

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SECTION 319 GRANT PROGRAM

Background

Section 319 of the 1987 Clean Water Act authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide grants to states for implementation of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution control programs and projects to help protect or improve water quality. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state agency having primary responsibility for carrying out Iowa's Section 319 program.

DNR prepares a grant application to EPA each year for Section 319 funding. The grant funds are used by DNR to support the state NPS program and for various NPS pollution control projects (often called "water quality projects") within the state. As part of preparing the annual grant application to EPA, DNR invites project applications from SWCDs, other agencies, and other organizations for NPS pollution control projects in Iowa. These projects may be statewide, regional, county or watershed based.

The Iowa DNR anticipates being awarded approximately \$4.4 million for the FY2008 Section 319 Grant. Roughly half of the FY2008 funds Iowa receives will be targeted for waters identified in Iowa's final FY2004 Section 303(d) or the draft final FY2006 Section 303(d) list of impaired waters (category 5a or 5b of the Integrated Report). Additional priority will be given to projects addressing a waterbody for which a TMDL has been completed or is currently being developed (category 4a of the Integrated Report). EPA Program Guidance also imposes additional reporting requirements on projects receiving FY2008 Section 319 funding, particularly with regard to reporting reductions in sediment and nutrient delivery achieved due to project activities, including implementation of BMPs.

Eligible Activities

To be eligible to receive Section 319 funds, NPS pollution control projects must be consistent with Iowa's *State Nonpoint Source Management Program* (NPSMP), dated September 2000. Copies of Iowa's NPSMP were sent in CD format to each SWCD in the fall of 2000 or can be downloaded at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/water/nonpoint/plan.html>. Activities identified in the NPSMP which may be eligible for Section 319 funding, include:

1. control of agricultural and non-agricultural (e.g. urban runoff, construction site erosion, etc.) sources of nonpoint source pollution;
2. implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the watersheds of priority surface and ground waters (see page 12, NPSMP);
3. public information and education programs on nonpoint source pollution and its control;
4. programs which provide technical assistance for controlling nonpoint source pollution; and
5. programs which address waterbody restoration, such as projects which restore wetlands, rivers, streams, riparian areas and other aquatic habitats. These proposals must also demonstrate that fundamental problems causing waterbody degradation or habitat destruction have been analyzed and are being addressed.

Special Consideration

Special consideration by DNR will be given to projects which address one or more of the following issues:

Iowa's 303 (d) list of Impaired Waterbodies and TMDL Development

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), and regulations adopted pursuant to the Act, require States to identify waterbodies for which technology-based effluent limits or other pollution control measures required by federal, state, or local regulations are not stringent enough to achieve applicable water quality standards. These identified waterbodies are sometimes called 303(d) listed impaired waters. Impaired waters for which TMDLs have not already been developed are listed in Iowa's final 2004 or draft final 2006 list of Clean Water Act Section 303(d) impaired waters (categories 5a and 5b of Iowa's Integrated Report). Impaired waters which have TMDLs developed are listed in category 4a of Iowa's Integrated Report. A current list of Iowa's impaired waters can be found at the following website:

<http://wqm.igsb.uiowa.edu/WQA/303d.html#2006>

For questions about the impaired waters list, please contact:

John Olson, DNR Impaired Waters Specialist, 515-8905, john.olson@dnr.iowa.gov

For 303(d)-listed waters, the CWA requires priorities be determined and total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) be calculated for the pollutants causing, or which could potentially cause, the impairment. TMDLs account for all sources of each pollutant causing an impairment, and can be used to develop pollutant control strategies when existing, required, pollution control measures are not sufficient to address the problem. A list of completed TMDL publications and reports can be found at the following website:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/pubs.html#draft>

A schedule of TMDLs to be completed can be found at the following website:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/schedule.html>

For questions about TMDLs (Water Quality Improvement Plans), please contact:

Chris Van Gorp, DNR TMDL Coordinator, 515-281-4791, chris.vangorp@dnr.iowa.gov

Iowa's Nonpoint Source Management Program

Priority for Section 319 funding will also be given to projects which fall within the priorities identified in Iowa's Nonpoint Source Management Program – September 2000:

- 118 significant publicly owned lakes
- 25 priority coldwater streams
- municipal wells
- surface water supplies from surface reservoirs and river intakes
- groundwater protection projects addressing contamination by agricultural drainage well and/or sinkholes
- ongoing NPS projects that are making significant progress in addressing nonpoint problems and can demonstrate a need to extend or expand the scope of the project
- other waterbodies that are publicly owned and locally important.

USEPA Guidance

All watershed projects using Section 319 funds must develop a watershed-based plan, whether they are designed to protect unimpaired waters, restore impaired waters or both. Attachment 10 addresses the elements of a watershed-based plan.

EPA recently made available a handbook intended to help communities, watershed organizations, and state, local, tribal and federal environmental agencies develop and implement watershed plans to meet water quality standards and protect water resources. This handbook should be used as a reference as the project sponsors deem appropriate. The handbook can be found at:

http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/watershed_handbook/

Additional information and guidance regarding the Section 319 program can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/cwact.html>

Other Issues that could be considered

- control of non-agricultural sources of nonpoint source pollution (such as urban stormwater, construction site erosion, etc.)
- demonstration of innovative or alternative NPS control strategies or practices
- informing/educating public or targeted groups on NPS issues, use of BMPs, etc.
- demonstration of strong local and regional involvement and support, as well as involvement of nontraditional groups (including financial support or other resource contributions from various governmental and private sources).
- small watersheds with controllable nonpoint source pollutant sources, assuring the project will address the needs of both private and public lands.

Schedule

1. **Project applications on April 1, 2008.**
2. Project applications are typically reviewed and scored by both an interagency review committee and DNR staff. Factors considered in the review include: need for the project; comprehensive workplan; budget; potential for success; and suitability of project measures (see attachments 8a and 8b). Using the comments as a guide, DNR considers the proposed project's applicability to program guidelines, total program budget, and agency priorities to determine if the project will be included in DNR's grant application to EPA.
3. Applications selected for inclusion in the draft workplan to EPA may be requested to provide additional information or revisions.
4. The project applications DNR proposes to fund will be included in a draft workplan submitted to EPA for FY2008 Section 319 funding, which DNR will submit to EPA.
5. **FY2008 Section 319 grant funds will likely be available to new projects approximately February/March 2009.** Once the FY2008 grant award is received, DNR will work with new project applicants to develop a plan of operations or workplan for the first year of the project, and project contracts will be developed.

Questions

Please direct questions regarding the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Program (NPS) to:

- Steve Hopkins, NPS Program Coordinator, 515-281-6402, stephen.hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov
- Kyle Ament, Project Officer, 515-242-6196, kyle.ament@dnr.iowa.gov
- Rachel Glaza, Project Officer, 515-281-8158, rachel.glaza@dnr.iowa.gov