

Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2008: Community Stakeholder Web Seminar Question and Answers

Q: What types of grant opportunities are available through supplying this information for our community?

A: Data supplied to the CWNS does not place your community on a list of locations that will receive or have a high priority for receiving grant money. The CWNS does not provide grant money. The data submitted is reviewed by your state and the EPA; this information can be used to prioritize which communities receive loans under the SRF program and or are awarded grant money under other programs.

Q: Can you explain what a community may expect in return for the time spent on the CWNS? I can anticipate reluctance to publishing this sort of data to the public view. How do you anticipate overcoming the resistance that communities may have to offering up this degree of visibility when there is no immediate return (such as grant or loan funding)? In other words, how do we sell participation in this program to our officials?

A: Communities should not expect to receive the entered amount of funding. Communities should expect increased knowledge of their water quality needs at state, federal, and congressional level. At the state-level, the CWNS is often administered by the state SRF program. In many states, the SRF program uses the data in the needs survey to identify the priority areas for loan funding. This increased visibility may result in technical assistance or offers of loan or grant funding. The impact of participating in CWNS varies by state.

Q: How recent does the data need to be?

A: Needs greater than \$20 million must have documentation from January 1, 2002 or more recent. Needs less than \$20 million must have documentation from January 1, 1998 or more recent.

Q: When is CWNS data due?

A: EPA requires all documentation from the State by February 27, 2009. The individual States will each set their own deadline (generally 1 – 3 months prior to State deadline) for receiving local community's data prior to sending the completed documentation to the EPA.*

** Note: This State deadline was extended from October 27, 2008.*

Q: From previous presentations, the original data entry deadline was October, why did it change?

A: The reason the date changed is that our program incurred budget cuts. With the cuts, EPA does not have sufficient funding to complete all of the data review by October. Therefore, EPA

decided to push the data review period into the next fiscal year (beginning October 1). The data entry deadline was extended accordingly (to February 27, 2009). We do an extensive data review to ensure that the data entered in the system matches what is in the documents submitted.

Q: What is the community size for a “Small Community”?

A: For CWNS, Small Community is defined as having a present population of less than 10,000 people.

Q: Can communities report private development costs to treat water quality as a part of the CWNS? (For example, stormwater BMPs for post construction)

A: Official needs in CWNS can be privately-owned for the following categories: NPS (VII), Decentralized Wastewater Treatment (XII), Stormwater Green Infrastructure (VI-C). Costs for privately-owned projects in other categories can be reported but will be considered unofficial needs.

Q: There was a section on marinas can you say something more about this?

A: Category VII-F is Nonpoint Source Control: Marinas. This category includes all costs that address NPS pollution control needs associated with boating and marinas, such as poorly flushed waterways, boat maintenance activities, discharge of sewage from boats, and the physical alteration of shoreline, wetlands, and aquatic habitat during the construction and operation of marinas. Some typical BMPs are used to address needs at marinas are bulk heading, pump out systems, and oil containment booms.

Definitions of all the Needs categories are available at www.epa.gov/cwns/needs2008cat.pdf.

Q: How do you define green infrastructure (under section 212 – wet weather control)?

A: Green infrastructure is defined as the needs and costs to address the activities associated with the planning, design and construction of low impact development and green infrastructure in order to manage stormwater. This include bioretention, constructed wetlands, permeable pavement, rain gardens, green roofs, cisterns, rain barrels, vegetated swales, restoration of riparian buffers and flood plains. Projects under is category can be both publicly- and privately-owned.

Definitions of all the Needs categories are available at www.epa.gov/cwns/needs2008cat.pdf.

Q: The survey seems geared towards WWTP, but my needs are only Phase II water quality project related. Is this the right database to be submitting info?

A: Yes, there are specific categories for reporting work for Phase I and Phase II Stormwater Management projects, as well as non-regulatory Stormwater Management projects. The survey aims to capture all water-quality related needs, not just treatment plant needs.

Definitions of all the Needs categories are available at www.epa.gov/cwns/needs2008cat.pdf.

Q: How did drinking water protection get captured in these figures?

A: Drinking water protection is captured in Category VII-E: NPS Control: Ground Water Protection (Unknown Source). This category includes all costs that address ground water protection NPS pollution control needs, such as wellhead and recharge area protection activities. Any need that can be attributed to a specific cause of ground water pollution, such as leaking storage tanks, soil contamination in a Brownfield, or leachate from a sanitary landfill, is reported in that more specific category. In the past, states have not reported many needs this category. This is an area where we could benefit from additional outreach.

Definitions of all the Needs categories are available at www.epa.gov/cwns/needs2008cat.pdf.

Q: In which category would UIC well rehabilitation and replacement fall?

A: This would in Category VII-I: NPS Control: Storage Tanks. This category includes all costs that address NPS pollution control needs associated with tanks designed to hold gasoline, other petroleum products, or chemicals. The tanks may be located above or below ground level. Some typical BMPs used to address storage tank needs are spill containment systems; in situ treatment of contaminated soils and ground water; and upgrade, rehabilitation or removal of petroleum/chemical storage tanks. If these facilities or measures are part of addressing NPS needs at Brownfields, the costs go in Category VII-H, Brownfields.

Definitions of all the Needs categories are available at www.epa.gov/cwns/needs2008cat.pdf.

Q: Are you requesting that community stakeholders report all water quality needs? (i.e.: if a stakeholder has more than one project proposed)

A: Yes, we are. All projects that fall within the scope of the survey (i.e., capital needs within the categories that were explained) should be reported. There can be different projects from any one community.

Q: What do you do if the document is not on the pre-approved list?

A: We have a process that we implemented this survey called the innovative methods review. States can propose to use other types of documents, and we evaluate them on a case-by-case basis. If you have a document not on the pre-approved list; it is very good to send that to your state coordinator. Point out the pieces that you think are relevant. The state coordinator will likely have

a good idea about whether the document can be used. In addition, the state coordinator can communicate with EPA if they have any questions about whether the document is acceptable.

Q: Do the cost curves take into consideration the project's region?

A: No, they do not. They are national-level cost curves. There will definitely be some variation--over-estimating in some cases and under-estimating in others.

Q: How would a community/stakeholder apply for an account to access the DEP?

A: New users wishing to gain access to this system must first request a CWNS user account. They may request accounts at www.epa.gov/cwns/cwns2008.htm. Requestors are required to complete all personal information and questions regarding the facilities/projects for which they want to provide data. The State Coordinator (not EPA) reviews the request and determines if and when you may have access to the data

Q: Does the system allow for multiple accounts for access. ?

A: Each person can have one account. The system allows for multiple roles. You could have view-only access for certain facilities, access to provide feedback for others, and access for direct data entry of unit process and utility management data for other facilities. There is flexibility with the roles. More than one person can have access to the same facility/project.

Q: I have applied for a CWNS user account and still have not received an account. When will I finally be able to log in?

A: The user account process is managed by the state. EPA is encouraging the states to approve or deny the accounts in a timely manner (5 business days). A few States have not followed up with community stakeholders. We communicate with the states regularly to encourage them to take action on these accounts

Please note that there are a few states that have decided not to give community stakeholders direct access to the CWNS data entry system. So you may want to check with your state coordinator to see how they want to handle community stakeholder participation. They may be very happy to email with you to get your information, but are not comfortable with giving users direct access into the system. It is the state coordinator decision and we help to support their decision.

Q: Can we go back and edit once information has been entered? When is the data considered final?

A: If a community stakeholder is using method three (providing information via the feedback sheets), the community stakeholder changes the "Feedback Status" (on the left part of the data entry screen) to "State Review Requested" when the community is ready to submit data to the state.

Until the status is changed, the changes can be saved and data can be edited as much as needed. Once the status is changed to “State Review Requested,” the feedback is locked and no more changes can be made. Community stakeholders using method four (providing direct updates to utility management and unit process data) can change the data until the end of the data collection period.

Q: I have not yet heard about CWNS from my State CWNS Coordinator. Should I expect to hear from them or just submit data and see if that catches their attention?

A: There is a lot of variability by state in their approaches for getting the word out about CWNS. A lot of that is dependent on the management attention given to the needs survey and the level of staff allocated to work on the needs survey in each state. Some states have been very upfront in communicating with communities early in the process and some have not. For those of you who haven't heard from your state, rather than try to submit data, the first action should be to contact the state. Find your state coordinator information at <http://www.epa.gov/cwns/whereyoulive.htm>.

Q: Our water authority and sewer company are not located in our municipality. What is our responsibility for their reporting? Would we include them in our CWNS or should they report separately?

A: The management company has the lead in submitting the appropriate data documentation to the state. You can get in touch with that company and provide additional information (e.g. most recent population projections) that they might not have for the report to the State.

Q: Can a local GIS dept help to send information to EPA?

A: Yes, not directly to EPA but to the State Coordinator. GIS departments should contact their State Coordinator and state the information that you have available. The State Coordinator will then determine if the information has merit and should be sent to the EPA with their report.

Q: The CWNS 2004 NPS numbers seem really low relative to TMDL needs that are being projected for the next 10 to 20 years. We are estimating 1 to 2 billion here in Central Florida alone. How can we get the word out to those not participating in the survey?

A: We agree that the NPS needs numbers are a lot lower than they should be. For the past year or so, we have done a variety of things (in conjunctions with EPA's 319 program) to increase participation and increase the accuracy of NPS needs.

- The data entry system was redesigned to make it flexible. Data areas are customized bases on type of facility/project*
- The list of pre-approved documents was expanded to include more documents relevant to NPS needs.*

- *Various outreach efforts, including factsheets, a web seminar, and, best practices guide, were conducted. These materials are available at www.epa.gov/cwns2008.htm.*

We welcome other ideas for avenues to reach other audiences. We are making efforts from EPA headquarters. A lot of the outreach is best peer to peer and we can provide you resources to help with talking to others about CWNS.

Suggestion from audience: EPA should communicate with each of the state contacts to pass the word on through the TMDL points of contact.

Q: Does ‘needs by state’ (CWNS 2004) take into account the number of facilities reporting? Is the main determinant of a state’s needs based on how many reports have been received from the state?

A: The CWNS only reports to Congress that information supplied by the States. There will always be some under reporting due to the lack of information from the States or the inability of a State to participate fully in the survey.

Q: Can we get copies of the slides?

A: A PDF file of the slides is posted at www.epa.gov/cwns. Contact cwns@epa.gov to request a PowerPoint file of the slides.

Q: Is there a trial or test version that a user could go through prior to entering a "real" project need?

A: Yes. You would first need to apply for a Local User account. Potential Local Users apply for a CWNS user account at <http://www.epa.gov/cwns/cwns2008.htm>. Click “Click here to [apply](#)” to begin the application process and be redirected to the Preliminary User Information screen. To have access to test data, select Virgin Islands as the State in which the Facility(ies)/ Project(s) are located.. In the text boxes for providing additional Facility/Project and town/county information, write “test.” Select “Local” as the role. Complete all other required fields. After successfully completing the request for access, the applicant is directed to a Thank You screen and sent a confirmation e-mail from cwns@epa.gov indicating: “Your request for access to the Clean Watersheds Needs Survey system has been received.