The WRR - A Federal Perspective

Dominique Lueckenhoff, Deputy Director, Water Protection Division, USEPA Region 3
October 16, 2014
Envisioning the future

THE NEXT 90 MILES - AN AWARD WINNING GREEN HIGHWAY

- 80% recycled materials used
- 4,650 wetland acres restored
- Stormwater runoff naturally cleansed
- 10,000 forest acres preserved
- Truckstop diesel emissions reduced 45%
- Alternative fuels available at truckstops

GREEN HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP
The Mid-Atlantic Green Highways Partnership (GHP) was formed to promote innovative streamlining and market-based approaches to meet transportation needs while promoting environmental stewardship so both are “better than before,” with an emphasis on sustainability!
Origins of the WRR
Green Highways Partnership (GHP)

- The GHP was initiated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) (MSHA) out of a realization that building safe, sound transportation systems and protecting and sustaining a clean and healthy environment were not mutually exclusive, particularly in light of their common denominator, serving the “public good.”
Why Form GHP?

• **Common ground necessary to address citizens’ needs for mobility & environmental protection**

• **Increased complexity of transportation & environmental issues**

• **Necessity for greater leveraging of public-private resources**

• **Drive better, faster, cheaper solutions**

• **Encourage innovators and early adopters**
Origins of the WRR

GHP - A Gap Closer & Game Changer!

Building A Bridge between Environmental & Transportation Communities

Environmental Community
- State DEPs
- Army Corps
- EPA
- FWS
- NGO’s
- Contractors
- Universities

Transportation Community
- State DOTs
- FHWA
- Contractors
- Universities
- Consultants
- TRB
- Trade Assc

GREEN HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP
Mid-Atlantic Green Highways Partnership

- Broad Based Partnership
- Leveraging of Knowledge, Experience, & Resources
  - Sharing, capturing, researching, depository
- Doing Business *Differently*
- Leaving Things "Better Than Before"
Pillars of GHP

Partnerships

Rewards & Recognition

Opportunities

THEMES

Innovative Watershed-Driven Stormwater Management

Recycling and Reuse - *Industrial By-Products and Recycled Material*

Conservation and Ecosystem Management
The Green Highways Partnership is dedicated to transforming the relationship between the environment and transportation infrastructure.
Why Should We Care About This Type of Partnering Approach TODAY?

- CLIMATE Change Impacts! Increased Flooding, Droughts, etc.

- ASCE- Grade “D” – Deteriorated Infrastructure – Increasingly High Price Tag!!

- Growing Public/Community Demands – Driving Need to Work “Smarter.” Leverage, Leverage, Leverage!!

- Markets Are Loaded with $$$ – Need to Take Advantage of Opportunities to Leverage Limited Public Resources & Capacity

- Pollutant & Transportation Needs are Shifting – Need New Paradigms – New Ways of Doing Business to Solve New Problems

- Sustainability – Growing Cornerstone of our Work – Leaving Things “Better Than Before”
Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

Henry Ford

The **WRR** - A Major Outcome of the **GHP**!
WRR Origin

• Limitations of the traditional regulatory framework – “my resource is most important”
• Needed broad-based collaborative planning and protection of the watersheds to “Green” Route 301.
• Watershed-driven compensatory mitigation rule
• Green Infrastructure approach to stormwater mgmt
• Limited number of tools existed to assist regulators and others in deciding both what activity might be most beneficial to the watershed and where that activity ought to occur
What is the WRR?

• It is a comprehensive replicable framework and GIS-based targeting tool that:
  – Integrates and streamlines regulatory programs
  – Guides resource planners
  – Saves time and $, and increases program efficiencies
  – Screens for preferred actions and maximizes watershed benefits
  – Is transparent, predictable and reliable
  – Facilitates multiagency input and coordination
Advantages of a Watershed Approach

- Interdisciplinary approach that integrates solutions
- Addresses complex environmental relationships
- Uses naturally defined areas
- Holistically targets problems
- Ecologically based
- Promotes stakeholder & public involvement
- Compatibility with other programs
WRR Partnering Focus

- Integrate CWA authorities
- Provide a comprehensive watershed approach
- Streamline the regulatory framework
- Provide a strategic communication vehicle among agencies
- Streamline the regulatory decision-making timeframe (LDEPA)
- Support watershed-driven decision-making

“WIN/WIN”!

Local Jurisdictions; Watershed Groups; Private Sector
WRR : Goals

• A collaborative national/regional pilot that grew out of the Green Highways Partnership and the Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) proposal for making the Route 301 Project the 1st Green Highway in Maryland.

• **Purpose 1:** Develop transferable framework for integrated watershed management to be to address the Federal Compensatory Mitigation Rule – ultimately enabling creation of “watershed banking” capability.

• **Purpose 2:** Achieve increased regulatory efficiencies through integration of CWA Sections 401, 402, and 404 (303(d), 319, etc.) in a watershed context – thereby also enabling greener (more sustainable) stormwater management.
Collaboration

Current partner agencies:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region III
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District
- Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)
- State Highway Administration
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
- Maryland Environmental Services
- Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Prince Georges County
- Charles County
- Mattawoman Watershed Society
- Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basis
WRR: Three Key Elements

- WRR: a collaborative, ongoing partnership with EPA Region 3, several MD agencies, the Corps (Baltimore District and HQ) and several others

- WRR: replicable scientific analysis framework via a set of eight suitability analyses

WRR: an interactive website that provides all users, including the general public, access to the findings
Predictability; Transparency; Consistency!
Spotlight on the WRR

“If You Build It, They Will Come!”

- **US EPA National Best Practice** by Office of Water
- **Tool for Improving Watershed Outcomes** Environmental Law Institute - National Wetlands Newsletter Feature; Society of Wetland Scientists
- Public Noticed by USACE as **Important New Tool** – to map high value wetland and riparian areas
- **AASHTO Innovation Initiative Grant**
- Featured - MD Governor’s Stormwater Management Workshop; Chesapeake Research Consortium; TRB; Delaware Estuary Science Forum
- **Component of the National Federal GI Collaborative and President’s Climate Strategy**
WRR Transferability - A Few Considerations

The more a “new” collaborative process can be integrated into an organization’s culture, the quicker the uptake by the organization.

Matrix management is a must when facilitating an effort involving actions from multiple agencies/organizations. It also allows for greater transparency.

Multiple “champions” and “brokers” need to constantly “shepherd” the process, sharing successes, while managing against pitfalls.
“Teamwork”- where there’s a will, there’s a way!

Thank you!