



# The Human Dimension of Targeting Watershed Practices

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# Watershed Targeting is a Moving Target

- We need to agree upon and set criteria to identify certain areas within the watershed that are critical to water quality improvement.
- Relate those criteria and how they were formed to the individual landowner.
  - Variation within a watershed gives us different selection criteria that makes it harder to convince one farmer why a certain field may be chosen over another field or his neighbors field.

# What Do We Need to Know to Do Targeting

- Need to establish criteria for identifying the areas within a watershed that are most environmentally sensitive or that produce the most pollutant loading and should be targeted for BMPs
- Need to identify ways that we can not only do an assessment of the watershed and critical areas but how to determine the impact by implementing BMPs
- Need to establish some "standard" criteria that all agencies will use to target watersheds so when talking to landowners/producers we are all on the same wave length.

What criteria determines if something is environmentally sensitive?



Getting producers to understand the criteria for selection of an area is critical for success.



# Tools for Targeting

- GPS data layers - land use, livestock numbers, soil type, slope, weather, etc
- Stream Assessment Tool - Stream-A-Syst, others (IA has developed a computerized tool)
- Land Assessment Tool - NRCS, BERM, (IA has developed a computerized tool)
- Economic data layers - may help determine cost-share for effective placement of BMPs
- Visual Assessment - need to be experienced to make sure this is done correctly
- Some tools are very subjective and you must be trained in their use to be effective.

# Tools for Targeting

- Once the data gives us a starting place for targeting specific areas in the watershed -
  - Take it to the local landowners and ask them to review and provide assistance and verification in the area.
  - Determine what the ultimate goal is for producer, landowner and agency and how they can come together
  - Get producers involved in identifying possible BMPs to improve water quality.

# Do Farmers Really Care About All the Tools for Targeting?

- In most cases no - but that doesn't mean that they don't want to know at least some of what you are using to make watershed decisions.
- They also want to know how this affects them and what cost are involved.

# Getting Landowner Participation

- Once we have the target areas within a watershed and have identified who to work with we need to determine how to approach them.
  - They must want to do this also
  - Ask for them to help identify more BMPs that they are interested in looking at
  - Equitable distribution of funds may not be the order of business in a targeted area (not a first come first served experience)
  - Remember you are there because the producer/landowners have allowed it.

# Reasons and Barriers That Keep People From Participating

- I am getting too old to invest money in these practices
- I don't want to look stupid by doing something different
- Nobody ever told me it was a problem
- It cost too much to do this
- Are they sure it's coming from my place
- I own the land and pay the taxes on it, I will do what I please with it.
- Others

Farmers are more likely to participate in BMP use if they can actually see damage occurring



Things to prevent soil erosion are generally easier to sell while practices for nutrient and pesticide runoff are not.

# What we need to understand about landowners

- They are intelligent
- They have long-term memory of what works and what doesn't work
- What they are doing may not be wrong but there might be a better way they haven't tried.
- They want to have input in developing or identifying ways of improving their situation
- If something is mandated - they may not have commitment to doing it and may not want to participate

# What not to do when going to talk to the landowner

- Don't accuse them of creating the problem.
- Don't attack them and tell them they are to blame.
- Don't attack them with statistics that explains what you want to tell them.
- Do forget that they are independent, can be resistant and can become defensive if you push them
- Hi, I'm from the government and I'm here to help you.

# What to do when approaching the Landowner

- Explain why you are there to see them
- Have a map of the area readily available
- What the data is telling us (lay person terms)
- Explain the importance to doing a practice in a particular area
- Explain what BMPs might be effective and ask for their input
- Explain what cost-share and other assistance is available

# What to do when approaching the Landowner

- Ask them what they would be willing to do
- Ask if they would be willing to work on a watershed management plan for the area
- Show them what is available on the web (if they are interested) and how they can use these as management tools (BERM)
- Show how pollutant loading is estimated and how lack of practices contribute to the pollutant load

# What to do when Approaching the Landowner

- Get them involved in the decision making process.
- Build on their experience to help them understand the concepts.
- They want to know what is going on, how it affects them and why it is important.
- If your goal and their goal isn't the same - success will not occur easily.

# Demonstration or Field Day Site

- Provide the farmer with a chance to use the area for a field day or demonstration site.
- Ask the farmer if he/she wants to be part of the presentation



Provide signage showing this farm is part of the conservation / water quality project

# Have Options for BMP Assistance

- Have a "toolbox" of available practices and assistance that you can offer.
  - BMPs
  - Financial
  - Technical
  - Educational
  - If what they want to do isn't on your list, try to figure a way to get it on the list (if within reason)



It takes more than information - it takes the full educational process: Awareness, Knowledge, Understanding, Adoption/change

# Reporting Outcomes and Impacts in Targeted Areas

- Determine what constitutes success
- If producers and agencies have same ultimate goals then determining success will be easier
- Utilize models and tools for not only assessing the watershed, targeting BMPs but also for calculating load reductions and determining impact of BMPS on water quality.
- A change in behavior

- **In one study farmers were asked which of these common practices were good for the environment and good for profitability**
    - Grass filters - good for the environment and profitable
    - Soil testing - good for the environment and profitable
    - Round Up Ready seed - good for profit and may help environment
    - Set Backs - good for the environment not profitable
- It didn't take into consideration what the identified pollutant might be - pesticide, erosion, nutrients, etc.

- Have producers help identify practices they think will work.
- If we know that these are practices that farmers are willing to do and if they work towards meeting our goals of water quality, let's use them.
- Suggest other possible BMPs that are similar that we can help find cost-share for.
- Keep bringing them back into the decision making process.

# Will Targeting Work?

- Ask yourself the question

- What made us determine the targeted watershed and the particular areas within that watershed for BMP implementation
- If I were the producer in the identified area, what would I want to know or what would persuade me to do something that I haven't done before?

- What is important

- We want to feel that we are making an important contribution
- We want to do what is right and we want to make a living.
- We need to figure how to make it all work together
- We as agency personnel want to be able to document changes and improvements in water quality and in peoples attitudes.

# Conclusions

- For success in working with producers in critical and environmentally sensitive areas, you need to:
  - Understand what barriers they may be facing
  - Help identify strategies to overcome or work around those barriers
  - Get them involved in the decision making process
    - Listen to what the landowners are willing to do and work with them to get it accomplished
  - Get them involved in what is being done
    - If doing the practice is where they are comfortable don't pressure them to do more.

# Questions???????

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