WQS Kaizen Team Meeting Notes
October 9, 2008, 10:00am-3:00pm
Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge, Headquarters Bldg
Mound City, Missouri

Meeting participants:
Iowa DNR: Chuck Corell, Lori McDaniel
Kansas DHE: Yan Wang
Missouri DNR: Phil Schroeder, Andrea Kliethermes
Nebraska DEQ: Pat Rice, Marty Link, John Bender, Cindy Miesbach (facilitator)
EPA Region 7: Art Spratlin, Ann Lavaty, Rebecca Landewe, Karen Flournoy

Opening discussion

The team discussed the gains they have achieved through the new process.

The identified "gains" include:

- A step-by-step process to follow -- a roadmap for all to follow
- The process identifies participants in the process and their roles. The flowchart map allows everyone to know when they have a role and allows them to be prepared for their role.
- Identified places and times in the process for EPA HQ to be involved.
- Getting to know one another better, especially EPA HQ folks, is very valuable. Having HQ staff come out is helpful.
- Everyone better understands each other's part of the process
- The direct relationship with EPA HQ, allows states to better understand issues of national policy, and HQ to better understand state issues.
- Honing in on the necessary changes to a State's WQS package
- Improved communications
- Improved predictability of approvability. EPA and states know issues ahead.
- More durable decisions
- The process documentation supports staff transitions
- Commitment to work on it together
- Staying on track regarding timelines and submissions is better
- Improvements are expanding into other areas and other states

The following outcomes have been achieved, as a result of the new process:

- Iowa DNR's chemical criteria package was completed on time and approved.
- Iowa DNR and EPA jointly developed a timeline for chemical criteria package submittal and approval, and followed it.
- At every step, the process is working better. Examples:
    - Four states participated in IA/KA anti-degradation scoping meeting
    - Iowa's consultation package was submitted to EPA, reviewed by EPA with comments, on schedule, thereby allowing quicker movement into formal rulemaking
    - Expectations are clearer throughout and work is completed throughout the process instead of having massive amounts of work at the end of the process.

TOPIC 1: State process flowchart, Step 1: "6 year planning process, identify the standards changes"

The team discussed the following questions:

1. In this flowchart step, the states identify a list of issues to be addressed over the next couple of triennial reviews and EPA has the opportunity to chime in on additional needed items. How will EPA and the states negotiate the list of topics? How do we decide what to tackle over the next two triennial reviews? How do we pare the list down or negotiate what the final list will look like?

2. How do we stay on track with the triennial process? Clarify the process steps from the "big picture" box (first box on flowchart) to the scoping meeting. How do we stay on track with "getting the ball rolling."

3. At this early point, how can the states begin to communicate to their citizens about the direction that the state and EPA are headed? (Coordination of the WQS process with citizen involvement, even at the earliest stages.)

The team clarified their understanding of the State process flowchart, Step 1: "6 year planning process, identify the standards changes":

Purpose of the step:

- Get all the ideas out for what will be addressed over the next six years
- Collaborate to focus our collective efforts on highest priority items
- EPA is informed early enough of State plans to influence the State's process
- Reduce anxiety of the public sector about what will be pursued over the next six years
- Develop a paper trail – Document State plans for future for the benefit of all (EPA, states, public)
- Allows states to collaborate on upcoming issues

Procedure:

Responsible Party	Tasks
States	State has meeting with stakeholders (or other involvement), if needed → States develop list of WQS issues to be addressed over next 6 years and their justification, and submits the list to EPA. Justification includes explanation for why an issue was or was not pursued.
EPA and other Stakeholders	EPA and other stakeholders submit ideas to States for WQS issues to be addressed in the future, and provide justification for why they think a state should pursue an issue.

TOPIC 2: State process flowchart, Step 3: "Scoping meeting"

The team discussed the following:

1. Iowa and EPA team members described their experiences with scoping over the last year, and showed their Microsoft Project tracking spreadsheet used to help them stay on track. This spreadsheet example will be posted on a team website as an example tool that can be used or modified for future use.

2. How do you form a scoping meeting? How do you decide on topics? How do we decide which issues to pursue and which to save for the next triennial review? How do we avoid turning up the heat on issues at a bad time?

3. Involvement of stakeholders:
   - How do we envision involving state stakeholders at the right time (from scoping forward)? Clarify the role of the stakeholders, how to communicate the current issues to them, and how to keep them involved.

- How to we coordinate with the Legal Staff? The courts may be unsettled on WQS, but we still need to move forward.

The team clarified their understanding of the State process flowchart, Step 3: Scoping meeting and identified activities that helped scoping to be successful:

Purpose of the step:

- Come up with a schedule for discussing the WQS package and set a timeline. It is topic-specific.
- "Scoping" is the first topic-specific discussion regarding an issue the State's plans to pursue in this triennial review.
- The state and EPA share information about that specific topic.
- Includes appropriate EPA Headquarters staff.
- This is a strategy session.

Scoping – What worked?

- Having a detailed, jointly-developed timeline identifying what needs to be done (tasks), date when each task must start, date when each task must be finished, and person responsible for ensuring completion. This schedule kept everyone organized and provides more definition to the process.
- Both EPA and the States had an up-to-date timeline (a State representative maintained the project timeline) and were constantly informed
- Explicit clarity about inflexible dates and when things had to be done
- Explicit timeline let us know when we could be flexible
- The fact that we all started together. The timeline provided a "starting gate signal" so that we had a common understanding of the fact that we were starting. We had a schedule to follow and the "finish line" was defined.

A few "Keys to Success" for future scoping meetings:

- Ann, EPA's WQS Regional Coordinator, found it helpful when states "cc'd" her on emails so that she could coordinate the efforts of all the Region 7's State WQS coordinators.
- Must have EPA HQ and appropriate topic experts in the scoping meeting.
- States need to prepare their issues, thoughts and questions in writing and share them in advance. Other materials/information should also be shared in advance. This allows everyone, particularly the subject matter experts, to be prepared for the meeting.
- States can ask EPA to bring examples from other states regarding how that state solved the same or similar issue.
- Consider if you need Legal staff to attend.
- Identify what resources (e.g., scientific experts) we're going to need and how we can go about getting them (funding).

TOPIC 3: State process flowchart, Step 6: the first step regarding "Scientific Clarity"

The team discussed the following:

1. How to get to scientific clarity – who do you ask to come to the table, how do we find the right technical people, how to ask the right questions. (E.g., The antidegradation meeting with Tim O'Connor for IA/KS was helpful.)

2. The criteria for WQS approval is still uncertain. How can we go about continuing to clarify "approvability"?

3. Communication about science is technically difficult and time consuming. How can we continue to make communication easier and more effective?

The team clarified their understanding of the State process flowchart, Step 6: Scientific clarity:

Purpose of the step:

- Opportunity for EPA to give the States enough scientific guidance about the scoped topic to allow the States to write an approvable packing the first try.
- States and EPA discuss the regulatory approach that will be used.

Activities that occur on in Step 6:

- Clarify which aspects of the regulation apply to the situation.
- Clarify what constitutes "satisfactory science" for the situation.
- Select the regulatory approach and define the ambiguities in the regulations to determine what scientific data is needed to support the change.

TOPIC 4: Sustaining our gains

The team discussed the following:

1. How to continue documenting the WQS process (developed through the Kaizen), so that we have a good common resource for everybody to follow.

2. Are there other resources we need to keep ourselves on track?

3. How do we become self-sustaining as a team?
   What measurables do we need to put in place? When/how to we review our measurables?
   How to we use the process to track progress?
   How are we going to share responsibility for leading the team?

The team agreed to the following actions:

Action items related to documenting the process

1. Document today's conversations. -- Cindy will prepare meeting notes.
2. Revise the process documentation that we already have (the document Chuck Corell put together) – Cindy will begin this process by putting together all the team's documentation from the last year. Chuck Corell offered to help. (Guidance for Cindy: Folders on the website should include Scoping, Scientific Clarity, Consultation Package, Agendas w/template and examples, Ideas for future revisions to this process).
3. Beef up the narrative descriptions of the task boxes on the flowchart (and number the boxes so the descriptions can be easily matched to the task boxes). – Cindy will develop a standardized documentation of each step for the team's review and number the boxes on the flowchart.
4. Develop a one-page checklist for what a consultation package must contain. – Ann
5. Develop a one-page checklist for what a final submittal package must contain. -- Ann
6. The team needs a server/webpage to store the team's documentation and to share information. Chuck Corell will check into using Iowa's website for this purpose.

Action items related to sustaining the team

1. Draft a formal MOU for our commitment.
2. Develop a list of measurables, including both quantitative and qualitative. They should document efficiency and good science. – Cindy will email the team to prompt them to provide their ideas to her. A conference call will be scheduled to discuss which measures to use to measure/track the team's on-going impact.
3. Develop a message map. -- Cindy talk to Art, Rebecca Landewe, and EPA R-7's PIO, Rich Hood.

TOPIC 5: How to deal with Fish and Wildlife Service

The team discussed how to deal with state-level requests for tighter than 304A numbers, agreeing that elevating the issue is appropriate.

Immediate Action: Ann L. and John Bender will draft information for Karen Flournoy to discuss with Ephraim King in two weeks. (late October?)