

Social Indicators for Nonpoint Source Management

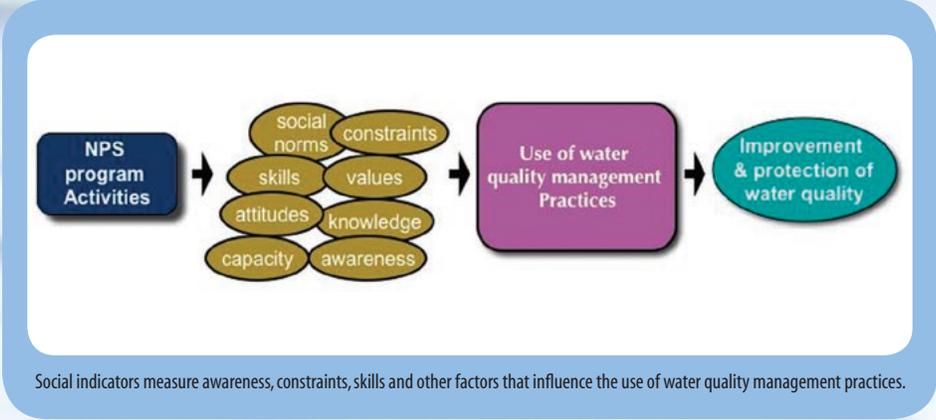


National Themes:
 Watershed Management

Project Description

Effective management of nonpoint pollution source (NPS) water pollution requires addressing both environmental conditions and the choices people make that impact the environment. Social indicators for NPS management provide information about awareness, attitudes, constraints, capacity, and behaviors that are expected to lead to water quality improvement and protection. By measuring these indicators over time, water quality managers can target their program activities and assess whether their projects are accomplishing the changes expected to improve and protect water quality. Monitoring social indicators, like monitoring environmental indicators, gives us valuable information about how well our management strategies are working.

State agency program leaders have joined land grant universities throughout the region in this initiative. Cooperative research and outreach among the universities, state NPS programs and local NPS projects is underway and will continue through 2010. Results of this ongoing applied research effort are disseminated through presentations at national conferences (USDA National Water Conference; USEPA National NPS Monitoring Conference; International Symposium on Society and Natural Resources; Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference) and through manuscripts submitted for review in academic and professional journals.



Social indicators measure awareness, constraints, skills and other factors that influence the use of water quality management practices.

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Project Goals

This project is intended to:

- 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.

Outcomes

The project team has developed a suite of social indicators for nonpoint source (NPS) management that provide information about awareness, attitudes, constraints, capacity, and behaviors that are expected to lead to water quality improvement and protection. The team has also developed a handbook and a data management and analysis system that will help NPS managers integrate social indicators into NPS planning, implementation, and evaluation. The products of this project will be pilot-tested in all Great Lakes Region states over the next three years.



The Great Lakes Regional Water Program Social Indicators Team



www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/regionalwaterquality/Flagships/Indicators.htm>