

Watershed Analysis Monitoring Pilot Project Evaluation

continues from page 7

data that was missing in the initial analysis, d) produce information for use in the five-year review, and e) validate the Watershed Analysis process itself. In some cases, a monitoring component was needed because the WA was going to be used as part of a landowner Habitat Conservation Plan. Some landowners also viewed monitoring as a tool for cooperative resolution of resource concerns that could prevent or replace adversarial relationships.

REASONS WHY SOME WA TEAMS DID NOT INITIATE MONITORING

In some cases development of a monitoring plan was not initiated because the team or team leader did not identify any compelling reason or benefit. Some teams appeared confident that the analysis and prescriptions were on target and had identified no monitoring issues or concerns. Many teams were unaware of a five-year review and had not considered how monitoring data would contribute to a meaningful and successful review process.

In other cases, a team or team leader interested in monitoring was simply too busy to initiate additional projects. The timing of monitoring plan development was a problem, because teams were typically overloaded tying up loose ends, and many people have to move on and begin another analysis or catch up on other work that had been neglected during the analysis. Occasionally, it appeared that conflict and suspicion had developed among participants during an analysis. This atmosphere discouraged participants from working together to develop a monitoring plan because they did not recognize that a monitoring plan could help overcome mistrust and resolve conflict.

WHAT WE LEARNED

To motivate WA teams to initiate monitoring, it is necessary to:

- a) Demonstrate that WA monitoring produces something of value, that it can be done at a reasonable cost and that it won't go on forever.
- b) Increase awareness of the benefits of cooperative monitoring. It is particularly important to sell the concept to people at the policy level.
- c) Inform and motivate team members to advocate for monitoring in the absence of a policy from higher up.
- d) Increase awareness of the five year review and the importance of monitoring in making the review and evaluation process more constructive.
- e) Demonstrate how monitoring can help resolve conflicts and discomfort over uncertainty about the analysis.
- f) Overcome the fears about monitoring that cause people to reject the idea of monitoring without giving it a chance.

STEP 2: IDENTIFICATION OF MONITORING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Five Watershed Analysis teams initiated the process of identifying monitoring goals and developing monitoring objectives. The teams used several approaches to accomplish this step.

Three of the five teams had completed prescriptions before attempting to identify monitoring objectives. Identification of monitoring goals and objectives was done through a group

process by interested members of the prescription team, along with some assessment team analysts. All three teams identified a mixture of monitoring objectives, but some placed more emphasis on monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of prescriptions while the other placed more emphasis on monitoring to document trends in resource conditions. All three teams were successful in identifying a set of monitoring objectives in group meetings. The time required for these groups to identify objectives ranged from 0.5 to 2 days, depending on how much supporting information was assembled during the group process.

Two other teams began working on monitoring plan development prior to completing prescriptions. One team attempted to identify monitoring goals and objectives while the prescription process was underway with a group that included a mixture of prescription team members and resource team analysts. Because the prescriptions were not available, the team had difficulty preparing monitoring objectives to evaluate the effectiveness of prescriptions. This problem was resolved by postponing further work on monitoring objectives until the prescriptions were completed.

The other team took a different approach. They made a commitment to develop a monitoring plan during start-up and designated a monitoring coordinator who began working during the resource assessment process. The monitoring coordinator identified a member of each resource assessment team to act as the monitoring contact person for their module and worked one-on-one with these people to identify monitoring objectives during resource assessment and synthesis. Potential monitoring objectives were identified during interviews with the module contact people and recorded by the monitoring coordinator.

Unfortunately, in both cases where teams initiated work on monitoring prior to prescriptions, finalization of prescriptions has taken months. Neither group has been able to finish identifying monitoring objectives. Hopefully, both teams will be able to pick up the lost momentum when prescriptions are finalized.

Several teams encountered situations that made identification of monitoring objectives and monitoring hypotheses more challenging. In WAUS with rapid urbanization and mixed patterns of urban, agriculture and forest land use, it was confusing to develop monitoring hypotheses about the effectiveness of WA prescriptions because of the difficulty in separating the effects of various land use impacts.

One Watershed Analysis was a joint state and federal effort that involved use of both state and federal guidelines. The two processes differ in purpose, procedure, content and spatial scale. Several differences are of particular importance in monitoring plan development. Federal WA has more modules, including cultural and wildlife modules that are not directly related to stream channels. The federal WA does not generate causal mechanism reports or prescriptions, making it more difficult to develop cause and effect monitoring hypotheses and to determine how to monitor effectiveness. The procedures for identifying monitoring objectives in the monitoring module seemed to work effectively for identifying monitoring objectives related to the federal cultural and wildlife modules.