



Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Winter 1993

### *A Note From Bob Wayland*

*Carol Browner has been confirmed as Administrator and a new chapter in our history has begun!*

*Several of us clustered around the VCR recently to watch the confirmation hearings (Thanks, Suzanne!) and ponder what may be in store. Senators posed a number of questions about our programs and activities and discussed the prospects for reauthorizing environmental laws. Senator Durenberger made a thoughtful and articulate case for a renewed Clean Water Act embodying a holistic, watershed, approach.*

*Senator Warner was among those who asked how the Federal government could more effectively deal with polluted run-off, which he characterized as our most significant remaining water quality problem and recognized was caused in significant part by agriculture. The new Administrator replied that the Agency needs to be better able to "speak the language of farmers."*

*OWOW has been working to better understand, and be understood by, those involved in farming, ranching, and silviculture. Our wetlands protection and nonpoint source control efforts affect farmers and are often a source of confusion and consternation to them. Agricultural advocacy groups have taken their complaints to the press and the Congress. Because many of these appear to be based on incomplete or inaccurate information, a number of OWOW managers and staff have been working to formulate a better game plan for getting our messages across to those engaged in agriculture.*

*Note--Continued on Page 3.*

### **An EPA Strategy for Protecting Habitats and Ecosystems By Doug Norton, AWPD**

Natural habitats are of inestimable value in supporting all life, including human life. These life-sustaining values of habitats, however, have been threatened by dramatic alterations in the environment during the past century. Broad-scale changes in habitats, such as the decline in total acreage of forests, wetlands, and prairies, have been evident for many decades. Losses in species and biodiversity have accompanied these changes. Numerous human-made stressors, including physical, chemical and biological stressors are often responsible for altering habitats. The most profound effect of habitat alteration is the loss of critically important habitat functions that are ecologically, socially and economically valuable. These values include, for example, maintenance of aquatic systems integrity, pollution prevention, climate moderation, recreation, and biodiversity.

Historically, EPA has tended to emphasize human health issues, and its consideration of ecosystems has varied from program to program. Habitat has been factored into EPA decisions more frequently in recent years, particularly as the Agency moves toward focusing its strategies on the whole environment instead of its isolated parts. For example, the Agency has increased its use of ecological risk assessment-based approaches to environmental problems; geographic targeting and watershed-based management; and monitoring status and trends in ecological resource extent and condition. These activities exemplify EPA's progress toward a more comprehensive, cross-media approach to environmental problems and their remedies. Habitat protection is an integral part of this perspective.

In the Fall of 1991, an EPA inter-office working group called the Habitat Cluster was assigned to formulate an EPA strategy for the problems facing the Nation's habitats. The Cluster researched the habitat protection elements of EPA's legislated mission and its various programs and analyzed the Agency's habitat information needs. The Cluster also identified ecosystem and habitat protection programs of other Federal, State, and private organizations and used their findings to develop a national goal, define EPA's role, and identify the central concepts of an Agency

*Habitat--Continued on Page 8*



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## Several States Considering Assumption of 404 Program by Lori Williams, WD

In 1984, Michigan assumed responsibility for the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit program; however, no other State has assumed this program since then. Currently, the 404 program is administered jointly by EPA and the Corps of Engineers. Through the 404 program, the Corps of Engineers issues permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters including wetlands. The 404 program is the primary Federal regulatory program for the protection of wetlands. EPA reviews 404 permit applications to ensure that the environment is adequately protected from any adverse impacts caused by the discharges. Various reasons are cited for why more states have not yet assumed the 404 program, including lack of Federal funds to support State programs, limits on the waters the states can assume, and excessive Federal involvement.

Recently, several States have begun moving toward program assumption. New Jersey is finalizing the documents to formally request program assumption, and its request should be received shortly. Florida is currently assessing its program to determine what revisions and modifications are needed to assume the Federal program. North Dakota is working on legislation needed to qualify to assume the program. Delaware is considering further efforts to enact freshwater wetland legislation to qualify for program assumption. Louisiana is assessing the feasibility of assuming the program. EPA's State Wetlands Protection Development Grant Program is supporting many of these assumption efforts.

EPA must approve a State's request to assume the Federal permit program. A State's program should be similar to the existing Federal permit program including scope of jurisdiction, types of activities regulated, and compliance with the Section 404 (b) (1) Guidelines. EPA will also evaluate the State's enforcement program and public participation in the permit program.

States are becoming more interested and involved in wetlands protection. In many cases, States have wetland programs that duplicate the Federal program. Program assumption would eliminate this duplication between the Federal and State programs thereby simplifying permit procedures for applicants. State agencies often have larger wetlands staffs than do the Federal agencies. State agency staff, in most cases, are more familiar with State resources, needs, and issues than are Federal agency staff. Under an assumed program, States will have more responsibility for decisions affecting their resources.

EPA's Wetlands Division and Regional staff are interested in working with States as they develop their wetland protection programs. Contact the appropriate Regional Wetlands Coordinator or Lori Williams, 260-5084.

## Watershed '93 Takes Shape

Watershed '93 is fast approaching, and it is shaping up to be an excellent conference. EPA is lead sponsor with 12 other Federal agencies, five local sponsors, and numerous nongovernmental groups for this national conference on watershed management. The program agenda for Watershed '93 is currently being finalized and includes panel presentations, plenaries, a resource fair, and field trips.

More than 200 practitioners, academicians, and policy-makers from across the nation will participate in 30 concurrent session panels to discuss the problems they've faced, the solutions they've tried, and the lessons they've learned. The closing day of the conference will be broadcast by satellite to miniconferences across the Nation.

Nationally recognized experts will lead plenary sessions that are designed to help attendees:

- Learn from the past;
- Broaden their understanding of current environmental problems and institutional barriers to watershed management;
- Gain sensitivity for the needs, expectations, and opportunities ahead for those involved in or affected by the decisions made about a watershed;
- Examine different approaches for getting the work done; and
- Explore options for the future.

The Resource Fair will feature 45 multi-media presentations that will provide opportunities for in-depth, one-on-one discussions on a wide range of topics. Fourteen different field trips will take conference attendees on site visits to see first hand innovative watershed management activities. Sites to be visited include the Chesapeake Bay, Great Falls, Jug Bay Natural Area and Merkel Wildlife Sanctuary, Occoquan Watershed, and the Potomac River Water Treatment Plant.

Watershed '93 is being held March 21-24, 1993, at the Radisson Plaza Hotel at Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. The registration fee is \$150 before March 1 and \$200 after that date. For general information about Watershed '93, contact Janet Pawlukiewicz, 260-9194. For registration information, contact Jennifer Paugh at the Terrene Institute, (202) 833-8317.

## Efforts Being Made to Expedite Section 319 Grants Process

EPA is working to expedite the award process for Clean Water Act section 319 nonpoint source (NPS) grants. These grants have been awarded to States, Territories, and Indian Tribes since 1990 for the implementation of EPA-approved NPS Management Programs. Approximately \$50 million is awarded annually by EPA Regional Offices to States. A survey of fiscal year (FY) 1992 grants indicates that the majority of the 319 grants were awarded in September 1992, the last month of the Federal fiscal year.

This Fall, EPA established a State/EPA operational work group to develop recommendations for reducing the Section 319 grant award timeframe for FY 1993 and beyond. The work group is composed of 10 State representatives (one per Region), and selected Regional and Headquarters staff involved in the grant process. The Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators (ASIWPCA) is assisting with this project to facilitate State participation in the work group.

The work group held its first meeting November 30 - December 1 and identified several issues to address in its efforts to expedite the award of Section 319 grants including: the need for an earlier award schedule; differences in Regional review processes (i.e., different schedules and work plan formats); and the need to reduce unnecessary paperwork and reporting requirements. The work group is using a Total Quality Management (TQM) process. The next steps for the work group are to do some fact finding regarding these issues and to identify alternative solutions. Several EPA Regions are already moving in the direction of expediting the 319 grant award process for FY 1993, and we anticipate that further efforts will be made to expedite the process as a result of this work group. Contact Anne Weinberg, 260-7107.

*Note—Continued from Page 1*

*A key to our ability to better inform farmers and ranchers is developing a better understanding of them, the range of challenges they face, and the other governmental programs that influence their actions. The agricultural panel discussion at last Spring's National meeting was a very revealing and stimulating session which helped provide a perspective on just how extensively and rapidly this "industry" and its underlying culture are changing.*

*John Burt of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) recently made a presentation to several of us on his agency's strategic examination of its historical role in helping farmers to prevent erosion and, more recently, protect water quality. SCS assignees in our Regional Offices have provided a valuable link between our agencies in recent years. Our links to Agriculture were further strengthened with the recent arrival in OWOW of Russ Lafayette as a liaison with the U.S. Forest Service — Russ' experience has included work in USDA's programs for tree producers operating on private lands.*

*Former Congressman Mike Espy's confirmation hearings for Agriculture Secretary were also very exciting as they pertained to our issues. He professed his support for funding the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Program. The new Secretary proclaimed his intention to work to "build bridges" in reconciling agricultural production and environmental protection interests and objectives. Secretary Espy stated repeatedly that agricultural productivity and a healthy environment should not be seen as "choices."*

*Alliances with public and private institutions are one of the keys to success in our programs. Continuing and building on the close relationship that we've been establishing with colleagues in USDA certainly sounds as though it will be encouraged from the top in both Departments (Cabinet status for EPA having been another widely supported concept at Carol Browner's hearing)! Cooperation between USDA and EPA, better understanding of the myriad demands on farmers and ranchers, more effective communication directly with agricultural producers — these can be translated into advances in controlling polluted run-off, as well as protecting coastal resources and wetlands. The nature of farming and ranching, and the vast land areas devoted to these pursuits make this an area where the potential is even greater than the challenge.*

"Quarterly Highlights" is prepared by the Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds (OWOW). Its purpose is to share information with our Headquarters and Regional counterparts on major events that occurred during the past quarter, to provide an update on specific topics, and to advise you of key personnel changes and upcoming activities. Any questions or suggestions concerning "Quarterly Highlights" should be directed to Anne Robertson of OWOW at 202-260-9112.

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## News Bits

\* **CZARA Guidance Signed** - On January 12, Martha Prothro, Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, and W. Stanley Wilson, Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management at NOAA, signed off on the Management Measures Guidance and the Program Implementation Guidance for Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990 (CZARA guidance). The Guidance was published in the Federal Register on January 19. This Guidance specifies technology-based management measures to be used by the States in developing Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Programs aimed at restoring and protecting coastal waters. For more details, see article in Fall 1992 issue of *Quarterly Highlights* or contact Stu Tuller, 260-7112.

\* **Clean Lakes Program Guidance Issued** - On November 30, the final FY 1993 Clean Lakes Program Guidance was issued. This annual guidance establishes the program priorities and procedures for awarding the \$4.0 million Clean Lakes appropriation in FY 1993. This is the second year OWOW has implemented a more decentralized (Regional) approach in awarding the funds, which allows the States more latitude in building state-wide program capacity. Contact Tim Icke, 260-2640.

\* **MAG Releases Recommendations on NPS Programs** In December, the Management Advisory Group (MAG) for OW released its recommendations on nonpoint source (NPS) programs. The MAG's recommendations focus on the following four areas:

- Commitment of adequate program resources and continued partnership development with other Federal agencies;
- Implementation of an aggressive outreach program;
- Refinement of the strategic plan with the involvement of all stakeholders and incorporating pollution prevention and water quality driving mechanisms; and
- Continued development of needed policy, program, monitoring, and knowledge tools.

The MAG believes that these recommendations provide a framework for an EPA NPS policy that advances water quality goals and allows cities and states to develop realistic NPS pollution policies and plans that can be implemented. Contact Rod Frederick, 260-7054.

\* **Four Estuaries Added to National Estuary Program (NEP)** - On September 11, Peconic Bay (NY) was added, and on October 22, Corpus Christi Bay (TX), Tillamook Bay (OR), and San Juan Bay (PR) were added to the NEP program. These additions bring the total number of estuaries in the program to 21. Public-private partnerships, called management conferences, will develop Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans

over the next three to five years to identify solutions for each estuary's problems and restore their productivity. Contact Ruth Chemerys, 260-9038 or Eric Slaughter, 260-1051.

\* **Proposed Ocean Dumping Site Reorganization Regulation Recently Forwarded to Administrator for Signature** - The purpose of this rule is to correct and reorganize the list of ocean dumping sites that appear in the Code of Federal Regulations. This rule would eliminate listings of expired or terminated sites, eliminate listings of sites which lie landward of the baseline of the territorial sea, and correct technical errors in the list. Contact Susan Hitch, 260-9178.

\* **Corps Rejects EPA's Request to Review a Case-Specific Section 404(q) Elevation** - The permit decision was made by the Corps of Engineers' Sacramento District and concerns the proposed Churchill Downs residential/commercial complex near Sacramento, California which would impact 17 acres of vernal pools and associated swales that provide habitat for several candidate threatened and endangered species. This elevation to Headquarters was the first under the revised Section 404(q) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Army Corps of Engineers. For more details on this MOA, see article in Fall 1992 issue of *Quarterly Highlights*. Contact Sandy Sieg-Ross, 260-9914.

\* **EPA Defends Decision on Ware Creek Reservoir** - EPA is currently defending its decision to block the proposed Ware Creek reservoir in James City County, Virginia which has been challenged by the applicant. EPA has twice vetoed the permit because construction of the proposed reservoir would result in the loss of an area that, from a site-specific and regional standpoint, provides an important wildlife habitat as well as environmental contributions to the York River and the Chesapeake Bay. The impoundment is intended by the applicant to meet the needs of its citizens, but a multi-jurisdictional effort to address the water supply needs of the region may choose a less damaging site. The Agency is concerned that without a regional approach several impoundments, each with wetlands impacts, would eventually be proposed. Contact Will Garvey, 260-9900.

\* **Objections to 404 Permits for Homestead Resort and Woodlands Meadow Remain** - The Wetlands Division and Region V continue to be involved in objections to two 404 permits that the state of Michigan proposes to issue. The first permit (the Homestead Case) is for a 267-acre golf course development in Homestead Resort that will result in the filling of approximately three acres of wetlands. The second permit (the Woodland

Meadows case) authorizes the discharge of fill in up to 90 acres of wetlands for a proposed Type II and Type III sanitary landfill. Region V and Headquarters both objected to this permit. A recent significantly revised proposal for the project has been developed, and EPA is reviewing the case pursuant to the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Contact Menchu Martinez, 260-5299.

\* **National Wetlands Conservation Alliance Established** - OWOW has been participating in the development of a new group, the National Wetlands Conservation Alliance, which has the objective of persuading farmers and other landowners to protect wetlands for the financial and other benefits to be gained by the owners. The group was convened by Bill Richards, Director of the Soil Conservation Service, with active participation by John Turner, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service; EPA; the Fish and Wildlife Foundation; the National Association of Conservation Districts; and Ducks Unlimited. A number of organizational meetings were held in November and December, a draft charter was prepared, and commodity groups were briefed. Contact John Meagher, 260-1917.

\* **Water Alliances for Voluntary Efficiency (WAVE) Announced** - On December 17, EPA announced the initiation of WAVE, a program to encourage hotels and motels, through voluntary partnership agreements with EPA, to implement and install water saving techniques and equipment. The goal of the program is to reduce water and energy consumption, thus reducing environmental demands. Simultaneously, hotels and motels can become more efficient and profitable, and lodging industry guests and employees can learn about the benefits of water efficiency. The potential annual savings from industry-wide adoption of cost-efficiency measures are: 32 billion gallons of water, one trillion BTUs of energy, and \$85 million in energy, water, and sewer costs. Contact John Flowers, 260-7288.



### People

Darrell Brown has been named as the Acting Chief of the Coastal Management Branch in OCPD. He replaces Mark Curran, who left recently to accept a job with Battelle at the Environmental Planning and Social Research Center. Darrell has returned to OCPD after a 2-year IPA with the International Maritime Organization in London.

Chuck Spooner has joined AWPD on a two-year detail from the Chesapeake Bay Liaison Office.

Russell LaFayette of the U.S. Forest Service has recently begun a two-year assignment as Forest Service Liaison to EPA. Russ will work with managers and staff in both agencies to foster mutual understanding of each agency's programs and to facilitate cooperative efforts in areas of shared interest or concern. Although the focus will be on OW-related programs and activities, Russ will also pursue similar objectives in other EPA offices. OWOW is serving as "host" office to Russ.

Glenn Eugster has embarked upon an eight-month detail to the Chesapeake Bay Program. Phil Oshida from Region IX will begin a rotation as Acting Chief of the Wetland Strategies and State Programs Branch on February 9.



### Recent Releases

*Final Report: Plastic Pellets in the Aquatic Environment: Sources and Recommendations* - This report describes the results of EPA's comprehensive assessment of the sources, fate, and effects of plastic pellets in the aquatic environment and provides recommendations about what can be done to control and prevent their release to the environment. This report should be available in February 1993. Contact Dave Redford, 260-9179.

*Monitoring Guidance for the National Estuary Program* - This document provides the National Estuary Program (NEP) with guidance on how to design, implement, and evaluate a monitoring program. Contact Joe Hall, 260-9082.

*Third National Citizens' Volunteer Monitoring Conference Proceedings* - These proceedings include detailed summaries of over 25 workshops, panel discussions, and technical sessions. Topics include collecting quality volunteer monitoring data; sharing volunteer data with State and local governments; volunteer nonpoint source monitoring; environmental education and community outreach; and watershed walking. Contact Alice Mayo, 260-7018.

*The O.S.V. Anderson: Working to Protect Our Oceans and Coasts* - This document describes the activities of the O.S.V. Anderson, EPA's ocean research vessel. Contact Marcy O'Dell, 260-1904.

## Meetings

**Wetlands Enforcement Roundtable, October 27-28** - At this roundtable, Regional and Headquarters staff discussed such topics as selection of an appropriate enforcement response; coordination with other Federal agencies, such as the COE and FWS; implementation of the Section 404 administrative penalty policy; criminal wetlands enforcement; media relations; and the Region I wetlands enforcement program. Contact Hazel Groman, 260-8795.

**12th Annual International Symposium of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS), November 4-7** - This symposium with over 500 attendees provided a forum for exchange of technical and general information on lake management and restoration. The symposium included a training session for Regions, states, and Tribes on the Clean Lakes Program Management System (CLPMS); a workshop on developing bioassessment protocols and biocriteria for lakes and reservoirs; and a session to discuss new ideas and future directions for the Clean Lakes Program. Contact Susan Ratcliffe, 260-5404.

**15th Consultative Meeting of Parties to the London Dumping Convention (LDC), November 9-13** - Issues addressed at this meeting included the procedures and subject areas of possible amendments to the Convention. Potential areas of amendment to be discussed during upcoming negotiations will include prohibition of industrial waste dumping, prohibition of incineration-at-sea, establishment of a binding moratorium or ban on dumping of low-level radioactive waste, and adoption of a precautionary approach to ocean dumping. In addition to addressing the amendment process, the Parties also took action to provisionally adopt a comprehensive waste assessment framework for use in making permit decisions, adopted a resolution banning incineration-at-sea of noxious liquid wastes, and established procedures for notification of parties prior to issuance of dumping permits for industrial waste. Contact John Lishman, 260-8448.

**Workshop on Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material, December 1-4** - This workshop, entitled "How to Design, Fund and Implement Beneficial Use of Dredged Material for Habitat Restoration/Creation," was attended by approximately 250 participants representing the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts, the Great Lakes, Canada, and Panama. The participants called for new Federal priorities to encourage re-use of dredged material for habitat creation projects and future dialogue to facilitate the implementation of beneficial use projects. Contact Fran Eargle, 260-1954.

## Kudos Korner



### Coastal States Organization

Representing the Governors of 17 Non-Gulf Coastal States,  
Territories and Commonwealths on Coastal, Great Lakes and Ocean Affairs.

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January 13, 1993

To: Trudy Coase, Director OCRM  
Bob Wayland, Deputy Assistant Admin. EPA Office of Water  
From: David Keeley, Chairman   
Re: Section 6217 Program Guidance and Management Measures

I am writing to compliment you and your staff for the long hours and hard work on the Section 6217 Program Guidance and Management Measures. It is exciting news that OMB has approved these materials and that the states can now begin our work in earnest.

During the past two years NOAA and EPA have shown the states, interest groups and Congress that federal agencies can work together and produce a quality product. Although the states anxiously wait to see the specific changes made since the last public review draft, we expect they are workable. We want to now get on with the business of responding to nonpoint source pollution in the coastal zone.

Again, congratulations! The states look forward to working with you on implementing this program.

HALL OF STATES SUITE 322, 444 NORTH CAPITOL ST., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

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### Special Events Wetlands Forestry Field Tour

In September, the U.S. Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters sponsored a field tour of forested wetlands in coastal North Carolina and Virginia. The tour focused on water quality issues, specifically forest management in wetlands and nonpoint source pollution from forestry practices. The tour objectives included:

- Building bridges among State forestry agencies, EPA, the Corps of Engineers, and the U. S. Forest Service;
- Increasing state forestry understanding of sections 319 and 404;
- Assisting EPA and the Corps in understanding forestry; and
- Identifying unresolved concerns and issues.

Several staff members from the Wetlands Division were able to participate in the tour. Contact Jane Freeman, 260-6422.

## Upcoming Events

**Workshop To Develop Ocean and Coastal Protection Division (OCPD) Technical Assistance Strategy, San Francisco - February 17-18, New Orleans - March 18-19** These workshops will bring appropriate professionals together to provide OCPD with input on the development of its Technical Assistance Strategy. Contact Steve Glomb, 260-6414.

**National Estuary Program (NEP) National Coordinators Training Workshop, March 16-18** - An annual workshop designed to allow NEP Headquarters and Regional staff to be updated on guidance procedures. This workshop is also an opportunity for Headquarters and Regional staff to address issues of common concern. Contact Ruth Chemerys, 260-9038.

**Watershed '93, March 21-24** - This is a national conference on watershed management. See article on page 2 for more information.

**OWOW National Meeting, March 25-26** - This meeting brings managers from Headquarters and all the Regions together to discuss accomplishments made in, problems with, and future directions for OWOW related programs. Contact John Pai, 260-8076.

**OWOW Region III Review, April 14-15** - Headquarters staff will be visiting Region III to review Regional activities that relate to OWOW programs. These reviews are conducted in all the Regions on a rotating basis and provide both Headquarters and Regional staff with an opportunity to share information on programs and identify ways to improve interactions. Contact Craig Vogt, 260-1952.

**301(h)/403 National Coordinators Meeting, April 19-23** - Headquarters and Regional staff will be meeting to discuss significant issues related to 301(h) and 403 programs. Contact Bridgette Farren, 260-9119.

**EPA Chief Scientist Certification and Training Program, May 3-7** - This program will train and certify EPA personnel to be Chief Scientists and lead ocean surveys using the Agency vessel, the OSV ANDERSON. Course work will include monitoring design, survey planning and reporting, ship operations and communications, emergency response, and data management. Contact Kevin Perry, 260-6833.

**Enhancing the States' Lake Management Programs, May 5-7** - At this sixth annual meeting, State and Tribal lake program managers as well as citizens involved in lake associations will interact and discuss current lake management issues. Contact Susan Ratcliffe, 260-5404.

————— *"The lakes and rivers sustain us; they flow through the veins of the earth and into our own. But we must take care to let them flow back out as pure as they came, not poison and waste them without thought for the future."* Vice President Al Gore, Earth in the Balance —————

## TQM Corner

### *Improvements*

**\* Streamlining Regional Funds Allocation** - Over the past year, OWOW has been working to streamline the resource distribution process, which includes the development of program-specific guidance, release of targets, and transfer of funds. Efforts to improve the timeliness of these activities began as a result of Regions' concerns that late-arriving targets and funds hindered planning efforts. Regional staff also expressed an interest in seeing the gamut of available contract and grant funds. In May 1992, Bob Wayland transmitted the Regional Funds Allocation plan for FY 1993. The package included milestones for distributing AC&C funds for each OWOW program (NEP, grant funds, etc.). Though the FY 1993 plan has been somewhat disrupted due to the Agency's overall budget difficulties, we intend to do our best to meet our goals of providing guidance and Regional funds earlier than last year and improving the process in the future. Contact Bob Brown, 260-9173.

### *TQM at Work*

**\* OWOW Plans Third Customer Survey** - To facilitate Headquarters ability to provide the Regions with the support they need, OWOW, for the third year in a row, is conducting a customer survey. This survey focuses on the importance, quality, and opportunities for improvement of OWOW services. Headquarters staff will hold focus group meetings to explore the issues and concerns identified by the survey respondents. Three to five of the issues discussed in the focus groups will be selected for in-depth discussion during the National Meeting in March in an effort to further define the issues and make recommendations. In addition to evaluating OWOW's services, Regions are being asked to evaluate the services provided them by other Headquarters' program offices. These responses will allow OWOW to compare its ability to provide services to that of other program offices. This benchmark exercise is intended to help OWOW and other program offices improve their services to the Regions. Contact John Pai, 260-8076.

### New Personnel

A warm welcome is extended to the following new employees who have recently joined OWOW (where these new arrivals most recently hailed from is indicated in parentheses):

#### *Budget and Program Management Staff*

- Christopher Bundy, Stay-in-School (Prince George's Community College)

#### *Assessment and Watershed Protection Division*

- Christopher Zabawa (MD Dept. of Natural Resources)

- Laura Sprehe, volunteer (Indiana University)

- Rebecca Glos, volunteer (Indiana University)

- Inez Belcher, Senior Environmental Employee

- Barbara Wilkins, Senior Environmental Employee

#### *Oceans and Coastal Protection Division*

- Beth McGee (MD Dept. of the Environment)

- Judith Weis, consultant (sabbatical from Rutgers University)

- Lynn Wagenfuehr, volunteer (Indiana University)

#### *Wetlands Division*

- Aura Stouffer, National Network for Environmental Management Studies (Penn State)

- Meredith Smith, volunteer (Stanford University)

- Vic Pyle, Sea Grant Fellow (Louisiana State University)

strategic approach. They have recently compiled their findings into a draft EPA habitat and ecosystem protection strategy (*Strategy*), which is based on EPA's responsibilities for protecting the environment and recognizes that habitat protection is a powerful approach for EPA to use in working toward a goal of sustainable environmental quality.

In discussions of habitat protection opportunities within EPA's Program and Regional Offices, six areas for action emerged as critically important. These key areas span EPA's capabilities and together can form a diverse, yet integrated approach. Each area enlists EPA's existing strengths, and the *Strategy* recommends ways to use these more effectively. The key areas are:

- Improving the use of existing regulatory authorities;
- Focusing EPA's non-regulatory programs;
  - Improving the habitat science base;
- Providing better habitat information management;
- Forming effective public and private partnerships; and
  - Using a risk-based approach for setting priorities and making decisions.

When approved, the *Strategy* can be implemented immediately. Specific, near-term actions are included as recommendations for initial action under each key area and in cross-organizational support.

United States Environmental  
Protection Agency (WH-556F)  
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Washington, D.C. 20460

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