

V Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts of the Plan

Implementation of the recommendations made in this plan will have environmental, as well as social and economic costs and benefits. Many of the Plan recommendations have been in effect since the previous 208 Plan was approved in 1999. This includes consolidation of wastewater treatment facilities and implementation of nonpoint source controls for new sources of urban stormwater runoff, construction activities, agriculture activities, stream encroachment, and water use and development activities. The goal of these recommendations is to effectively remedy the problems and improve quality of life aspects associated with improved water quality. This requires taking a larger regional perspective, looking at past trends, current activities and how future activities might affect the region. Through a regional perspective, by looking at each watershed, it is easier to determine the impacts of existing and proposed projects and how they may incrementally contribute and compound existing problems. Recommendations made in this plan to mitigate and prevent future problems have positive and negative effects.

Environmental

Overview

The overall intent of this plan is to maintain the existing high quality of the watershed's streams and lakes, while accommodating growth and development. Another intent is to improve water quality in degraded stream segments, which are unable to support the full range of potential uses. Each of the plan's recommendations is aimed towards these objectives. Environmental impacts may occur upon implementation of the plan either as a result of adoption of the recommended controls on new potential sources of water quality degradation (preventative strategies) or as a result of recommended cleanup activities.

Impact Discussion

Implementation of the recommendations in this plan will be accomplished through the recommended use of point and nonpoint source policies and strategies that target the unique problems identified in each of the five watersheds. Implementation of the recommendations could require greater enforcement, development of new and refinement of existing regulations.

Recommendations that establish effluent limitations, potential wasteload allocations, treatment service areas, and recommended areas of wastewater treatment can have a positive and negative effect on the environment. The negative impacts from meeting

wastewater treatment requirements include: increased energy consumption, land use impacts, greater cost when consolidation is required, temporary local construction impacts on noise, dust, soil disturbance and traffic. Positive impacts include: improvement and maintenance of water quality in streams, protection and enhancement of aquatic life in fishery resources.

In addition to point source controls, nonpoint source prevention strategies will continue to be implemented in order to meet the objectives of the Clean Water Act. These policies address water quality degradation; urban runoff; construction activities; agriculture activities; use of chemicals; fill in of wetlands and degradation of riparian areas.

Social and Economic Impacts

Overview

This plan is intended to serve the population and economic growth projected by local governments within each of the corresponding five watersheds. The majority of the projected growth and development is associated with the unincorporated portion of the county.

Protection and enhancement of the environment is a key element to the potential for economic diversification and the provision of a stable economic community for residents of the region. Many examples of the potential for economic diversification relate to the protection and enhancement of water quality, such as tourism and recreation. Positive impacts of implementing this plan include the protection and enhancement of water quality, which leads to protecting the potential recreational resources. Negative impacts of this plan's implementation include increased levels of regulation and development costs associated with protecting water quality.

Impact Discussion

The provision of advanced wastewater treatment for selected communities has had an impact associated with the construction and operation of these systems. Higher costs for construction and operation of these systems have been passed on to system users in the form of higher tap fees and service charges. Construction costs have been supported, in part, by Federal grant programs, State revolving loan fund program and energy impact assistance programs.