Summary of the Vision Breakout Discussions

2020 National CWA 303(d) Training Workshop

May 29, 2020
Overarching Concepts and Ideas

• Maintain the stability of the current Vision

• Implementation is a driver of the Vision

• Flexibility is key

• Messaging needs improvement

• Accountability and evaluating progress are important
Prioritization

Lessons Learned:
• Overall, it provides a good framework, strategy, and process.
• It can guide restoration activities across administrations.
• It allows programs to choose quality over quantity.
• It has enabled flexibility; encouraged long-term planning, collaboration, and integration; and increased engagement.
• The opportunity for periodic corrections is important.

Opportunities Identified:
• Other programs and stakeholders could be more engaged in the development of priorities.
Assessment

Lessons Learned:
• It is helpful to communicate TMDL monitoring and assessment needs in time for initial monitoring efforts.
• Staff need to understand the models when done externally.

Opportunities Identified:
• Expand the goal in ways to better tell the story, tying actions to long-term water quality goals.
• Strategic coordination on monitoring data collection should extend beyond the assessment of impaired waters.
Engagement

Lessons Learned:

• Engaging early and often throughout the entire process helps.
• It works well when others serve as intermediaries.

Opportunities Identified:

• Tools, methods, and strategies are needed for better communicating with different audiences.
• The EPA and states should be educated on tribal entities and include them in planning efforts. Regardless of TAS status, tribes need to hold a place in the work of the program.
Integration

Lessons Learned:
• Success depends largely on agency organization structure.
• Continued integration efforts are needed with not only other programs but also other agencies.

Opportunities Identified:
• Explore using WQM plans/CPP to support integration.
• Align commitment processes under CWA 319 and 303(d).
• Better communicate the importance of TMDLs to other agencies.
Alternatives

Lessons Learned:

• Some jurisdictions have found the option helpful, while others are unclear of the benefits or purpose, or what an “alternative” would look like.

• “Alternatives” can provide a way to get support from stakeholders in cases where TMDLs are not favorably viewed.

Opportunities Identified:

• Improve the clarification of and consistency in the review and acceptance process.

• Create a repository of accepted plans to provide examples and promote knowledge transfer.
Protection

Lessons Learned:
• Many jurisdictions believe the concept is important and like the flexibility offered to do protection work.
• The development of protection plans is still at a relatively early stage.

Opportunities Identified:
• Better clarify the options and expectations related to protection.
• Knowledge transfer from jurisdictions further along in the process would be helpful.