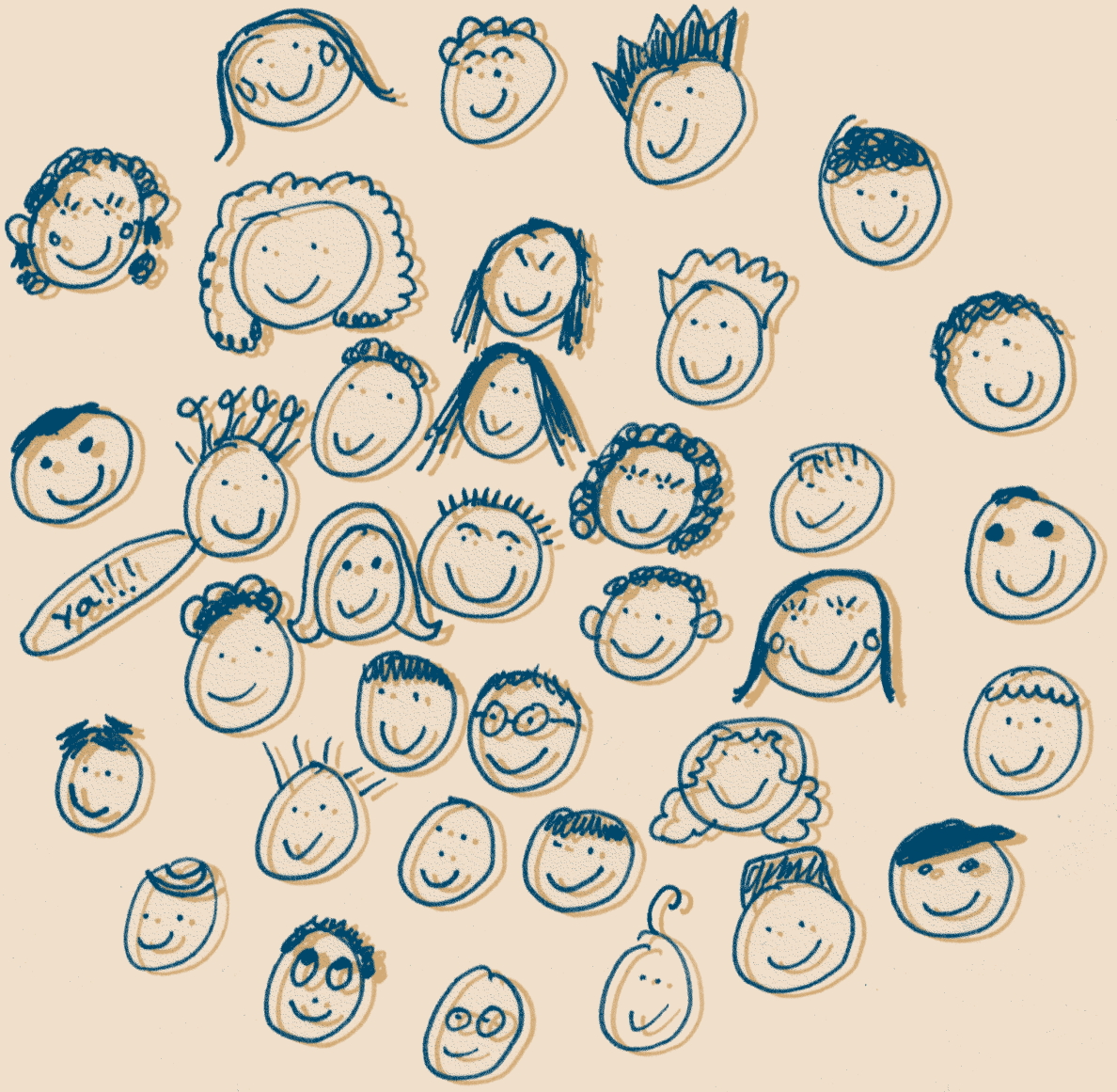
Getting in Step:

Engaging and Involving Stakeholders in Your Watershed



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Introduction:

Watershed Protection In the New Millennium

No matter what you call it—cooperative resource management, civic environmentalism, a watershed partnership, place-based management, or environmental democracy—involving stakeholders in protecting natural resources is here to stay. Local residents are tired of talk and want action. National environmental groups acknowledge the power of activating and motivating people and institutions. The business community is beginning to embrace open, inclusive, performance-based environmental management systems to save money and improve performance. And government agencies are eager to work with partners to help restore and protect America's watersheds.

Stakeholder involvement in watershed issues has gained momentum in recent years because of the nature of water quality problems in our country. Thirty years ago, most water quality problems were linked to discharges from factories and wastewater treatment plants. Today, however, 40 percent of our nation's waters do not meet their water quality goals because of runoff from streets, farms, mines, yards, parking lots, and other nonpoint sources of pollution. Solving these problems requires the commitment and participation of stakeholders throughout our communities.

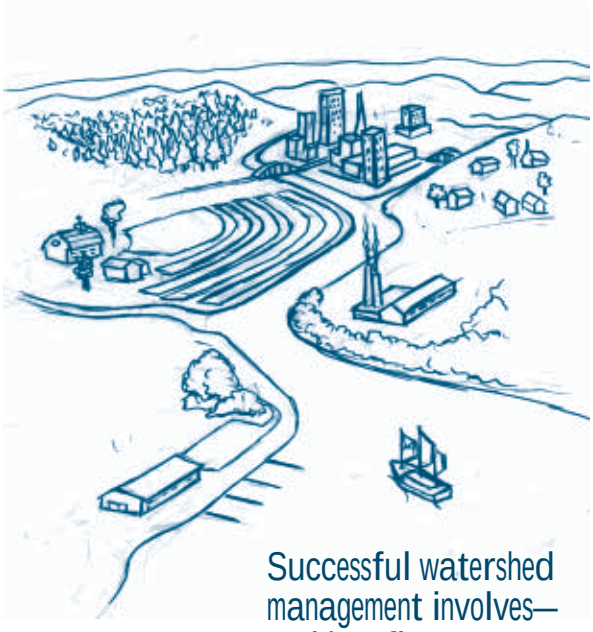
Stakeholder involvement is more than just holding a public hearing or seeking public comment on a new regulation. Effective stakeholder involvement provides a method for identifying public concerns and values, developing consensus among affected parties, and producing efficient and effective solutions through an open, inclusive process. Managing that process requires some attention to the logistics and synergies of creating and operating a team of diverse people pursuing a common goal.

Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide the tools needed to effectively engage stakeholders to restore and maintain healthy environmental conditions through community support and cooperative action. This guide is intended primarily for federal, state, tribal, and

What's in the Introduction?

- Purpose of this guide
- What's inside?
- Why involve stakeholders?
- Each stakeholder group is unique!



Successful watershed management involves—and benefits—everyone.

This guide defines a stakeholder as a person (or group) who is responsible for making or implementing a management action, who will be affected by the action, or who can aid or prevent its implementation.

local agency personnel involved in watershed management activities. The guide can also help private organizations interested in recruiting stakeholders and involving stakeholders in local or regional watershed efforts.

What's inside?

This guide is meant to provide real-world information that you can apply to your situation. There are seven sections included in the guide. Each section builds on the previous one, but you may skip around to any topic. References to related information are indicated with a ☞.

The last section includes resource information, case studies, web sites, and other how-to guides related to watershed protection. Case studies are included throughout the guide to highlight success stories, to share some of the challenges, and to show that you are not alone. Wherever possible, a contact and phone number are provided.

Why involve stakeholders?

If you're responsible for developing and implementing a watershed management program, you need support from relevant stakeholders—those who will make decisions, those who will be affected by them, and those who can stop the process if they disagree.

Over the past 20 years, watershed managers have found a lot to like about involving interested parties in their work. Involving stakeholders

- Builds trust and support for the process and product
- Shares responsibility for decisions or actions
- Creates solutions more likely to be adopted
- Leads to better, more cost-effective solutions
- Forges stronger working relationships
- Enhances communication and coordination of resources

It is important to note that public involvement processes can greatly enhance watershed management efforts, but they can't override laws and regulations enacted by elected officials and public agencies. In fact, stakeholder processes are used most often to *support and complement* legally required actions such as achieving water quality standards, protecting drinking water supplies, restoring habitat, and generally making the nation's waters fishable and swimmable.

Another important aspect of stakeholder involvement is utility. If you convene a group and don't somehow include their input in the process or product, they'll likely wonder why they wasted their time with you. Make sure that the contributions of stakeholders are both recognized and used in some manner to aid the goals of the watershed program.

Coalfield "bucket brigade" helping streams in Pennsylvania

Environmental consultant Bill Sabatose of the Little Toby Creek watershed in Pennsylvania periodically leads "bucket brigade" remediation projects that apply granular limestone to streams heavily impacted by acid drainage from abandoned coal mines. The limestone adds alkalinity as it tumbles downstream and dissolves, reducing acidity and raising the pH. The projects are both low-tech remediation activities and social outings, and they have achieved results that provide an important sense of making a difference in the watershed.

Stakeholder involvement enhances communication, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Each stakeholder group is unique!

This guide provides tools and tips for working effectively with stakeholders, but it is important to recognize that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. Each stakeholder group is unique, and its makeup and operation will depend on several factors—the driving forces of the effort, the agencies' internal goals, the geographic scale, the time frame needed for decision making, the available budget, and the political climate. Before forming a stakeholder group, all of these factors must be considered to determine the best way to proceed.

Sometimes, after you have completed an internal assessment of the driving forces and issues, you might determine that convening a stakeholder group is not the best approach to achieve your goals. It might make more sense to form a small technical workgroup and proceed with your work, especially if the project is small and involves only a few outside parties.

There is no "one size fits all" approach.

Too much too soon on the Santa Ynez?

Dense stands of willows along the banks of the Santa Ynez River in California's Lompoc Valley impede storm water flows from vegetable and flower farms, causing flooding and erosion of the riverbanks. In 1994, a group of politicians, planners, and farmers approached the California Coastal Conservancy for help. The Conservancy enlisted the well-respected Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, and a program to establish a watershed-wide plan to control flooding and deal with other possible issues was launched.

The Land Trust hired a project manager and professional facilitator and convened a stakeholder group composed of property rights advocates, environmentalists, farmers, and resource agency representatives to begin developing the plan. Almost immediately, political currents, mistrust, and confusion threatened to derail the initiative. Some landowners perceived the effort to move beyond the willow issue to address other concerns in the watershed as a direct attack on land and water rights. The lack of motivation and a strong foundation—common issues, trust, broad support, acute problems requiring immediate attention—caused the process to unravel soon after it began.

People were confused by and suspicious of the attempt to develop a comprehensive basin plan just to address the willow problem. "Why are you doing this?" was a common refrain throughout the first few months. The Conservancy and Land Trust believed that support for a basin plan existed, but that belief was based on early interviews with flood-impacted farmers and others who did not necessarily represent other important stakeholders in the watershed. As the process unfolded, mistrust and suspicion grew. People wanted to know why a plan was being developed if it was not required, and they questioned the authority of the Land Trust and Conservancy to "force" a plan on local residents.

Less than a year after the planning committee was convened, it was disbanded because of an inability to agree on the scope and objectives of the process. Organizers noted that "a truly comprehensive approach to resource management must be allowed to evolve at its own pace, especially where most of the resources are on private land."

"The fatal flaw on the Santa Ynez was rushing the process and telling landowners, water districts and special interest groups that they were going to collaboratively develop a watershed plan," said Carolyn Barr, project director for the Land Trust. "We did not take the time to understand their interests and fears, and we tried to impose a process that was not appropriate for the place and time."

(Excerpted from California Coast & Ocean, *Summer 1996)*

Let's get to work!

Launching a full-blown basin planning and management programs to address a limited set of issues can backfire if the situation is not ripe for a broad-based, cooperative approach. Building awareness and trust, conducting educational activities, engaging stakeholders, and convening a planning group take commitment, time, and resources. Forcing the process can complicate things, as the case study on the Santa Ynez River demonstrates.

However, important partners and even potential critics should be included to make sure their concerns and interests are addressed early in the process.

There are common elements to be considered when working with stakeholders. The remaining sections of this guide provide tips and tools to increase the effectiveness of your efforts to involve and engage stakeholders in protecting water quality.

Section 1:

Stakeholders and Watershed Management

What's in Section 1?

- Using a watershed approach
- Involving stakeholders throughout the planning process
- Where are we now and where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?
- How will we know when we've arrived?

Whatever the reason for conducting watershed management activities, stakeholders can help. Inclusive processes increase awareness and understanding of issues and challenges, generate more data, help determine priorities, increase support for remediation programs, and generally enhance the likelihood of success. Stakeholder processes often provide the reality check for scientific efforts: they seek to synthesize ecological, technical, social, cultural, political, and economic concerns through a process that helps to define what's actually doable.

The move toward integrated, holistic watershed management has meant that more attention must be paid to factors beyond the water body itself—how land is used, what type of vegetative or other cover it has, and how it is managed. Such an approach requires the involvement of landowners, developers, farmers, urban governments, homeowners, recreational groups, and other constituents in the watershed if real progress is desired.

All types of stakeholders should be involved.

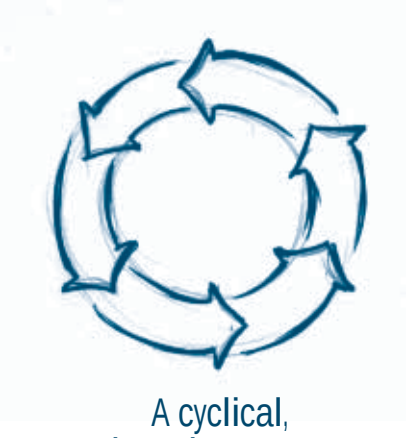
Using a watershed approach

Organizations in both the public and private sectors have enthusiastically embraced a watershed approach to protect and preserve the quality of surface water and groundwater. This approach has developed rapidly over the past decade at the federal, state, and local levels. More than half the states now manage their water resources through river basin programs that consider all impacts in a drainage area rather than discrete programs to address point and nonpoint sources of pollution.

A watershed approach is particularly helpful in addressing tribal, federal, state, and local responsibilities under various Clean Water Act Programs. For example, the "Total Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) program requires cleanup plans for waters that don't meet the minimum water quality criteria associated with the designated use of the water body. Development of a TMDL involves identification of the pollutant(s) that exceed water quality criteria, careful

Public support and sufficient participation are essential for project success. A high rate of participation is key in voluntary projects because nonpoint sources of pollution are widespread.

—North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service



A cyclical, iterative process continues to improve the management plan.

assessment of the sources (point and nonpoint) of those pollutants, analyses of possible pollutant reduction strategies, and a plan to implement selected actions designed to lower pollutant loads so the water body meets minimum water quality criteria.

USEPA requires that states subject TMDL pollutant loading and other calculations to public review, and recommends public participation to implement load allocations for nonpoint sources. For example, a TMDL for sediment might include an analysis of sediment loads from construction sites, timber harvest activities, row crop farming, and stream bank erosion caused by increased flows. These analyses—and any plan to address sediment loads—would benefit greatly from the involvement of construction contractors, loggers, farmers, and storm water managers in the affected watershed. Their intimate knowledge of the activities and land management practices contributing to sediment loads and their participation in remediation actions designed to reduce them significantly enhances the scientific and technical validity of the loading analysis and increases the likelihood that appropriate control measures will be implemented.

Clean Water Act regulations to prevent the degradation of cleaner waters also require public participation. Under 40 CFR Part 131.12, antidegradation programs must include a policy for ensuring that waters exceeding minimum water quality criteria are protected from degradation and must also include a method for implementing that policy. Public participation and intergovernmental coordination is specifically required when considering proposals (e.g., NPDES permits, Section 404 permits) that would lower the quality of waters already meeting the criteria for their designated use. Engaging and involving the public in refining and implementing antidegradation policies can help to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of a state antidegradation program. For example, West Virginia's antidegradation implementation procedure allows for public notice and comment regarding reviews, findings, and decisions, and outlines a nomination process for "any interested party" to request higher protection levels for state water bodies.

Clearly, engaging and involving stakeholders benefits both regulatory and non-regulatory actions to restore and protect America's waters. Synthesizing people, policies, priorities, and resources through a watershed approach blends science, technology, and statutory responsibilities with social, economic, and cultural considerations. The procedures for implementing this process are discussed in the following sections.

The management cycle

Stakeholder involvement is not conducted in a parallel course with watershed management, but rather is *woven throughout to* strengthen the end result. This section describes the watershed management

process from planning to implementation, highlighting key areas where stakeholder involvement is critical. Keep in mind that the overall process is iterative or cyclical, not linear, so it can be initiated at any phase. Recognize also that you might not conduct every activity in each phase. Some activities can be skipped with sufficient justification, but it helps to know what you're skipping and why in case those issues need to be addressed during later iterations of the cycle.

Steps in an iterative process

Assessment, planning, management, and implementation are iterative processes driven by continuous evaluation and adaptation. A watershed approach to resource management embodies these elements through a cyclical process characterized by the following steps:

1. Define the watershed and nested hydrologic units
2. Conduct initial outreach; organize stakeholder and technical teams
3. Establish broad consensual goals and/or conduct a visioning exercise
4. Collect relevant watershed and community assessment information
5. Analyze and evaluate information; identify and address data gaps
6. Assess, prioritize, and analyze key concerns and issues
7. Develop management objectives and strategies for implementation
8. Implement, evaluate, and adapt selected management actions

Involving stakeholders throughout the watershed planning process

Stakeholders need to be involved at each stage of the watershed planning process. Their knowledge of local social, economic, political, and ecological conditions provides the yardstick against which proposed solutions must be measured. Also, the goals, problems, and remediation strategies generated by stakeholders define what's desirable and achievable. Weaving stakeholder input, legal requirements, and resource protection strategies into an integrated tapestry for managing surface water and groundwater resources is what the watershed approach is all about.

Both the knowledge, and needs, of stakeholders provide a yardstick to measure solutions.

The following questions will lead you through the watershed approach, highlighting where stakeholders are critical to the outcome:

- Where are we now and where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?
- How will we know when we've arrived?

Watershed planning and management checklist

Where are we now and where do we want to go?

Scoping

- ❑ *Identify the driving forces*
- ❑ *Identify the geographic scope of the effort*
- ❑ *Identify the key issues and goals in the community*
- ❑ *Determine the level of stakeholder involvement needed*
- ❑ *Form partnerships after deciding who to include initially and how to find them*
- ❑ *Identify goals and objectives for addressing community concerns*
- ❑ *Develop a problem statement regarding priority issues to be investigated, assessed, and managed during this iteration of the management cycle*
- ❑ *Conduct outreach on how the approach will be carried out and how stakeholders can participate*

Information Collection

- ❑ *Determine information needed to characterize environmental, economic, and social conditions*
- ❑ *Collect information on environmental, economic, and social conditions*
- ❑ *Characterize the current condition of the watershed*

Assessment and Targeting

- ❑ *Identify suspected causes and sources of watershed impairments or threats*
- ❑ *Target and prioritize specific geographic areas for management action*

1. Where are we now and where do we want to go?

Asking this question helps to guide your assessment of current conditions and define the problems you want to address. Stakeholders need to be brought in at this phase to help identify social and environmental concerns in the watershed, assist with gathering data, initiate public outreach, create a vision for the future, and develop a list of potential problems. Your watershed protection efforts will be built on this foundation to ensure that future management goals and objectives consider the views, capabilities, and values of the stakeholders.

2. How do we get there?

This question identifies specific activities that will be conducted to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the previous phase. Stakeholders will assist with identifying the strategies to be implemented, often taking the lead on the actions. Stakeholders can also support funding opportunities for sustaining the watershed efforts in the future through grants, in-kind services, education, and outreach.

Planning and implementation—The issue is not whether to plan, but how to develop plans that lead to action. The most effective plans contain a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and ecological, social, economic, cultural, and political issues. However, they focus mostly on identifying, prioritizing, and targeting problems and generating possible solutions based on real-world conditions. Plans must be understandable to the public and lead to strategic actions that improve water quality and habitat. Watershed plans should be viewed as management tools rather than merely as technical studies.

The issue of scale—The scale of the planning/management program greatly influences how it will unfold. Efforts to manage smaller basins (less than 100 square miles) can be as complicated as programs in large watersheds. The scale chosen usually depends on the land and water issues of concern. If the issue is forest management and the basin is mostly rural, a large watershed can be effectively managed by a single partnership. On the other hand, urban watersheds facing industrial, residential, and commercial impacts as well as new development effects might have to be addressed at the subwatershed level.

Attempts to manage watersheds that are too large can fail because communication and stakeholder interaction can be difficult and interests may diverge over a broad region. The scale chosen should be based on a common-sense analysis of the people, issues, and activities in the watershed under study. Of course, when smaller management units are required some attempt should be made to coordinate with other subwatershed groups in the basin. Interaction among these groups must be handled carefully and on a case-

specific basis. Efforts to create an umbrella management program with representation from each smaller unit can cause tension, especially if the overarching program attempts to dictate policy or process to its constituent groups. A loose, flexible arrangement that focuses on communication and cooperation rather than structure and process is often the best approach.

3. How will we know when we've arrived?

A key step to watershed protection is determining when you have achieved your goals and objectives. This involves developing appropriate indicators to evaluate the progress of the watershed efforts, as well as conducting monitoring to measure improvements in the watershed. Stakeholders should be involved in developing the indicators to be used and can also assist with monitoring efforts through volunteer monitoring programs or by acting as watchdogs in the watershed.

Measuring success—Stakeholders and the public want to achieve success, and that usually means improvements in water quality or aquatic habitat. Success also means development of an effective, sustainable, long-term process capable of recruiting new leaders, participants, and resources.

Measuring environmental success is not difficult, though often improvements occur many years after restoration and new management practices are implemented. Success indicators should be derived from the goals established by the partnership, and goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-sensitive). Although a variety of environmental indicators can be used, some might not be relevant to stakeholders or the public. The Green Mountain Institute defines indicators as "direct or indirect measures of some valued component or quality of a defined system used to assess and communicate the status and trends of the system's health." The World Wildlife Fund calls indicators "tools to simplify, measure and communicate complex events or trends."

Communicating environmental conditions—The ability of indicators to communicate defines their relevance. Stakeholders may glaze over at graphs of dissolved oxygen trends, sediment transport, or substrate embeddedness, but they might exhibit keen interest in a simplified, consolidated fish health index. Public agencies are increasingly adopting indices that incorporate a suite of indicators to more effectively communicate environmental conditions. For example, the state of Florida issues periodic ecosystem summaries that contain brief overviews of assessment, stressor, and trend data along with a consolidated speedometer-type graphic that gauges conditions over a range from poor to excellent. The Tennessee Valley Authority uses a color-coded scheme to denote good (green), moderate (yellow), and poor (red) conditions for indicators like temperature, nutrients, and dissolved oxygen.

Why watershed plans fail

The Center for Watershed Protection conducted a broad assessment of the value of planning documents in protecting water resources and identified a number of reasons why some plans failed:

- *Planning activities were conducted at too great a scale*
- *The plan was a one-time study rather than a long-term management process*
- *Stakeholder involvement and local ownership were lacking*
- *The plan skirted land use/management issues in the watershed*
- *The document was too long or complex*
- *Recommendations were too general*

The Center recommends the creation of watershed management plans that focus on the subwatershed scale, measure and forecast land use, guide the location and density of future development, emphasize strategic resource-based monitoring, involve stakeholders and the public, and promote coordination of resources. A plan must be a guide to the future rather than simply a reflection of the past, and it must incorporate a continuous cycle of assessment, action, evaluation, and adaptation.

How environmental conditions are communicated is important.

Watershed planning and management checklist

How do we get there?

- ❑ *Identify ongoing management efforts and gaps or additional management needs*
- ❑ *Outline possible alternatives and potential resources*
- ❑ *Develop strategies (management practices, pollution prevention programs, outreach activities, permits, Total Maximum Daily Loads, etc.) that designate who is responsible for doing what, by when, where, and how. Make sure each strategy is tied to the management goals.*
- ❑ *Develop indicators linked to the strategies (environmental, programmatic, social)*
- ❑ *Identify funding opportunities and other resources*
- ❑ *Implement selected management strategies*
- ❑ *Conduct outreach and collect feedback on activities*
- ❑ *Make adjustments to ongoing strategies as needed*

Technical teams that design and conduct monitoring and assessment programs should consult with stakeholders to determine what kinds of indicators or groups of indicators are understandable and useful. Innovative approaches like the transparent plastic cups used by rice farmers in Louisiana to measure suspended sediment levels are often best. A sample is left in the cup for a few hours to settle out, and growers can tell whether the water from their flooded fields is too muddy to release to adjacent streams by measuring the level of silt in the bottom of the cup.

Regardless of the indicator scheme adopted, showing stakeholders how chemical, physical, and biological parameters are used or incorporated into indices helps develop an appreciation for scientific and technical principles and processes. Linking indicators to water quality and habitat condition further aids this effort and is an important consideration in any assessment and monitoring program.

Restoring Sawmill Creek Using an Innovative Management Approach

Sawmill Creek is a second-order freshwater stream on Maryland's coastal plain. Two-thirds of the watershed has been converted to residential and light industrial land use over the past 50 years, jeopardizing the base flow of groundwater to the creek. Various stakeholders in the Sawmill Creek watershed have come together under an adaptive management approach to reverse declines in water quality and habitat in the creek.

Five Anne Arundel County government departments, seven state agencies, three federal agencies, five nongovernmental organizations, several local businesses, and many private citizens joined in 1994 and pooled their resources to develop the approach. Each partner was required to use only existing programs to achieve the project's goals; no new funding was allocated for the project. The group adopted a watershed perspective and developed implementation and monitoring teams.

The implementation team drafted a strategy for each major problem that described the geographic location of the problem, prescribed a general restoration goal, and identified the responsible management agencies. The monitoring team investigated the cumulative impacts of the various land use practices in the watershed. Project partners used feedback from the monitoring team's investigations to revise and improve the details of each restoration project. After four years, the focus has shifted from assessment and planning to implementation and evaluation.

—Larry Lubbers, Watershed Restoration Division, Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Examples of environmental indicators

Description of Indicator Type	Examples of Indicators
Document the extent to which programmatic, regulatory, and other actions have been taken	▪ *Number of permits reissued with new limits* ▪ *Number of point sources in substantial noncompliance* ▪ *Elapsed time from identification of serious discharge violations until correction* ▪ *Number of targeted facilities/properties that have implemented BMPs* ▪ *Amount of fertilizer sold or used* ▪ *Number of estuary acres monitored* ▪ *Number of communities enacting zoning or storm water management ordinances* ▪ *Number of public water systems with source water protection plans* ▪ *Number of public outreach activities and citizens reached*
Describe actions or conditions which are likely to impact surface or groundwater quality	▪ *Reduction in nutrient loadings from each type of point and nonpoint source* ▪ *Reduction in pollutant loadings to groundwater from underground injection wells* ▪ *Stability and condition of riparian vegetation* ▪ *Percent imperviousness upstream* ▪ *General erosion rate upstream* ▪ *Amount of toxics discharged in excess of permitted levels* ▪ *Amount of toxics discharged by spills* ▪ *Number of businesses and households that have altered behaviors or processes to reduce pollutants*
Measure the extent to which ambient water quality has changed	▪ *Pollutant concentrations in water column, sediments, and groundwater* ▪ *Frequency, extent, and duration of restriction on water uses—bathing, drinking, fishing, shellfishing* ▪ *Percent of stream miles or lake or estuary acres that support each designated use* ▪ *Percent of stream miles with impaired or threatened uses* ▪ *Percent of citizens who rate major water bodies as usable for various recreation activities*
Measure direct effects on the health of humans, fish, other wildlife, habitat, riparian vegetation, and the economy of the region	▪ *Aquatic community metrics* ▪ *Reduction in waterborne disease in humans* ▪ *Size of wetlands or riparian habitat lost or protected* ▪ *Size of commercial and recreational fish harvest* ▪ *Increased jobs and income due to recreation*

Watershed planning and management checklist

How will we know when we've arrived?

- ❑ *Identify relevant indicators*
- ❑ *Evaluate indicators for desired targets*
- ❑ *Develop monitoring strategy (ambient, compliance, and intensive surveys)*
- ❑ *Implement actions and reevaluate*

4. Repeating the cycle: where do we want to go next?

Because watershed management is cyclical, you're never really done. Management is dynamic: conditions, priorities, resources, and capabilities can all change over time. Repeating the cycle provides an opportunity to update assessments, priorities, goals, and management strategies and address issues that were not dealt with during previous iterations because of resource constraints or other reasons. The process of moving cyclically through the planning and management steps and making constant adjustments is called *adaptive management*. This approach allows consideration and use of innovative and even experimental strategies and avoids the narrow-minded pursuit of activities just because they're in "The Plan."

Section 2 focuses on the nuts and bolts of starting a stakeholder involvement process and defining how the participant group will operate.

Indicators for the Chesapeake Bay

The Chesapeake Bay Program tracks a considerable number of environmental indicators, including those associated with nutrients, living resources, toxics, and programmatic activities. A comprehensive list of these indicators and other information regarding their use is available on the Web at http://www.chesapeakebay.net/indicators.htm.

Innovation and experimentation help stakeholders improve watershed conditions.

Section 2:

Getting Started

In this section you will learn to identify the driving forces that prompted your watershed management effort, determine your internal goals and objectives, and outline how the stakeholders will complement and support your overall program. Keep in mind that once the stakeholders convene, the goals and objectives you first identified will be modified to include their issues. Taking the time to discuss any inconsistencies in goals and to reach consensus on how to proceed is the most important aspect of the stakeholder process.

Identify driving forces

When initiating a stakeholder involvement program, you must first identify the driving forces behind your effort. This will help you determine the scope and level of participation throughout the rest of the process. For example, many programs under the Clean Water Act require or strongly recommend stakeholder involvement to implement efforts related to source water protection, coastal zone management, protection of estuaries, Total Maximum Daily Loads, and water quality criteria and standards. The permitting process for wastewater discharges, storm water management, and combined sewer overflow control also requires public input and involvement, as do activities conducted under state and federal nonpoint source pollution programs and the Endangered Species Act.

Why stakeholder groups form

The driving force for initiating a stakeholder involvement effort often centers around a specific issue such as water quality violations in a stream segment, an NPDES permit upgrade to expand wastewater treatment capacity, or the need to reduce loadings of a specific pollutant into a water body.

Development of a TMDL, or cleanup plan for waters not meeting minimum criteria, also spawns the creation of many watershed groups. Stakeholder involvement is extremely valuable in reviewing the relevant water quality criteria and water body use designation for appropriateness, identifying likely sources of problem pollutants, developing strategies for reducing pollutant loads, and implementing the selected strategies. When TMDLs address nonpoint sources of pollution, stakeholder participation is even more helpful. Watershed

What's in Section 2?

- Identify driving forces
- Define internal goals and objectives
- Develop a framework for stakeholder involvement

Why stakeholder groups form

- **To strengthen TMDL implementation**. *TMDL guidance from the USEPA notes that "adequate public participation should be a part of the [impaired waters] listing process to make sure that all water-quality limited waters are identified." In addition, the guidance encourages strong state and local involvement in the TMDL development process: "States and involved local communities should participate in determining which pollution sources should bear the treatment or control burden needed to reach allowable loadings. By involving the local communities in decision-making, EPA expects that a higher probability of successful TMDL implementation will result."*
- **To be eligible for state funding**. *The state of Washington, for example, does not require local watershed planning, but when those efforts are supported by state funds they must include local governments, tribes, and "representatives from a wide range of water-resource interests."*
- **To follow recommended guidance**. *The USEPA's* Ecological Risk Assessment Framework *and the* Proposed Guidelines for Ecological Risk Assessment *outline a process for risk assessment that "provides a mechanism for stakeholder involvement that helps ensure that assessment information is relevant to the issues under consideration," according to a report by the Water Environment Research Foundation.*
- **To comply with new legislative requirements**. *The 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act require stakeholder involvement in developing programs to protect rivers, lakes, reservoirs, wellhead recharge zones, and other sources of drinking water.*
- **To respond to federal decisions**. *The Black Bear Conservation Committee (BBCC) was formed in 1990 when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced its decision to list the Louisiana black bear as threatened under the guidelines of the Endangered Species Act.*
- **To address conflict over specific issues**. *The Niagara Frontier in New York State has a large percentage of wetlands, and it is frequently difficult to balance healthy economic growth with resource protection. The Wetlands Roundtable was created to address the friction between conservation and growth in the Niagara Frontier area.*

residents and land managers usually have a much richer knowledge of potential pollutant loading activities and a better perspective of what's likely to work in terms of remediation. For example, the Rouge River Wet Weather Demonstration Project tapped area residents' knowledge of possible waste disposal sites and found dozens of small, leaking landfills that were not registered in state or local databases. The Center for Watershed Protection and other technical support organizations report that targeted workshops with homeowners on how to reduce residential storm water impacts associated with home, yard, and garden practices are more effective than brochures or media campaigns that don't feature workshops.

Direct engagement with groups to address a specific issue provides the basis for stakeholder group formation in many cases. In other cases, stakeholder involvement is also driven by a desire to develop proactive responses to potential future threats. These stakeholder programs are often the most challenging because the driving force is much more subtle, making it tough to motivate action—especially if there is no specific time frame for accomplishing activities such as acquiring a permit or complying with a regulation. These issues may include managing the long-term growth of a region in an environmentally sensitive manner, exploring options for sharing water resources among localities, or preserving the cultural heritage of a region.

Regardless of the reason for watershed planning and management initiatives, there are clearly significant legal, logical, and logistical reasons to engage and involve both the public and other agency stakeholders. Identifying the driving forces for including stakeholders is an important step in designing the stakeholder involvement program because it will define the scope and level of participation throughout the process.

Define internal goals and objectives

Once you've determined why you're undertaking a watershed planning or management initiative, it is important to examine your organization's internal goals and objectives regarding the project. Addressing this issue before involving stakeholders will help you determine which stakeholders need to be involved based on your goals and objectives. Internal goals may overlap somewhat with the driving forces, but they usually go beyond mere compliance with legal or logistical requirements. The following are typical internal *programmatic* goals:

- Characterize and resolve an existing problem (e.g., flooding, water quality violations)
- Clarify the scope and magnitude of a perceived problem
- Deal with impacts from future agricultural, industrial, commercial, or residential development
- Protect important recreational or habitat resources

Internal *management* goals like the following also need to be considered:

- Efficiently coordinate the deployment of public agency resources
- Generate awareness and interest in resolving potential problems
- Build trust in the sponsoring organization and its partners
- Create support for funding and implementing selected management practices

After you outline the general goals you hope to achieve, you must identify specific objectives to accomplish them. For example, if one of your goals is to alleviate flooding in the county, your objectives might be to conduct an inventory of drainage areas, to perform hydrodynamic modeling, and to implement a storm water education program.

Remember that internal agency programmatic and management goals are only a subset of the overall aims of the planning/management process. Stakeholders will bring to the table their own set of goals and objectives that will be incorporated into the overall project goals.

Goal of the Umatilla River Fisheries Restoration Program

The Umatilla River Fisheries Restoration Program is a collaborative effort between the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (who have treaty rights to the river), federal agencies, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the local community. The goal of the Umatilla River Fisheries Restoration Program is to restore 47,000 salmon and steelhead to the river. Program partners completed a project that diverts water from the Columbia River, where there is no shortage of water, and delivers it to three of the five irrigation districts in the Umatilla Basin.

Sample driving forces, goals, and objectives for a watershed management effort

What are the driving forces for the watershed management effort in Starshader County?

- Need for a TMDL to address excessive sediment loads in the 303d-listed Salmon River.
- Angler demands for cleaner water and better habitat to support recreational fisheries.
- Localized flooding caused by faster runoff from urban areas.

What are the goals of the watershed management plan?

- Increase awareness about water quality issues in Starshader County.
- Develop and implement a TMDL for sediment in the Salmon River.
- Restore fish habitat and water quality to improve the fishery.
- Reduce flooding impacts by addressing flows and/or floodplain development.

What are the key objectives?

- Identify, engage, and involve relevant stakeholders.
- Characterize land uses and land management practices in the watershed.
- Assess land use/management practices on fish habitat.
- Identify activities and/or areas significantly contributing to sediment loading.
- Identify land use/management practices that may exacerbate flooding.
- Assess cyclically flooded properties to determine impacts and possible options.
- Develop management strategies targeted at reducing flooding impacts, sediment, and habitat degradation.
- Identify resources to implement the selected management strategies.
- Evaluate the success of implemented actions; adapt as necessary.

Develop a framework for stakeholder involvement

After assessing the driving forces and identifying your internal goals and objectives for the project, you should be able to (1) determine whether stakeholder involvement is needed and (2) define the level of involvement. This is the time to start outlining a structure for the stakeholder group, possible roles and responsibilities, and decision-making methods. Keep in mind that this is just a preliminary framework. The stakeholders will comment and provide their own input on how they think they should operate (☞presented in Section 4). When developing a stakeholder involvement framework, you must answer questions such as

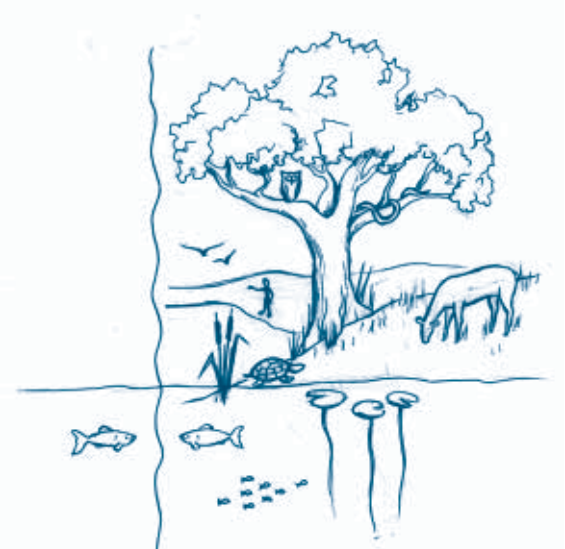
- How will the group be structured? (fully empowered management entity, advisory body, subset of the management committee, ad hoc group)
- How will decisions be made? (majority vote, consensus, input received but decisions made by responsible party)
- What is the membership of the group? (one representative from each locality or interest group, cross section of the watershed residents, etc.)
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders? (outreach, selection of management options, representation of larger constituencies, preparation of reports, etc.)

The rest of this section reviews these questions to help you decide which approach best fits the circumstances at hand.

Stewardship in Napa County, California

The Napa County Resource Conservation District views natural resource stewardship as "a community perspective that moves from dealing with objects (people, parts, pieces) to dealing with relationships." District planning and management processes are not necessarily targeted at changing practices in the agricultural community, but rather at building a stewardship ethic.

Thus, stewardship management as practiced in Napa County "is not a process or set of tools to be used to alter or affect the values of others," contends former Napa County Resource Conservationist Dennis Bowker. "Behavior changes may result from the development of stewardship but they are not the purpose of stewardship."



Groups may focus on a single aspect...

... or take a holistic approach

Organizational structure

Watershed stakeholder groups range from informal, ad hoc groups to highly organized and well-funded nonprofit corporations. Some are made up mostly of government agencies, with a sprinkling of interest group and citizen representation. Most adopt a statement of purpose or vision (e.g., *"to protect, conserve, manage, and restore land and water resources through a cooperative/consensus process designed to meet the needs of present and future generations"*).

Some stakeholder groups focus on a single aspect of the resource (e.g., fisheries, aesthetics), while others adopt a holistic or ecosystem approach. Watershed groups are very much driven by the interests, capabilities, and contacts of participants. Since they often emerge in response to problems, stakeholder groups may be highly focused on those concerns initially. Gentle guidance can help expand a stakeholder group's mission over time to encompass a broader, more holistic approach, if necessary, but it is best to let this maturation process evolve at its own pace.

Although it might seem desirable to merge resource planning and management groups in the same basin into a comprehensive structure, many of these small, focused organizations value their independence and may resist efforts to force them into a larger group. Coordination and communication are the best approaches to build cooperation. Keeping interest groups informed of larger planning and management efforts and seeking their input and expertise at every opportunity can create an effective, efficient management program without the burden of rigid, overarching structural and procedural components.

Working with manageably sized stakeholder groups

There are several ways to balance the need for inclusion of multiple stakeholders with the desire for working with a group that's not too large. Committees of 25 or more people can present logistical and other problems and make it impossible to offer adequate time for participation by all members. Stakeholders for the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative include regulatory agencies, publicly owned treatment works, storm water permittees, environmental groups, the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District, the Silicon Valley Manufacturers' Group, the Chamber of Commerce, and the League of Women Voters. A core group of stakeholders was convened to serve as an advisory board to established decision-making bodies and local communities. The core group oversees the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative and coordinates the activities of nine subgroups to develop the watershed management plan.

Watershed partnerships take time!

Professor Paul Sabatier and his watershed partnership research team at the University of California (Davis) found that it takes time—frequently about 48 months—to achieve major milestones such as formal agreements and implementation of restoration, education, or monitoring projects. Stakeholders in general perceive that their partnerships have been most effective at addressing local problems, even serious ones. On the other hand, they perceive that partnerships have occasionally aggravated problems involving the economy, regulation, and threats to property rights. Indeed, Sabatier and his team found that partnerships apparently have the most positive impact on the most serious problems in the watershed. This finding contradicts the fear that consensus-based processes often avoid important issues and generate ineffectual agreements.

—Stakeholder Partnerships as Collaborative Policymaking: Evaluation Criteria Applied to Watershed Management in California and Washington; UC Davis

Massachusetts' collaborative approach to restore wetlands

The Massachusetts Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program (WRBP) was established in 1994 to undertake a comprehensive, statewide wetland restoration effort. Because several agencies already had funding or other wetland restoration efforts in place and others had a strong interest, it soon became apparent that the state could benefit from a collaborative approach to wetland restoration.

Through WRBP's initiative, state and federal agencies joined forces under the federal Coastal America Partnership. In June of 1994, officials from the Massachusetts Executive Offices of Environmental Affairs and Transportation & Construction and the federal Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Army, Agriculture, and the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency gathered to sign the Resolution to Restore Massachusetts Wetlands. This agreement commits the partners to joint implementation of a comprehensive, watershed-based wetlands restoration program for Massachusetts. The signatories have become the core of the Partnership to Restore Massachusetts Wetlands, a broad coalition of more than 200 organizations and individuals who have joined forces to support implementation of the resolution.

—Christy Foote-Smith, Wetlands Restoration & Banking Program, Boston, MA

Stakeholders in a group usually bring different backgrounds, interests, and agendas.

Ecosystem management through role reversal

The Illinois Conservation 2000 program includes a component for managing targeted ecosystems that turns the traditional agency-led approach on its head. Local stakeholder partnerships have primary oversight over nearly all aspects of the projects and are authorized to call in state agency resources as needed. The role reversal removes state agencies from the often-difficult task of resolving conflicts among various interests and gives the resulting consensus recommendations a validity untarnished by charges that the management strategy represents only what "the state" wants to do.

Try to achieve a balanced representation.

Membership

Membership in watershed organizations is also highly variable. Some are composed of like-minded people who share a concern for a specific resource facing a highly focused threat (e.g., a lakeshore homeowners association dealing with elevated nutrient levels). Others are more like "textbook" stakeholder partnerships, consisting of people with very different backgrounds, perspectives, values, interests, and agendas. In both cases, however, membership is often based simply on interest, commitment, and energy. Of course, when the basin is large and the issues are many, it is often desirable to establish a representative board or committee to make decisions. This process is highly subjective, but must be based on honest efforts to ensure that all stakeholder perspectives are represented.

Often the biggest challenge when selecting stakeholders is to achieve a balanced representation among the various interests so that people don't feel that the "deck is stacked" against them. ☞ Section 4 goes into detail on how to identify key audiences in the community and select stakeholder representatives for participation in your effort.

Decision-making methods

There are many approaches for considering input from stakeholders in final management decisions. Managers can gather input informally from individual stakeholders or interest groups to increase understanding of stakeholder perspectives and make a decision without ever convening a meeting. Conversely, the sponsoring organization can hand over significant authority to a formally organized stakeholder committee and agree to abide by whatever decisions it makes. Regardless of the approach, the process and its impact on the resulting product must be clearly stated at the outset. This enables decision makers to establish clear boundaries for the involvement of others, lets people know what to expect and what is expected of them, and helps build support for the final decision. Generally speaking, as the level of involvement in the decision making increases, so does the level of commitment to the outcome.

Soliciting formal or informal input without sharing real authority is commonly practiced in natural resource management programs. Sharing of authority was relatively rare in the past but is becoming more common under the watershed planning and management approaches developing today. Giving stakeholders a real voice in decision making might cause some discomfort at first, but this approach generates much more interest, involvement, and commitment from participants and gives them a real "stake" in the outcome.

Most partnerships seek consensus on decisions, but there are concerns that such an approach leads to lowest-common-denominator (rather than better) decisions or discussions that avoid contentious or critical issues. ☞ See Section 5 for specific guidance on making decisions by consensus.)

Roles and responsibilities

Outlining proposed roles and responsibilities for the stakeholder group will help clarify expectations, reduce conflict, and encourage a smooth group process. There are two major areas for involvement—*process* and *content*.

The person responsible for managing the process is usually a facilitator. Outside facilitators (i.e., third-party persons not connected directly to the sponsoring agency or other stakeholders at the table) are usually best. The facilitator should be perceived as a neutral party who will not contribute his or her ideas to the group. Facilitators should be objective and maintain a broad perspective, but they should also challenge assumptions, act as a catalyst, generate optimism, and help your group connect with similar efforts. It is important to make sure that the stakeholders feel comfortable with the facilitator. Sometimes, even if the facilitator is truly neutral, some members of the group might not feel their concerns are being validated or incorporated into the process. If this is the case, it's best to select someone else to manage the process.

Stakeholders usually participate in determining the content of the effort. This is where you outline some possible roles and activities for the stakeholders. Again, remember that this is just a first cut at proposed roles and responsibilities. Once the stakeholders convene, they will have an opportunity to make changes.

Possible roles and responsibilities for stakeholders include the following:

- Clarify overall project goals and objectives
- Ensure all relevant interests are adequately represented
- Provide input on watershed problems
- Help develop evaluation criteria for analyzing management options
- Provide input on the preferred management strategies
- Help conduct community education and outreach throughout the process

Once you have developed a preliminary framework for your stakeholder group, you're ready to move on to conducting outreach and identifying the stakeholder participants.

The framework is built for a stakeholder group.

Do we always need consensus?

Don't jump to the conclusion that consensus is needed for every decision. In some cases, it is more appropriate to gather input from the stakeholders and then make a decision. The factors to consider when selecting a decision-making method include time available, the importance of the decision, the information needed to make the decision, the capability of the group to make the decision, and the information required to make a decision. And remember, consensus is a decision everyone can live with, not necessarily one that is eagerly supported by all.

Checklist for your watershed framework:

- ❑ What are the driving forces behind this effort?
- ❑ What are our agency's/organization's internal goals?
- ❑ How will we achieve those goals?
- ❑ Do we need stakeholder involvement? How much?
- ❑ What will be the structure of the group?
- ❑ What will be the membership of the group?
- ❑ How will decisions be made?
- ❑ What are some of the proposed roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders?

Section 3:

Outreach and Communication Tools

What you have done so far...

- ✓ Identified driving forces behind your effort
- ✓ Defined internal goals and objectives
- ✓ Developed a framework for group structure, membership, decision-making methods, and stakeholder roles

Using outreach to strengthen stakeholder efforts

Once you have identified your internal goals and objectives and developed a preliminary stakeholder framework, you need to start conducting outreach and education activities. If people are expected to exhibit concern over a water resource, gather and process assessment information, and support preservation or restoration proposals, they must be engaged through a planned, long-term outreach program.

Outreach is a process that involves communicating information to an audience and getting a response from that audience. How you communicate the information (fact sheets, news articles, watershed festivals, CD-ROMs, etc.) will depend on the audience, the message you're trying to deliver, and your budget.

Changes in outreach over time

Outreach is conducted throughout all phases of the stakeholder involvement effort to *raise awareness* of the issues and the process, *educate* stakeholders and the community on the issues of concern, and *motivate* the community to identify and implement solutions. One of the most common roles of stakeholders is to conduct outreach and education to their constituents in the community. Keep in mind that your outreach and education products will change throughout the process. As the stakeholders become more aware of

What's in Section 3?

- Using outreach to strengthen stakeholder efforts
- Changes in outreach over time
- Steps for conducting effective outreach

Outreach efforts inform and involve potential stakeholders as well as the general public.

The first installment of the Getting in Step *series,* "A Pathway to Effective Outreach in Your Watershed"*, provides detailed information on developing and executing outreach efforts. (See http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/outreach/documents to download an electronic copy of the guide.)*

the issues, your outreach efforts will shift to educating them on possible causes and solutions. The table on the next page provides some examples of what kinds of outreach to conduct throughout your project.

Mass media will reach the widest audience early on in the project.

In the beginning . . .

At the outset of your project, your primary outreach objective is to make the community aware of the major watershed issues. It will be easier to recruit stakeholders if they are already familiar with the issues. Your primary format at this stage will probably be mass-market venues such as the local newspapers, radio, or TV.

Try to get on the agenda at various community meetings and make a brief presentation on the project. Look in local newspapers to see which groups meet regularly so you know where to target your efforts. Find out who the environmental reporters are and see if they would be interested in covering your project.

Tip:

Make a presentation at the regularly scheduled meetings for local elected officials. These meetings are often televised on the local cable network and the news media usually attend. Make sure you bring a background fact sheet to hand out to the media.

After you've researched your community . . .

Once you've researched key audiences in the community, you'll have a better understanding of their values and concerns, their level of knowledge on watershed issues, and how they get their information on watershed issues. You can use this information to develop targeted outreach materials with messages that relate specifically to the intended audience. You're still in the awareness phase, but your outreach materials will include more information on causes of concern and show the community how they can participate in solving these problems.

After you've formed your stakeholder group . . .

Once your stakeholder group is up and running, you will need to develop outreach materials for a variety of audiences for communication and education among your stakeholders, distribution by your stakeholders to their constituents, and distribution to the community at large.

Tip:

E-mail listservers are a great way to promote communication among stakeholders. The Kent County (Michigan) Storm Water Management Task Force uses e-mail frequently to communicate, edit documents, and comment on activities between monthly meetings.

How outreach activities change over the course of the management program

What's Happening	Possible Outreach Products/Activities
Awareness stage *You're just starting your project, and need to let people know about what the issues are and what some solutions might be.*	▪ Prepare a map of the watershed with political boundaries overlaid. ▪ Prepare a 2-page background sheet on the issues and your project. ▪ Develop a list of media contacts. ▪ Assemble a media kit (including the map, a background sheet, a contact list, and three news articles with quotes). ▪ Submit articles to local media outlets (newspapers, TV, radio). ▪ Make presentations at local government meetings.
Education stage *You've researched some key audiences in the community and have gathered information on their values, attitudes, concerns, and communication channels.* *You've formed the stakeholder group and asked them what outreach products they would find useful.*	▪ Continue to submit articles to various media outlets on the issues of concern. ▪ Expand on the list of media contacts to include other venues of communication within the community (e.g., periodicals, cable television stations, community newsletters). ▪ Develop targeted outreach materials such as fact sheets or flyers that include messages relevant to specific audiences. ▪ Develop a general slide show on the project showing geographic scope, major issues of concern, and possible sources of pollutants. Include a script that the stakeholders can use to make presentations to their constituents. ▪ Develop a speaker's bureau for the stakeholders so they can go out in the community to make presentations. ▪ Sponsor events such as a canoe trip, watershed festival, or city-farm tour. ▪ Develop news items that can be included in stakeholder-related publications. ▪ Prepare a newsletter or listserver that can be used for communication within the stakeholder group and for distribution to the community. ▪ Develop a traveling tabletop display that can be used at libraries, fairs, schools, etc.
Action stage *The stakeholder group is up and running and implementing parts of the management plan.*	▪ Conduct demonstration projects in the watershed. ▪ Initiate a volunteer monitoring program. ▪ Conduct a storm-drain stenciling program. ▪ Continue generating media coverage (e.g., feature articles on BMP implementation, program activities, etc.). ▪ Hold events to showcase successes and motivate the community on additional efforts that need to be taken.

Steps for conducting effective outreach

To develop and implement effective outreach to support your watershed efforts, you need to consider the following steps:

1. Define project goals and objectives
2. Identify target audiences relevant to goals and objectives
3. Develop your message, based on the goals, objectives, and audience(s)
4. Package your message in formats appropriate to the audience(s)
5. Distribute your message to the target audience(s)
6. Evaluate your outreach efforts, and adjust as necessary

Within each step you must gather information to be able to effectively target your messages to the right audiences. Each step more or less builds on the previous one so it is important to address each one. Too often, outreach efforts start in the middle of the process and important steps— identifying measurable objectives or defining target audiences, for example—are ignored. Such an unfocused approach is ineffective and wastes resources.

Step 1: Define your goals and objectives

As stated previously, your outreach goals and objectives will reinforce your overall goals for the watershed effort. For example, if one of your goals is to restore the water quality of Cane Creek, one of your outreach objectives might be to educate farmers about the benefits of fencing off their streams to livestock. Another could be to make the landowners living adjacent to the stream aware of failing septic systems and educate them about a cost-share program available through the health department.

Your outreach objectives should be SMART— specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific. You will probably develop several objectives for each issue you're trying to tackle. Keep the desired outcome in mind when forming your objectives. Do you want to create awareness, provide information, or encourage action among your target audience? It is very important to make your objectives as specific as possible and to include a time element as well as a result. This approach will make it easier to identify specific tasks for achieving the objective and will enable you to evaluate whether you've achieved the objective.

Step 2: Identify your target audience

Your target audience is the group of people you want to reach with your message. Keep in mind that your stakeholder group is only one target audience; you will target other groups within the community as well, such as elected officials, homeowners, farmers, and business people. Raising general awareness of the value and function of a water resource might include a very broad target audience like a

Getting stakeholders' attention and piquing their interest

The Upper Chattahoochee Basin Group in north Georgia developed a public involvement plan to engage and involve stakeholders. The plan provides a good example of how to proceed to build the awareness and knowledge needed to develop and implement consensus-based solutions:

- *Develop a master list of interested parties and their issues*
- *Conduct scoping interviews with stakeholder groups*
- *Distribute outreach materials and sponsor events and workshops*
- *Create a forum for airing and resolving stakeholder issues*
- *Hold regular briefings for the news media, civic groups, and other organizations*

Objectives should be
Specific,
Measurable,
Achievable,
Relevant, and
Time-specific.

mass media market. Define your target audience as the narrowest segment possible that still retains the characteristics of the audience. If your audience is too broad, chances are you won't be able to develop a message that engages and resonates with those you are targeting. Be creative in defining and developing perspectives on target audiences and in finding out what makes them tick.

Target your audience—narrowly identify the groups of people you want to reach with your message.

This is where your stakeholders will be invaluable. Use them to help gather information needed to develop targeted materials and to identify the best distribution mechanisms for the materials.

Think of the target audience as your customer. You want to sell your customer a product (e.g., environmental awareness, membership in an organization, participation in a stream restoration project, or some voluntary behavior change), so you need to find out what will make your customer buy the product. The kind of information needed to characterize and assess the target audience/customer might include:

- What is the demographic makeup of the audience?
- How does the audience receive its information?
- What is the knowledge base of the audience regarding the issues involved?
- What is the perception/attitude of the audience on those issues?

The tools provided in ☞Section 4 on researching potential stakeholders can help you get the answers to these questions.

Georgia surveys elected officials to focus its coastal outreach efforts

The Georgia Coastal Management Program (GCMP) was faced with the challenge of educating a rapidly growing public about the natural resources on which its sought-after quality of life is based. Because most land use decisions are made at the local level, much attention has been focused on local government and elected officials.

To develop a personal relationship with more than 80 local government officials, staff from the GCMP conducted face-to-face surveys with them. "We asked them what the most important natural resource issues were in their communities and how they thought the Coastal Management Program should focus its efforts." The results showed that 75 percent of local government officials recognized the importance of protecting groundwater resources from saltwater intrusion and contamination, but only 25 percent of the officials mentioned nonpoint source pollution as a natural resource issue for their communities. "We know that nonpoint source pollution is a widespread problem in our coastal area, and the fact that the elected officials are not aware of it shows us where to concentrate our outreach efforts."

—Beth Turner, Georgia Coastal Management Program

It's a cliche, but marketing is a mindset. You need to think like a marketer, or "marketeer" as some people prefer to call them... [There] is a new trend emerging, which is changing the way we look at the field of marketing. Increasingly, smart individuals at environmental organizations across the country are realizing that there are valuable lessons to be learned from the marketing sector. Congratulations. You are one of them."

—*Marketing the Environment: Achieving Sustainable Behavior Change Through Marketing; Huron Rivepr Watershed Council*

Develop a message with benefits that will attract your target audience, and package it effectively.

Step 3: Develop your message

After gathering information on the target audience, you are ready to craft a message that will engage them and help achieve your objective. To be effective, messages must be understood by the intended audience and appeal to them on their own terms. The message should be specific and tied directly to something your target audience values. Remember that these are your customers and you want them to buy your product! Some benefits you might want to include in your message are

- Money savings
- Time savings
- Convenience
- Free of charge
- Health improvements
- Efficiency
- Drinking water quality
- Stewardship
- Recreation opportunities
- Habitat protection

In addition to attracting attention, being understandable, and providing a link to something of value, effective messages should also state specific actions required to achieve the desired results. Instructions should be clear, nontechnical, and familiar to the audience. Providing a means for the target audience to become more involved or receive additional information through a toll-free telephone number, Internet site, or other means always helps. Focus on making everything—the behavior change requested, the involvement needed, or the support required—"user-friendly."

The stakeholder group will be a valuable resource in verifying that the messages are appropriate for the target audience and will be understandable to them.

Step 4: Package your message

You've defined your objective, assessed the target audience, and crafted your message. Now it's time to determine the best package or format for the message for eventual delivery to the target audience. In some cases the format will define the distribution mechanism (newspaper articles, radio spots, public events). When choosing alternative formats, consider the following:

- Will the package be deliverable to the target audience?
- Is it "user-friendly?"
- Can the target audience decipher it?
- Does it accomplish the objective and promote the message?
- How will the target audience access and use the information?

- Is it something they will see once and discard or refer to often?
- Can it be produced in-house, with existing resources?
- How much will it cost, and who will pay for it?

Once you go out with your message, repeat it, repeat it, repeat it! The formula for success in the marketing world is

Reach x Frequency = Results

where reach is how many people are exposed to the message and frequency is the number of times they hear or see it.

The following is an overview of some popular message packages. Choose one (or more) that helps achieve the desired result with the available resources. Combining formats can reinforce your message considerably.

Print. By far the most popular format is print. Printed materials include fact sheets, brochures, flyers, magazine and newspaper articles, booklets, posters, bus placards, billboards, and doorknob hangers. They can be easily created and can be referred to again and again by the target audience.

Stuff**.** "Stuff" refers to promotional items or "give-aways." These include Frisbees, magnets, key chains, tote bags, coffee mugs, and bumper stickers. Give-aways represent a good format to promote watershed organizations, simple actions, and general awareness.

Media**.** Working with the professional media—newspapers, television, magazines, and radio—will help to reach broad target audiences. Opportunities to place your message in the media include informational news stories, people features, issue analyses, public service announcements, interview programs, call-in shows, editorial columns, and feature items related to sports, recreation, or outdoor living.

Internet. Increasingly, the Internet is becoming a powerful means of communication. It provides worldwide access to hundreds of thousands of sites containing millions of documents, chat rooms for special interest groups, and database/mapping features that are almost mind-boggling. Although the World Wide Web is used regularly and extensively by agency personnel, environmental group leaders, and the business community and can be a valuable format, average citizens still get the great bulk of their environmental messages from more traditional venues. Remember, too, that a Web-based approach is geared to a certain target audience—one that is very much "plugged in" and perhaps already attuned to your objectives.

Combining different formats can reinforce your message.

Getting the message packages to the audience...

Step 5: Distribute your message

Once the message has been packaged in the desired format, you can proceed with distribution. Figuring out ahead of time how you will distribute your outreach materials can affect the development and design of the products. Common distribution mechanisms include direct mail, door-to-door, by phone, through targeted businesses, presentations, as handouts at events, through media outlets, and posting your message in public places.

Depending on where you are in our outreach efforts, your stakeholders can serve as a distribution vehicle for most of your outreach and education materials. Remember that you don't always have to distribute the message yourself. If your target audience subscribes to an existing periodical, it may be more effective to piggyback your message in that publication. It will certainly save you the hassle of dealing with mailing lists, postage costs, or news media releases. It will also increase the likelihood that your message will actually be read by members of the target audience since they are already familiar with the publication.

Step 6: Evaluate your outreach efforts

Evaluation provides a feedback mechanism for continuous improvement of your outreach efforts. Many people don't think about how they're going to evaluate the success of their outreach program until after it has been implemented. Building in an evaluation component from the beginning, however, will ensure that at least some accurate feedback on the outreach program's impact is generated.

Your time and available resources will determine the degree to which you evaluate your outreach program. At a minimum, you will review the outreach plan with the staff or watershed team to determine whether the objectives were attained or supported, the target audience reached, and so forth. Outreach programs ideally feature pre- and post-tests of randomly selected people to measure what knowledge or behaviors existed before the program was implemented and after it ended. This approach is used mainly for large-scale, high-level efforts because of the resources involved.

Your stakeholders can assist in the evaluation of your outreach efforts by providing feedback from their constituents. You should track the following: How were outreach materials distributed? Was the message understood? What was the response to the information?

Feedback is crucial to improvement of your outreach program.

Tip:

Piggybacking your efforts by including your outreach information in existing publications or presenting your information at regularly scheduled meetings of important target audiences is both efficient and effective.

Section 4:

Building Your Stakeholder Group

What's in Section 4?

- Researching key interest groups
- Inviting the stakeholders to participate
- Running productive meetings
- Conducting the first meeting
- Building a stakeholder operating plan

What you have done so far . . .

- ✓ Determined that you need stakeholder involvement for your project and that no existing group can accommodate your overall effort
- ✓ Identified the driving forces that led you to this point (e.g., violation of water quality standards, new regulations, potential threats to the resource)
- ✓ Outlined your internal programmatic and management goals for the project
- ✓ Developed a framework for stakeholder involvement, including the level of decision-making authority and the process to be used
- ✓ Conducted initial outreach to create awareness of your issues in the community

If you have not yet identified your internal goals or developed a preliminary framework for how the stakeholder group will operate, go back to ☞Section 2. You need to complete those steps before you identify and recruit stakeholders because (1) that information will determine who should be involved and (2) potential stakeholders will ask questions related to those steps (How much time is involved? Will I be making decisions or serving in an advisory capacity? How will we make decisions?). You'd better have some answers.

Depending on the project, you might already have a fairly good idea of the likely stakeholders for your effort. But what if you're going into an unfamiliar watershed or you want to try to get better representation from some nontraditional interest groups? This section shows you how to research the key interest groups in a community and identify the stakeholder representatives who should be invited to participate. This process involves characterizing the community through various demographic, cultural, and other approaches to ensure that you know "where they're coming from."

Identify stakeholders who should be invited to participate.

Researching key interest groups

Before building your stakeholder group, spend some time researching the key interest groups in your community. If the community will be responsible for implementing the management strategies developed, it is vital that a cross-section of the community participate in the process. When looking at key interest groups for watershed involvement, we tend to draw from the same groups—local elected officials, environmental organizations, and agency personnel. Key interest groups are not just power brokers like the mayor, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, or the president of the PTA. Remember that stakeholders are not only those who influence a decision but also those who are affected by it and those who can aid or prevent its implementation.

We also tend to select the people who ask to participate. This leaves out groups who need to be involved but are reluctant to come to the table. By researching key interest groups you might uncover some nontraditional audiences such as church organizations, the local garden club, or university professors who have a strong role in the community.

When researching the key issues in a community or watershed, you will gather information to build a profile. By the end of your research, you will have defined the following:

- Primary geographic features, political boundaries, and landmarks in the area
- Major organizations in the community
- Key activities and where they occur (e.g., school football games, agricultural fairs, concert series)
- Influential persons and opinion leaders
- Knowledge in the community of your project issues
- Methods of communication in the community
- Attitudes and perceptions regarding your project issues

Where do you start?

Several resources are available to help you to determine the key interest groups in the community. As a first cut, consider researching local government agencies, local organizations, and the local media. This will give you a foundation to build on. As you talk to people, always ask them where you might find additional information about the community.

Community cultural profiling

The USEPA has put together an entire manual on profiling communities. It provides examples, worksheets, and a variety of methods for developing a detailed picture of a particular community. To receive a copy of Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place*, refer to the resources listed in Section 7.*

Tip:

If your primary stakeholders belong to an organization that meets regularly, consider starting the process by attending their meetings. Providing information and initiating a dialogue on their turf can help get the ball rolling in a relaxed, nonthreatening environment. As other stakeholders get involved the group can decide whether to start separate meetings or continue "piggybacking."

Local government

The first place to start might be the phone book. Check out the government listings in the blue pages and identify three or four departments to start with. These might include the department of parks and recreation, the department of soil and water conservation, the water and sewer authority, the office of economic development, and the planning department.

Local organizations

Local organizations can provide you with information on the community's interests and makeup. For example, if there are many churches in the area, the religious community might be an important key interest group. The local Chamber of Commerce can provide information on the kinds of businesses located in the community, business trends, and names of local business leaders. Recreational organizations can tell you about the kinds of activities available (e.g., birding, canoeing, and rafting) and the numbers of people involved.

To build a list of local organizations to contact, start with the community newspaper. Look in the calendar of events section, which shows what organizations are active and when they meet and provides contact information. Don't forget to look in the sports section, which might have a calendar of its own.

Typical departments in a local government

Building and Development
Community Services
Economic Development
Health Department
Land Records and Property Transfers
Libraries
Mapping and Geographic Information
Parks and Recreation
Planning and Zoning
School Board
Social Services
Soil and Water Conservation
Tourism Board
Water and Sewer Services

Information needed to identify potential stakeholders

Once you have identified several different groups to contact, you need to identify the kind of information that will be valuable in building your community profile and identifying potential stakeholders. There are no set questions to ask since the information you need will be related to your own internal goals. Some possible questions include the following:

- What are the problems affecting the watershed, from the community's perspective?
- Who has the potential to help protect the watershed?
- What are the political, cultural, and economic factors in the community?
- What are the demographics of the community?
- How is your organization perceived in the community?
- Who are the influential leaders—religious, civic, business?

Research local government, organizations, and businesses to identify potential stakeholders.

How do you get the information?

Once you have identified the types of information you need from the key interest groups, how do you get the information? You can use several different tools depending on the makeup of the community and your available resources (time and money). Any information you collect will be useful, so don't worry if you don't have access to

Possible contacts for identifying potential stakeholders

Agencies

- *Federal government*
- *US Environmental Protection Agency*
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service*
- *Natural Resources Conservation Service*
- *US Army Corps of Engineers*
- *US Department of Transportation*
- *State government*
  - *Department of Natural Resources*
  - *Environmental Agency*
  - *Department of Fish and Game*
- *Local government*
  - *Planning Commissions*
  - *Conservation Districts*
  - *Health Department*

Organizations

- *Civic organizations (e.g., League of Women Voters)*
- *Religious organizations*
- *Recreational organizations (e.g., Trout Unlimited)*
- *Historical or cultural associations*
- *Business organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce)*
- *Environmental organizations*
- *Financial institutions*
- *Homeowner associations*
- *Political organizations*
- *Parent-teacher associations*

Individuals

- *Landowners*
- *Youth*
- *Seniors*

a Census Bureau database (see www.census.gov) or can't make your survey results statistically significant. Methods for gathering information range from visual observations to crunching data from research agencies. You'll probably use a combination of techniques that includes direct interaction with the community and indirect access through surveys, databases, and archives.

Indirect methods

Indirect methods to obtain information about potential stakeholders include surveys, newspaper archives, census data research, geographic information system data, and other techniques that do not involve face-to-face contact.

Surveys by mail
Mail surveys are an excellent way to get baseline information about a community. Before conducting a mail survey, make sure you'll be able to get current addresses for mailing. Keep in mind what information you want to collect, how you are going to use that information, and who is going to tabulate the data. This can save a lot of anguish once the results come back. From a respondent's perspective, make the survey relatively short (and explain up-front how long it will take to fill it out). State the objective of the survey clearly, make the format easy to read, and include a self-addressed stamped envelope to increase the return rate. If you want to make your results statistically significant, consult a marketing professional or college instructor for suggestions on random sampling techniques, follow-up prompting, and other issues.

Pros/Cons: Mail surveys allow participants to think about their answers before responding, can reach large numbers of people, and can gather data from people who might not be accessible in person. The disadvantages include printing and mailing costs, staff time required for tabulation of results, and the potential for low response rates.

Surveys by phone
Surveys by phone can also provide good information about your key interest groups. Again, make sure you have access to current phone numbers and the resources available (phones and volunteers) to carry out the survey. The success of phone surveys tends to vary geographically: rural audiences are more willing to take the time to answer questions than urban audiences. Standardize the greeting used by all of your volunteers, and practice proper phone skills. If a person called does not want to participate, thank the person and move on to the next one. Schedule calls at mixed times—some during weekends, some during the day, but most during the early evening (but not at dinnertime!).

Pros/Cons: Phone surveys allow data gathering from people who might not be accessible in person, elicit immediate responses, and can accommodate many participants. The disadvantages include the need

to access correct phone numbers for participants, lack of time for participants to think about their responses, level of resources involved, and exclusion of those who will not respond to unsolicited calls.

Databases
Many organizations collect information on their constituents and maintain the information in a database. This data can provide you with strong demographic information, indicate trends, and identify key people. Local public agencies such as planning departments and property tax evaluation agencies can provide information on zoning ordinances, trends in development, and revenue sources. Soil conservation districts keep records on land-use patterns, size of parcels, and farming practices. The Chamber of Commerce and other trade associations keep track of their constituents and the numbers and types of businesses located in the community.

Census data is collected every 10 years and was last collected in 2000. This data is available through the Internet from the U.S. Bureau of the Census at www.census.gov and from local libraries. If you do not have access to these files or do not have the resources needed to extract the information, consider asking a college marketing class for assistance. Often they are looking for real-world projects, and they might be willing to conduct a detailed analysis of the target group at no charge.

Pros/Cons: Databases can provide consolidated demographic data and can sort the data by different parameters. Some databases can be unwieldy to work with, are not current, or require technical expertise to extract the data. Databases do not provide qualitative information on behavior patterns or attitudes.

Local newspapers
The local papers can provide a tremendous amount of insight into a community. This is particularly important for small towns. The sports page shows you which teams are active in the area as well as recreational activities. Letters to the editor show you the issues and concerns of the community, and the events calendar provides information on the local organizations, cultural events, and happenings about town.

Direct methods

Direct methods tend to be more resource-intensive than indirect methods but provide qualitative information on attitudes, values, and behavior patterns. Direct interaction also helps you to start building relationships with potential stakeholders and allows you to pursue other lines of questioning that surveys may omit. Direct methods include focus groups, community meetings, and one-on-one interviews.

Phone surveys could be used to gather information about your stakeholders.

What you need to know about potential stakeholders

- *What is their knowledge of watershed issues?*
- *What are their attitudes and opinions about their community?*
- *How do they use the resource?*
- *What language and messages motivate them?*
- *Where do they get their information?*
- *Whom do they trust?*
- *What do they value in their community?*
- *What are the key local activities in the community?*

Focus groups
Focus groups provide an opportunity to meet with several members of the community at once and allow them the chance to expand on comments and ideas. The focus group participants may be selected through surveys, recommended by a particular organization, or selected at random. Typically, up to 12 members are asked to participate for one or two hours. Be sure to schedule the focus group at a time and place convenient for the participants. For example, many people, including government officials of small localities, have jobs during the day and are available to meet only after 5:00 p.m. The focus group should be handled by an outside facilitator to avoid introducing bias into the results. A series of questions are asked to the group and the answers recorded on flip charts or video/audio tape. Focus groups also enable you to start building a network of people you might want to use later to deliver your message.

Pros/Cons: Focus groups can provide insights about the interest group's composition, perceptions, and beliefs; provide interaction among participants; and build support for further actions or outreach. The disadvantages are that the success of a focus group depends largely on the facilitator, focus groups can accommodate only a few participants, and the time demand on participants is considerable. Finally, focus groups might not be suitable for certain cultures where peer pressure or deference to others might inhibit discussion.

Community meetings
Community meetings provide a forum to collect information on a variety of topics for all members of the community. The meetings can be unstructured in an open-house type of format, or they can be focused around specific issues. It's important to remember that you are still gathering information so you want to allow plenty of opportunity for the participants to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions.

Pros/cons: Once established, community meetings can be conducted on a regular basis to inform the group about stakeholder activities, solicit input, and maintain communication. Organizing community meetings is time-consuming, and often you're competing with other regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., school board, local board of supervisors).

Farmers' concerns about TMDLs

In response to a presentation made at a local Farm Bureau to introduce water quality issues and TMDLs, the Yolo County, California Resource Conservation District convened a focus group composed of area farmers. Their concerns included the following:

- *We don't have time to come to meetings*
- *We don't want a bunch of stakeholders that know nothing about farming telling us how to farm*
- *We want to be the only decision makers on these projects*
- *There are issues of private property rights*
- *How are we going to afford to make the changes in practices?*
- *We don't want to do something now and then have an agency come to us in a few years and tell us what we did is wrong and we have to change it*
- *We don't feel there is enough scientific data in place to tell us what we should be doing*

—Katy Pye, Yolo County Resource Conservation District

Using data-gathering techniques to collect community information

Goal: *To determine level of awareness and willingness of the community to participate in watershed protection activities.*

Methods: *Focus groups, surveys by mail, community meetings.*

Focus Group Questions

- *What community organizations do you belong to?*
- *Whom do you go to for advice about rangeland management?*
- *What are three things you value about your community?*
- *How do you spend your leisure time?*
- *Where do you get your information on environmental issues?*
- *What are some key activities that occur in your community?*
- *Do you think the water quality in your community is improving or declining? Why?*
- *How is the land managed in your community (ownership, leased lands, and land-use planning)?*

Survey questions

- *What do you think are the biggest problems facing your community?*
  (a) education
  (b) crime
  (c) water quality
  (d) taxes
  (e) other

- *In your opinion, what is the best use of the Rio Platte?*
  (a) irrigation
  (b) habitat for birds and wildlife
  (c) recreation (hunting, fishing, canoeing)
  (d) other

- *Please indicate whether you have a positive or negative view about the following groups, or indicate if you don't recognize the group.*
  (a) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  (b) Friends of the Rio Platte
  (c) Farm Bureau
  (d) Texas Fish and Game Commission
  (e) Trout Unlimited
  (f) Soil and Water Conservation District
  (g) Northeast Water Supply Association

Open house

- *Have you heard about our organization? If yes, from whom?*
- *Can you find where you live on this map?*
- *Which environmental resource(s) do you think best describes your community?*

What do you do when the landowner says "No"?

One of the first landowners I asked about streambank fencing said no. Since we felt like he was a key stakeholder, we didn't want to give up.

I would stop by when I was in the neighborhood and visit with him. We talked about everything but fencing. We were fencing in other areas at the time.

One day I stopped and asked him if fencing would be OK if I did it. He wanted to know how I was going to do it, me being a bureaucrat and all. I told him not to worry about that part. He finally agreed, if I did it.

I fenced it with a small grant for materials and I provided the muscle and sweat. He has been a good friend ever since and speaks highly of fencing.

—Frank Lucas, Pequea-Mill Creek Project, Natural Resources Conservation Service

You might need to use creative methods to involve some stakeholders.

What do you do with the information collected?

Once you have a picture of the values and concerns of various interest groups within a community, you can select possible stakeholder representatives to participate in your project. Go back again to your driving forces, goals, and objectives to determine if your list of stakeholders represents all of the issue areas.

Inviting the stakeholders to participate

Once you've developed a list of stakeholders, invite them to participate in writing. If someone in the community recommended them, be sure to include that person's name in the letter. To increase the chances of participation, tailor each letter with the reasons why they need to be involved in the project. For example, if you're trying to get representation from the building community, you might want to highlight the fact that no one from the building community is involved with the watershed planning process.

Follow up your letter with a personal phone call to answer any questions and confirm their participation. Be prepared for resistance. If the potential stakeholders say they can't participate in the kickoff meeting, make sure you send them any information that comes out of the meeting and ask if there is someone from their organization who could attend in their place.

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you won't be able to get key stakeholders to attend a meeting. This doesn't mean that you can stop trying. It means you have to use a different technique to keep them informed and enable them to participate in the decision-making process. For example, when working with farmers in a watershed, often the best communication tool is one-on-one contact with a farmer in his field. Use this opportunity to hear his concerns, explain the issues, and show him why it's important to be involved.

Sometimes stakeholders will say, "Just tell me when a decision is made." Again, it's up to you to continuously provide them with the information and allow them to enter the process when they feel ready.

If you still have gaps in your stakeholder group in terms of representation, don't worry. At the first meeting you can ask for suggestions for additional representation—stakeholders appreciate being asked for their input.

Hosting productive meetings

Because one of the primary tools for communication among stakeholders is "the meeting," this section presents some tips to make your meetings as productive as possible. There are four major elements to running a successful meeting:

- Provide advance notice to participants
- Develop a strong agenda
- Manage the process during the meeting
- Follow through

Successful meetings start with advance planning and advance notice.

Provide advance notice to participants

One way to set your meetings off on the right foot is to provide plenty of advance notice to participants. This shows respect for their time, demonstrates good planning skills, and increases the chance of attendance. If the stakeholder group will meet on a regular basis, try to establish a set date so everyone knows, for example, you will meet on the third Tuesday of every month.

Advance notice also refers to any materials the stakeholders need for the upcoming meeting. As part of agenda development (see section III) you will determine what information your stakeholders might need ahead of time to make informed decisions at the meeting. Make sure stakeholders have adequate time before the meeting to review such materials.

Develop a strong agenda

The agenda will serve as a road map to accomplish your meeting objectives. As a rule, the amount of time spent preparing for a meeting should be twice that devoted to the meeting itself. Before you can develop an agenda, you need to answer several questions. Each of these questions will provide information to help develop a strong agenda, which, when followed, will help you achieve your objectives.

1. **Why are you calling a meeting?** Often we call meetings first and then figure out what we want to accomplish in them. By first asking what you need to accomplish, you might determine that a meeting isn't necessary and that you can accomplish your goals some other way. Determining the purpose up front will set the stage for the rest of the elements that need to be considered. There are several reasons for calling a meeting. Some of the most common are sharing information, solving a problem, making a decision, tracking progress, celebrating achievements, and evaluating results.

What do stakeholders expect?

Researchers at the Social and Environmental Research Institute in Massachusetts summarized what participants expect of a public involvement process in a paper published in Society and Natural Resources: *access to the process, power to influence the process and its outcomes, access to information, a structure that promotes constructive interaction, facilitation of constructive personal behaviors, adequate analysis, and the enabling of future processes.*

2. **What do you hope to accomplish?**
   Determine what you hope to leave with at the end of the meeting. Are you looking for agreement on an issue? Increased awareness of an issue? A list of goals for an activity? If you can't clearly outline the desired results, chances are you need to go back and focus on the purpose of the meeting.

3. **Who needs to attend and what are their roles?**
   Based on your desired outcomes, determine who needs to be involved in the meeting. Nothing is more frustrating than holding a meeting and realizing that you can discuss an issue to death, but the one person who can make a decision on that issue is not present. Determine what the participants' roles will be. Who will lead the meeting? Do you need a facilitator? Who will take notes? How will decisions be made?

4. **What topics need to be discussed to reach the desired outcome?**
   Deciding on topics will help determine if materials need to be sent out ahead of time so that an informed decision can be made. It will also help in allotting time on the agenda for discussion. You may find that you will not be able to discuss all of the proposed topics and will have to narrow the list.

5. **What are the room layout arrangements?**
   The room layout is critical to the success of your meeting. Considerations include seating arrangements, lighting, and placement of equipment. If the room arrangements are not optimal, they can detract from the content of your meeting. The room layout will depend on several factors—the size of your stakeholder group, the length of the meeting, and the size of the meeting room. If possible, try to set up the seating so that all members can see each other using a U-shaped or semicircular arrangement. Tables in front of the participants create a barrier, but they also provide a place for notebooks, cups, and so forth. You want to create an environment that will stimulate discussion. Try to match the room size with the size of the group because some people are reluctant to speak in a cavernous room.

A semicircular arrangement allows members of the group to see each other.

Once you have answered the above questions, you can develop an agenda that is focused on the desired outcomes, allows enough time for discussion of key issues, and is structured so participants will feel they have contributed to the desired outcome.

Manage the process

The person responsible for managing the process of a meeting ensures that the desired outcomes are achieved and the participants feel they have contributed to the end result. It's not good enough to

reach a decision if the participants don't feel good about the process.

☞Section 5 goes into more detail about managing the process during the meeting (such as getting agreement on issues, maintaining balanced participation, and resolving conflicts), but there are some tips to follow to start a meeting off on the right foot.

1. **Have the participants introduce themselves**.
   Even if they just say their names, it breaks down a psychological barrier of speaking out loud. If time permits, you may want the participants to share something about their community or themselves to start building relationships.

2. **Review the agenda and the desired outcomes**.
   Make sure everyone is clear on the objectives of the meeting and what you hope to accomplish.

3. **Review the roles of the participants and how decisions will be made.**
   Participants can play various roles in a meeting—participation, information management, process management, and decision-making. Make it clear to the participants what their roles are. If there is an outside facilitator, the facilitator will introduce himself or herself and explain that he or she is there to manage the process, not the content, of the meeting. Explain the decision-making methods for reaching an agreement (majority vote, consensus, or information-gathering with another entity responsible for the ultimate decision).

4. **Develop ground rules**.
   Setting ground rules at the beginning of a meeting helps to focus the participants on the task at hand and provides a structure for the meeting. The facilitator should use the ground rules to guide the meeting and refer to them if they are not being followed. Typical ground rules include the following:

   - Honor time limits
   - Speak one at a time
   - Refrain from personal attacks
   - Maintain confidentiality

   Allow the participants to add additional ground rules they would like to see observed.

5. **Keep time on your side**.
   One of the easiest ways to lose credibility with a group is to disregard the time limits established for a meeting. If you said the meeting would start at 8:30, but you want to wait another 15 minutes for people who are late, you are in effect punishing the folks who made an effort to get there by 8:30. It also sets a

Visioning exercise

An excellent way to begin the stakeholder process is to conduct a visioning exercise, where public agency representatives, stakeholders, and other interested parties brainstorm on how the resource should look and function 10 or 20 years from now. Although vision statements are necessarily broad and lack detail, they are usually agreeable to nearly all participants and thus serve as an important touchstone later in the process, when discussions over devilish details require the perspective of a consensual "big picture."

bad precedent: no one will show up on time for the next meeting because they know you'll start late. The same is true for ending your meeting. People have other commitments, and it's presumptuous to assume that you can continue past the designated adjournment time. At the very least you should poll the group and ask if people are willing to stay an extra 15 minutes.

Follow through

Once the meeting is over you're still not done. Remember what your third grade teacher told you about how to write a story—tell them what you're gonna say, say it, and tell them what you said. A successful meeting will conclude by summarizing what occurred during the meeting, identifying action items based on the discussion, assigning individuals to accomplish those action items, and thanking all of the participants.

It is important to review the action items with the participants to make sure there is agreement on the next steps. Finally, remember that the final element of a successful meeting is producing and distributing a meeting summary. Effective meeting summaries are brief and well organized and are distributed soon after the meeting.

Vision 2025

The Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council is a consortium of community groups, government agencies, businesses, and academic institutions working to restore, preserve, and enhance watersheds in Los Angeles County. The vision of the council for the year 2025 states that "our watershed and our communities will be renewed through an integrated and cooperative approach to restoring the environment and the economy, creating a more livable future."

Conducting the first meeting

The first meeting with the stakeholder group can set the tone for the rest of the process, so careful planning is needed to ensure a smooth beginning. Before setting the date and time, poll the stakeholders on the most convenient day and time for them. Remember that most of your stakeholders have other jobs so they may not want to meet during the day. By asking them first, you are letting them know that this is their group and you are trying to accommodate their schedules, not yours.

Send materials out early

Mail any agenda materials and background information well ahead of the meeting to allow participants time to review them. E-mail and web site posting are tremendous assets for circulating pre-meeting information. In addition, personal phone calls to members to ensure they received the information and know how to get to the location go a long way in building relationships. Use the phone call as an opportunity to allow the stakeholders to voice any potential concerns or needs that you can resolve before the meeting (*I'm a vegetarian... Is the building wheelchair accessible?... I never got an agenda... You spelled my name wrong on the stakeholder list...*).

Consider providing 3-ring binders at the first meeting with the members' names printed on them that they will use throughout the project to organize all of the materials distributed.

Include time for social interaction

Include time for socializing. Consider starting the meeting with a social hour. This immediately puts people at ease and allows them to meet their fellow stakeholders informally. If the meeting is to be held during the day, begin with lunch before getting into the agenda items.

Also, make a point to remember members' names and to use them during the meeting. It's amazing how just a *"Good point, Bob"* or *"Justine was talking at the break about..."* or *"Tom, were you the one who mentioned..."* can go a long way toward making people feel worthwhile and included in the process. As people become familiar with the names of others at the meeting they will become more comfortable and considerate in their discussions and deliberations.

Allow time for social activities to break the ice and put your group at ease with each other.

Prepare an agenda

The agenda for your first meeting will obviously depend on your overall project objectives. It can be highly structured or simply a forum for group discussion. Whatever the case, it should be based on careful planning. In a watershed management planning process, the first meeting could focus on introduction to the issues and review of the preliminary framework to determine how the group will operate. Allow plenty of time on the agenda for group discussion to avoid one-way communication. As the watershed assessment, planning, and management processes unfold, meetings will focus on reviewing past activities, future plans, and adjusting the approach as new information comes in.

Building a stakeholder operating plan

It is helpful for the stakeholder group to develop an operating plan to outline the roles, structure, membership, and activities that will be conducted. There are many ways to develop this plan, and the approach used will depend on the group. A constant challenge to working with a stakeholder group is providing enough information to be useful in moving the process forward without undermining the group's input or giving the impression that decisions have already been made. It may be helpful to present the preliminary framework you developed when researching key audiences (☞Section II) and then let the group tailor it to their needs at the first meeting. If your stakeholders are new to the group process, it's often helpful to give them something to react to.

The operating plan may include the following elements: program goals, stakeholder goals, ground rules, roles, responsibilities, decision-making methods, and products. Again, this is only a guide. The plan will change and evolve as your group progresses.

Key elements of stakeholder operating plans

Program goals

Ground rules

Roles, responsibilities, and decision-making methods

Stakeholder goals, objectives, and tasks to achieve the goals

Products from the stakeholder program

Example stakeholder involvement issues to address during the watershed assessment, planning, and management process

Why are we here, and what is the challenge we're facing?

- *Why do the watershed assessment/plan now?*
- *County's key objectives of this project. Develop a plan that:*
  - *Supports the designated uses of streams and lakes*
  - *Protects water quality and enhances water quality where needed*
  - *Alleviates flooding as development occurs*
  - *Provides for a safe, adequate water supply*
  - *Supports wastewater, water withdrawal, and storm water permitting decisions*
  - *Increases awareness about water quality problems and solutions to protect water quality*
  - *Increases the understanding about the linkage between land use alternatives and water quality and flooding*
- *Discussion:* Are there any questions about the driving forces behind this project and the County's objectives? What are other objectives and considerations that should guide the assessment and evaluation of management options?

Key milestones in the project

- *Characterize the watershed*
- *Conduct scoping modeling analysis*
- *Conduct inventory of drainage*
- *Conduct field visits with the stakeholder group*
- *Develop detailed water quality and quantity models*
- *Identify promising watershed management strategies*
- *Use the models to assess the effectiveness of the alternative strategies*
- *Design and begin implementing a long-term monitoring program*
- *Develop draft management plan*
- *Committee recommends/endorses management plan*
- *County (and others) adopts management plan*

Stakeholder roles

- *Clarify overall project goals and objectives*
- *Review the scoping-level analysis and recommendations for future, general options to explore*
- *Provide input on proposed water quality and quantity indicators and targets*
- *Help develop evaluation criteria for analyzing management options*
- *Help screen for promising management options to model*
- *Review findings of the modeling analysis and provide input on the preferred management strategies*
- *Review and provide input on the proposed monitoring plan*
- *Review and provide input on the draft management plan*
- *Help conduct community education and outreach throughout the process*

Discussion questions

- *Do you have questions about any of the specific tasks or how they relate to each other?*
- *Are there questions about the input we need from you and how it will be used?*
- *Helping provide community outreach and education will be a key role. What materials would be the most helpful for you to take out into the community?*
- *From your experience, are there other water quality issues that the community is currently concerned about that we should address in the modeling and management plan?*
- *Given projected growth, can you think of potential future issues that we may need to address related to our scope of work?*
- *Are there other objectives and considerations we should weigh as we develop and evaluate management strategies? (Note: These objectives might include other planning objectives, cost to utility customers, impacts on landowners, equity, etc.)*

Section 5:

Keeping the Ball Rolling

What you have done so far . . .

- ✓ Identified internal goals and objectives
- ✓ Outlined a stakeholder operating framework
- ✓ Conducted outreach activities
- ✓ Researched key interest groups
- ✓ Identified and engaged key stakeholders
- ✓ Convened the first meeting
- ✓ Developed a stakeholder operating plan

Top 12 tips to move the process forward

Although stakeholder processes can be long and involved (someone once described stakeholder involvement as a turtle—slow and ugly), there are some specific tools you can use to smooth out the road ahead and build trust within the group.

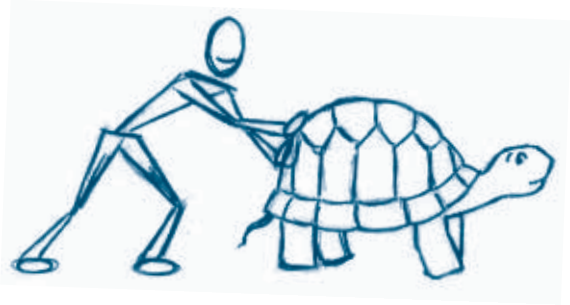
Keeping the momentum going throughout the life of a stakeholder process can be challenging, to say the least. The two most common causes of burnout are too many meetings and the feeling that the process is not progressing or worthwhile. Through careful planning and common courtesy, you can reduce the chances of participant burnout and maintain the energy level of the group.

1. **Involve stakeholders as soon as possible**. Many agency personnel are reluctant to bring in stakeholders too early in the process. They would rather wait until they have something to "show them." The early stage is actually the best time to involve stakeholders. Nothing can derail the process faster than asking for input after a decision has already been made. As soon as you know that you need the involvement of stakeholders, start involving them. Allowing stakeholders to help set the tone and the pace of the effort as it begins helps to maximize interest and buy-in.

2. **Be honest**. Building on the previous tip, lay all of your cards on the table at the beginning. If you're really not sure how the process is going to work, tell the group. It's OK not to have the answers, but it's not OK to mislead the group. This is particularly important with the decision-making methods. If the group will

What's in Section 5?

- Top 12 tips to move the process forward
- Making decisions by consensus
- Resolving conflict



Keeping the stakeholder process moving can be a challenge.

not have any decision-making authority, tell them up front. This will help reinforce to the group that there is no "hidden agenda."

3. **Listen.** Listening is not as easy as it sounds. Often we are so focused on how we are going to respond to what is being said, that we miss what's being said altogether. Active listening involves paying attention with both your body and your brain. Your body language—eye contact, your stance, how your arms are positioned—communicates a lot about how you're listening. Allow your brain to process what the person is saying without worrying about your response. Often the best response is no response. To make sure you have understood what was said and to let the speaker know you were listening, repeat what was said or ask a follow-up question to continue the dialogue.

4. **Communicate clearly and often.** Clear and frequent communication is essential. Do not assume your stakeholders understand the issues and processes. Many of your stakeholders may not be trained in the sciences and may not be comfortable with technical terms. Ask for feedback to see if the stakeholders understand the information being presented, or have them explain the concepts discussed to see if they are clear. Avoid the use of acronyms and techno-jargon!

   Ask your stakeholders how they would like to communicate with each other and outside the group. Choose several formats (e.g., e-mail, newsletters, phone chains, web sites, meetings) depending on the level of communication needed.

5. **Recognize differences early on.** It's OK to disagree. If you try to ignore conflict or make people think they're one big happy family (when they know they're not), you lose credibility. Accept and applaud the fact that everyone is at the table for different reasons, emphasizing that all they're there to accomplish common goals.

6. **Don't leave out stakeholders because they're difficult.** Inviting to the table those expressing the most intense opposition may cause some initial discomfort, but there are many potential benefits. They will likely bring considerable energy and a host of new perspectives to the process. In addition, they may have the ability to educate and activate others who were not accessible to the original team. Finally, if the opposition group has the ability to stop the planning/management process through legal or other means, it might be wise to work with its members and avoid a showdown in the courts or elsewhere. Nothing is gained by excluding people from the stakeholder group purely because of their views, criticism, or concerns. The ground rules for mutual respect, however, must be followed.

Getting started with stakeholders

Dave Martin of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality has some simple advice for managers who are initiating a stakeholder involvement program. Martin recommends attending regularly scheduled meetings of stakeholder groups (e.g., county soil and water conservation boards, environmental organizations, livestock producer committees, recreation groups, etc.), which provide a comfortable setting for stakeholders to hear about proposed watershed planning and management activities. When explaining new water quality or habitat improvement initiatives to those in attendance, Martin recommends "talking a little and listening a lot."

Why isn't this going to work?

Sometimes, if you start a process by asking why it's not going to work, you can disarm resistant attendees and uncover various interests, opinions, and attitudes. Once you have identified the universe of barriers, you can address each one and try to identify solutions that will move the process forward.

7. **Focus on their issues.** Remember that people will bring their own concerns and issues to the process. Instead of focusing on how you're going to meet your internal goals, concentrate on meeting their needs. This will keep them involved in the process and help build trust throughout the effort.

8. **Establish mini-milestones.** Because stakeholder processes tend to be long and drawn out, it is important to achieve and build upon small successes. These mini-milestones can be used throughout the process to show success and keep the group energized and motivated. Start off with some projects that are likely to be noncontroversial and ones that will benefit most of the group members. This shows them that they can work together and produce something tangible. Examples of small projects include developing a slide show, holding an open house for the community, and creating a general brochure on the project.

   Use on-the-ground projects that stakeholders can see in their community to show their results. For example, host a stream cleanup, partner with a local school or garden club to landscape a common area, stencil storm drains, or hand out watershed materials at local events.

Establish mini-milestones such as community projects that will show positive results and keep the group motivated.

9. **Commit the resources needed to achieve your objectives**. Make sure the resources (personnel and financial) will be available to the group. Coordinating and maintaining stakeholder groups can be a substantial drain on resources. If your agency or organization is only providing seed money for the process, consider applying for grants (☞see Section 6) or getting in-kind services from members of the group. Keep your activities and projects in line with your budget. Don't go through the process of selecting activities that you know you won't be able to implement with your budget. Don't duplicate the efforts of other groups.

10. **Call a meeting only when it's absolutely necessary.** Are you calling a meeting just because you said you were going to, but you don't really have any new information for the group to consider? Meeting burnout is one of the most common by-

What do you do when stakeholders don't like outsiders?

Work in the Pequea-Mill Creek Project areas in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has relied on one-on-one landowner visits and heavy use of private funding channels to overcome the reluctance of Amish farmers to get involved in government programs. "Our goal is to install stream bank fencing on about 40 farms," said project coordinator David Wise. "Landowners are interested in on-site benefits, not saving the bay. Herd health, ease of conversion to rotational grazing, and improvement of wildlife and fish habitat have been major reasons for participation."

—David Wise, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
(717) 733-0301

Nothing succeeds like success

When trying to reach consensus on pursuing a regional approach to managing our water and sewer needs among five localities, there was a great reluctance among the board of supervisors to cooperate with each other. Instead of trying to establish a regional management entity up front, we identified a project that all of the utilities could agree on—developing a wasteload allocation for the region—to show that we could work cooperatively and that addressing these issues on a regional scale made sense.

—Tim Slaydon, Director of Utilities
Spotsylvania County, Virginia

products of the stakeholder process. Think long and hard before asking your stakeholders to take time out of their schedules to come to a meeting. Try to communicate information to stakeholders through a flyer, phone call relay, or web site. Reschedule agenda-less meetings for a later date when there will be more substantive information to discuss. This will show that you value stakeholders' time and will reinforce the notion that when a meeting is planned, it is because key issues will be discussed and their participation is required.

Consider holding your meetings in creative locations to provide an educational opportunity for the participants. This approach gives the stakeholders a sense that each meeting is like a field trip. Possible meeting sites include the community wastewater treatment plant (try to arrange for a tour), the local high school (have a science teacher or a student make a watershed-related presentation, someone's home (this creates a warm, social environment), the police station, the zoo, the Chamber of Commerce, a marina, or a funky local restaurant. The possibilities are endless.

11. **Give feedback and praise**. We all like to know if what we're doing is having any affect on the outcome of a process. Stakeholders are no different. Give feedback to the group to show them how their efforts are moving the process forward. Provide

The BBCC works to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and has fun at the same time

The Black Bear Conservation Committee was formed in 1992 to transform the image of a threatened species from a liability for landowners to an asset and to develop management plans for increasing bear habitat from the Tensas River in northeastern Louisiana southward to the Gulf. After convening an impressive group of more than 70 corporate, public agency, agricultural, environmental, private, and university organizations, the BBCC developed restoration goals.

Attention to the human, social element—typified by informal, congenial cookouts prior to focused meetings designed to seek consensus and resolve conflict—has been cited as one of the more remarkable features of the group. As BBCC coordinator Paul Davidson puts it, "If your meetings aren't any fun, nobody will come to them."

The Black Bear Conservation Committee focuses its efforts on areas of concern that other entities are unwilling or not equipped to address. There is no need for the BBCC to get involved in land acquisition when other organizational members are in that business.

The BBCC does excel in conflict management and educational efforts. "By not competing with other groups we help to perpetuate positive attitudes and keep our efforts prioritized so that we get the most return on our investment of time and limited resources."

—Paul Davidson, Black Bear Conservation Committee

everyone with articles written about the project, publish data that they collected, pass on positive feedback from key decision makers. After a key event or decision point, write a personal letter to the stakeholders thanking them for their participation. Highlight key activities and participation by the stakeholders. Recognize the members who make substantial contributions of time and energy. If you produce an internal newsletter, consider profiling a stakeholder in each issue. Use quotes from stakeholders in articles.

12. **Make it fun**. The issues you're dealing with are serious, but that doesn't mean you can't have fun. Often the best way to start building relationships within the group is through social activities. These allow group members to interact and learn about each other on a personal level and can help alleviate possible conflicts down the road. Remember that meetings are not the only forums available to communicate with your stakeholders. Periodically, invite stakeholders and their families to an event that is purely social. Throw a barbecue along the river, sponsor a canoe trip, or have a crab feast. This allows relationships to be built and shows that you appreciate their hard work.

An occasion for a purely social event can help build relationships between stakeholders.

Making decisions by consensus

Because many stakeholder groups use consensus as a basis for making decisions, this section provides some tips on basic facilitation techniques to prevent the process from getting bogged down and stagnating. It is often advisable to retain an outside facilitator to work through the consensus-building process or at least to have someone who is trained in facilitation and is perceived as a neutral party.

The definition of consensus is ***a decision that the group can live with***. Consensus is not a majority vote. It is important to remind the stakeholders that consensus does not necessarily mean that they are supporting their first choice, but they are willing to support the decision selected. When making decisions by consensus, you must indicate up front a fallback position if consensus can't reached. For example, "If we cannot reach consensus on the management options to pursue, the county will have to select the options," or "If we cannot reach consensus on which watershed projects to fund, we will vote and go with the majority decision."

The key to any consensus process is to get agreement on something. How many times have we had all of our ideas taped up on the wall of a meeting room but were unable to get closure on which ideas to pursue? This section briefly reviews how to build an agreement.

Open-Narrow-Close

Interaction Associates, Inc., has developed a useful model for reaching an agreement called *Open-Narrow-Close*. (See Section 7

When working with stakeholders . . .

Do . . .

Start early

Recognize differences

Achieve a broad representation

Communicate clearly and often

Be honest

Listen carefully

Build on successes

Commit resources to complete activities

Focus on issues that are important to them

Make it fun!

Don't . . .

Bring stakeholders in at the end of the project

Set unrealistic goals

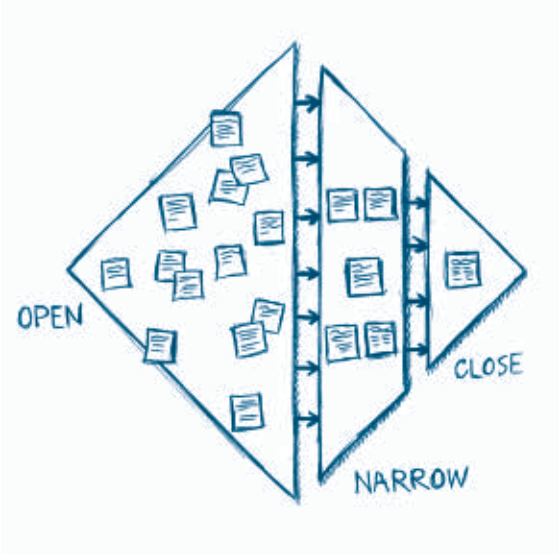
Leave out key stakeholders because they are difficult

for more information on Interaction Associates facilitation courses.) The basic steps to building an agreement are to gather or generate information (open), organize the information (narrow), and reach an agreement on the best approach (close).

Before opening the floor for ideas, it is sometimes helpful to identify the screening criteria you will apply during the narrowing phase. This helps to bring forward topics that focus on considerations related to the end result or key aspects of the overall goals and objectives. The screening criteria can be anything the group agrees to. Some common criteria include relative effectiveness, time limits, cost considerations, geographic focus, and the ability to measure results.

Using sticky notes

Many groups use sticky notes to generate and sort through ideas. Have each participant write down one idea per note and then post the ideas on large sheets of paper taped to the wall. This allows you to easily group the information into categories and sort and rank the information later.



Open

In the open phase the purpose is to generate ideas and stimulate discussion. It is important to stress to the group that you are not evaluating any ideas at this point. Approaches can include free-style brainstorming, going around the table and letting each person offer a suggestion, or starting with an initial list and having the group add to it. Taking turns and having people contribute one idea each time allows more people to participate, which promotes buy-in during the process.

Once all of the ideas have been generated, it is important to check back with the group to make sure everyone understands the ideas. If someone is confused, have the person who mentioned the idea explain it to the group. If your stakeholder group is a subset of a larger management effort, you may start the open phase with the proposed recommendations from the technical committee and then have the group add to them.

Narrow

During the narrowing phase you are trying to organize the information and get a sense of priorities. It is important to stress that no

Setting restoration project criteria in the state of Washington

The King County Engineering and Environmental Services Division developed the Small Habitat Restoration Program (SHRP) in response to disappearing spawning and rearing habitat for salmon, extreme bank and channel erosion, sedimentation in stream and wetland buffers, and water quality degradation.

To meet program goals, a Habitat Advisory Group established a set of guidelines for selecting projects.

These guidelines stated that projects should be located in or along natural stream systems and/or wetlands and their buffer zones; should originate from county staff members, the public, or community groups; should include as partners other groups, governments, volunteer organizations, and/or fish and wildlife agencies; and should be constructed primarily with Washington Conservation Corps crews and volunteers, using low-cost materials.

decisions will be made during this phase. The first task is to combine any obvious duplicates. Remember to ask the group if it's OK to combine issues. Sometimes what may seem obviously related to you is distinctly separate to someone in the group.

Techniques to organize the information include applying the screening criteria to the issues, grouping similar topics, taking straw votes, and giving each member a certain number of votes to rank their preferences. This can be done by raising hands or by giving them one or more stickers to place directly on the flip charts. This allows you to see which issues are the most active and which ones you can target for elimination in the next phase.

After you have used the narrowing techniques, it is important to allow the members a chance to advocate for a particular issue, even if it did not score very high in the ranking process. This allows members to express their views and provide background information that can sometimes change people's minds.

Once you have a sense of the participants' priorities, you can start the closing process.

Close
During the closure phase, you remove ideas until you are left with the best approach or choice. The objective is to start with the ideas that have received the least attention. Based on the prioritization in the narrow phase, you should already have an idea of the level of interest on the various topics.

Ideas can be removed by negative polling. For example, you ask the group, "Is there anyone not willing to remove number 5 from the list?" If there is no opposition, physically remove it and praise the group for making progress. Then, working from both ends (using straw votes or negative polling), try to determine which topics the group wants to keep and which ones can be eliminated.

When two or three topics remain, you'll probably have more discussion on the merits of each and can determine if these discussions influence the group. One option is the "build up/eliminate" approach, which asks what must be added to or removed from a particular topic for the stakeholders to support it. The "both/and" technique allows you to choose more than one option if the participants agree. Don't force yourself into choosing between two ideas if you don't have to. For example, if you're left with two potential watershed projects to fund, maybe both watershed projects can be funded, with the total funding split between the two efforts.

Bring everyone along together

When building agreements with stakeholder groups, it's important to make sure that everyone is on the "same page" and that every-

Different Ways to Generate Ideas

Propose
(limited opening)
Someone leads off the discussion

List
(moderate opening)
Let's list 4 or 5 items that we want to address

Brainstorm
(wide opening)
Let's get all our ideas out first

Narrowing the field of possibilities

Combine obvious duplicates
to eliminate redundancy

Prioritize by using N/3
number of ideas divided by 3 = the number of votes each person gets

Apply screening criteria

Use straw votes
show of hands

Advocate
allow anyone to advocate for an issue

Closing in on a final decision

Negative poll
Is there anyone not willing to take #5 off the list?

Build up/eliminate
What can we add to option B to make it work for you?

Straw poll
Let's get a quick show of hands. Who wants to keep this one?

Both/and
Can we go with both of these?

Example Showing Open-Narrow-Close in Action

Situation

Your watershed group (nine persons) has received $10,000 to fund a watershed project in the community. Which project do you fund? (Note: Techniques used are highlighted in **bold**.)

Screening Criteria:
- ✓ Project must be completed in a year.
- ✓ Project must contribute to an improvement in water quality.
- ✓ Project must occur in the West Fraser watershed.
- ✓ Project must be doable with $10,000.

Open

*"Let's **brainstorm** some projects that we can fund."*

1. Conduct storm-drain stenciling in the town of West Fraser.
2. Plant a riparian buffer along Goose Creek.
3. Fence off 20 miles of stream along the Malone Dairy Farm.
4. Conduct a training workshop to educate development contractors on erosion control practices.
5. Conduct stream sampling to determine levels of fecal coliforms in the West Fraser River and publicize the results in the media.
6. Hold a fall watershed festival.

Narrow

Combine any duplicates.
Apply screening criteria.
"Which projects don't meet the criteria?"
"Goose Creek is not in the West Fraser watershed." (Eliminates # 2.)
"The watershed festival doesn't really improve water quality." (Eliminates #6.)

Bob: *"I think we should leave in the erosion and sediment control workshop because even though there isn't a direct benefit to water quality, there is an indirect benefit."* (You **ask the group** to raise their hands if they would like to leave #4 up. The group agrees to leave #4 on the list.)

Vote for preferences: *"With the remaining projects, let's have everyone cast three votes for their choices"* (using **N/3**, 9 people divided by 3 = 3 votes each).

1. Conduct storm-drain stenciling in the town of West Fraser. (6 votes)
2. ~~Plant a riparian buffer along Goose Creek.~~
3. Fence off 20 miles of stream along the Malone Dairy Farm. (11 votes)
4. Conduct a training workshop to educate development contractors on erosion control practices. (2 votes)
5. Conduct stream sampling to determine levels of fecal coliforms in the West Fraser River and publicize the results in the media. (8 votes)
6. ~~Hold a fall watershed festival.~~

Advocate: *"Does anyone want to advocate for a particular issue?"*

Sheryl: *"I think fencing off the stream alongside the Malone farm makes the most sense. His farm is the largest dairy operation in the county and we already know that fecal coliforms and sedimentation are our biggest problems. A lot of that is probably caused by cattle grazing along the streams. But I think we need to do some sampling too, so we can see if fencing the cattle out improves the situation."*

Close

You are left with four choices and have to get to one. Based on the N/3 vote during the narrowing phase, you start with the choices that received the least attention.

Negative polling: *"Based on the discussions, is there anyone not willing to take #1 (storm-drain stenciling) off the list?"* (Agreement to eliminate #1.)

1. ~~Conduct storm-drain stenciling in the town of West Fraser.~~ (6 votes)
2. ~~Plant a riparian buffer along Goose Creek.~~
3. Fence off 20 miles of stream along the Malone Dairy Farm. (11 votes)
4. Conduct a training workshop to educate development contractors on erosion control practices. (2 votes)
5. Conduct stream sampling to determine levels of fecal coliforms in the West Fraser River and publicize the results in the media. (8 votes)
6. ~~Hold a fall watershed festival.~~

"OK, we're left with numbers 3, 4, and 5. I haven't heard too much discussion on #4. Is there anyone not willing to take #4 off the list?" (Agreement to remove #4.)

1. ~~Conduct storm-drain stenciling in the town of West Fraser.~~ (6 votes)
2. ~~Plant a riparian buffer along Goose Creek.~~
3. Fence off 20 miles of stream along the Malone Dairy Farm. (11 votes)
4. ~~Conduct a training workshop to educate development contractors on erosion control practices.~~ (2 votes)
5. Conduct stream sampling to determine levels of fecal coliforms in the West Fraser River and publicize the results in the media. (8 votes)
6. ~~Hold a fall watershed festival.~~

Both/and: *"OK, we're left with choices 3 and 5. Can we combine numbers 3 and 5 to fence off the stream and conduct coliform sampling at just the Malone Farm, to see if the fencing program works? We'll probably get some good results from the sampling that we could publicize in the media. It might make others fence off their streams."* (Agreement on amending and combining the two choices.)

Decision: The watershed group agrees to fund a $10,000 project to fence off 20 miles of stream next to the Malone Dairy Farm and monitor the river to determine the water quality results. Findings from the sampling program will be publicized in a feature newspaper article on the project.

one is moving through the process together. It's like leading a group on a field trip to an art museum. You have to wait for the stragglers to catch up before you can begin talking about the next painting. If you rush to the next issue without ensuring that the group is with you, you risk having to discuss a topic again or realizing that their concerns were not addressed and you have to go back to square one. Some common places in the process where you may get bogged down because you have lost part of the group include the following:

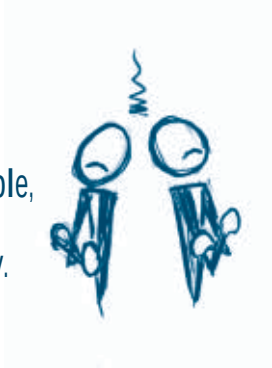
No commitment to the problem. If you don't get agreement on what the problems are at the beginning of the effort, the stakeholders may not feel that it's worth the investment of their time.

Poor problem definition statement. Sometimes the group jumps ahead and states the problem as a solution. For example, stating a problem as "there are no riparian buffers in the watershed" is a solution. The problem statement might be "Increased sedimentation and elevated temperatures in the stream." Once the problems are clearly identified, alternative solutions can be proposed.

Tip:

Avoid conflict by providing opportunities for stakeholders to interact at unstructured, informal social events. Watershed management is based on relationships among people. They need to get to know each other if they are to build a cooperative, coordinated watershed program.

Conflicts are inevitable, but not impossible to resolve constructively.



Resolving Conflict

Hopefully, by following the steps above you have reduced the chances for conflict to occur. You have structured an open, honest process, listened to stakeholder concerns, and communicated with the stakeholders clearly and often. But, invariably, when different personalities are involved and the stakes are high, conflict can result.

To resolve conflict, you must first uncover the underlying interests or needs that cause people to take a particular position on an issue. When those interests or needs are evident, it is often possible to deal with them constructively.

What is conflict?

Conflict results when people have different positions on an issue and they don't believe it's possible to reach an agreement.

Know the difference between a need and a position

Often a stakeholder will express his or her concerns in the form of a position. It is very difficult to make progress when working with conflicting positions. Try to get stakeholders to state their concerns in terms of needs. For example, if a farmer says that he refuses to fence off his streams, ask him what his needs are for his cows. That prompts him to state his concerns differently, providing you with some issues you might be able to work with.

Position: I won't fence off my streams.

Need: My cows need access to water.

In this example, if the need for water can be addressed, the farmer might be willing to consider having his stream fenced. Sifting through positions on issues to get to the underlying needs or interests can be a delicate process. Often, the need relates to financial issues—funding for management practices, training on sediment and erosion control,

incentives for setting aside riparian buffers, money to upgrade on-site wastewater treatment systems, etc.

Finding the resources to implement management strategies takes the energy of the entire stakeholder group. ☞Section 6 provides a brief overview of funding issues, but the best way to attract financial support is to build an energetic, unified stakeholder group committed to addressing the interests and needs of its members. Public and private entities like to fund projects with lots of local support and enthusiasm.

Establishing the real needs and concerns of stakeholders will help resolve conflicting positions.

Use your active listening skills

Active listening skills are crucial in identifying and resolving conflict. Some techniques to use include the following:

- **Clarify.** As a first step, have people state their positions and repeat them back to the group to make sure everyone is clear. *"John, could you restate your concerns for me?"*

- **Reflect.** Ask each party to restate the other's position. *"John, could you restate what Bob's concerns are about fencing off the streams on his farm?"*

Some general observations regarding conflict and conflict resolution

- ✓ Conflict is a natural and normal phenomenon and is associated with nearly all human relationships.
- ✓ There are several basic human needs that are especially pertinent to conflict and conflict resolution—the need for recognition, development or fulfillment, security, and identity.
- ✓ People get involved in conflicts because their interests or their values are challenged, or because their needs are not met.
- ✓ It is easy to resolve a conflict stemming from a clash of interests. It is more difficult to deal with a conflict that arises from a clash of values. It is even more difficult to handle a conflict in which at least one party's basic needs are not satisfied.
- ✓ It is extremely difficult for the parties to the conflict, even with outside assistance, to find a solution that would completely satisfy everyone's needs.
- ✓ Mediators, intermediaries, and other third parties can't resolve conflict – they can only facilitate involving the parties directly so they can resolve it themselves.
- ✓ Despite the limited role of facilitators, some conflicts cannot be resolved without their help. The involved parties' perceptions of each other and of the issues of the conflict can be so biased and so limiting that they cannot mutually satisfactory options even when they have the desire to settle their differences. It is in such cases that third parties can be the most helpful. By bringing to the conflict their own knowledge and experience, their own perspective, and, of course, their own power and leverage, they make previously unconsidered options visible and feasible.

Source: Dimostenis Yagcioglu

Top 5 reasons that teams fail

1. ***Team members don't influence and get support from key external stakeholders.***
2. ***Team members don't set appropriate goals for the team and then build and implement a plan for reaching them.***
3. ***Team members don't spend enough time planning how they will work together.***
4. ***Team members don't know how to reconcile differences or resolve interpersonal conflict.***
5. ***Team members don't conduct efficient meetings that produce results.***

Source: Interaction Associates

- **Ask open-ended questions** to have the group identify possible solutions to the conflict. *"What could Bob do so that his cows have access to water?"*

- **Accept/legitimize.** Show the participants that you understand the problem. *"I understand that Bob's cows need access to water and that John is concerned about the nitrogen loadings in the stream, which are causing the water quality violations."*

- **Build on small agreements.** This technique might include having participants agree to discuss the issue further without asking for a commitment. *"So, Bob and John, do you agree to meet with the extension agent to explore possibilities for getting your cows access to water? Great!"*

Separate beliefs from facts

Our view of the world is a product of our experiences and beliefs. Our beliefs include our values, perceptions, attitudes, and opinions. Sometimes we state our beliefs as facts and they contradict other people's beliefs, creating conflict. It is important to separate beliefs from facts to keep the discussion focused on the issues.

Belief: There is not enough water supply in the county to support future growth projections.

Fact: The current water supply in the county is 15 million gallons per day and the projected growth for the year 2020 is an additional 200,000 residents.

Turn the negative into a positive

When your stakeholders start talking about all of the problems with the process or stating reasons why something won't work, take a break and regroup. Often the group will build on negative energy

Three simple questions to improve the success of a meeting

When planning an important meeting, it is essential to consider input from stakeholders on what they expect and what they would like to see. Stakeholders are more likely to share responsibility for implementation and success if they have participated in planning the work, assigning tasks, and identifying the resources required. The sense of ownership that comes from participation usually generates more cooperation and a sense of shared ownership in both the process and the product. Three simple questions to ask stakeholders when preparing for a meeting are:

- ✓ What are your hopes for this meeting?
- ✓ What are your concerns, if any?
- ✓ What advice do you have to help make this meeting successful… is there anything else I should know about the meeting or the issues we'll be discussing?

Source: Interaction Associates

Dealing with negative people

One of the challenges watershed programs face in developing a collaborative and open environment is dealing with negative people. This becomes an even larger issue in meetings. The following tips can help the leader and the group deal effectively with people who may become disillusioned or dissatisfied with group progress or otherwise create impediments to reaching consensus and implementing selected water quality improvement strategies:

- ✓ Make sure participants have a vested interest in the meeting topic and understand their role. They are more likely to be active and cooperative
- ✓ Communicate the scope of the meeting clearly, to set expectations at the appropriate level
- ✓ Establish the process to be followed at the beginning of the meeting and stick with it
- ✓ Model a positive and receptive attitude, whether you're the facilitator, meeting leader, or participant
- ✓ Address objections or concerns directly and involve the group in dealing with them
- ✓ Seek to understand all participant points of view by asking probing questions like "How do you see this problem? What do you think is happening? How is the situation affecting your group?"

Source: Interaction Associates

being generated, so you'll want to try to steer the members toward something positive. Try asking the group to state their issues in terms of what they would like to see. Make them lead off with the statement *"I would like to see . . ."*.

Example: *"This won't work because there are too many agency staff at the table."*

Restatement: *"I would like to see greater representation from non-profit groups and other organizations that should be participating in the process."*

This approach enables them to take one step toward a solution, instead of dwelling on all of the barriers. If you had the foresight to conduct an initial visioning exercise (☞see Section 4, Conducting the first meeting), it's a good idea to revisit the vision statement and talk about it again. Such a discussion can help to cast things in a new light and broaden the perspective on current issues under debate.

Focus on the positive.

Focus on the common goals

The looming threat of regulatory or other legal action, though often viewed as a negative, sometimes provides a powerful impetus to seek consensual solutions. Focusing the group on the vision or overall goal expressed initially and seeking to accommodate interests

Regulatory action sometimes provides a common goal for a stakeholder group.

rather than positions can help spark creative, "outside-the-box" solutions that break through disagreement and past baggage.

For example, environmental groups in Kentucky and other states have actively lobbied for cost-share support for livestock waste treatment systems and other expensive management practices to help ease the burden for complying with clean water initiatives on the farm. Coalitions of groups that seemed to be at odds in the past are powerful forces for changing policies and building support for implementing management strategies in the watershed.

It should be noted that focusing on impending regulatory action as the sole (or most important) reason for developing a watershed management plan can backfire with stakeholders. Warnings that the planning process must proceed because "if we don't do it, the government will" can cause resentment and unnecessary ill will.

The Six Habits of Merely Effective Negotiators

James K. Sebenius, writing in the April 2001 Harvard Business Review, summarizes the "Six Habits of Merely Effective Negotiators:"

1. Neglecting the other side's problem: If you want to change someone's mind, you first have to learn where that person's mind is. Solving the other side's problem as a means to solving your own requires understanding and addressing your counterpart's problem.
2. Letting cost/price bulldoze other interests: While price/cost is an important factor in many transactions, it's rarely the only one. Wise negotiators put the vital issue of price in perspective and don't straitjacket their views of the richer interests at stake.
3. Letting positions drive out interests: Three elements are at play in a negotiation: issues are on the table for explicit agreement, positions are one party's stand on the issues, and interests are the underlying concerns that would be affected. The goal should be to meet both sets of interests through joint problem solving so that an agreement can be reached. Probing behind the positions to flush out interests makes that possible.
4. Searching too hard for common ground: Common ground helps in negotiating agreements, but differences will drive the details of the deal. Flushing out differences (especially in interests) related to the terms of an agreement can unbundle them so each can be dealt with individually within the context of the overall agreement.
5. Neglecting BATNAs: The "best alternative to a negotiated agreement" reflects the course of action a party would take if an agreement is not possible. BATNAs set the threshold that any acceptable agreement must exceed, i.e., both parties must do better than their BATNAs or an agreement is unlikely. Knowing the BATNAs of your side and those of your counterpart will help you to define the level of benefits that must come from the agreement.
6. Failing to correct for skewed vision. The psychology of perception can lead to major errors during a negotiation. Getting too committed to your own (probably exaggerated) point of view, i.e., being too self-serving in your analysis of the facts, and failing to accurately assess your counterpart's position are both common problems in negotiations. Seeking the views of outside, uninvolved parties is useful in addressing this phenomenon, as is reverse role-playing.

—Harvard Business Review, April 2001

Section 6:

Beyond the Stakeholder Group

What's in Section 6?

- Establishing independent watershed management groups
- Organization types
- Securing funding
- A final thought . . .

Many stakeholder involvement processes are initiated by public agencies to accomplish a specific task or fulfill a legal or other mandate. Once the initial objective has been satisfied, however, stakeholder groups often coalesce into long-term partnerships to implement watershed plans or otherwise assist with management efforts.

Establishing independent watershed management groups

Establishing a separate, self-supporting entity to conduct watershed assessment, planning, and management tasks has several advantages. These entities are by definition locally led, inclusive, and able to respond quickly to requests for information, support, training, or management assistance. Public agencies often find it difficult to provide close, on-the-ground support to the dozens—or even hundreds—of groups representing local interests. Providing assistance to establish and maintain these groups complements river basin-scale management activities and distributes the workload among more partners.

The most critical issues to consider when shifting from an agency-supported effort to a more inclusive, independent approach are organizational structure and funding. Watershed groups can range in structure from informal, ad hoc advisory groups to incorporated entities with hired staff and multiple programs. Obviously, the resources available to the watershed group will dictate its capacity for action. Money, volunteers, and donations of office space and other resources can support a broad variety of activities.

Defining the organizational structure and accessing resources are important considerations when moving from an agency-led approach with local support to a locally led approach with agency support. The following section outlines some issues to consider when establishing long-term watershed management programs.

Organization types

There are two basic types of organizations, formal and informal. Formal organizations are those established by law, initiated through formal public agency action, or incorporated under the laws of a state. Most watershed groups that are formally organized are nonprofit corporations; that is, they are incorporated under the laws of their state and meet the charitable, educational, scientific, or other requirements outlined for tax-exempt corporations under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code.

Nonprofit corporations

Setting up a nonprofit corporation is not difficult, and many excellent books and web sites are available to help with the process. The first step, establishing the corporation, involves filing articles of incorporation with the secretary of state and paying a filing fee. The articles outline the purpose, membership, and other organizational aspects of the corporation, including the names and contact information for the officers. (Sample articles of incorporation are posted on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits' Web site at http://www.mncn.org/articles.htm.)

The second step, securing tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service, takes a little more time. Federal IRS reviewers conduct a thorough review of the application and supplemental materials to ensure that the organization will operate within the bounds of federal law. Up to 6 months—and longer in some cases—is needed for the review process, so applicants are urged to submit their materials long before their tax exempt status needs to be finalized.

Although some work is involved in setting up a nonprofit organization, there are significant benefits. Tax-exempt corporations are eligible for a wide variety of public and private grant and contract funding programs, and they can serve as the vehicle for funneling resources to smaller groups involved in monitoring, assessment, or implementing management practices. For example, nonprofit basin groups in many states operate mini-grant programs to fund projects conducted by smaller, unincorporated groups. These groups could not access grant funds without a nonprofit "sponsor."

Information on the specifics of forming a tax-exempt organization is available on the IRS's Internet site at http://www.irs.gov/bus_info/eo/exempt-req.html.

Ad hoc stakeholder groups

Although instituting a long-term watershed management program by establishing a nonprofit corporation builds quite a bit of capacity for action, ad hoc groups can still accomplish a lot. These groups can range from a handful of people who write letters or otherwise advocate improvements for a river or lake to large, highly organized watershed activist groups that conduct high-profile events, collect

and spend money, sponsor monitoring programs, and develop sophisticated basin management plans.

Ad hoc groups often "will themselves into existence" in response to some real or perceived threat to a water resource. Some function for years, expanding and receding in tandem with the ebb and flow of interest in the resource and the ongoing public assessment of whatever is threatening it. There is no established criterion or benchmark for deciding when to incorporate an ad hoc group and apply for tax-exempt status. The most frequently used yardstick is eligibility for funding. Nonprofit corporations qualify for support from public agencies, private foundations, and other sources. Ad hoc groups can solicit money from organizations and individuals, but there are no tax advantages for those who donate and many grant and other program funds are not available to ad hoc groups.

Though funds earmarked for nonprofit corporations are not directly available to ad hoc groups, such groups can often find a sponsor that will serve as a vehicle for funneling money to their projects. Unincorporated groups working on contaminated coal mine drainage, establishment of riparian buffers, streambank restoration, and other issues frequently attach themselves to an existing nonprofit or even a public agency (e.g., resource conservation district, county soil and water conservation board) to access funds for special projects. This approach avoids the bureaucratic hassles of setting up a separate corporation and applying for tax-exempt status and allows those involved to focus on the project rather than on organizational issues. The sponsoring organization benefits from the involvement of a group of energetic, motivated individuals and action on projects within its sphere of interest, making this approach a win-win approach for everyone. Support from ad hoc groups and citizen volunteers is often used as a cost-share or matching support for grant programs.

Ad hoc groups can access funding through existing nonprofit or public agencies.

Finally, don't ignore the value of convening informal focus groups or task forces when no formal or even ad hoc organization exists. Public agencies and statewide or regional nonprofits often call together small groups of citizens and stakeholders to review management proposals, assist with specific projects, provide information to

Minnesota nonprofit sponsors stakeholder river forums

In 1992, the Land Stewardship Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustainable agriculture and sustainable communities, set out to build a citizen constituency for the Minnesota River. With $44,000 from the McKnight Foundation, Clean Up Our River Environment (CURE) pulled together farmers, townspeople, community leaders, youth groups, and environmentalists to create one of the strongest and most influential grassroots organizations in the Minnesota River basin. After successfully intervening to prevent a river-straightening project on one tributary, CURE formed a partnership with other local groups to address similar problems in another tributary.

—Sylvia Paine, CURE, (612) 333-4220

The myth of "bottom-up" efforts

The University of Wisconsin found in its Four Corners Watershed Innovators Initiative that "there is a myth that the watershed movement consists of spontaneous 'bottom-up' local efforts that find alternatives to the rigidity of intransigent bureaucracies and one-size-fits-all solutions." Researchers noted that "the governmental role is generally critical to successful watershed approaches, particularly if plans and solutions proposed by watershed groups are to be implemented."

State agencies are important resources for funding and implementation of watershed projects.

others, or conduct similar activities. Nurturing these groups for a few months or years can lead to the establishment of a more self-sufficient ad hoc or incorporated entity in the long term and provides valuable information and service in the short term.

Securing funding

Regardless of the organizational type, watershed partnerships require coordinated action among state agencies, local interest groups, and other stakeholders. Many local organizations, however, lack the technical capacity, administrative assistance, and infrastructure to adequately support watershed outreach, protection, and restoration initiatives after the planning work has been completed.

State-funded support

States have stepped in to provide resources to local groups rich in commitment and interest but lacking financial support. For example, Massachusetts, Washington, California, Oregon, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and more than two dozen other states provide grants or other assistance to nonprofit groups so local efforts can be maintained over the long term. The Wyoming legislature created and funded a citizen monitoring program in the late 1990s, which is operated by county soil and water conservation districts. Regional water management districts in Florida support local stewardship group efforts to build technical capacity and coordinate activities.

These support programs pay rich dividends in providing volunteers for restoration projects, monitoring data, outreach efforts, educational initiatives, resource coordination, and identification of potential problems. This approach recognizes that agency staff cannot and should not be driving hundreds of local projects across a state simultaneously, and is viewed as an efficient, productive use of public funds.

States are discovering new, creative ways to develop flexible funding programs and management policies that support and enhance local stakeholder-driven watershed initiatives. In Washington, for example, a landmark 1998 law requires state agencies to adopt rules and ordinances that ensure locally developed watershed plans are implemented. In practice, such an approach means that management of state land—parks, wildlife refuges, conservation areas, and so forth—must be consistent, to the maximum degree possible, with watershed partnership plans and policies.

The USEPA Office of Water publishes a funding guide for watershed groups (see http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/funding.html), and most states provide assistance to organizations seeking funds for watershed projects. As the level of financial support and staffing increases, partnerships must be careful to avoid minimizing the role of volunteers. The energy and creativity of interested, committed

local residents bring a vitality and drive to a partnership that is difficult to replace.

Accessing non-cash resources

Although having staff and funds committed solely to the activities of the partnership may represent the ideal to some, many watershed groups have adopted creative and effective ways to access resources without dedicated funding. The rapid growth of volunteer monitoring programs over the past two decades has increased available water quality data by an order of magnitude in some states. Early concerns over data quality have diminished considerably over the years, though appropriate data quality objectives, program goals, design, training, and quality assurance/control remain critical to success.

The most effective approach for acquiring and deploying resources seems to be the case-specific cobbling together of available technical, financial, and human resources that characterizes most partnerships. Several states facilitate this approach by authorizing agencies to participate in monitoring programs, restoration initiatives, and local planning/management activities. More than a dozen states have created statewide watershed management frameworks designed to support and coordinate the actions of local partnerships. Creativity and cooperation remain the best assets for any watershed group seeking resources.

Of course, embracing this approach means things will be done differently. Risks will be taken at times, and some failures or at least setbacks are inevitable. A lot of activity will occur "on the fly," and some managers may initially be uncomfortable proceeding rapidly without the standard memoranda of agreement, committee meetings, and memos from upper management.

But "if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got," as the old saying goes. Government can take some guidance from the private sector when it comes to conceiving

Idaho "Adopt-A-Wetland" Program gains momentum

Idaho Fish and Game is using the Adopt-A-Wetland Program to protect the state's wetland area. Fish and Game Director Steve Mealey believes that the program provides "an opportunity to accomplish some tasks that we can no longer do, or cannot do well, because of budget and manpower cuts." Supporting and promoting local groups interested in wetland wildlife and habitat issues helps state outreach efforts and builds local capacity for wetland protection and restoration.

—Idaho Fish and Game, (208) 334-3700

Stretching monitoring resources in the Bluegrass State

The state of Kentucky adopted a five-stage watershed management framework several years ago, but like many states did not have the resources to conduct comprehensive assessments in each major river basin. A nonprofit citizens group obtained a small amount of funding from private sources and approached state agency officials to conduct a volunteer monitoring project outside the existing agency monitoring program. The volunteer monitoring program was a tremendous success: agency staff noted a tenfold increase in the amount of screening information available on the Kentucky River watershed. The volunteer program has been extended into the other basins under study, and state officials have successfully engaged additional agencies, public utilities, and organizations in its growing basin assessment program.

and implementing bold, creative projects supported by a wide variety of people. The philosophy statement at New England Securities is particularly instructive:

- Experiment, take risks. Don't play it safe.
- Make mistakes. Don't try to avoid them.
- Take initiative. Don't wait for instructions.
- Shoot for total quality. Don't shave standards.
- Focus on opportunities, not problems.
- Take personal responsibility for fixing things.
- Don't blame others for what you don't like.
- Try easier, not harder. Stay calm.
- Smile! Have fun!

A final thought . . .

Well that's it. As we said at the beginning of this guide, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to stakeholder involvement. Although engaging and involving stakeholders may be a long and sometimes frustrating process, it's still the best way to conduct comprehensive watershed assessments, identify and target problems, implement remediation strategies, and institute long-term management strategies.

Under the stakeholder approach, all the heavy lifting is moved to the front end of the process so things move more quickly later on. Remember: *go slow to go fast*. And smile! Have fun!

Smile and have fun!

Section 7:

Resources

This section provides resources, web sites, and contacts for finding more information about stakeholder activities. The resources are loosely grouped by topics.

Contacts

1999 State and Regional Watershed Contacts: Nonpoint Source
This directory lists more than 350 people from state and federal agencies who can answer nonpoint source water pollution questions. Agencies include Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center, 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

National Directory of Volunteer Environmental Monitoring Programs
This fifth edition publication highlights 772 volunteer programs located around the country engaged in monitoring stream, lakes, estuaries, ground water, coral reefs, wetlands, beaches, and adjacent land areas. Available from EPA's National Service Center for Environmental Publications and Information at USEPA/NSCEP, PO Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH 45242, (800) 490-9198 or visit their web site at http://www.epa.gov/ncepihom.

Case studies

Baton Creek and Springs: A Case Study
This 15-page handbook guides the reader through the successful protection campaign of Barton Creek and Springs, Texas. It creates a model for taking the watershed perspective, developing a campaign, and raising money. Available from the Rivernetwork, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207, (800) 423-6747 or from their web site at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

What's in Section 7?

- Contacts
- Case studies
- How-to guides
- Web sites

Wetland and Watersheds: Six Case Studies
This report include case studies from local governments in a variety of natural environments. The case studies provide ideas for restoration, funding, building partnerships, and working with regulatory agencies. Available from the International City/Council Management Association , 777 North Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002, (800) 745-8780 or visit the bookstore on their web site at http://www.icma.org.

How-to guides

Bridge Builder: A Guide for Watershed Partnerships
This handbook emphasizes the success of the watershed partnerships. It includes transparencies, checklists, and exercises designed make the facilitation of watershed planning and management easier. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

Chesapeake Bay Community Action Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide to Improving the Environment in Your Neighborhood
This guide includes ideas and information on watershed enhancement projects, including storm drain stenciling, reforestation and tree care, and much more. Contact the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Information Center, 777 North Capitol St. NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002-4239, (202) 962-6270.

The Clean Water Act: An Owners' Manual
This valuable handbook explains the complex Clean Water Act in an easy-to-read manner and enables local watershed organizations to use the act to their advantage. It provides information on many sections of the act including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and the components of a state's water quality standards. Available from the River Network, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, #1130, Portland, OR, 97207, (503) 241-3506, or on the web at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

Community Culture and the Environment: A Guide to Understanding a Sense of Place
This is both a guidance document and training course developed by USEPA to support the social and cultural aspects of community-based environmental protection approaches. The Guide provides a process and set of tools for defining the human dimension of an environmental issue. Based on social science theory and methodologies (sociology, cultural anthropology, political science), the Guide and associated training modules can be used by government and communities to identify environmental issues of concern. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002. EPA 842-B-01-003.

Conflict Resolution Guidebook
Conflict is a part of any normal watershed partnership. This guidebook illustrates effective techniques for managing and resolving conflict situations. Through the use of six steps developed to resolve conflict, it helps to develop skills to manage and control conflicts. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547.

Conservation Partners Field Guide
This guide is for partnering public and private organizations for natural resource conservation. It includes an overview of projects and partnerships and sections on funding partners and getting started. Available from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Training and Education, National Publications Unit, Rt. 1 Box 166, Shepherdstown, WV 25443, (304) 876-7203.

Cross Cultural Watershed Partners Activities Manual
This guidebook contains suggestions and activities to create a cross-cultural exchange using watershed themes. Available from Earth Force, Inc., 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, 2nd Floor, Alexandria, VA 22301 or from their web site at http://www.earthforce.org/green.

Culvert Action: How to Interest Your Local Media in Polluted Runoff Issues
This manual is geared toward anyone seeking to educate the public about polluted runoff. It describes methods of communication through newspaper, radio, and television. Available from the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, (925) 935-1978.

Designing an Effective Communication Program: A Blueprint for Success
This handbook helps watershed partnership leaders through each step involved in designing an effective communication program. It covers areas such as designing a program and increasing the effectiveness of communication materials. Available through the University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources and Environment, Ann Arbor, MI 48109, (734) 764-6453.

Direct Mail Guidebook
Direct mail marketing can be a powerful tool and a good form of communication. This manual contains guidance on how to tailor your messages to various audience and how to write an effective direct mail letter. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547 or their web site at http://www.nacdnet.org/publications.

Essential Facilitation: Core Skills for Guiding Groups
This workbook is part of a training series sponsored by Interaction Associates. For more information about their workshops contact

them at Interaction Associates, 600 Townsend Street, Suite 550, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 241-8000.

Getting In Step: A Pathway to Effective Outreach in Your Watershed
The guide provides tools needed to develop and implement an effective watershed outreach plan. The guide provides information on developing an outreach plan, tips and examples for developing and enhancing outreach materials, and tips on working with the news media to accomplish outreach goals. To download a copy of the guide visit http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed or call the Council of State Governments at (859) 244-8000.

Guide to Winning a River Protection Campaign
A clean, simple, and graphic outline for watershed organizations to use when creating and implementing a river protection campaign. Available from the Rivernetwork, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207, (800) 423-6747 or from their web site at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

Handbook for Wetlands Conservation and Sustainability
This 220-page publication is filled with information on wetland ecosystems and how to start a wetland stewardship program. This guide offers information on case studies of volunteer conservation efforts nationwide. Available from the Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878, (800) 453-5463 or visit their web site at http://www.iwla.org.

How to Save a River
How to Save a River provides an overview of the resource issues involved in river protection. It defines the general principles of action, including getting organized, planning a campaign, building public support, and putting the plan into action. It also includes examples of successful river protection campaigns and suggested resources for further information. Available from the Rivernetwork, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207, (800) 423-6747 or from their web site at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

Information Gathering Techniques Guidebook
Watershed partnerships need to understand their audience before attempting to market their project. This guidebook explains the mechanics of using several techniques, such as focus groups, interviews, and surveys for collecting useful information on a potential audience. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547.

The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits
This workbook is for organizations and watershed campaigns that want to create successful communications strategies. It helps nonprofit organizations enhance their profiles, increase name recognition, boost

fund-raising, and recruit members. Available from Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 433-1740 or visit their web site at http://www.josseybass.com.

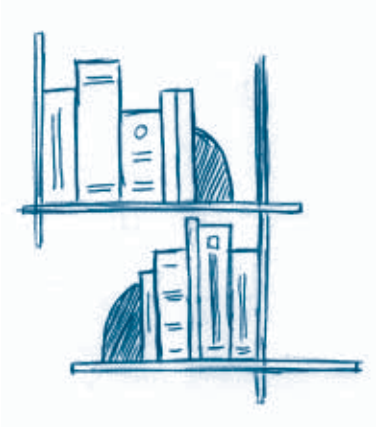
Lake Smarts: The First Lake Maintenance Handbook: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Solving Lake Problems
This how-to manual describes many lake improvement projects that are field-tested, easy, and affordable. It also outlines common lake problems and solutions and how to find and cost out equipment. Available from the Terrene Institute, 4 Herbert Street, Alexandria, VA 22305, (800) 726-4853 or visit their web page at http://www.terrene.org.

Leadership Identification Guidebook
Leadership is an important part of any successful conservation partnership. This publication provides information on how to identify community leaders and to involve them in promoting the goals of a watershed partnership. It describes group dynamics and the facilitation skills required to get the most out of each meeting. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547.

Marketing for Conservation Success
This brochure helps illustrate the need to strengthen partnership relationships and enhance a conservation program. It highlights examples of efforts across the country that are using marketing techniques to communicate their conservation messages. It also describes the seven stages of a marketing plan and how to get the most out of marketing efforts. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547.

Marketing the Environment: Achieving Sustainable Behavior Change through Marketing
This guide uses commercial marketing techniques to create lasting behavior change. It includes tools, steps to develop a marketing plan, and lots of references. Available from the Huron River Watershed Council at (734) 769-5123.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Public Involvement Handbook
This handbook provides useful information on community participation and guidance for enhancing the public's trust, managing conflict that might arise, and developing and carrying out a public involvement program. Also included is a section of ideas and techniques that can be applied to a variety of situations. This handbook is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Forum Place, 555 Walnut Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101.



Protecting and Restoring Watersheds: A Tribal Approach to Salmon Recovery
The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission developed this guidebook to describe their effective approach to watershed restoration consistent with tribal restoration philosophy. It includes information on watershed assessments and protection, monitoring, and active and passive recreation. Available from The Watershed Department, Colombia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, 729 Northeast Oregon, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97232, (503) 238-0667.

Reaching Out to Minority Groups Guidebook
This publication helps to build productive relationships with minority groups. It describes some considerations and potential challenges to promoting a watershed program. Available from the National Association of Conservation Districts, Service Center, PO Box 855, League City, TX 77574, (800) 825-5547.

River Friendly Farmer Kit
This program was first developed for use in Minnesota and is ideal for almost any watershed partnership interested in helping farmers improve their watershed. The watershed organization sets the standard for the farmer who gets an award and presents that farmer a sign to celebrate his or her efforts. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

River Talk! Communicating a Watershed Message
This manual assists river and watershed advocates interested in encouraging key sectors of their community to effectively design a watershed-friendly future together. It guides the reader through developing a communication plan, to identifying an audience, to creating and promoting a message. Available from the River Network, 520 SW Sixth Avenue, #1130, Portland, Oregon 97204, (503) 241-3506 or on the web at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

Sourcebook for Watershed Education
This tool is geared toward communities working to improve education and the environment. It helps to organize a self-sustaining watershed education program by providing information on recruiting volunteers, developing funding strategies, connecting community resources to program needs, and creating program assessment plans. Available from Earth Force, Inc., 1908 Mt. Vernon Avenue, 2nd Floor, Alexandria, VA 22301 or from their web site at http://www.earthforce.org/green.

Starting Up: A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations
Newly formed watershed organizations can use this tool to design an effective program. This 350-page handbook was based on the

experiences of dozens of leaders in the watershed conservation movement. It includes information on choosing a name, developing a mission statement, creating a budget, and much more. Available from the Rivernetwork, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207, (800) 423-6747 or from their web site at http://www.rivernetwork.org.

Stormwater Strategies: Community Responses to Runoff Pollution
This report describes almost 100 case studies of communities that have demonstrated strategies to prevent and control urban stormwater pollution. Projects include urban retrofitting, volunteer monitoring, and storm drain stenciling. Available from the Natural Resources Defense Council Publications Department, 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, (212) 727-2700, or visit their web site at http://www.nrdc.org.

Top Ten Hints for Successful Watershed Management
This article is ideal for use in publications or newsletters. It lists 10 suggestions from successful watershed coordinators. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center, 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

Walk Your Watershed Festival Organizing Kit
This kit outlines how to get started, choose activities, find volunteers, and secure financial support. Helpful tools include checklists, a model watershed festival program, a sample press release, and a Walk Your Watershed logo. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

Water Works: Your Neighbors Share Ideas on Working in Partnership for Clean Water
The idea behind this publication is to try to provide some useful information that may help you through the process of forming, building, and sustaining a community group to protect and improve water resources. Many success stories are showcased throughout the text. This resource, published in 1997, is available through the Tennessee Valley Authority, 400 West Summit Hill Drive, Knoxville, TN, (423) 632-2101.

A Watershed Approach to Urban Runoff: Handbook for Decisionmakers Guide
This guide outlines the process for understanding your watershed and the watershed management approach to assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating. It provides an overview of assessment and management tools as well as detailed insights into structural and nonstructural best management practices and sample site plans. Available from the Terrene Institute, 4 Herbert Street, Alexandria,

VA 22305, (800) 726-4853 or visit their web site at http://www.terrene.org.

Watershed Conflict Resolution: Some Guiding Principles
This 11-page booklet recognizes that conflicts with watershed policies are inevitable. This publication can help make a watershed policy conflict productive. Available from Cornell University Resource Center, 7 Business & Technology Park, Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 255-2080 or order online at http://www.cce.cornell.edu/publications/soil-water.html.

Watershed Issues Resolution
This 16-minute video uses the experiences of six individuals to illustrate how they helped citizens and governmental agencies work together to protect a watershed. Available from Cornell University Resource Center, 7 Business & Technology Park, Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 255-2080 or order online at http://www.cce.cornell.edu/publications/soil-water.html.

Watershed Management: A Policy-Making Primer
This guidebook includes information on how to address wildlife habitats, wetland preservation, development, and land-use impacts while managing a watershed. It also highlights questions that must be addressed in policy-making. Available from Cornell University Resource Center, 7 Business & Technology Park, Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 255-2080 or order online at http://www.cce.cornell.edu/publications/soil-water.html.

Watershed Management Starter Kit

This complete kit includes five guides (*Getting to Know Your Watershed, Building Local Partnerships, Putting Together a Watershed Management Plan, Managing Conflict*, and *Leading and Communicating*) and a 13-minute video (*Partnerships for Watersheds*), 10 companion brochures, and an application to the National Watershed Network. In other words, it includes everything you need to get a watershed management partnership started. Available from the Conservation Technology Information Center, 1220 Potter Drive, Suite 170 W, Lafayette, IN 47906, (765) 494-9555 or visit their web site at http://www.ctic.purdue.edu.

Watershed Partnerships: A Strategic Guide for Local Conservation Efforts in the West
This guidance manual is targeted toward westerners interested in choosing and fine-tuning their watershed approach. It provides valuable information on how to organize, start, and maintain a watershed partnership. Available from the Western Governors Association, 1515 Cleveland Place, Suite 200, Denver, CO, 80202, (303) 623-9378 or visit their web site at http://www.westgov.org.

Watershed Protection: A Project Focus
This document provides a blueprint for designing and implementing

watershed projects. It includes sections on defining problems, setting goals, and measuring success. It illustrates how the broader principles of watershed management, including all federal, state, tribal, local, and private activities, can be brought to bear on water quality and ecological concerns. Publication number: EPA 841-R-95-003 (August 1995). Available from the National Center for Environmental Publications 11029 Kenwood Road, Bldg 5, Cincinnati, OH 45242, (800) 910-9198 or order online at http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/info/PubList/comments.html.

Web sites

Watershed Partnership Information

http://www.biodiversityproject.org
The Biodiversity Project. This web site contains useful outreach information for environmental projects, such as fact sheets on creating effective messages, obtaining grants, and public opinion research firms.

http://www.earthforce.org/green
Global Rivers Environmental Education Network. This web site contains valuable information and tools to educate a community about the benefits of a healthy watershed. The Network has many publications available to assist a watershed improvement program.

http://www.lwv.org/where/protecting/wetlands_cep.html
League of Women Voters Wetland Citizens Education Program. This site describes local wetlands education and enhancement projects developed and implemented by members of the League.

http://www.rivernetwork.org
The River Network. This web site is dedicated to supporting river and watershed advocates. It provides on-line resources and information for funding opportunities and fund-raising ideas. It also contains a comprehensive publication list for further information.

http://www.iwla.org/SOS
Save Our Streams. This program was developed by the Izaak Walton League of America 30 years ago. This valuable web site offers helpful informational tools for an effective watershed improvement project. Publications, videos, a stream monitoring and restoration database, curriculum ideas, and a newsletter are offered.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/lessons
Top Ten Watershed Lessons Learned. This site was developed by EPA's Office of Water. Drawn from the experiences of more than 100 watershed practitioners and those who support them, this valuable web site provides insight into important lessons learned and details about what works and what doesn't.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore.htm
EPA Office of Water's River Corridors and Wetlands Restoration. This web site includes information on the benefits of a restoration project and an area to list your own project. It also describes different watershed improvement programs across the nation that are part of its Five Star Restoration Programs.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/acad2000
EPA's Office of Water developed this web site to use the Internet as a classroom for watershed education. The site contains training modules on watershed science, effective communications, and organizational management and development. The modules address many important topics, including watershed management, monitoring, and restoration.

http://watershed.org/wmchome
The Watershed Management Council. Click on "Recommended Watershed Terminology" to view the proper words to use (and avoid) when crafting your outreach materials.

http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/focus
Watershed Protection: A Project Focus. Check out this site to view an interactive handbook that provides a blueprint for designing and implementing watershed projects. It includes sections on defining problems, setting goals, and measuring success. It illustrates how the broader principles of watershed management, including all federal, state, tribal, local, and private activities, can be brought to bear on water quality and ecological concerns.

http://www.westgov.org
The Western Governor's Association. The Western Governor's Association consists of governors from western states who identify and address key environmental and public issues. This site outlines current initiatives and provides access to the Association's many publications.

Information about Your Watershed

http://www.epa.gov/adopt
Adopt Your Watershed. Check out this site, developed by the USEPA, to learn more about watersheds, add your watershed group to their catalogue, use their helpful resources and links, and participate in a chat room.

http://www.ocrm.nos.noaa.gov/cpd/welcome.html
Coastal Programs Division. This site was created by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to summarize Coastal Zone Management Programs around the nation. It offers an interactive map to learn more about a coastal state's program.

http://www.endangered.fws.gov
Endangered Species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service created this page to keep the public informed of the endangered species list and any applicable current events. This site contains the current list of endangered species searchable by state.

http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa
National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program. The U.S. Geological Survey monitors 59 study units in rivers and streams around the nation. Check out this site for their findings on many pollutants, including pesticides, nutrients, and volatile organic compounds.

http://water.usgs.gov/nwsum/index.html
National Water Summary on Wetlands. Check out this site, developed by the U.S. Geological Survey, to learn more about wetlands. It includes articles on wetlands, such as technical aspects, management and research, and restoration. It also lists state USGS representatives who can be contacted for more information.

http://www.epa.gov/305b
The Quality of Our Nation's Water, 305(b) Water Quality Report. This site was developed by the EPA's Office of Water and includes the National Water Quality Inventory reports to Congress. Reports from 1994, 1996, and 1998; fact sheets; and the report brochure are also included in this site.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore
Rivers Corridors and Restoration. Check out this site to get information on other river restoration efforts in your state. New projects can also be posted on this site, and worthy projects are given a five star award.

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/protect/swap.html
State Source Water Assessment and Protection Programs: Guidance and Implementation. EPA's Office of Water developed this site to disseminate information on each state's source water assessment program to protect drinking water. This site includes information on background and general information on the program, the status of each state's program, and a contact list.

http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/STORET
The STORET web site was developed by EPA's Office of Water to disseminate raw water quality data, where and when it was obtained, sampling methods used, and the laboratory used to analyze the sample. This site also offers information on how to join and use the STORET database.

http://www.epa.gov/surf
Surf Your Watershed. The EPA created this site to enable citizens to locate and check on the health of their watersheds, identify current restoration efforts, obtain real-time water quality data for participa-

ting states, and much more. This site also offers state contacts for further information.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl
Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program. A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards and the allocation of that amount to the pollutant's sources. This site includes general and state-specific information on TMDLs, provided by EPA's Office of Water.

http://www.epa.gov/win
Watershed Information Network. This site offers step-by-step interactive guide for watershed program coordinators to help them get started. It includes information on how to get started, offers avenues for financial and technical assistance, and explains important water-related laws.

Other Watershed Programs

http://www.centralcoastsalmon.com
Central Coast Salmon Enhancement's web page contains information on the organization, its accomplishments, and restoration efforts. Newsletters are also available on this site.

http://www.crcwater.org/crcwho.html
The Chehalis River Council was formed to lead the implementation of the Chehalis River Basin Action Plan. This web site describes the water quality issues and current events and provides background information.

www.chesapeakebay.net
The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional watershed program aimed at restoring the bay. This site contains publications, information on the bay, and a data clearinghouse.

http://www.wgby.org/crei
The Connecticut River Education Initiative is a consortium of educational institutions working together to develop environmental education tools using the Connecticut River. This web page contains a description of the watershed, teacher and student journals tracking the project, and links to other resources.

http://www.hawriver.org
The Haw River Watch web page contains a calendar of events and information on the organization and the Haw River Festival.

www.epa.gov/glnpo
The Great Lakes National Program Office web site contains information on monitoring, the different partners, and pollution prevention.

http://www.mrba.org
The Mississippi River Basin Alliance links environmental justice organizations with conservation groups for the benefit of the Mississippi River. This site describes the Alliance's program and policy statements and contains the organization's newsletter.

http://www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries
The National Estuaries Program is designed to encourage local communities to take responsibility for managing their estuaries. This site contains information on the importance of estuaries, key management issues, example management structures, and the *Coastlines* newsletter.

http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Rapids/4604
Rockingham County Watershed Preservation Coalition is a regional effort to improve the waters of Rockingham County, North Carolina. This site contains information on river restoration efforts, pertinent state news, and important events.

http://nsccux.sccd.ctc.edu/~tcp
Thornton Creek Project's web page contains the organization's mission statement, a description of the watershed, monitoring efforts, and coming events. This site also offers a mapping tool for the watershed and educational resources.

Other Useful Information

www.neetf.org
The National Report Card is a survey on adult environmental attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. This site is a good source of quick facts to include in outreach materials.

www.rcfp.org/foi_lett.html
This site provides a "fill-in-the-blanks" Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request letter to be submitted to a federal agency.