Environmental Indicator Profile Sheet

Indicator Profile No. 19

Public Involvement and Monitoring

Category: **Social**

Tools Used to Measure Indicator:

- Number and type of public involvement groups
- Quantity of volunteer monitoring performed
- Number of hotline reports
- Advisory council

Description:

Public participation in stormwater programs is one measure of overall program effectiveness. Successful implementation of stormwater programs depends, in large part, upon the active support and participation of the public. Citizen monitoring programs, stream segments adopted, watershed stewardship groups, public education (including school curricula), participation in watershed education events are all components of public involvement programs. Other measures of public participation include participation in household hazardous waste recycling efforts, number of calls made to report illegal dumping into the storm sewer system or streams, and membership in citizen advisory groups.

Utility of Indicator to Assess Stormwater Impacts:

- Can be used to help modify citizen behaviors related to source controls.
- Can help reduce monitoring expenses and expand a jurisdiction's monitoring database.
- Can help identify pollutant sources through citizen watchdog actions.
- Can help prepare students to be knowledgeable about water pollution issues and respectful of existing water resources.
- Can generate political support for additional stormwater and watershed funding.
- Can foster acceptance of projects through close relationships with communities, and can provide input for adjacent residents on siting and aesthetic concerns

Advantages of Method:

- Jurisdictions with active public involvement programs are more likely to have a population which is informed about water quality issues and therefore is more receptive to program initiatives, funding issues, and pollution prevention efforts.
- Programs can be initiated by local governments with relatively little expense.
- Provides decision makers with information on public perceptions which is useful in watershed management programs.

Indicator Useful for Assessing:

* Aquatic Integrity of:	
Lakes	◖
Streams	◖
Estuaries	◖
* Land Use Impacts	◖
* Stormwater Mgmt Programs	◖
* Whole Watershed Quality	◖
* Industrial Sites	○
* Municipal Programs	◖

Key:	
Very Useful	●
Mod. Useful	◖
Not Useful	○

Indicator Advantages

* Geographic Range	●
* Baseline Control	○
* Reliable	◖
* Accuracy	◖
* Low cost	●
* Repeatable	○
* All Watershed Scale	●
* Familiar to Practitioners	●
* Easy to use & Low training	●

Key	
Very Advantageous	●
Mod. Advantageous	◖
Not Advantageous	○

Cost

See Table 3.3D

Disadvantages of Method:

- Monitoring may not always meet strict quality control protocols and, therefore, may not be scientifically useful for expanding databases.
- Citizen activists may not understand technical issues and may be less receptive to political and financial tradeoffs associated with particular projects.
- Educational efforts may take several years to affect citizen behavior.
- The lack of citizen involvement group participation may be a function of socioeconomic environment rather than actual program effectiveness.
- Does not measure or change the behavior/attitudes of residents that do not participate in the programs.

Case Study: Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission

Texas Watch: Volunteer Environmental Monitoring

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711

This information packet describes Texas Watch, the statewide volunteer environmental monitoring program of the Texas Natural Conservation Commission. The program is one component of the agency's strategy to combat nonpoint source pollution. Texas Watch addresses nonpoint source pollution in two ways: it assists professional data gathering efforts by enlisting volunteers to monitor water quality in their communities and it provides an excellent tool with which to educate the public about nonpoint source pollution through teacher involvement and the media.

Method References:

- Number and type of public involvement groups: Fullmer, J., 1994. Successful Grass-Roots Strategies for Public Education and Participation In Watershed Protection Policy Making., In: Pawlukiewicz, J.; et.al. (eds.), 1994. Proceedings for *Watershed '93: A National Conference on Watershed Management.*, Alexandria, VA., Mar 21-24, 1993., USEPA No. 840-R-94-002
- Quantity of Monitoring: Ely, E (ed.); 1994. Volunteer Monitoring: Past, Present & Future., *The Volunteer Monitor.* Vol. 6, No. Spring 1994