

## **Additional Guidance for Completing Incremental Applications Under the NC Section 319(h) Grant**

This document provides guidance to those seeking Section 319(h) Incremental grant funds for watershed assessment, planning, and restoration activities. This guidance supplements the general guidance provided in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and should be consulted in addition to reviewing the RFP. To access the RFP and current grant application, please see the following website: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program>.

Note: Applicants with questions are encouraged to contact a member of the 319 staff to answer questions and provide assistance prior to completing an application. In addition, applicants are encouraged to submit applications several weeks prior to the application deadline for review and feedback. DWQ Nonpoint Source Unit staff can review the application and highlight any deficiencies. Applicants will be allowed to resubmit a revised application by the deadline.

### **General Guidance**

Some general elements that contribute to a successful Incremental proposal include:

- The proposed project is located in a smaller watershed where implemented practices have a greater impact on water quality and where it is easier to demonstrate measurable results.
- A local “champion” has been identified to assist or lead implementation of the project. Active local groups or individuals can be critical in helping to start and keep momentum going in the watershed to help achieve long-term restoration goals.
- Willing landowners have been identified. If the project requires access to private land, demonstrate that the affected landowners have been contacted, are supportive of the project, and have granted access to their land or have agreed to implement best management practices on their land.
- Some planning or restoration work has already been completed within the watershed. A proposal to continue ongoing work or implement a completed watershed plan is typically viewed more positively because it shows there is momentum for the project and thoughtful planning has gone into what is being proposed.

**What activities can a proposal cover?** To be eligible to receive Incremental funds, the project must be working to restore an impaired waterbody that is on the state’s 303(d) list of impaired waters. Additionally, the project must be either 1) developing or implementing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or 2) developing or implementing a 9-element Watershed Restoration Plan.

**Projects developing or implementing a Watershed Restoration Plan must include EPA’s 9 Key Elements for Watershed Restoration Plans.** Applicants have to provide this information **ONLY** if they plan to develop or implement a Watershed Restoration Plan as part of their project. The nine required elements are provided in the application form itself.

Note: Applications should always address the extent to which land use change is occurring or expected to occur in the watershed. Please also mention if there is no development in the watershed. If growth/development is occurring or anticipated in the watershed, it is important to include efforts to stem the additional impacts that will likely result from future development. Including these efforts will help ensure the long-term success of the project.

## **Estimate Load Reduction**

Only projects that will generate load reductions need to provide this information. For projects that will not generate load reductions (i.e., TMDL or Watershed Restoration Plan **development**), this information does not need to be provided.

- **Pollutant Load Estimation/Reduction Tools**

Each of the following sections corresponds to a parameter(s) to be measured. Within that section are one or more tools to measure that parameter. These tools can be used to quantify existing conditions in a watershed and then estimate the load reductions needed. Please note that some of these tools (i.e., STEPL, NLEW) can be applied to larger areas, but others (i.e., RUSLE2, PLAT) are site specific and should not be applied across larger geographic areas.

- **Nitrogen, Phosphorus, BOD and Sediment**

Spreadsheet Tool for the Estimation of Pollutant Load (STEPL): Because this tool can be applied to the entire nation, it may not be as site specific as other tools, but can be a good place to begin for a watershed. Please see the following link to STEPL:  
<http://it.tetratech-ffx.com/stepl/>.

- **Sediment**

Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation 2 (RUSLE2): Please remember that when using RUSLE2, it is necessary to evaluate much smaller areas (such as fields). It is not possible to evaluate an entire watershed at one time using RUSLE2 (such as one can do using STEPL). Please see the following website that may be helpful in using RUSLE2:  
[http://fargo.nser1.purdue.edu/rusle2\\_dataweb/RUSLE2\\_Index.htm](http://fargo.nser1.purdue.edu/rusle2_dataweb/RUSLE2_Index.htm).

- **Nutrients - Agriculture**

North Carolina Agricultural Nutrient Assessment Tool (NCANAT) contains both the Nitrogen Loss Estimation Worksheet (NLEW) and the Phosphorus Loss Assessment Tool (PLAT). NLEW was developed for the agricultural community to enable them to determine nitrogen reductions associated with different BMPs in their respective counties. PLAT (similar to RUSLE2) must be used on a site-specific basis. It cannot be applied across watersheds or counties as STEPL and NLEW.

- **Nutrients - Stormwater**

The Neuse and Tar Pamlico River Basin nutrient management regulations both contain a stormwater component. The following website ([http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/nps/documents/BMPNutrientRemovalEfficiencies\\_000.pdf](http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/nps/documents/BMPNutrientRemovalEfficiencies_000.pdf)) contains both nitrogen and phosphorus removal efficiencies for stormwater BMPs. Efficiencies calculated using these stormwater nutrient tools can then be input in a larger model such as STEPL.

### **Funding Requested**

- **Agriculture related projects:** If the proposed project involves water quality impairment resulting from agricultural sources and/or agricultural solutions to watershed restoration, the applicant must make full use of agricultural funding sources prior to applying for 319 funding. The applicant should also quantify the extent of agricultural funding in the application. Please document that agricultural funding programs do not provide sufficient and/or applicable funding for purposes of your proposed project. Please see the different agricultural funding programs and their websites:
  - USDA Farm Bill programs  
(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farbill/2002/products.html>)
  - North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program  
(<http://www.enr.state.nc.us/DSWC/pages/agcostshareprogram.html>)
  - North Carolina Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program  
(<http://www.enr.state.nc.us/DSWC/pages/crep.html>)
- If applicant plans to use existing staff that are fully funded by another source to work on a 319 project, it's not appropriate to request 319 funds for additional salary for them unless their hours will increase accordingly or their current funding source will end. In either of these cases, please explain. The latter case would include grant-funded faculty positions.
- If a new position is proposed, fully describe the nature of the position, to whom the position will report, where located, how supported, and the specific nature of its responsibilities.
- Review to make sure there are no arithmetical errors in your budget tables. Make sure the requested funding amounts for various budget categories (i.e., salary, travel, supplies, etc.) agree between budget tables. Also ensure estimated annual project expenditures agree between budget and milestone tables, as instructed in the application form.

### **Monitoring/Environmental Data Collection**

Prior to developing the actual monitoring plan, clearly identify the goals and objectives of the project and identify the purpose of the monitoring in relation to the project. Define why monitoring is needed, who will use monitoring data and how monitoring data will be used. Any project that will conduct monitoring or will collect water quality data will be required to prepare a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). While the QAPP specifics do not have to be provided in the application, a completed QAPP must be submitted and approved before starting data collection activities. A template to assist in the development of a QAPP is provided on the 319 program website: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/nps/319program>.

### **List Project Outputs and Products**

- A detailed Final Project Report and Quarterly Progress Reports are required from all 319 funded projects.
- Be as specific as possible and quantify project outputs wherever possible. For example, include the number of BMPs to be installed, the number of monitoring locations and monitoring events, the number of stakeholder meetings to be held, the number of publications to be produced/distributed, etc.