

Chapter 11 – Plan Evaluation

“This planet came with a set of instructions, but we seem to have misplaced them. Civilization needs a new operating system.”

Paul Hawken



There will need to be evaluation of the progress towards implementation of the specific actions identified in the Indian Creek Watershed Management Plan and towards meeting the long-term goal of a healthy watershed. It is recommended that evaluation be completed through annual plan reviews and plan updates that occur every five years. The reviews and updates are an important component of the adaptive management approach.

Adaptive management is a type of natural resource management in which decisions are made as part of an ongoing science-based process. Adaptive management involves testing, monitoring, and evaluating applied strategies, and incorporating new knowledge into management approaches that are based on scientific findings and the needs of society. Results are used to modify management policy, strategies, and practices. (USGS)

This adaptive management approach recognizes the limitations of current knowledge regarding future situations, and the inevitability of change. This Plan provides a big-picture context for specific actions based on best available data, and will need to be adjusted as better information or new conditions arise. By design, the short-term action steps are outlined in greater detail than the long-term action steps. Recommendations for the first 5 years are reasonably firm, whereas those beyond 20 years are expected to be refined several times before they are implemented.

11.1 Implementation

The ICWMA will begin Plan implementation by establishing subcommittees and advisory groups:

- Agriculture Related Advisory Group to advise project development and education strategies
- Education & Outreach Subcommittee to develop and implement education strategies
- Monitoring & Analysis Subcommittee to develop and implement a long-term monitoring and data collection plan
- Policy & Ordinance Review Subcommittee to promote adoption of model ordinances to protect the watershed
- Infrastructure Subcommittee to incorporate low impact development and best management practices into capital improvement projects

11.2 Annual Reviews

The purpose of the annual plan review is to identify and discuss implementation challenges to determine if there is a need for plan amendments. The evaluation process provides stakeholders an opportunity to discuss concerns about a particular element of the Indian Creek Watershed Management Plan. The annual reviews are a reminder that the Plan is adaptable, dynamic and flexible. Information that will be collected as part of the annual survey and evaluation of progress will include:

- Education Activities – Reporting of education and outreach efforts
- Alignment of policies – Status of adopting model ordinances
- Watershed Improvement Projects – Track implementation of projects and locations, provide watershed-wide summary with a map
- Watershed Conditions Assessment – Update and summarize monitoring program data

As additional metrics for measuring progress are developed by the ICWMA they will be included in the annual survey and progress report.

11.3 Plan Updates

Plan updates occur every 5 years and take a more holistic look at changed conditions and implementation actions since the last Plan Update. Evaluations of changed conditions for Plan Updates may include:

- Population and land use forecasts and trends

- Water quality trends using the 303(d) list and available watershed assessment data
- Social assessment changes
- Tracking of BMPs
- Flood risk modeling for future land use projections

Undoubtedly, other issues will emerge that merit in-depth consideration in the future. As with existing efforts, future planning work should be open and inclusive, involving all ICWMA members and stakeholders.

11.4 Conclusions

While the performance will be reported annually by the ICWMA members, the final measure of implementation success will be the longer term, demonstrable trends of:

- Ongoing implementation of model ordinances
- Watershed planning and greater local coordination on land use and watershed health
- The progression of communities towards proactive programs
- Proactive detection of potential pollutant sources
- Collection of better watershed conditions data
- Heightened public awareness and community support through an effective public education and awareness program
- Progress on improving surface water quality and reducing the risk of flood impacts

