

Steps to Developing Watershed-Based Plans

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters](#), major steps in the watershed planning and implementation process include:

Build Partnerships

- Identify key stakeholders
- Identify issues of concern
- Set preliminary goals
- Develop indicators
- Conduct public outreach

Characterize the Watershed

- Gather existing data and create a watershed inventory
- Identify data gaps and collect additional data if needed
- Analyze data
- Identify causes and sources of pollution that need to be controlled
- Estimate pollutant loads

Finalize Goals and Identify Solutions

- Set overall goals and management objectives
- Develop indicators/targets
- Determine load reductions needed
- Identify critical areas
- Develop management measures to achieve goals

Design an Implementation Program

- Develop implementation schedule
- Develop interim milestones to track implementation of management measures
- Develop criteria to measure progress toward meeting watershed goals
- Develop monitoring component
- Develop information/education component
- Develop evaluation process
- Identify technical and financial assistance needed to implement plan
- Assign responsibility for reviewing and revising the plan

Implement Watershed Plan

- Implement management strategies
- Conduct monitoring
- Conduction information/education activities

Measure Progress and Make Adjustments

- Review and evaluate information
- Share results
- Prepare annual work plans
- Report back to stakeholders and others
- Make adjustments to program