

9. Watershed Management Plan Evaluation Strategy

Watershed management planning is generally considered an iterative process due to the fact that over the course of any long-term plan, various factors can change that might affect proposed actions or direction. For example, funding sources might change, new developments may cause a shift of task priority, or a proposed improvement may not be achieving the desired effect. Measuring effectiveness is one of the most important reasons to regularly evaluate progress, as it can help re-direct resources to achieve a more productive end. Also, more support can be gained for the management plan if it can be demonstrated that goals were achieved and improvements were made.

It is recommended that the Huron Creek watershed management plan be annually evaluated in order to measure progress (are goals and objectives being completed?) and identify any needed changes (do proposed tasks need to be modified?). A form is provided in Appendix T that can be used as a guide at WAC meetings or by individuals to evaluate the progress of the plan.

Part 1 of the form addresses recommended monitoring plans (See Chapter 7) and identifies

- If monitoring has been completed.
- If any new trends have been identified, and if subsequent changes need to be made to the plans.
- If previously suggested changes have been made.

Part 2 of the form addresses recommended actions and improvements and includes the following questions.

- Which recommended actions and/or tasks have been addressed during the last year? Have any been completed?
- Are these actions being completed according to suggested plan priority and timeline? If not, do project priorities and timelines need to be changed?
- What methods are being used to measure progress?
- Are current efforts still in line with the goals of the WAC? If not, do the goals need to be modified? Should any additional goals be addressed?
- Have previously suggested changes to goals, objectives or recommended actions been made?

Part 3 of the form addresses information and education (I/E) efforts and includes the following questions.

- Which I/E actions and/or tasks have been addressed during the last year? Have any been completed?
- Are these actions being completed according to suggested timeline? If not, do project timelines need to be changed?
- What methods are being used to measure progress?

Suggested methods to measure progress can include:

- Identifying completed steps or tasks towards a recommended action (for example, identifying funding or gaining commitment of project partners).
- Evaluating results of monitoring plans.
- Taking photos of critical areas over the implementation process.
- Monitoring WAC member and volunteer participation (is more outreach needed?).

Completed forms can then provide a “look back” that will allow long-term plan evaluation and provide documentation of progress over the implementation process. Making these forms available to the public, such as by posting them on a website, will help keep the community aware of progress, and add accountability to the plan.