects; (2) including a concise summary of each project; (3) using common geo-locational information to link funded projects to improvements in waters quality over time, which will be reported through EPA's WATERS database (which includes States' 305(b) and 303(d) information); and (4) providing information on reductions in nonpoint pollutant loads. The new GRTS assists the States in meeting the load reduction reporting requirements

of Section 319(h)(11) by providing computer-based tools and formats that have been designed to simplify the effort as much as possible.

In addition to these mandated elements, GRTS has the capacity to accept a great deal of additional information on State programs and projects. States can, if they choose, include detailed project descriptions or project implementation plans, and attach maps, tables, photographs, and spreadsheets. In fact, States can attach appropriate portions of their Section 319(h)(11) annual report to GRTS. Similarly, States can provide much or all of the information needed by EPA Regions to make annual "satisfactory progress" determinations as required by Section 319(h)(8). Finally, due to its Web-enabled format, States may allow sub-State organizations that receive Section 319 funds to directly enter data into the system, thereby reducing the States' own reporting burdens.

Regions are encouraged to work with their States to design reporting procedures utilizing GRTS that will promote efficiency and eliminate duplication of work. In particular, States are encouraged to use GRTS to submit grantee performance reports pursuant to 40 CFR 31.40(b)(1). States are also encouraged to use GRTS' project description, project evaluation, and other data fields for more complete data management and project reporting purposes. In addition, the Regions should explore ways to coordinate and synchronize the submittal of performance reports of other EPA programs managed within the same State office (e.g., Section 106, 104(b), 305(b) and 604(b)).

Since GRTS is an official reporting vehicle for programs or projects conducted by States under Section 319(h) grants, a State's cost to enter data and otherwise utilize GRTS is itself eligible for funding under Section 319. Regions and States should work together to ensure that the States are provided sufficient resources in their Section 319 grants to meet these reporting requirements and management support needs. Examples of GRTS support needs include: providing adequate staff support; purchasing necessary equipment, materials, and supplies (including high-speed data switches or other links that enable fast and efficient transfer of data to and from GRTS); and attending GRTS conferences and training.

3. STORET

In March 2003, EPA published "Elements of a State Water Monitoring and Assessment Program" (available at