

## MEMORANDUM

**SUBJECT:** Formation of a "Managing for Environmental Results" Workgroup

**FROM:** Jim Giattina, Director  
Water Management Division

**TO:** All Water Management Division Employees

I am announcing the formation of a Managing for Environmental Results Workgroup to evaluate current management process and/or new organizational changes needed in the Water Management Division. The purpose of forming this Workgroup is to continuously improve our ability to manage for environmental outcomes on a watershed basis. Specifically, I am charging the Workgroup to focus on improving our ability to achieve sub-objective 2.2.1 of the Agency's 2006 – 2011 Strategic Plan - Improving Water Quality on a Watershed Basis. The Plan's associated strategic targets are:

- by 2012, attain water quality standards for all pollutants and impairments in more than 2,250 water bodies identified in 2002 as not attaining standards (cumulative);
- by 2012, remove at least 5,600 of the specific causes of water body impairment identified by states in 2002 (cumulative); and,
- by 2012, improve water quality conditions in 250 impaired watersheds nationwide using the watershed approach (cumulative).

The details in terms of the purpose, criteria, workgroup composition and functions, and timeframes and deliverables are attached.

I want to give you my thinking in response to the first question that is likely on your mind: "Why undertake this effort?" The short answer is that I do not believe we are making the progress needed to integrate our programs as effectively and efficiently as we should in order to actually manage to achieve improvements in water quality. We have to be constantly vigilant and willing to ask ourselves the critical question: "How can we continue to improve our efforts to achieve and measure results?"

Since joining Region 4 over four years ago, I have consistently discussed our need to achieve results by integrating our programs, both *horizontally* (across EPA and other federal agencies) and *vertically* (across state and local governments), including our need to reach out to non-government entities. We have taken some steps in this direction through the formation of the Watershed Management Office, the designation of State watershed leads, and the formation of cross-Division workgroups. In addition, we have improved our information management capabilities, streamlined some of our oversight responsibilities, and modified the priorities in our grants work. We have done a better job of targeting programmatic activities in ways that contribute to achieving results on a watershed scale. All of these steps have resulted in positive

contributions to our programmatic and environmental measures. However, I believe we are in need of "mid-course" corrections. I am looking for creative approaches that will accelerate our ability to support state and local efforts to improve water quality and, ultimately, to achieve the objective of the Clean Water Act of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters in the southeastern United States.

We continue to face difficult environmental issues - the causes of which are not exclusively addressed by our programmatic responsibilities. As critically important as our programs are, they cannot function in isolation and achieve the broader environmental objectives committed to in the Agency's Strategic Plan. Nor can they function in isolation from each other or in isolation from the complementary federal, state, and local mandates that are the purview of other agencies and organizations. We are being called upon as never before to document environmental results, environmental *outcomes*, and to demonstrate how our programs and activities are working in concert with other programs to achieve those results.

My vision is this: When each person in the Division comes to work their first priority is to work effectively with their colleagues (both within and outside the Agency) to achieve our environmental outcomes be they providing safe drinking water or protecting water quality and wetlands. For the Clean Water Act programs, I believe that if we focus on important watersheds (where there is a federal interest or need expressed), work together effectively as a team, and ***manage to achieve results***, most if not all of our programmatic "beans" will be achieved. Our job is to help States, Tribes, local governments and non-government organizations "turn red waters blue" and to put in place sustainable organizations, practices, and procedures that will protect those resources into the future. We are being asked to do this within a legal and regulatory context requiring us to ensure federal laws are being administered appropriately and effectively either as a result of our own direct implementation or through delegation to our States. This is the challenge.

To address that challenge, today I am forming the Managing for Environmental Results Workgroup. I want a process that effectively engages the staff and solicits input from the broadest possible spectrum of individuals. I'd like each of you to consider the charge I've provided in the attachment and seriously consider your willingness to participate. The final Workgroup will be composed of two representatives from each Branch, one representative from each Office, and a management advisor. The Water Executive Team will make the final decisions on the Workgroup membership. Please note that we reserve the right to ask specific staff to serve on the Workgroup. **So, if you are interested in serving, please provide your name to Becky Allenbach by close of business July 23, 2007.** The WET will make final selections in time for the first meeting of the Workgroup by August 7. I expect the Workgroup to produce a final set of recommendations and a communication plan by November 7, 2007, after which the Workgroup will sunset.

These are extremely important times for the Agency, for our Division, and for water programs. As you are aware, over the years the Agency has been operating under limited resources (e.g. manpower, finances, etc.) and the situation is not likely to improve. Therefore, we need the best thinking of the Division to critically evaluate our ability to manage for results

and to chart our course for the years ahead. I am open to any constructive recommendation that will lead to better performance in terms of environmental outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration and support as we look to the future.

Attachment

## **ATTACHMENT DRAFT (7.5.07)**

### **Water Management Division Managing for Environmental Results (MER) Workgroup**

**Objective:** To develop recommendations for mid-course corrections that will improve the Division's ability to manage for environmental outcomes through process changes (e.g., reduced State oversight), process efficiencies (e.g., streamlining grant reviews), and/or organizational changes (e.g., realigning Sections, Branches, and/or Offices). Specifically, the Workgroup will identify process and/or organizational changes that will improve our ability to integrate our management efforts and better support State and local organizations in order to improve water quality and achieve measurable targets under sub-objective 2.2.1 of the Agency's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan:

- by 2012, attain water quality standards for all pollutants and impairments in more than 2,250 water bodies identified in 2002 as not attaining standards (cumulative);
- by 2012, remove at least 5,600 of the specific causes of water body impairment identified by states in 2002 (cumulative); and,
- by 2012, improve water quality conditions in 250 impaired watersheds nationwide using the watershed approach (cumulative).

**Analytical Criteria:** Recommendations must:

- ✓ improve our ability to improve efficiency and to support federal, state, and local efforts to achieve the measurable and reportable outcomes above;
- ✓ improve our ability to effectively integrate programs to achieve outcomes on a watershed basis;
- ✓ promote our ability to understand and respond to environmental issues and needs at the local watershed level, but address those needs more effectively through actions at the regional and national level (i.e., a “wholesaling” approach that builds from our watershed experiences);
- ✓ provide management the flexibility needed to address changes in workload potentially resulting from legislative mandates, legal decisions, varying state capabilities, or emerging environmental issues;
- ✓ provide for the development of a multi-skilled staff that is technically proficient in solving environmental problems by working effectively in workgroups across multiple

water programs, as well as, related environmental programs in order to achieve common objectives;

- ✓ provide for effective communication linkages with Headquarters, state agencies, and local governments; and,
- ✓ not result in an increase in the number of GS/GM 14's or 15's currently in the Division.

**Workgroup Composition & Functioning:** The MER Workgroup will be composed of a Management Advisor, two representatives from each Branch, and one from each Office within the Division. Section Chiefs and staff will be asked to express their interest in serving on the Workgroup through an all-hands email. However, the Water Executive Team (WET) reserves the option of requesting and assigning specific staff to participate. Our goal is to have a Workgroup that reflects the diversity of the Division across management, senior and newer staff, as well as, across race, age, and gender.

The Workgroup will select a Workgroup Leader who will work closely with the Management Advisor to complete the Workgroups' objective and deliverables within the timeframe described below. The Workgroup will be responsible for forming any sub-groups and for identifying any supporting information or funding needed to achieve their mission. The Workgroup should consider benchmarking other Regions, States, and/or private organizations. Benchmarking generally should be accomplished by teleconference. However, limited travel from the Front Office may be available to support a particularly high priority benchmarking trip for one or, at the most, two Workgroup members.

Every effort should be made to ensure the final recommendations represent the consensus of the Workgroup (i.e., all members can support the recommendations as proposed). However, if a consensus is not possible, a minority view can be expressed with the final report. Frequency of meetings and agendas will be the responsibility of the Workgroup. The Workgroup should also serve as a forum for gathering broader input from individuals across the Division and even across the Region, as appropriate.

**Timeframe & Deliverables:** The Workgroup will hold its initial meeting no later than August 7, 2007, and will complete all deliverables by November 7, 2007. The Workgroup Leader and Management Advisor will provide the following products:

- ✓ status updates on the progress, activities, and any preliminary recommendations of the Workgroup at each of the routine WET meetings (August 10 & 24; September 7 & 21; October 5 and 19; and November 2);
- ✓ a final report that describes the options considered for any process and/or organizational changes, a description of how each option was evaluated against the criteria described above, and the final recommendations of the Workgroup (November 7); and,
- ✓ a communication plan for rolling out the recommendations of the Workgroup to the full Division, and to the States and Headquarters, including a powerpoint presentation for the

Regional Administrator. The communication plan should also include the specific timing, audience, suggested events, and products to be used (November 7).