

NATIONAL WATER REUSE ACTION PLAN

COMPLETED ACTION

Action 1.4 Leverage EPA's Water Partnership Programs to Consider Water Reuse in the Context of Integrated Water Resources Management at the Watershed Scale



The Background

The EPA's Office of Water manages two national water partnership programs that operate at landscape-scale in national watersheds: the [National Estuary Program \(NEP\)](#) and the [Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program \(UWFP\)](#).

Established by Congress under section 320 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1987, the NEP is an EPA place-based collaborative network of organizations that protects and restores the water quality and ecological integrity of 28 estuaries of national significance referred to as local NEPs. The UWFP

includes 21 designated locations that aim to connect communities to their urban waterways to promote healthier human and environmental systems, including the sustainable management of runoff and wastewater. This action aimed to promote consideration and implementation of water reuse locally in designated local NEPs and UW locations (all watershed-based) through collaboration with a broad network of public and private sector stakeholders maintained by each partnership program.

Action Team

Action Leaders

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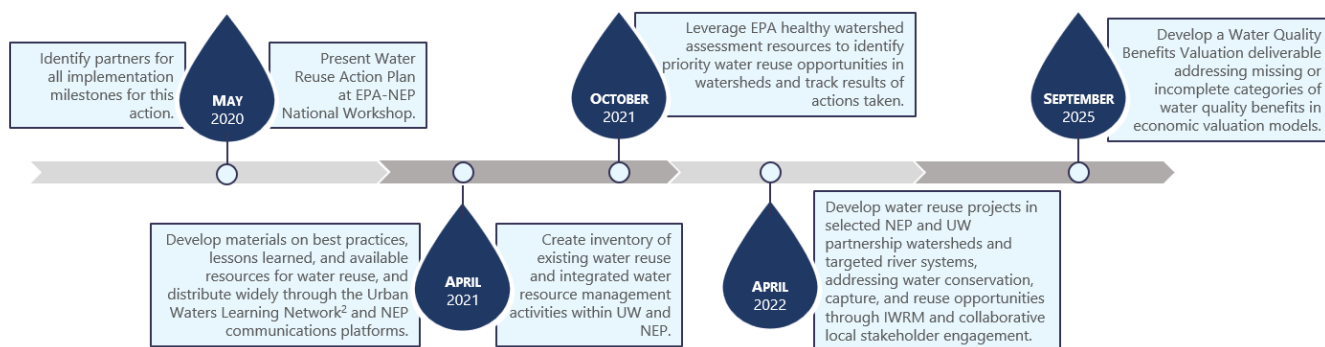
Accomplishments/Impact

- Developed the [Promoting Water Reuse through Partnership Programs: National Estuary Program and Urban Waters Partnerships Delivering on EPA's Water Reuse Action Plan](#). The report provides a snapshot of recent water reuse projects that have been successful across the local NEPs and UW locations and illustrates the breadth of ongoing or completed activities that support implementation of the National Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP). The examples and information provided in this report highlight the innovative ways that the local NEPs and UW locations have advanced safe and reliable water reuse systems while promoting healthy watersheds.
- Developed an approach to water data mapping through the [Promoting Equitable Water Supply Management Through Integrated Planning and Partnerships](#) project. Through this project, EPA collaborated with stakeholders in the San Antonio River (TX) and upstream partners of the Rio Reimagined in the Verde River (AZ) to identify barriers and strategic opportunities for collaborative actions to integrate water reuse and data mapping into water resource management at the river-system scale.
- Developed a [Water Quality Benefits Valuation](#) report, which updates categories of water quality benefits to expand the capacity of current economic valuation models. The product focuses on the economic valuation approaches to examine changes in water quality, stream condition, estuaries and related ecosystem services to address agency and partner needs.

Lessons Learned

- Partnerships are a highly effective delivery mechanism for developing and implementing water reuse initiatives. When partners come together, they can identify solutions and develop new approaches. Local NEPs and UW locations can serve as platforms for advancing water reuse in communities across the country.
- Local NEP and UW programs emphasize collaboration with diverse stakeholders across the entire study area for holistic and long-term planning, including for water reuse and conservation at the watershed scale. Both programs focus on sustained outreach and communication to their constituents and partners, which create opportunities to implement innovative water management solutions with strong stakeholder support.
- Data mapping can help prioritize multi-benefit/multi-use projects. This type of analysis can help to prioritize areas for funding, projects, and community engagement.
- The [EPA's Restoration and Protection Screening tool](#) is valuable as a public repository of data for 284 social, environmental and stressor indicators. It has potential to supplement integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water reuse efforts, as it can help to jumpstart the visualization process to improve the understanding of social and environmental dynamics across watersheds.

Action Implementation Process



Future Applications

The range of IWRM and water reuse activities being implemented at local NEPs and UW locations illustrates how much these community-supported programs have already accomplished, and how these case studies can serve as examples for other place-based partnership programs whether federally or non-federally sponsored. The experience of partnership locations that are known to be implementing water reuse initiatives makes a case for considering how this partnership approach can be applied more broadly in the future.