EPA Update

Agriculture and Water Quality Partnerships

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Overview

- Section 319 and Nonpoint Source Control Branch
- Nutrient Priorities
- Water Quality Resources
- National Water Quality Initiative
- Hypoxia Task Force
- Animal Ag Partnerships, Nutrient Recycling Challenge
- EPA training opportunities
- Ag partnership opportunities

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act

- Nonpoint Sources are not specifically defined under the CWA – any source that EPA does not have authority to regulate as a point source
  - Includes agriculture stormwater discharge and irrigation return flows
- 319(b) - State NPS Management Programs
- 319(h) - Grant Program

- In addition to CWA, states follow EPA grant guidelines in spending 319 funds *https://www.epa.gov/nps/319*

NSCB: What We Do

- Manage the Section 319 NPS grants and program
- Manage, with NOAA, the Coastal Nonpoint Program (CZARA)
- Provide a focal point for NPS issues among CWA programs
- Provide expertise in areas critical to NPS control
  - Agriculture
  - Green infrastructure/LID practices and programs
  - Forestry
  - Onsite systems (septics)
  - Watershed planning
  - Data analysis/mining
- Technical leadership for Hypoxia Task Force

EPA Nutrient Priorities

- Strong strategic focus is on nutrients
  - Addressing nutrient pollution by supporting states is a top priority for EPA
- Many efforts are underway to reduce nutrient impacts on WQ at state and national levels but, collectively, we are not solving this problem
- EPA focus is on assisting states as they implement and continue to develop state-level nutrient reduction strategies and develop and implement TMDLs
  - Continue to encourage focused efforts at the state level
- Working with all source sectors, point source and nonpoint source community, is key to many of these strategies

Water Quality Resources: CEAP and NARS

- Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)
  - NIFA/CEAP Watershed studies
    - Valuable lessons learned on conservation placement, critical source areas and monitoring designs
  - National and Regional Assessments (Cropland reports)
- National Aquatic Resources Survey (NARS)
  - Collaboration between EPA, states and tribes to assess the quality of nation's rivers and streams, coastal waters, lakes and wetlands
  - Statistical survey and randomized design to provide a snapshot of the overall condition of the nation's waters

National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)

- Objective: Water quality progress through accelerated implementation of conservation practices
- NRCS coordinates with EPA and state WQ agencies to address Ag sources; states monitor water quality results in selected watersheds
- NRCS directs portion of EQIP funds to water quality-focused practices in small watersheds (currently 188) impaired by nutrients, sediment and pathogens
- State agencies are monitoring water quality in at least one NWQI watershed per state - approximately 60 watersheds
- Funding began at 5% of EQIP funds ($33M) – was $25M in FY15

NWQI- Building Working Partnerships

- Many state water quality agencies work with USDA and Ag partners to reach common goals of reducing nutrients and other water quality impacts
  - 2014: half of state agencies reported active collaboration with USDA
  - EPA, states, and USDA are working to grow these partnerships; NWQI has been helpful
- We've used the NWQI to advance collaboration more generally
  - While some challenges persist, NWQI has been an excellent opportunity to build partnerships between EPA, NRCS and State water quality agencies
  - Successful ways to collaborate at state level
- New partnership opportunities to arise- NWQI pilot projects with enhanced watershed planning and outreach opportunities

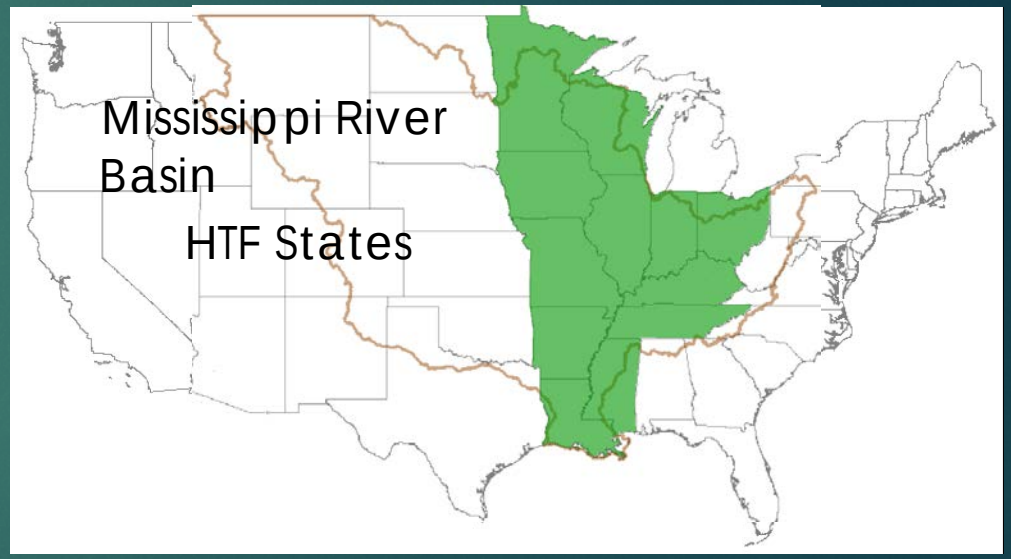
Hypoxia Task Force

5 Federal Agencies and Tribes:

- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Department of Agriculture
- US Geological Survey
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Tribal Water Council

12 State Agencies:

- Arkansas
- Missouri
- Iowa
- Tennessee
- Minnesota
- Indiana
- Ohio
- Louisiana
- Illinois
- Mississippi
- Kentucky
- Wisconsin



Each state is represented by one of:

Agriculture agency, Environmental Quality agency, or Natural Resources agency

HTF State Nutrient Reduction Strategies

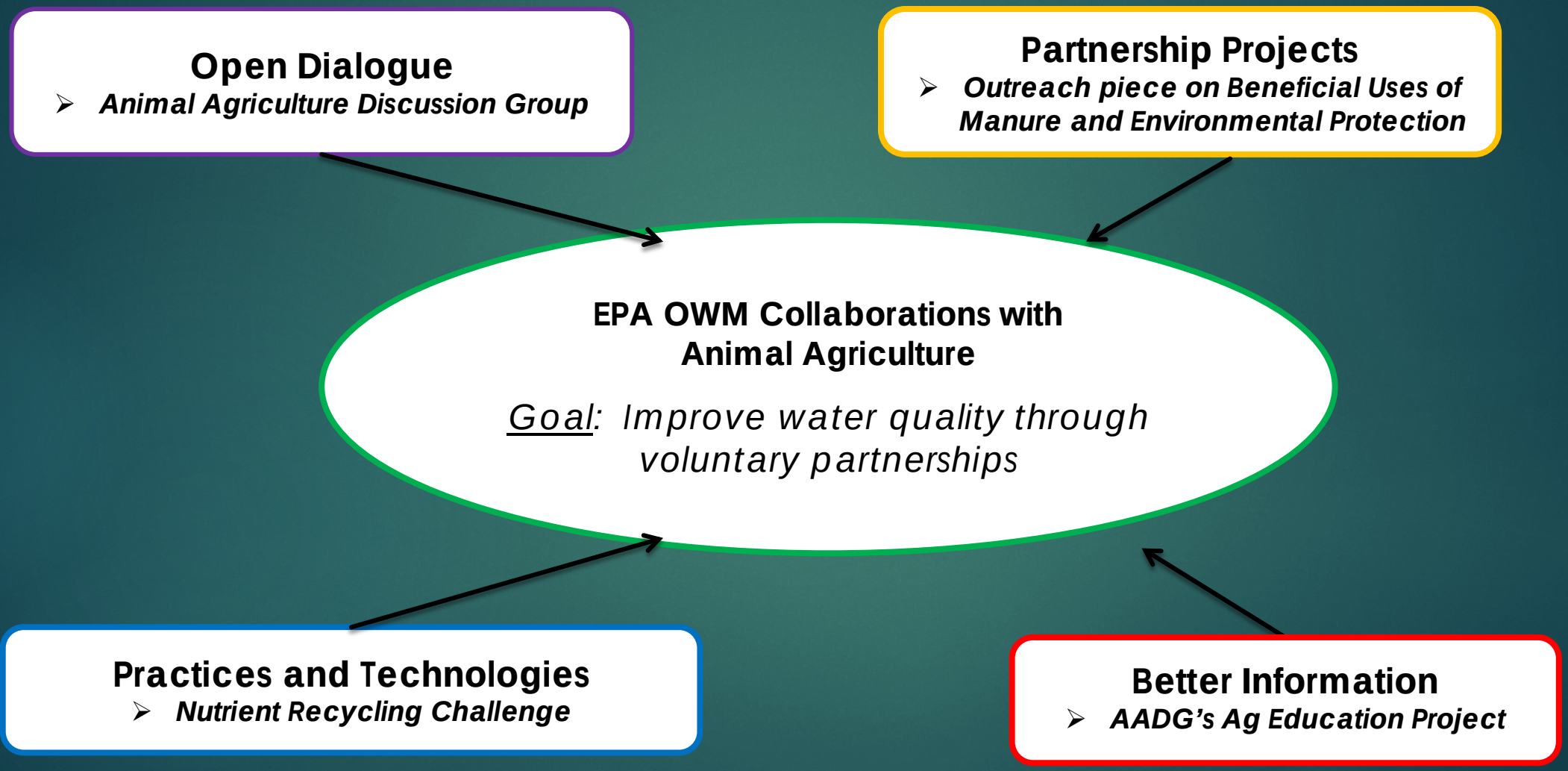
www.epa.gov/ms-htf/hypoxia-task-force-nutrient-reduction-strategies

- Each state has a nutrient reduction strategy aimed to move towards the Goal
  - Coastal Goal: By 2035, reduce 5-year running average size of the Gulf hypoxic zone to 5,000 km^2
  - Interim Goal: 20% reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus loading by 2025
- 2013 Federal Strategy complements/supports the 12 state strategies; to be updated fall, 2016
- HTF and state members working to grow partnerships to help implement their strategies, e.g.:
  - Land Grant University
  - NGOs
  - Foundations
  - State Agribusiness Councils and Industry

Tracking progress towards our goal

- www.epa.gov/ms-htf/northern-gulf-mexico-hypoxic-zone
- www.epa.gov/ms-htf/hypoxia-task-force-new-goal-framework
- Develop basin-scale nonpoint source measures
  - This year, develop and report on common NPS metrics by state
- Modeling considerations
  - How can state information and data be used by federal and regional modelers in MARB scale nutrient reduction tracking models?

EPA Office of Wastewater Management's Collaborations with Animal Agriculture



Goals of the Nutrient Recycling Challenge

- Accelerate the development of nutrient recovery technologies that are adoptable for pork and dairy farms, and can produce environmental and economic benefits.
- Increase awareness of issues and opportunities related to nutrients and manure management.
- Connect innovators and agricultural stakeholders.
- Stimulate markets for products generated by nutrient recovery technologies.

EPA training opportunities

- Watershed Academy Webcasts
- Water Quality Standards Academy
- Animal Ag Discussion Group- Ag Education Project
  - Livestock and Environmental Learning Center producing videos and webcontent on trends in ag and manure management, nutrient management, and managing manure for water quality
- Series of technical webinars on water quality monitoring, a nonpoint source technical exchange on NPS issues and solutions, and upcoming webinars on watershed planning

Partnership Opportunities

- Agricultural partnerships are key to success of 319 NPS program:
  - USDA
  - Conservation Districts
  - Industry Service Providers: Ag Retailers, CCAs
  - Land-grant Universities
- Implement grant-supported Ag partnerships for training and adoption of high impact practice systems and watershed planning
- Continue to advance partnerships through the NWQI and HTF, and through Animal Ag collaborations