

FACT SHEET:

WATERSHED BASED PLANNING 101

As Nevada looks to address its water quality problem, enabling success through watershed-level planning and project implementation is a crucial step. Developing a watershed based plan is an early part of the water quality improvement process that enables local buy-in and jump starts action in a watershed.

What is a Watershed Based Plan?

A watershed based management plan is a road map for improving water quality, reducing erosion risk, assessing resource concerns, and outlining actionable steps that can be taken within a watershed to address these challenges.

A WBP = A cooperative agreement between cities, counties, and Conservation Districts that is organized within the boundaries of Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)-8 - 12 watersheds

What makes a strong watershed management plan?

A robust watershed management plan provides detailed watershed information, sets goals and priorities, and helps guide the implementation of future projects. The main goal of a plan is to provide a road map for improving water quality and reducing erosion risk in a watershed. In addition to basic requirements, strong watershed management plans include the following components:

Provides an assessment of land use within the watershed. This information is crucial for goal setting and identifying priority areas for improvement. Solid plans should be updated as the information changes.

Contains community and stakeholder input and has demonstrated local relevance and support. Plans that intentionally incorporate feedback from social cohorts such as farmers, landowners, and community leaders often enjoy increased public confidence and acceptance.

Flexible enough to fit multiple sources of funding which may have different priorities. From state sources alone, funding priorities can vary drastically among achieving the goals of the Pollution Reduction Strategies, reducing erosion impacts, and restoring impaired lakes, rivers, and streams.

Sets clear goals and measurable outcomes that align implementation with long-term planning efforts. This may include designating a “leader of implementation,” or a jurisdiction who handles the logistics and coordinates implementation efforts of all members.

Tip: A robust project list which contains “shovel-ready” projects that can be implemented once funding becomes available can provide a competitive edge when seeking funding.



Benefits of a watershed management plan:

- > **Secures funding** from various sources to achieve better water quality, while improving water quality and quality of life in the watershed. A plan helps cities, counties, and Conservation Districts (CDs) leverage sources of funding to improve water-shed conditions.
- > **Sets expectations and responsibilities** of WBMP members. This ensures members are consistently engaged and active in achieving the goals set forth in the plan.
- > **Collects feedback** from a diverse group of stakeholders within the watershed. Engages residents of the watershed, including farmers, landowners, urban residents, and others. Strengthens any goals set for the future.
- > **Evaluates resource challenges**, such as erosion, pollution sources, and land use concerns within the designated watershed. Identifying these issues will help inform any solutions that may be proposed to address significant contributors to problems in the watershed and ensure community resiliency.
- > **Identifies priority areas** within the watershed which prompt the greatest degree of concern and urgency for erosion management, water quality, and more. A clear picture of where resources can get the biggest return on investment for funders can help accelerate progress toward the goals of the plan.

Examples of project funding to protect or restore water quality include:



- > Watershed based management planning
- > Nutrient management to reduce the risk of harmful algal blooms
- > Prescribed grazing, critical area fencing, heavy use area protection, irrigation livestock pipeline, cover crops
- > Riparian forest herbaceous buffer, planting, restoration
- > Wetland creation, restoration, enhancement
- > Fire and habitat loss



OTHER RESOURCES

Connecting with others who have completed a plan could offer great insight. Organizations that provide technical guidance include the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection Non Point Source Pollution Branch, (NDEP NPS), and National Resource Conservation Service (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/ewp-emergency-watershed-protection/ewp-success-stories>)