

Nonpoint Source Success Stories

Introduction to Success Story Panel
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Excerpt from materials presented at the first New England NPS conference, May 1990

HOW TO MEASURE SUCCESS?

The major goal of the NPS program is to improve water quality to meet the "swimmable-fishable" goal

Are we accomplishing that goal?

Each group should review the types of NPS activities that are underway and develop strategies' for measuring success.

Why so important to document success?

- NPS pollution is the major cause of water quality impairments across the country, and is recognized as challenging to address
- EPA has invested over \$3 Billion since 319 program inception, and it's important to be able to evaluate if it's bearing fruit – achieving CWA goals
- Need to be able to show program evaluators at OMB, Congress, and the public that funds are being spent wisely and environmental conditions are improving
- EPA published three volumes of NPS success stories beginning in 1994, in an early effort to demonstrate progress
- These earlier success stories highlighted some innovative and well-implemented projects, but generally didn't make the link to water quality improvements

Current Measures of Success

- In 2002, EPA with input from states, negotiated new measures of success with OMB
- Key measure of success is publication of new type of “success stories”
- Nationally, EPA made a commitment to OMB to post 250 success stories by 2008 and 700 by 2012
- Actual 2008 tally: 97
- 106 stories currently posted; 13 from New England (<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Success319>)

Success Story Criteria

- 3 Categories of Success Stories:
Category 1 -- Previously impaired water must have been restored, specifically...
- One or more causes of impairment must have been removed and documented via state 303(d) list delisting process
- Water quality improvement must be due to NPS restoration activities (but not limited to 319 projects)
- Write-up must include water quality monitoring results, description of accomplishments, partners and funding


Success Story Criteria (Cont.)

- Stories must be approved by EPA HQ, and posted on EPA's website before they can be counted
- Category 2: Waters partially improved, though use(s) still impaired
 - Need to be able to document improving trend with monitoring results
 - Useful for broader demonstration of program success, but can't be counted toward OMB/strategic plan commitment
- Category 3: Ecological restoration
 - Restoration of impairments not caused by pollutants, but instead caused by things like hydro modification or invasive species

Size/Scale of Restorations

- Success stories are acceptable for a wide range of waterbody restorations
- Size of water segment tracks segmentation of state 303(d) list
- Could be a small section of stream where an impairment is fixed by just one or two BMPs, or a large lake watershed where restoration efforts involved numerous BMPs installed over several decades

Roles for Local Organizations

- Help states identify candidates for success stories and focus restoration efforts in areas with high potential for success
 - Follow status of your local waters on 303(d) lists: note waters now meeting WQS
 - Let the state know if you are aware of NPS restoration work that may have contributed to the improvement
 - Push state to monitor areas that have recently been the focus of significant restoration effort, or seek opportunities to monitor yourself
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For More Information:

- To view all published NPS success stories:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Success319>

- EPA guidance for preparing success stories:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/Success319/info.htm#cat1>