

NPS Management Update

September 23, 2015

**Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Kevin McGaughey, Program Manager
NPS Management Program**

Updates and Information

- **Funding**

- \$2,957,500 was approved by EPA to fund 12 NPS related projects in Arkansas starting on October 1, 2015.

- **Workplans**

- A request for workplans will be announced by ANRC in December 2015. Workplan submittals are due by the last week in January 2016.
- FY 2015 – 2017 dollars will be specifically dedicated to projects. Projects workplans should continue to focus on NPS prioritized watersheds with accepted 9 element Watershed Management Plans **or** that **specifically targets** locations and BMPs needed to delist an impaired stream or address a (TMDL) waterbody*
 - *Focus remains in the NPS Priority watersheds
 - *Specific and targeted BMP to address the cause of impairment
 - *Specific measures of success that directly relates or demonstrates WQ improvement
 - *Monitoring

Updates and Information

- **Changes occurring**

- Allocation amounts for FY 2016 and beyond can not be predicted and are not typically known before mid January
- Starting for FY 2015 funding for ANRC and EPA approved workplans will not begin until October 01, 2015. To be considered for FY 2016 funding, workplans must be submitted by the last week in January 2016.

- **Annual Report**

- Annual report to EPA was turned in ahead of time and received a favorable review for work toward milestone attainment

- **Success**

- Success Story- Illinois River segment delisted
- Watershed Management Plans
 - Frog Bayou and Lee Creek (approved)- City of Fort Smith & GBMac
 - Cache River, Strawberry River, and Lower Little River (in the works)- FTN

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Arkansas: Upper Illinois River

Watershed Restoration Efforts Reduce Turbidity in River

Waterbody Improved

Surface erosion and agricultural activities led to high turbidity levels in the upper Illinois River in Arkansas. As a result, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) added a 2.5-mile segment of the Illinois River to the state's 2006 Clean Water Act (CWA) section 303(d) list of impaired waters for turbidity. The state applied a holistic mitigation strategy to abate sediment runoff in the watershed. Turbidity levels on the listed reach declined, prompting ADEQ to remove it from the 2014 CWA section 303(d) list for turbidity impairment.

Problem

The Illinois River watershed is in northwest Arkansas and northeast Oklahoma. It is a perennial river with flow rates varying considerably from year to year, depending on rainfall. The Illinois River begins in the Ozark region of northwest Arkansas, near Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers and Bentonville. The headwaters of the river meander west through the Ozarks (Benton and Washington counties) and cross into Oklahoma 5 miles south of Siloam Springs, near the town of Watts, Oklahoma (Figure 1).

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Historic Funding for the NPS Program in Arkansas

- FY 03 \$4.561M (-) 56K
- FY 13 \$2.921M (-) 161K
- FY 14 \$2.988M + 67K
- FY 15 \$2.957M (-) 31K

In 2002 the NPS program received \$4.617M. In 2015 the NPS program received \$2.957M. In 12 years the NPS program has been **reduced by 35%** (\$1.63M). Greater and documented results are required today with less dollars.

NPS Program focus for the Future?

Urban NPS*

- Leading source of impairments to surveyed estuaries (Presidents directive on Chesapeake Bay)
- Third largest source of WQ impairments to surveyed lakes

Why?

- Land conversion – yesterdays family farm of 100 acres is becoming 300 lot subdivisions of today
- Impervious surfaces
 - Concrete, asphalt and roofs do not allow water to percolate into the ground
 - Increased runoff (increased volume + increased velocity = greater pollutant loads)

*Based on a National Water Quality Inventory by EPA

Adapting to changes of the NPS Management Program

- Money – Too much or not enough?
 - The NPS program could use more \$'s but only if there are partners (entities) willing to do the work (projects) or do the work necessary (eligibility) with the restrictions of where \$'s can be used based on EPA guidance (criteria)
 - Currently only federal \$'s are put into the NPS program. There is no "line item" or Arkansas legislative funding allocated
 - Project area or stream segment monitoring, results and WQx cost versus "on the ground" implementation
- Field Capacity – there are not entities to carry out projects
 - Not financially secure or ever develop a long term revenue stream
 - No full time coordinator or dedicated personnel
 - No activities to keep partners involved
 - Little or no recognition or expressed appreciation
- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) – primacy agency for water quality
 - ADEQ develops the Integrated Water Quality Report (305b) and the subsequent 303(d) list of impaired waters
 - Roving monitoring network – waters actively assessed on a rotating basis
 - Typically an 8 digit HUC has 2-3 monitoring stations
 - Not enough monitoring to assess effectiveness of "small" projects

Limitations of the NPS Management Program

- Documented Success
 - Difficult and takes time (long term monitoring and assessment)
- Reactive versus Proactive management
 - Historically EPA has mandated a reactive management approach to WQ (i.e. address only waters that are impaired)
 - Federal fiscal year 2014 EPA agreed with states that some \$'s be dedicated to maintaining waterbodies
- Time
 - Practices (BMPs) placed along the streambank have the most immediate effect
 - BMPs placed within the riparian zone have the next quickest effect
 - BMPs placed out of the riparian zone but within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile typically will not show an effect for years (dependent on the practice, condition, slope, etc.)
- No real way to assess the effects of controlling, reducing or abating NPS expediently
 - Watersheds are not static
 - Improvements may be negligible or negated in the geographic scope of the watershed

Strength of the NPS Management Program

Partners

- Federal and State agencies, academic institutions, conservation districts, organizations and watershed groups

How is Partnership strength demonstrated

- Informing stakeholders and citizens who your are and what you do
- Giving credit where credit is due
- Reporting activities through an “annual report”
- Distributing the “annual report” to partners

The NPS Program has initiated a “Snap shot” reporting form to help capture activities occurring in the State that agencies, academic institutions, conservation districts, organizations and watershed groups are doing.

Water Plan Update

The Arkansas Water Plan is now in its final stage-rulemaking. All public hearings have been completed.

Questions?

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