



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Great Lakes

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

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Social Indicators for Nonpoint Source Management

GREAT LAKES
REGION



National Themes:
Watershed Management

Project Description

Nonpoint Source (NPS) pollution often results from a combination of individual actions across the landscape. Effective management of NPS water pollution requires addressing both environmental conditions and the choices people make that affect the environment.

Historically, NPS programs have had difficulty evaluating and documenting clear linkages between project activities and measurable progress toward water quality goals. Because of the short time-frame of most projects, few have been able to demonstrate direct impacts on water quality. An assessment of the Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) NPS program administered through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act (the 319 Program) indicated a need to demonstrate results through the use of clear efficiency measures, targets and baselines for measures, and regular, independent program reviews.

In an effort to improve evaluation of its 319 Program, USEPA Region 5 and the Region 5 state water quality agencies are working together to develop and implement an evaluation framework for NPS intended to more clearly link program activities to water quality outcomes. In addition to capturing traditional administrative measures (e.g., funds awarded and spent, workshops held, projects implemented) and environmental indicators (e.g., physical and biological measures of stream health), the NPS evaluation framework for Region 5 includes social indicators of progress toward water quality goals.

Project Goals

- ◆ develop a system for integrating social indicators into nonpoint source (NPS) planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- ◆ provide this system to NPS project managers so they may integrate social indicators into projects addressing NPS issues;
- ◆ help water quality managers target outreach activities where they will have the greatest environmental impact; and
- ◆ help water quality managers assess whether their outreach efforts are accomplishing changes to improve and protect water quality.

Please visit our web page at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality/Flagships/Indicators.htm>

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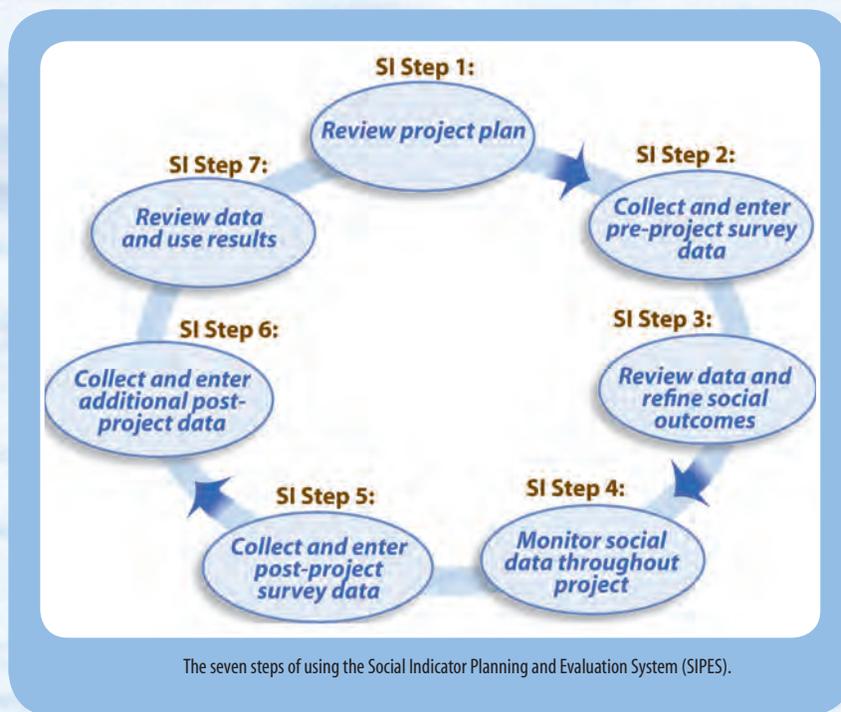
Indiana Environmental Protection Agency

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Land Grant Universities

Outcomes

State agency personnel and watershed project staff and volunteers have increased their knowledge and skills related to 1) targeting outreach activities where they will have the greatest environmental impact, and 2) assessing whether their outreach efforts are accomplishing changes expected to improve and protect water quality. This project has also provided more than 10 graduate students with direct experience in applied research in water resource management. Students have been involved with data management and analysis, worked with local watershed groups, and helped develop frameworks for communicating and using social information at the watershed level. Experiences from this project supported professional development programs for resource management professionals and educators at five national conferences in 2007 and 2008. In addition, the team has developed a handbook for the Social Indicator Planning and Evaluation System (SIPES) and an on-line data management and analysis tool. A key component of the system is a suite of social indicators for NPS management that can inform project managers about awareness, attitudes, constraints, capacity, and behaviors of target audiences that are expected to lead to water quality improvement and protection. The products of this project are being pilot-tested in all Great Lakes Region states.



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