MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Supplemental Guidance for the Award of Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grants in FY 2000

FROM: Robert H. Wayland III, Director
Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

TO: EPA Regional Water Division Directors
State and Interstate Water Quality Program Directors

I am pleased to inform you that on October 20, 1999, the President signed the FY 2000 appropriations bill for EPA, which provides the full amount included in the President's budget request, $200 million, for States, Territories, and Tribes to implement their nonpoint source management programs under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This second year of funding at the $200 million level established last year provides a continued opportunity for States, Territories, and Tribes to implement effective, upgraded nonpoint source programs.

The Section 319 grants process and criteria to be used in FY 2000 are, except as modified below, the same as were used last year. The process, criteria, and schedules are set forth in three documents: (1) Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidance for Fiscal Years 1997 and Future Years (May 1996); (2) Process and Criteria for Funding State and Territorial Nonpoint Source Management Programs in FY 1999 (August 18, 1998); and (3) Funding the Development and Implementation of Watershed Restoration Action Strategies under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act (December 4, 1998). Each of these documents may be reviewed online or downloaded from the Nonpoint Source Web site.
Before discussing the FY 2000 grants process below, I want to thank the States and Territories (hereinafter collectively referred to as "States") for your efforts and accomplishments to upgrade your nonpoint source management programs during the past few years. EPA looks forward to the completion of our mutual effort to upgrade all State nonpoint source management programs this year. To build upon this success, we plan to begin a new cooperative EPA/State process that will be designed to identify, prioritize, and address the States' needs for technical, programmatic, and financial assistance to overcome any remaining obstacles to successfully implementing your nonpoint source programs. We intend to work closely with you so that you can help us focus on your highest needs and jointly develop appropriate plans and strategies to address those needs.

EPA and the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators (ASIWPCA) have scheduled a two-day State/EPA meeting to take place on April 4 and 5, 2000, in Riverside, California to begin this process. During the months preceding this conference, we will form a work group of State and EPA nonpoint source program staff to develop a process to identify issues and options; plan the April meeting; and consider approaches to establish a longer-term process that can sustain itself over time.

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**States' Section 319 Grant Allocations in FY 2000**

States' nonpoint source grant allocations under Section 319 remain unchanged from last year, with one exception: all allocations are slightly reduced (by less than one percent each) to accommodate the increase in Tribal 319 grants nationwide from 1/3% to 1.25% (i.e., from $666,666 to $2,500,000). The State allocations for FY 2000 are set forth in Attachment A to this memo.

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**Upgrading State Nonpoint Source Management Programs**

I am extremely pleased by the progress made to date in States' efforts to upgrade their nonpoint source programs as called for in the May 1996 guidance. To date, almost all States have submitted complete drafts of their program upgrades to EPA for review and received comments back from EPA on those drafts. Fifteen upgraded programs have been approved to date; still others are nearing approval; and we anticipate that virtually all States will receive approval of their upgraded programs in FY 2000. To enable you and members of the public to track the States' progress in this regard, we have posted a map on our Nonpoint Source Web site, which indicates the current status of each State's program upgrade effort. We intend to update that map biweekly.
The States' final and draft upgraded programs collectively represent a tremendous effort by the States to strengthen their programs. The increased level of effort and sophistication of these programs is reflected in many ways: greatly enhanced targeting of funds and technical assistance to geographic priorities, such as 303(d)-listed waters and Category I watersheds identified through the States' Unified Watershed Assessments; increased and enhanced partnerships among State agencies, private sector groups, and Federal agencies; improved coordination with key related programs such as the coastal nonpoint pollution control program under Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 (CZARA); objective long–term and short–term goals and milestones that provide a framework for future actions over the next five, ten, and fifteen years; enhanced funding mechanisms, including both significant new State funding programs as well as increased use of State revolving loan funds in many States to address nonpoint source pollution; and increased development of new State enforcement authorities to address high-priority problems such as animal waste and stormwater.

The Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP) provides that beginning in FY 2000, EPA will award any section 319 monies exceeding $100 million to States and Territories only if they have incorporated all nine key elements of successful nonpoint source programs into their approved nonpoint source management programs. As provided in the CWAP, EPA Regions may immediately award to all States their allocated portions of the base $100 million. Regions may award a State its allocated portion of the incremental $100 million only after approving the State's upgraded nonpoint source management program as incorporating all nine key elements as specified in the May 1996 guidance.

Animal Feeding Operations

In March 1999, EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture published the Unified Animal Feeding Operation Strategy. To review a copy of the Strategy. This strategy discusses the relationships between animal feeding operations (AFOs) and environmental and public health; is based on a national performance expectation for all AFO owners and operators; and presents a series of actions to minimize public health impacts and improve water quality while complementing the long–term sustainability of livestock production.

The AFO Strategy includes a goal that all AFOs will have comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs) by 2009. USDA/EPA funding assistance programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Section 319 grants program are critical tools to help assure the development and implementation of almost 300,000 CNMPs for non–permitted AFOs in the United States during the next 10 years. Therefore, we encourage the States to continue, as they have in the past, to use their base Section 319 funds to assist AFOs in assuring that animal wastes are appropriately stored, handled, and land–applied. (Incremental Section 319 funds may be used for this purpose where the project is part of a Watershed Restoration Action Strategy.) To this end, we ask the Regions to assure that all Section 319 grants that include programs or projects that assist
AFOs include a provision (either as a grant condition or through a separate document such as a workplan or BMP implementation plan) to assure that any AFO that receives financial assistance pursuant to the grant has and will implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan.

We recognize that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be working this year to produce CNMP guidance and technical assistance documents (which will support USDA’s technical and financial assistance programs for AFO’s as well as EPA’s). Once that process is completed, we recommend that any CNMPs for 319-funded AFO projects should be developed, reviewed, or approved by a person who has been certified through a certification program accepted by USDA or by another equivalent certification program.

__Grants to Indian Tribes__

EPA is extremely pleased that Congress has, in its FY 2000 authorizing language, removed the 1/3% cap in Section 518(f) on grants to Indian Tribes. Pursuant to the one-year removal of the cap, EPA will set aside $2,500,000 of the FY 2000 appropriation for Tribal Section 319 grants, to provide funds to Tribes to implement their approved Section 319 program. EPA is pleased that at present, over 30 Tribes, totaling over 28 million acres (which accounts for over 60% of all Tribal land and is approximately equal to one percent of all land in the United States), have approved nonpoint source management programs. EPA is working with additional Tribes to help them complete development of their nonpoint source management programs and to thereby become eligible to receive Section 319 funds to implement their approved programs.

We are currently developing a process, in cooperation with the Regions, the American Indian Environmental Office, and Tribes and Tribal organizations, to develop an equitable process to allocate the funds in a manner that will help as many Tribes as possible achieve water quality improvement. As soon as that process is complete, the Office of Water will publish a separate guidance on awarding Section 319 grants to Indian Tribes in FY 2000.

__Watershed Restoration Action Strategies__

As discussed in my December 4, 1998, memorandum and the Clean Water Action Plan, the incremental ($100 million) Section 319 dollars are to be used to implement watershed restoration action strategies (WRASs). Like last year, however, States may use up to 20 percent of the incremental funds to develop watershed restoration action strategies. We recommend that EPA Regions and the states review the Framework for developing UWAs and WRASs (June 9, 1998), and

As was the case in FY 1999, we recognize that many States will not have completed development of WRAS or may have completed development of only one or two. Therefore, we again are authorizing the funding of critical components of a WRAS that is not yet complete but that the State has committed to completing, provided that those components have been developed and are ready for implementation. For example, States and Territories are encouraged to begin funding the implementation of nonpoint source components of TMDLs that have been approved under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act in Category I watersheds. Similarly, implementation of CZARA Section 6217 management measures in Category I watersheds should be considered for funding prior to completion of the entire WRAS. In addition, a program to address the results of a completed source water assessment can be funded if it is part of a WRAS that is under development. However, beginning with the FY 2001 grants cycle, we anticipate that only completed or fully drafted WRASs will be eligible for funding with the incremental Section 319 dollars.

Like last year, Section 319(h) grants to States and Territories in FY 2000 should clearly indicate which activities will be implemented using the base funds and which projects will be supported by the incremental funds. The work plans should clearly identify: (1) the Category I watersheds and sub-watersheds where the incremental funds will be used to implement WRASs, and (2) the activities to be undertaken to assist in the development of WRASs. Activities supported by the incremental funds should be separately tracked.

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**Clean Lakes**

The Senate Appropriations Committee included the following language in Senate Report 106–161, accompanying the Senate's FY 2000 appropriations bill (S. 1596):

"Clean Lakes program activities are to be funded through the sec. 319 nonpoint source grant program. The Committee suggests that 5 percent of the section 319 funds be allocated to clean lakes, and that EPA better integrate the Clean Lakes and section 319 programs by incorporating the section 314 guidance into the 319 guidance."

The House and conference committee reports were silent on this issue, as was the appropriations bill itself. The Senate Committee's suggestion is consistent with the approach that EPA has taken to assure that the management needs of lakes, ponds and reservoirs are addressed under the Section 319 grants program. Over the past several years, we have encouraged States, Territories and Tribes (hereinafter collectively referred to as "States") to use Section 319 to fund the lakes work which was previously funded under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 314 Clean Lakes Program. In the May
1996 "Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidance for Fiscal Year 1997 and Future Years" we included the following paragraph on Lake Protection and Restoration Activities:

"5. Lake Protection and Restoration Activities

Lake protection and restoration activities are eligible for funding under Section 319(h) to the same extent, and subject to the same criteria, as activities to protect and restore other types of waterbodies from nonpoint source pollution. *States are encouraged to use Section 319 funding for eligible activities that might have been funded in previous years under Section 314 of the Clean Water Act.* However, Section 319 funds should not be used for in-lake work such as aquatic macrophyte harvesting or dredging, unless the sources of pollution have been addressed sufficiently to assure that the pollution being remediated will not recur." [emphasis added] (at: Nonpoint Source Program And Grants Guidance For Fiscal Year 1997 And Future Years)

We also provided additional lakes guidance in July 1998 to emphasize the eligibility of lake and reservoir restoration and protection activities under Section 319, to ensure the listing of impaired and threatened lakes and reservoirs on Section 303(d) lists prepared by States, and to encourage greater use of other funding authorities including the CWA State Revolving Fund (CW–SRF) for implementing priority lake and reservoir management projects in approved State nonpoint source management programs (see "Guidance on Use of Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act Authorities to Address Management Needs for Lakes and Reservoirs," issued July 9, 1998, signed by Robert H. Wayland III, Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds, at: Nonpoint Source Program And Grants Guidance For Fiscal Year 1997 And Future Years).

Consistent with the Senate Appropriation Committee's report as well as the above-mentioned EPA guidance, we are establishing the following additional guidance for FY 2000 and in future years:

- We suggest that each State use at least 5 percent of its section 319 funds for Clean Lakes activities to address the restoration and protection needs of priority lakes, ponds and reservoirs.
- We suggest that States give priority to funding the following Clean Lakes activities. (Each of these four types of activities is described at greater length in Attachment B.)
  a. Lake Water Quality Assessment (LWQA) projects
  b. Phase 1 Diagnostic/Feasibility Studies
  c. Phase 2 Restoration/Implementation Projects
  d. Phase 3 Post–Restoration Monitoring Studies

Please note that while a State may decide to fund a LWQA and several Phase 1 studies with Section 319 funds, such funds are included within the overall limitation allowing States to use no more than 20 percent of their entire Section 319 allocation to upgrade and refine their nonpoint source programs and assessments.
- These Clean Lakes activities should be funded in lakes that are publicly owned and that have public access, consistent with the Clean Lakes regulations at 40 CFR 35.1605-3.
- Clean Lakes activities should be funded as part of a State’s Section 319 work program, and all operative Section 319 grant guidance requirements will apply to these projects as well.
- We will be adding new data elements for Clean Lakes activities to the Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS) to enable EPA and the States to track our progress in responding positively to the Senate Appropriations Committee’s suggestion that 5 percent of Section 319 funds be allocated to clean lakes. See Attachment B for more details on the new data elements required for Clean Lakes activities.
- We included the following restriction regarding in-lake work in the May 1996 “Nonpoint Sources Program and Grants Guidance for Fiscal Year 1997 and Future Years.”

Section 319 funds should not be used for in-lake work such as aquatic macrophyte harvesting or dredging, unless the sources of pollution have been addressed sufficiently to assure that the pollution being remediated will not recur.

This guidance is still operative and is fully consistent with the Clean Lakes regulations at 40 CFR 35.1650–2 (5)(i) and (ii) which provide:

"The project does not include costs for harvesting aquatic vegetation, or for chemical treatment to alleviate temporarily the symptoms of eutrophication, or for operating and maintaining lake aeration devices, or for providing similar palliative methods and procedures, unless these procedures are the most energy efficient or cost effective lake restorative method.

"Palliative approaches can be supported only where pollution in the lake watershed has been controlled to the greatest practicable extent, and where such methods and procedures are a necessary part of a project during the project period. EPA will determine the eligibility of such a project, based on the applicant’s justification for the proposed restoration, the estimated time period for the improved water quality, and public benefits associated with the restoration."

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**Executive Order 13061: American Heritage Rivers**

In July 1998, the President designated 14 rivers across the country as "American Heritage Rivers" to help their river communities protect and restore environmental quality and natural resources, preserve historic and cultural resources, and revitalize waterfronts. Executive Order 13061, "Federal Support of Community Efforts Along American Heritage Rivers," outlines a process in which Federal
agencies have been directed to refocus their programs, grants, and technical assistance resources to
provide support for communities adjacent to American Heritage Rivers. Accordingly, EPA encourages
the 25 States that have designated American Heritage Rivers within or along their borders to
consider the designation when considering their priorities for nonpoint source funding under Section
319. For more information, visit the American Heritage Rivers Web site.

Grants Reporting and Tracking

In FY 2000, the Section 319 nonpoint source program will achieve two major milestones. First, this
will be the tenth year of State implementation of nonpoint source programs with Congressional
funding. Second, with the additional funding in FY 2000, we will pass the one billion dollar
($1,000,000,000!) mark. With the achievement of these major milestones, we have arrived at an
appropriate point for the States and EPA to evaluate the nonpoint source program’s accomplishments
and pace of progress relative to the extent of the remaining nonpoint source problems. This juncture
also affords us the opportunity to consider how we may improve our efforts to track and report to
the public our progress and success in controlling nonpoint source pollution.

Our current program currently incorporates some tools to enable EPA and the States to describe our
progress in implementing the national nonpoint source program. The May 1996 guidance states that
for significant watershed projects (those whose Section 319 costs exceed $50,000), the State should
include in its grant application a brief synopsis of its watershed implementation plan, including the
environmental indicators and/or other performance measures that will be used to evaluate the
project’s success. The December 4, 1998, memorandum further clarifies that for the incremental
funds supporting implementation of WRASs that are included in a State’s Performance Partnership
Grant (PPG), those funds must be linked to watershed restoration objectives that are clearly
articulated in the Performance Partnership Agreement or the PPG work plan.

At present, EPA and the States use a computer–based Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS)
for reporting twelve mandated elements. The 12 mandated GRTS (listed in Appendix F of the May
1996 guidance) include such items as NPS category, waterbody type; 8–digit hydrologic unit code;
the budget; number of State employees funded by the grant; and program or project start dates and
completion dates. The system also allows for reporting of a significant number of elements beyond
the twelve mandated elements; about one–half of the States report some additional elements, such
as project descriptions.

Although the mandated twelve elements allow some minimal tracking, they are not adequate to
answer such fundamental questions as: Where are the projects specifically located within the
identified 8–digit code areas (which often include a million acres or more)? What are the goals of
these projects? (E.g., do they have water–quality goals, load reduction goals, BMP implementation
goals, or education goals?) Does the water quality currently meet water quality standards? Is the
project in the watershed of a 303(d)-listed water? At the close of the project, does the water now meet standards? Are other objective measures of on-the-ground or in-the-water success (e.g., load reduction, measurable habitat improvement, or measurable improvement in water quality) being achieved?

EPA plans to work with the States to consider these issues and develop an improved set of minimum reporting elements that will enable EPA and the States to effectively account for our progress in implementing the nonpoint source program and in achieving our near-term and long-term goals. We will then consider whether any changes to our reporting/tracking system are needed to support our reporting/tracking needs. Any such changes will be made in as streamlined a manner as possible to assure that we do not impose any undue burdens on State NPS staff. In addition, we will also look at this issue in the context of Section 319(h)(11), which requires States to report annually on progress in meeting NPS program milestones, reducing NPS loadings and improving water quality.

Our data systems themselves are a critical link in the chain of reporting accomplishments, and we must assure that they are adequate to the task. Working with the States, we will consider whether the recently enhanced GRTS system fully meets our reporting/tracking needs, and whether it needs to be further enhanced and/or, if appropriate, migrated into a more comprehensive data base system. In this regard, EPA has begun efforts to integrate, consolidate or harmonize several of our water quality data systems, using the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) as the geo-referencing standard to enable efficient tracking of data, including the 305(b) assessment data base, TMDL tracking system, and GRTS. This would allow us and other system users to, for example, relate the implementation of 319-funded projects to the priority problems identified in TMDLs. In the long term, it may also enable us to link more effectively with both Federal agency programs (e.g., USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program) and State funding programs. We intend to work with the States to examine some of these broad data and accountability issues and consider how we can focus our efforts better to account for improvements brought about by the totality of water quality programs that are relevant to nonpoint source pollution control.

We envision that any enhancements in NPS reporting would be established and included in the 319 Guidance for FY 2001. If at all possible, we would also like to use this opportunity to discuss how best to communicate the successes and environmental progress that have been accomplished during FY 1999 and FY 2000 using both the base program and incremental funds.

Conclusion

When we look at how much progress has been achieved by States and their partners during the past ten years, there is much to be proud of. I believe that with States’ renewed focus on solving priority problems with a broad array of effective technical, programmatic, and regulatory tools, our accomplishments will accelerate during the next ten years and result in the restoration of many of
our currently impaired waterbodies, while protecting those that may be threatened. This is indeed an exciting time for all of us who are working to protect our nation's waters.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Robert Wayland, 202–260–7166 or have your staff contact Dov Weitman, Chief of the Nonpoint Source Control Branch, 202–260–7088.

cc:
State Nonpoint Source Coordinators
EPA Regional Water Quality Branch Chiefs
EPA Regional Nonpoint Source Coordinators
EPA Regional Clean Lakes Coordinators
Kathy Gorospe
Robbie Savage

ATTACHMENT A: FY 2000 SECTION 319 GRANT ALLOCATIONS

FY 2000 § 319 GRANT ALLOCATION

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ATTACHMENT B

New Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS)

Questions to be added Regarding Clean Lakes

Question 1: Is this a Clean Lakes activity or other lake, reservoir, pond–related activity?

___ Yes
___ No

If the respondent answers "yes," the following pop–up questions will appear:

Question 2: What type of Clean Lakes or other lakes–related activity is it?

• ___
• ___
• ___
• ___
• ___
• Lake Water Quality Assessment (LWQA)¹
• Phase 1 Diagnostic/Feasibility Studies ²
• Phase 2 Restoration/Implementation Projects³
• Phase 3 Post–Restoration Monitoring⁴
• Other lake–specific activity⁵
Lake Water Quality Assessment (LWQA) projects which are intended to compile a comprehensive statewide assessment of lake water quality, to enhance overall State lake management programs, and to increase public awareness and commitment to protecting lakes. Specific activities might include:

- developing a statewide lake monitoring program;
- listing threatened and impaired waters on State section 303(d) lists;
- meeting the reporting requirements for lakes as outlined in section 314(a)(1)(A–F) for reporting in the State's 305(b) report;
- building and enhancing the State's lake-related public outreach and volunteer monitoring activities; and
- Developing and enhancing state lakes programs including travel/training for program managers to attend the annual meeting on "Enhancing State Lake Management Programs."

Phase 1 Diagnostic/Feasibility Studies which are intended to:

- perform comprehensive studies of particular lakes included on State's priority lists including section 303(d) lists and Unified Watershed Assessments;
- determine the causes, sources, and extent of pollution to the lake;
- evaluate possible solutions; and
- recommend the most feasible and cost-effective methods and measures for restoring and protecting lake resources.

The specific requirements for Phase 1 studies are listed in the Section 314 Clean Lakes Program regulations (40 CFR Part 35, subpart H). The Clean Lakes Program regulations are still valid and provide a sound basis for the design of Phase 1 studies, and thus, we suggest that you consult these regulations when you develop work plans for Phase 1 projects. In many cases, Phase 1 studies should provide the basis for the development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for a particular lake or reservoir.

Phase 2 Restoration/Implementation Projects which are intended to implement lake protection and restoration measures recommended in Phase 1 studies. Historically, a lot of Section 319 funds have been used to implement Phase 2 Implementation Projects and such implementation projects are fully consistent with the goals of the Section 319 program e.g., to implement watershed protection and
restoration programs. Again, we recommend focusing these projects in lakes included on States' priority lists.

Phase 3 Post–Restoration Monitoring Studies are to determine the longevity and effectiveness of various restoration techniques and to advance the science of lake restoration. Funding priorities should support the primary purpose of these studies which is to assess the effectiveness of restoration techniques that have been applied through Phase II projects. Lower priority consideration will be given to projects that support activities to improve and advance the science of lake restoration and management (but not necessarily post–Clean Lakes Phase II projects).

Other lakes activity that is not covered in the first 4 items listed above, and in which the activity is focused on a specific lake, reservoir, or pond.

Question 3: Does this activity support the development and implementation of statewide programs for lakes, reservoirs, or pond–related activities?

___ Yes
___ No

If the respondent answers "yes," the following pop–up question will appear:

Question 4: What type of statewide lake (reservoir or pond) program activity is this?

• ___
• ___
• ___
• ___
• Education and training
• Technical assistance
• Regulation/ordinance development
• Other

• (amount of 319 funds ___)
• (amount of 319 funds ___)
• (amount of 319 funds ___)
• (amount of 319 funds ___)