NPS Monitoring in the 21st Century: Ohio's Vision

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Implementing the watershed process can be time-consuming and expensive. Since 2001, Ohio has awarded nearly $30 million in 319 project funding for over 120 projects in Ohio watersheds. So how can we be sure that our investments are paying off? Monitoring project success using indicators measuring actual environmental outcomes has long been a serious deficiency with most projects. Subgrantee monitoring efforts have often been tempered by concerns with inappropriate data collection given the project's goals and objectives as well as quality assurance issues related to the protocols used and the experience of the data collectors.

The presenter will describe Ohio's new vision for effectively monitoring the progress and success of 319 projects implemented in Ohio. The goal is to collect the right information to gauge the status of stated goals and objectives of the project plan. While not discouraging monitoring by project subgrantees, the new effort focuses on pre- and post-implementation monitoring of pertinent Ohio projects by an experienced Ohio EPA field crew. Where needed, subgrantee monitoring efforts will focus on key parameters that can be readily and reliably measured as the project progresses and which will serve as midpoints to assess the project's interim status. The need for this type of procedural change and reliance on an experienced professional field crew is necessitated by Ohio's Credible Data Law which was enacted in 2003 and implemented in 2006. The presenter will provide an update and some initial observations of 319 project monitoring during the first year of data collection using the new approach.

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