

NACWA's Strategic Watershed Task Force...

Recommendations for a Viable and Vital 21st Century Clean Water Policy

Frank Pogge, Chair
Kansas City Water Dept.
Kansas City, MO

Charlie Logue, Vice Chair
Clean Water Services
Hillsboro, OR



Task Force Objective

- To develop a set of recommendations to guide NACWA's advocacy efforts on implementation of a watershed approach to water quality improvement and protection.
- Recommendations:
 - Regulatory
 - Legislative
 - Short-term and Long-term



What is a Watershed Approach?

Our definition:

A watershed approach is a holistic, collaborative framework that focuses water quality protection and restoration efforts within a hydrologically-defined area (i.e., a watershed).

A watershed approach...



A Watershed Approach...

- Considers the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of water quality
- Allows scientifically-based prioritization of watershed needs
- Involves all stakeholders in prioritization and planning
- Provides for coordinated implementation of all water quality restoration and maintenance activities
- Ensures all activities affecting water quality address established priorities



EPA Actions

- 1991 – Endorsed a *Watershed Protection Approach Framework*
- 4th Pillar: *Watershed Approach*
- 2006 – Convened Forum: *A Watershed Approach to Utility Management*
 - Recommendation: “Explore legal, regulatory, and policy changes with the purpose of legitimizing integrated watershed and source water protection programs.”

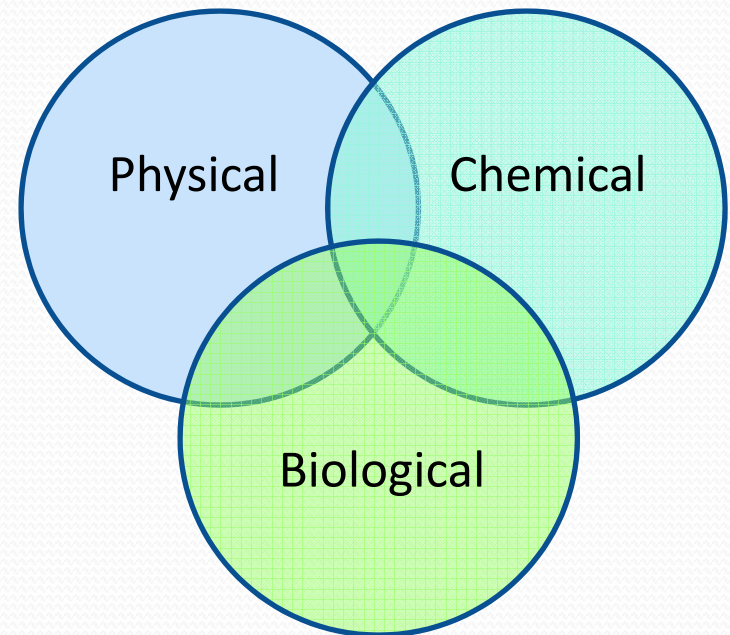


Questions Considered

- Is the Clean Water Act dead?
- How can a watershed approach address our current problems?
- What are the obstacles to implementing a watershed approach?
- What can we do to realize broad implementation to a watershed approach?

Is the Clean Water Act Dead?

- No, but overall goal to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters” must be reinvigorated.
- Nonpoint source controls must rise to level of point source controls





Clean Water Act – Section 208

- Each state must:
 - Identify boundaries of areas with substantial water quality control problems
 - Designate single organization to formulate management plan for each area, even for areas spanning political boundaries
- Plan should identify:
 - Point source treatment works needs
 - Nonpoint sources and control measures
 - Salt water intrusion and control measures



Watershed Approach Opportunities

- Integrated watershed management
 - Consider physical, chemical, and biological together
- Recognition that “Water is water”
 - Integrate wastewater, drinking water, stormwater issues
- Prioritization of water quality issues
 - Allows most environmental “bang for the buck”
- Acceptance of innovative solutions
 - Ex: Green infrastructure, PEFTFs



Obstacles to Implementation

- Regulatory silos
 - CWA, SDWA
 - Within EPA
- Regulations established ahead of science
 - TMDL schedules
 - Pollution sources
- Inflexible timeframes for solutions
 - 5-year NPDES Permits



Obstacles to Implementation

- Uneven enforcement
 - Point vs. nonpoint sources
 - Environmental benefits not considered
- Political issues
 - Jurisdiction
 - Changes in political leadership



Short-Term Recommendations

- Reinvigorate the Section 208 planning process
- Institute mandatory agricultural nonpoint source controls
- Promote adaptive implementation of water quality improvement measures
- Establish market-based approaches
- Break down regulatory silos within EPA
- Use proper sequencing for TMDL establishment
- Prioritize current actions and planning



Long-Term Recommendations

- Establish a new water quality framework with a Watershed Act
 - Recognize that “water is water”
 - Provide a fair and equitable distribution of costs and spending
- Reorganize EPA to remove silos
- Conduct research to show that progress is made with a watershed approach



Next Steps

- Options for promoting recommendations:
 - Press release
 - Congressional briefing
 - Meetings with EPA
 - Other?