

# Preparing a Successful Watershed Project Application



## Watershed Project Planning



## Watershed project planning is still conservation planning

- A matter of scale
- Nine-step process still works
- Iterative
- In a way, it's never really "done" (Just like everything else in life, conditions change, and decisions aren't perfect; adaptability is required).
- **BUT**... There are almost always other stakeholders involved

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## Stakeholders?

- Your client
- Neighbors
- Local units of government
- Local businesses and their customers
- Other community members, organizations or institutions

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## Watershed or landscape scale

(Focused on a stream or other very significant resource)



## Step 1 - Identify problems and opportunities

How do you know there is a problem?

- Observations?
- Data?
- Regulatory designation?
- Legal citation?



## Step 2 - Determine objectives

- WHOSE objectives?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Are there legitimate stakeholders that haven't been a part of the dialogue?

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## Step 3 - Inventory resources

- Not just soil and water (Don't forget APAHE).
- Appropriate science & technology use – don't guess.
- Get help if you need it.
- Not just physical / environmental:
  - Financial
  - Political
  - Cultural/social
  - Networks

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## Step 4 – Analyze resource data

- Trains of thought often derail at this stage of the process.
- Don't skip immediately to the next step.
- Look for spatial patterns and relationships.
- Is the scope and severity of the problem what you were expecting?
- Are previously unrecognized resource issues emerging?
- Is there a need for stakeholders to re-think their objectives?

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## Step 5 - Formulate alternatives



- Check your assumptions and biases at the door.
- Don't force the last project's solutions on the current project.
- Involve other disciplines

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## Step 6 – Evaluate alternatives

- How will each alternative affect identified resource concerns (positively and negatively)?
- Will the described actions do what we say they will?
- What about unintended consequences?

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## Step 7 – Make decisions

- Match the **solutions** to the **problems**.
- The right practices in the right places.
- Develop reasonable cost estimates.
- Stakeholder investment?

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## Step 8 – Implement the plan

- Who will staff and fund design and installation work?
- Are those staff available? Do they have the right skill sets?
- Are staffing commitments *in hand*?
- How will the project be administered?
- Who is covering administrative costs?
- Describe all this in the proposal.



## Step 9 – Evaluate the plan

- What are meaningful measures of:
  - Implementation progress?
  - Results?
- Monitoring, modeling or both?
- Make the indicators of progress fit the stated objectives.



## Plan Your Project

Background	Problems & Opportunities	Goals / Objectives	Actions	Responsible Party	Timeline	Evaluation Method	Resources / Budget	Letters of Commitment
?								
							?	
								?

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For more information:  
<http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov>

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## Top Ten Tips for Successful Water Quality Applications



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## Top Ten List: #1

- Read the Application!

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## Top Ten List: #2

- Ask Questions about the application ahead of time



## Top Ten List: #3

- Plan Ahead to Get the Required Information



## Top Ten List: #4

- Do It!

Do the Work  
to Compile the  
Required  
Information



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## Top Ten List: #5

- Directly  
Answer the  
Questions



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## Top Ten List: #5a

- Read the Application!

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## Top Ten List: #6

- Get to the Point!
- More words are not better



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## Top Ten List: #7

- Put the application together in order
- Same as application



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## Top Ten List: #8

- Don't skip required information



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## Top Ten List: #9

- Have someone proofread the application before submitting it



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## Top Ten List: #10

- If at first you don't succeed, try again
- Re-apply!



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## Top Ten List: Bonus Tip

- Read the Application!

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## For More Information:

- Read article: “Those Dreaded Watershed Grant Applications”, CDI News (handout provided)

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## Application Tips from Application Reviewers



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## 1. Make the Application Easy to Read

- Use headings that correspond with questions in the application
- Number pages and label maps/exhibits
- Pay attention to detail
- Check your work or have someone check it for you

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## 2. The Assessment is Important

- When was the assessment completed? Is it still relevant?
- Who participated?
- What was discovered?
- Have any of the findings already been addressed?

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### 3. Have A Clear Long-Term Strategy

- State overall progress in implementing your assessment
- Is your request comprehensive or one phase of a larger initiative?
- If there are higher priorities that are not addressed, why not?

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### 4. Make Resource Concerns Clear

- What resource concerns are you addressing?
- What is the importance of the resource in the watershed?
- Are you addressing all resource concerns in your application? If not, explain how you have already addressed them or how you plan to do so.

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## 5. Link Activities to Resource Concerns

- Will your project activities solve resource concerns?
- Are project activities comprehensive?
- Are your quantities realistic?
- Are your goals attainable?

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## 6. Quantify Your Goals

- Use firm numbers to connect funding to accomplishments
- Be specific with respect to number of practices
- Clearly state anticipated environmental benefits

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## 7. How Will You Spend Grant Funds?

- Be specific with budget line items
- Obtain current estimates whenever possible
- Make sure your prices are appropriate
- Are your funding requests eligible in the grant program?
- Check for accuracy



## 8. Partnerships are Essential

- Engage project partners early
- Clearly delineate stakeholder roles in your project
- Document your partnerships
- Leveraging grant funds makes a huge difference!



## 9. Will the Work Get Done?

- Engage landowners before you apply
- State the total number of landowners in your project area and the number who might participate
- Include reasonable timelines for implementation

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## 10. Prior Performance Matters

- Application reviewers are often also project managers
- Positive and/or negative performance can impact future requests
- Be responsive to project staff
- Meet your deadlines!

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## Help is Available! Take Advantage!

- Many applications list points of contact for assistance. Engage our staff early in the process!
- Regional Basin Coordinators (IDALS and DNR)
- GIS Technical Assistance
- Equipment, Monitoring, Education and Outreach Support

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## Technical Assistance and Resources

- Funding agencies want to see successful projects. Once your application is approved we are one of your partners!
- Take advantage of the opportunities available through non-governmental partners
- Listen to your customers. Without them there is no project!

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# Questions



# Closing Remarks

- Website for Presentations:  
<http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/fundingSummit.asp>
- Please complete feedback survey!
- Thank you for attending! Safe Travels and Best of Luck!

