



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Incorporating Social Indicators into a Regional Evaluation Framework for NPS](#)

Rivers and streams in the Great Lakes Region (USEPA Region 5) face significant impairment from nonpoint sources (NPS) -- nutrients, siltation, habitat alterations, and related issues are among the most frequently cited causes of impairment. Recognizing the influence of individual management and behavioral decisions on NPS, state and federal programs fund projects that directly address environmental management, such as the installation of various best management practices. In addition, programs fund more socially oriented projects that increase individual and community capacity to manage water bodies. Many involved with NPS projects in Region 5 have the expertise and knowledge necessary to plan, implement, and evaluate their projects' physical and environmental components, yet addressing and evaluating the social and human-dimension components presents new challenges. In response to this situation, EPA Region 5, state environmental agencies, and the CSREES Great Lakes Regional Water Quality Program (GLRWQP) have initiated a project to incorporate a social component into NPS project planning and evaluation for the region. The effort involves an inter-organizational team drawing from EPA, state environmental agencies, land grant universities in the CSREES Great Lakes Region, and others. The team is developing a framework for tracking indicators of individual change, such as knowledge, awareness, and behavior, as well as broader social indicators related to communities, organizations, and other contextual factors that can influence NPS water quality efforts. This framework is being developed in part through a participatory process that involves key stakeholders in all six states. This session will describe this regional project, its components, and considerations involved in designing a NPS evaluation framework that spans regional, state and project scales.

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