

Deep Creek Lake Watershed Planning Context and Framework

Watershed Planning - What is it?

- Considers a range of environmental, economic, and social issues under a common framework.
- Works within physical/natural boundaries rather than political boundaries.
- Focuses on protection and restoration of water quality, habitat and natural resources.
- Makes the connection between land use and environmental health.
- Provides a framework for assessing impacts from land use decisions and changes.
- Provides a direction for restoration and preservation actions.

What is not?

- A substitute for the Comprehensive planning process.
- Regulatory – recommendations are not required to be implemented at all or in the priority order identified.
- Does not address transportation , economic development or other needs other than to assess impacts to the resource on a general land use scale.
- Static – needs to be updated, reassessed, revised and reinvigorated.

Elements for Developing the Plan

A. Develop Watershed Planning Goals

The first step in the watershed planning process analyzes watershed conditions to **develop clear consensus among stakeholders on the goals, objectives and indicators** that will guide watershed planning. Stakeholder concerns should be evaluated when setting goals.

Concurrently: The process starts by characterizing the watershed and looking at existing scientific information that will influence the planning process.

B. Classify and Screen Priority Subwatersheds *(TBD dependant upon the findings in the characterization report)*

This approach can be used where resources are limited or watersheds are too large to address all issues initially. Prioritization of issues, needs, access, potential threats, and opportunities will drive the outcome of a screening process. If further investigations or detailed assessments are deemed needed but cannot be conducted under the initial planning phase, recommendations can be included in the final report for more detailed assessments in specific areas or on specific issues..

C. Identify Watershed Planning Opportunities

In this step, the core team evaluates and prioritize issues than can be addressed through modifications to current programs, and regulations as they pertain to watershed planning. Some field work may be needed at this time such as a stream walk . Prior reports and studies will also be used to evaluate opportunities. The resulting data is used to develop an initial strategy that scopes out the **types of practices** that best meet watershed goals.

D. Identify potential project areas

The purpose of this step is to assess opportunities for candidate projects. This may involve identifying specific locations for retrofit projects or actions needed. Candidate sites can be prioritized and site visits conducted to assess viability of proposed projects. Project sites would be included for review at the second public meeting where concerns can be expressed before being included in the final plan recommendations

E. Assemble Recommendations into Plan

This step transforms the inventory of projects, programmatic changes, and management approaches into a draft plan that recommends the most cost effective group of projects, programs and management approaches for the watershed. Recommendations should include indicators to measure success. Recommendations should be evaluated against the goals and objectives and be should be able to be accomplished before being finalized.

F. Methods to Implement the Plan

As the watershed plan is being finalized, it is important to step back for a moment and plan for project implementation itself. From here on out, much of the time and expense is devoted to the final design, engineering and permitting of individual projects, programs and management approaches.

G. Implement Plan and Monitor Improvements Over Time

The Plan should include a process for tracking and monitoring progress.

Modified from :

A User's Guide to Watershed Planning in Maryland
Basic Concepts of Local Watershed Planning