

**NRCS National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) Watershed Assessment Checklist
(Do not use for source water assessments)**

Watershed(s):

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Document(s) that together provide all elements required in the NWQI watershed/areawide assessment:

Reference #	Document Citation
1	
2	
3	

Use the checklist below to document the specific reference and location (chapter, section, page ranges, etc.) of the required elements. Example NWQ assessments are available upon request:

- I. Background and purpose of the assessment - *Clearly identify the primary water quality resource concerns of the watershed.*

Reference # where located	Elements Required	Location within Citation
	General overview and location of the watershed	
	Specific water quality degradation resource concerns and impairments	
	Constituents of concern	
	Opportunities and objectives for meeting water quality goals	
	An assessment of NRCS's ability to help partners reach the watershed goals	

- II. Watershed characterization - Overview of the watershed and identification of resource concerns.

Reference # where located	Elements Required	Location within Citation
	Location of watershed within the drainage network	
	Landscape characteristics including topography	
	Climate overview	
	Geology, geomorphology, soils and soil interpretations	
	Drainage network – NHD, GID-derived flow paths, NWI	
	Land cover and land use	
	Socioeconomic conditions	

- III. Hydrologic and water quality characterization - Fully describe the hydrology (including irrigation) that affect transport, and the water quality conditions within the watershed.

Reference # where located	Elements Required	Location within Citation
	Discussion of pertinent plans, assessments, reports for the watershed	
	Gaging stations in or near the watershed	
	Surface/ground water quality sampling sites, Biological monitoring	
	Runoff and streamflow hydrology (including irrigation) description which includes runoff and streamflow generation processes, irrigation conveyance	

	and systems used, precipitation-runoff budgets/water budget, spatial and temporal distribution of runoff and streamflow	
	Water quality conditions in the watershed with respect to specific pollutant(s) of concern, including general concentrations and loads of major constituents and how they vary with season, weather, land use, etc.	

IV. Resource Analysis and Source Assessment - Documentation and comparisons between existing and potential conditions. A preliminary analysis of what could be accomplished.

Reference # where located	Elements Required	Location within Citation
	Causes of the resource problem(s) are identified	
	Analysis using appropriate tools – this could include hydrologic modeling, GIS analyses, mass balance models for nutrients, simple sediment delivery budget, load reduction spreadsheets based on efficiencies of practices, stream surveys, etc.	
	Tool results that describe the locations and extent of the problems within the watershed including locations of critical source areas/highest risk areas	
	Tool results that describe the level of treatment needed to address the water quality concerns	
	Current level of treatment in the watershed	
	Assessment of how treatment is balanced with participation/producer engagement	
	Set of preferred practices to address the water quality concerns	

V. Recommendations and Follow-Up.

Reference # where located	Elements Required	Location within Citation
	Description of the goals (usually reduction goals) and practice efficiencies or number of acres of conservation needed	
	Interim metrics that will be used to track progress. Both implementation and effectiveness metrics should be included	
	Locations (maps or GIS files) of critical source areas or vulnerable acres needing treatment	
	Overview of planned practice scenarios and estimated costs and pollutant reductions	
	Documentation of NEPA Concerns (areawide-level CPA-52)	
	Outreach strategy/plan	

I certify that:

- I am a Level 3 or Level 4 Planner with area-wide planning experience
- The watershed assessment meets the requirements outlined in the NWQI/MRBI Watershed Assessment Guidance, and generally follows NRCS areawide planning policy.

Print name _____

Signature _____