Streamlining Practices for Water Quality Trading Programs: BMP Guideline National Templates

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WATER QUALITY TRADING IS

is strategy that provides discharge permittees flexibility in meeting regulatory compliance while achieving broader clean water goals on a watershed scale.

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WHY DO IT?

1. Maintain transparency & flexibility
2. Facilitate collaboration
3. Reduce start-up time and costs
4. Produce additional environmental benefits

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KEY PLAYERS

Program Administrator

Landowners

Project Developers

Buyers

Regulatory Agency

Third-party Verifiers

Registry Provider

Public

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THE WQT PROCESS

Select & Validate Site
Implement & Calculate Credits
Verify & Certify Credits
Register & Issue Benefits
Ongoing Verification Tracking & Transfer

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KEY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- Lack of standardization
- High degree of uncertainty and complexity
- Spatial and temporal variability in watersheds
- Inconsistent language
- Complicated and highly detailed

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WHAT DO WE NEED?

- Facilitate ease of use and development
- Enhance program quality, consistency
- Create shared language between programs
- Aggregate and build up existing resources
- Strengthen understanding of challenges facing implementation

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Building a Water Quality Trading Program: Options and Considerations

National Network on Water Quality Trading: Improving consistency, innovation, and integrity in water quality trading

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BMP Guideline
National Templates

Template: Sediment Basin Guideline

BMP guidelines are intended to ensure that projects seeking credits are implemented to a high standard, do not create unanticipated environmental impacts, and are maintained in a way that achieves the credited water quality benefits for as long as the project is valid. This template includes design, installation, maintenance, and performance standards that can help ensure that BMPs are performing as anticipated.

This template is intended to serve as a starting point only. Any language can be adjusted to meet the needs of a particular state or trading program. There are instructions, comment boxes, and options throughout the template providing additional information or alternative language for states to consider.

This template is organized to include the components of BMP Guideline proposed in the National Network publication, Building a Water Quality Trading Program: Options and Considerations (National Network Guide), which was itself developed through review of NRCS practice standards and trading programs. This template was developed in collaboration with several experts in water quality trading programs. A review of relevant literature and national monitoring standards and programs. This template will continue to evolve as it is applied.

Template: Riparian Revegetation Guideline

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COMMON WQT BMPs

STRUCTURAL
Sediment basin
Sprinkler irrigation

NON-STRUCTURAL/MANAGEMENT BASED
Cover cropping
Riparian grass buffer

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GUIDELINE DESIGN PROCESS

- Riparian Revegetation Performance Standards
- Water Quality Trading Toolkit
- NRCS Practice Standards
- State trading programs
- Resources from project developers
- Non-Structural: Riparian Revegetation BMP Guideline Templates
- Structural: Sediment Basin BMP Guideline Templates

BMP Guideline Templates

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WHAT’S INSIDE?

1. Basic information
   Geographic scope, practice description, credit types, definitions

2. Credit Calculation Methods

3. BMP Quality Standards
   Project and site eligibility
   Project design
   Implementation requirements
   Monitoring and maintenance procedures

4. Credit Issuance Procedures
   Project site pre-screening, project site review, contract terms & duration

Designed for practitioners, stakeholders, and experts

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Riparian Revegetation Guideline

1. BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 PRACTICE DESCRIPTION:

Establishment of native vegetation, predominately trees and/or shrubs, located adjacent to and up-gradient from a river or stream.

1.2 ELIGIBLE CREDIT TYPES

The Riparian Revegetation projects in this guideline serve to filter sediment and phosphorous and regulate water temperature. This guideline can be used to generate the following types of credits:

- Thermal Load (kcal/day)
- Total Phosphorus Load (lb/year)
- Total Nitrogen Load (lb/year)
- Total Sediment Load (ton/year)

**GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE**

Application of BMPs and restoration techniques, and their expected results, can vary from place to place. This section defines the range of situations for which this particular BMP Guideline can be applied.

ERT GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE HERE (E.G., Boise River Watershed).

**DEFINITIONS**

This section defines technical language within the guideline. Cite references where available.

- ***Canopy closure***: Canopy closure is an upward-looking point estimate of the coverage of a forest canopy, and may be measured in the field with a spherical densiometer (also called a mirror integrator) or by analyzing upward-looking hemispherical photographs.
REVIEW PROCESS

WQT and BMP Expert Feedback

BMP Guideline Templates

Non-Structural: Riparian Revegetation BMP Guideline Templates

Structural: Sediment Basin BMP Guideline Templates

State trading programs

NRCS Practice Standards

Water Quality Trading Toolkit

Riparian Revegetation Performance Standards

Resources from project developers

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WHY DO WE NEED THESE?

- Offer a detailed blueprint
- Serve as a platform for communication and shared experiences
- Provide national uniformity
- Facilitate program development
- Build upon existing resources

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REMAINING CHALLENGES

1. Detail vs. flexibility
2. Inconsistent language
3. Lack of program transparency
4. Knowledge gaps
LOOKING FORWARD

Developing these programs is challenging, but now the path is a little smoother.

Developers should not be afraid to start simple.

Finding a common language is key.

Progress relies on relationships with stakeholders, trust, and social readiness.

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