



Nonpoint Pointers

Understanding and managing nonpoint source pollution in your community

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No.

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The National Nonpoint Source Management Program

The Clean Water Act of 1972 helped clean up of many of our country's waters, often achieving dramatic improvements. Despite those successes, approximately 36 percent of the Nation's surveyed river miles, 37 percent of its surveyed lake acreage, and 37 percent of its surveyed estuarine square miles are not safe for basic uses such as swimming or fishing.

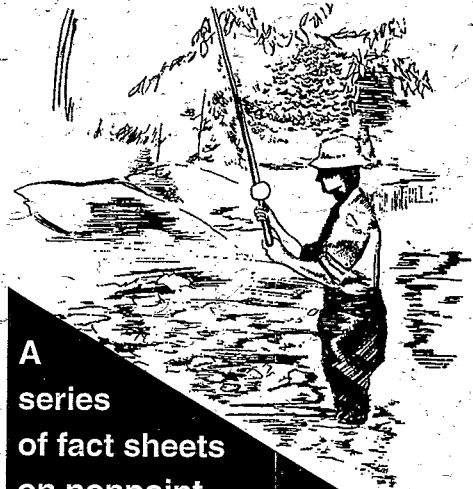
States, territories, and tribes estimate that at least half of these impairments, as well as significant ground water contamination, are caused by nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, making it the Nation's leading source of water quality problems. To address these problems,

Since EPA began awarding section 319 grants to implement management programs, recipients have directed approximately one-third of the funds toward controlling agricultural NPS pollution.

In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began awarding grants to states, territories, and tribes with approved programs. By 1991, all 50 states and the territories had received EPA approval; by 1995, 7 tribes also had received approval. Since 1990, recipients of 319 grants have directed approximately 40 percent of awarded funds toward controlling NPS pollution from agricultural lands. In addition, nearly one-quarter of the money was used for general assistance purposes, including funding for outreach and technical assistance. Efforts to control runoff from urban sources, septic systems, and construction also received significant funding under section 319, as did projects to manage wetlands and NPS pollution from forestry, habitat degradation, and changes to stream channels.

In 1991, EPA established the National Monitoring Program to evaluate the effectiveness of NPS pollution control projects. Fourteen state-proposed projects will be evaluated over a six to 10-year period. The findings from this effort will help states, territories, and tribes develop more successful NPS pollution controls in other watersheds.

Congress amended the Clean Water Act in 1987. Congress established the NPS Pollution Management Program under section 319 of the amendments. The program provides states, territories, and tribes with grants to implement NPS pollution controls described in approved NPS pollution management programs.



A
series
of fact sheets
on nonpoint
source (NPS) pollution

**Did you know
that at least 50%
of water quality
problems in the
U.S. result from
NPS pollution?**

NPS pollution occurs when water runs over land or through the ground, picks up pollutants, and deposits them in surface waters or introduces them into ground water.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Additional fact sheets in the Nonpoint Pointers series (EPA-841-F-96-004)
- Managing Nonpoint Source Pollution: Final Report to Congress on Section 319 of the Clean Water Act (EPA-506/9-90)
- Nonpoint Source Water Quality Contacts Directory, Conservation Technology Information Center, West Lafayette, Indiana
- The Quality of Our Nation's Water: 1994 (EPA-841-S-95-004)
- Section 319 National Monitoring Program Projects (EPA-841-S-94-006)
- Section 319 National Monitoring Program: An Overview, Water Quality Group, North Carolina State University, March 1995
- Section 319 Success Stories (EPA-841-S-94-004)

To order any EPA documents call or fax the National Center for Environmental Publications and Information.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Nonpoint Source Control Branch
Washington DC 20460

Internet Address:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/index.html>

As of 1995, EPA had awarded states, territories, and tribes \$370 million under section 319 to implement NPS pollution control. Section 319 Success Stories provides examples of how states, territories, and tribes chose to use section 319 funds.

How Section 319 Works

Assessment Reports

All states, territories, and some tribes have met two basic requirements to be eligible for a section 319 grant, the first of which is to develop and gain EPA approval of a NPS pollution assessment report. In the assessment report, the state, territory, or tribe identifies waters impacted or threatened by NPS pollution. They also describe the categories of NPS pollution, such as agriculture, urban runoff, or forestry, that are causing water quality problems.

Management Programs

To meet the second requirement a state, territory, or tribe must develop and obtain EPA approval of a NPS pollution management program. This program becomes the framework for controlling NPS pollution, given the existing and potential water quality problems described in the NPS pollution assessment report. A well-developed management program supports activities with the greatest potential to produce early, demonstrable water quality results; assists in the building of long-term institutional capacity to address NPS pollution problems; and encourages strong interagency coordination and ample opportunity for public involvement in the decision-making process.

How to Get Involved

The addresses and telephone numbers of state and territory nonpoint source officials are listed in the *Nonpoint Source Water Quality Contacts Directory*. These individuals can inform citizens about section 319 program activities in their home state or territory. They can also let citizens know how to become involved in the periodic updates of section 319 NPS assessments and NPS management programs.