



# Community-Based Environmental Protection

EPA 100-F-96-002 ✓

United States Environmental Protection Agency

May 1996

## Introducing CBEP

Over the past twenty-five years EPA has achieved remarkable progress using nation-wide standards to protect the environment. We recognize, however, that even if there were perfect compliance with all environmental laws and regulations, we would still see many disturbing environmental trends. One reason is that many problems result from a multitude of dispersed sources of pollution (for example, automobiles or run-off from cities, suburbs and agriculture). These problems are more difficult to control with traditional "end of the pipe" regulation than are large, industrial sources of pollution. Another reason is that we recognize the need to treat all the resources in a place - air, water, land, and living resources - as inter-connected parts of a system. And finally, not all parts of the country have the same problems or need the same kind of solutions. To continue our progress, we therefore must lay the foundation for a new generation of environmental protection.

Community-Based Environmental Protection (CBEP) is an approach that EPA is taking to improve the effectiveness of our nation-wide regulations and other environmental programs. Our goals are to assess and manage the quality of air, water, land and living resources in a place as a whole, to better reflect regional and local conditions, and to work more effectively with our many partners in environmental protection - public and private.

EPA's role in the CBEP approach will vary from place to place and issue to issue - just as it has under past approaches to environmental protection. In some places (e.g., those which cross state boundaries or which are nationally important) EPA may lead the effort. In other places, EPA will be an active partner in designing and implementing effective environmental solutions. In many places, EPA will support and assist the efforts of others by providing environmental information, monitoring systems, scientific analysis and other types of assistance.

**How CBEP Works:** The CBEP approach tailors environmental programs to address the problems of a particular watershed, ecosystem, or other place. CBEP is designed to maximize the use of scarce resources, encourage local support, and consider the economic well-being of communities.

**Description:** The following are key components of Community-Based Environmental Protection:

- A **Geographic Focus** allows for a more comprehensive approach to environmental protection. EPA staff from various program offices will work together to assist our many partners with priority environmental problems whether they be air, water, or land issues -- or a combination of these concerns.
- A **Focus on Environmental Results** is made easier by geographic boundaries. Our goal is to measure environmental improvement in the area of concern. In many cases this means looking beyond facility-by-facility progress and identifying overall environmental improvements and trends.
- **Partnerships and Stakeholder Involvement.** CBEP partnerships may include representatives from all levels of government, public interest groups, industry, academic institutions, private landowners, concerned citizens, and others. We envision that these relationships established with regional and community organizations will bring about a better understanding of environmental problems as well as more effective solutions.

CBEP FACT SHEET SERIES

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 5, Library (PL-12J)  
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MAY 1996

Progress to date:

- ✓ All EPA Regional Offices and Headquarters Program Offices submitted Action Plans for supporting CBEP in December, 1995.
- ✓ EPA Headquarters offices are supporting the Regional CBEP efforts by providing additional budget flexibility to the Regions.
- ✓ An important aspect of CBEP is working more closely with state and local organizations. Each Regional CBEP Action Plan described ways to be more responsive to state and local needs.
- ✓ EPA is working to develop Performance Partnerships Agreements with states to work together to tailor the programs' requirements to individual state and local/community needs while emphasizing a more integrated approach to environmental protection.
- ✓ Efforts to develop effective information and technical tools for CBEP are under way throughout the country.

Examples of CBEP Projects: Projects are under way in major cities and smaller rural areas. Examples include:

**Clear Creek, CO** - a partnership of local organizations, private citizens, industry, and several agencies to protect the Clear Creek Watershed which covers roughly 600 square miles. Actions taken to restore the river include Superfund remedial actions and voluntary cleanups, wetlands planning, mapping of endangered species, land use plans, water quality projects, and an emergency dial-down system to inform water users when spills have occurred in the creek.

**St. Louis, MO and East St. Louis, IL** - an effort to enhance communication and coordination among the many agencies involved in environmental issues in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. The goal is to promote creative solutions to environmental problems such as hazardous and radioactive sites, poor air quality, wetland and riparian management issues, and water quality issues. Actions taken include creating multi-media teams within EPA to work on issues in the area, as well as hiring an on-site liaison in response to community requests for more regular contact.

**Brunswick, GA** - an initiative to use regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to assess the environmental condition of the area and respond to environmental problems. Issues include mercury and PCB contamination in creeks, hazardous waste, and potential air quality problems. Actions taken include a strategy to reach across media-specific programs in a coordinated ecosystem protection manner; expanded site assessments; and sampling of surface water, sediments, fish tissue, private wells, and marshes in the area.

**Henryetta, OK** - a partnership with city and state agencies and a citizens advisory group to address concerns about: the redevelopment of an abandoned mining and smelter site owned by the city; solid waste collection and recycling issues; and drinking water and wastewater delivery systems.

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**For More Information:**

Visit EPA's CBEP Internet Home Page at:  
<http://earth1.epa.gov/ecosystems/>

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