



Raritan Basin Watershed Management Project

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Watershed Management Plan Structure

ADOPTED BY THE RARITAN BASIN COUNCIL – 24 JULY 2001

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: A Watershed Management Plan “*describes how a watershed will be taken from its existing condition to a desirable future condition.*” A management plan is **resource**-oriented: it focuses on watersheds rather than political boundaries. It is **objective**-oriented: it seeks specific watershed qualities based on a vision and goals, rather than vague or undefined ends. It is **change**-oriented: it seeks to modify what is or might be in a proactive, rather than reactive, manner.

PLAN STRUCTURE: The Raritan Basin Council has adopted a general structure for the Raritan Basin Watershed Management Plan. This proposal was reviewed and accepted by the three Watershed Management Area Committees. This general format can be presented in printed documents (loose-leaf, bound, or a combination), electronic formats (Web or computer disk), or both. The Raritan Basin Council is considering publication methods that assist public involvement and project management. The general format would be:

- 1) **Executive Summary** – Would be published both as part of the full plan and as a stand-alone document, in language appropriate for a wide audience
- 2) **Vision** – a verbal statement of the long-term vision for the watershed management areas and the basin, used as a basis for and to drive the goals and objectives
- 3) **Goals & Objectives** – For the priority issues, what are the goals (qualitative description of a desired future condition) and objectives (measurable condition related to the goals) for the watershed?
 - a) Goals & Objectives for the Basin and Watershed Management Areas
 - b) Relationship to Federal and State Government Goals and Objectives
 - c) Relationship to Local Government Goals and Objectives
- 4) **Characterization & Assessment of Key Issues** (drawn from Technical Reports, surface water quality modeling and additional research) – Emphasize key commonalities and distinctions among watersheds.

Understanding the Terms

- **Characterization** – What is the current status of the watershed? How has the watershed status changed over time, and are those trends likely to continue?
- **Assessment** – Does the current and projected status of the watershed represent a major change from its natural state or meet existing standards for watershed health? How did it get to this status – what are the causes?
- **Priority Issues** – Of the issues identified through the Characterization and Assessment, which have the highest priority for management in this planning cycle, for the basin and the Watershed Management Areas?

- a) Water Quality & Summary of TMDLs
 - b) Water Quantity & Water Budget
 - c) Ecosystem Health
 - d) Open Space Preservation
 - e) Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Infrastructure
 - f) Additional Issues as Identified
 - g) Priority Issues Addressed by Strategies In This Plan
 - h) Priority Issues for the Next Planning Cycle – What additional priority issues were identified through the characterization and assessment process but not fully addressed in this planning cycle? What approach is most appropriate for addressing these issues?
- 5) **Implementation Strategies** – The focus is on strategies, rather than detailed tactics, for sufficient flexibility in the plan implementation phase. Some strategies would be broadly applicable, but others might be area-specific. What plan of action is most appropriate to meet each objective? What resources and commitments are being made? This section is critical to the plan – it focuses on what should be implemented, when, how and by whom. Each strategy would include:
- a) Priority Issues/Problem Statements
 - b) Goals and Objectives Addressed by the Strategy
 - c) Nature of Actions Needed and Action Plan (including regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms, including education, as appropriate)
 - d) Responsibilities – Mandatory Responsibilities (must be clear, precise and directed), Voluntary Commitments and Recommendations or Requests for Voluntary Commitments – Plus responsibilities (moral, ethical, societal) that are broadly applicable
 - e) Funding Needs, Sources & Commitments

- f) Schedule & Milestones
- g) Evaluation Process – linked to the strategies and their implementation
- h) Constraints, Challenges and Key Opportunities
- i) Rapid Watershed Improvement (Action Now) Projects
- j) Components Triggering WQM Plan Consistency Determination Issues

6) Summary of Implementation Challenges & Recommendations

- a) Public and Political Understanding and Support Issues
- b) Institutional Capacity Issues
- c) Funding Issues
- d) Legal and Regulatory Issues

7) Summary of the Evaluation Method for Plan Implementation Progress

Understanding the Terms

- **Evaluation** – What “milestones” and “indicators” can be used to assess progress toward the objectives? How will the evaluation process work?

- a) Summary of Evaluation Approaches from Strategies
- b) Method for Revising Plan Based on Evaluations

8) Summary of the Planning and Decision-Making Process

- a) Overview of the Characterization & Assessment Process
- b) Public Involvement in Characterization & Assessment
- c) Overview of the Plan Development Process
- d) Public Involvement in Plan Development
- e) Decision-making Approaches Used in Plan Development