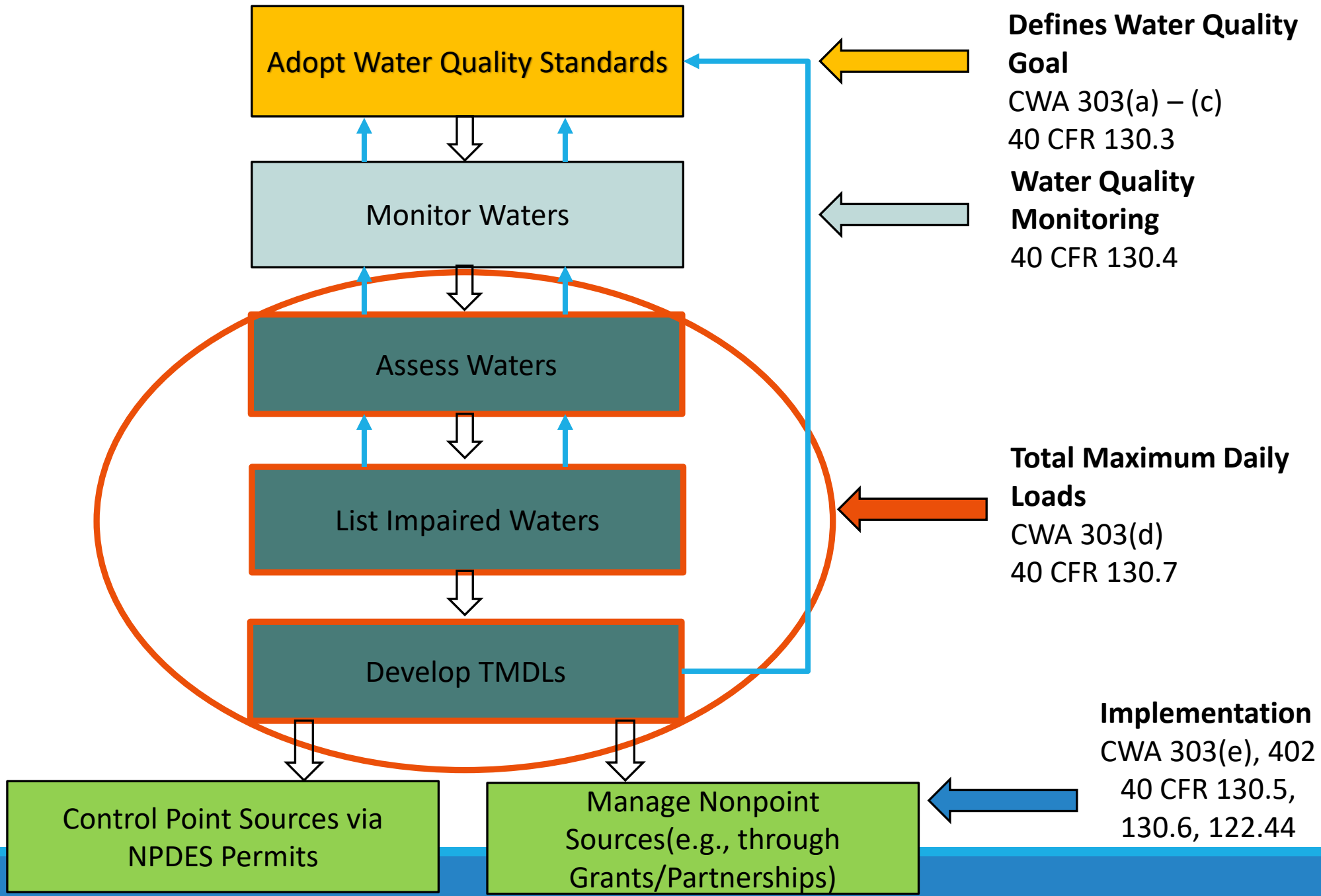


CWA Section 303(d) Program Vision

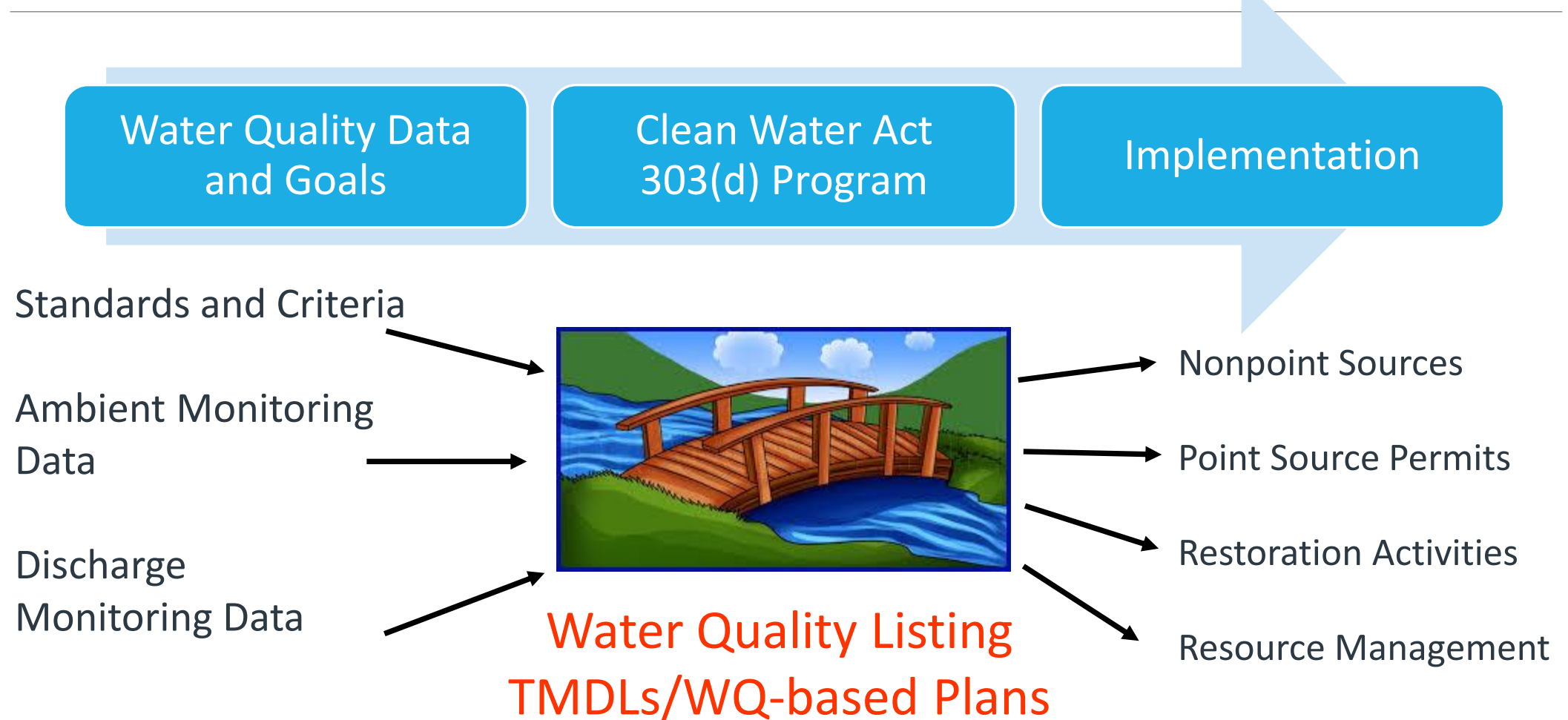
Ashley Geiger (Standards and TMDL Section, U.S. EPA Region 3)

For Toxics Contaminants Workgroup Call
December 14, 2022

CWA Framework



CWA 303(d) Program: Bridging Water Quality Goals and the Actions Through Planning Development



Program History

Late 1990s - Early 2000s

Focus on TMDL development driven primarily by court deadlines



2011 - Present

Long-term planning as a tool to address difficult environmental issues, and use resources in most effective way



2013 Program Vision

What is the Vision?



- The Vision outlines a framework to organize program activities; it does not constitute regulation, policy, or new mandates.
- The Vision identifies opportunities to manage effectively CWA section 303(d) program activities to achieve water quality goals for the Nation's aquatic resources such as streams, rivers, lakes, estuaries and wetlands.
- The purpose of the 2022 Vision memo is to articulate a renewal of the initial 2013 long-term Vision and associated Goals, as well as to introduce new Focus Areas for the CWA section 303(d) program.



2022 Vision Memo Published (September)

www.epa.gov/tmdl/vision

2022-2032 CWA 303(d) Program Vision



Planning and Prioritization Goal

States, territories, and tribes develop a holistic strategy for implementation of Vision Goals, systematically prioritize waters or watersheds for TMDL and other plan development (restoration and/or protection), and report on the progress towards development of plans for priority waters.

- Regulatory requirements
 - Assign a priority ranking to all impaired waters
 - Identify waters targeted for TMDL development in the next two years
 - Set a 2-year schedule for TMDL submissions
- Vision
 - Take time to consider a long-term planning process
 - Focus limited resources strategically
 - Consider the broader water quality goals
 - Don't limit your thinking to only the Category 5 waters

Planning & Prioritization

- Prioritization Framework
 - The only output of the Vision
 - Due April 1, 2024
 - Covers the period 2025-2032
 - Flexible in terms of how to identify priority waters for TMDL and other plan development (geographic areas, pollutants, designated uses, or pollutant use combination) and can be as general or specific as you want
 - Can be modified at any time
 - Identify specific priority waters in two-year increments

Restoration Goal

States, territories, and tribes design TMDLs and other restoration plans to attain and maintain water quality standards, facilitate effective implementation, and drive restoration of impaired waters.

- Regulatory requirements
 - Develop TMDLs for Category 5 waters
- Vision
 - Most effective approach for restoring water quality
 - Restoration plan refers to TMDLs and other beneficial plans that address impaired waters
 - Impaired waters regardless of category in Integrated Report

Data and Analysis Goal

The CWA Section 303(d) program coordinates with other government and non-governmental stakeholders to facilitate data production and sharing, and effectively analyzes data and information necessary to fulfill its multiple functions.

- Regulatory requirements
 - Monitor water quality
 - Establish monitoring methods and procedures
 - Report on water quality
 - Assemble and evaluate readily available data and information
- Vision
 - Collaborate and foster effective data sharing
 - Consider data practices to most effectively support all 303(d) programs
 - Impaired waters regardless of category (5, 5r/alt, 4b, and 4c) in Integrated Report

Partnerships

The CWA Section 303(d) program meaningfully communicates and collaborates with other government programs and non-government stakeholders to restore and protect water quality effectively and sustainably.

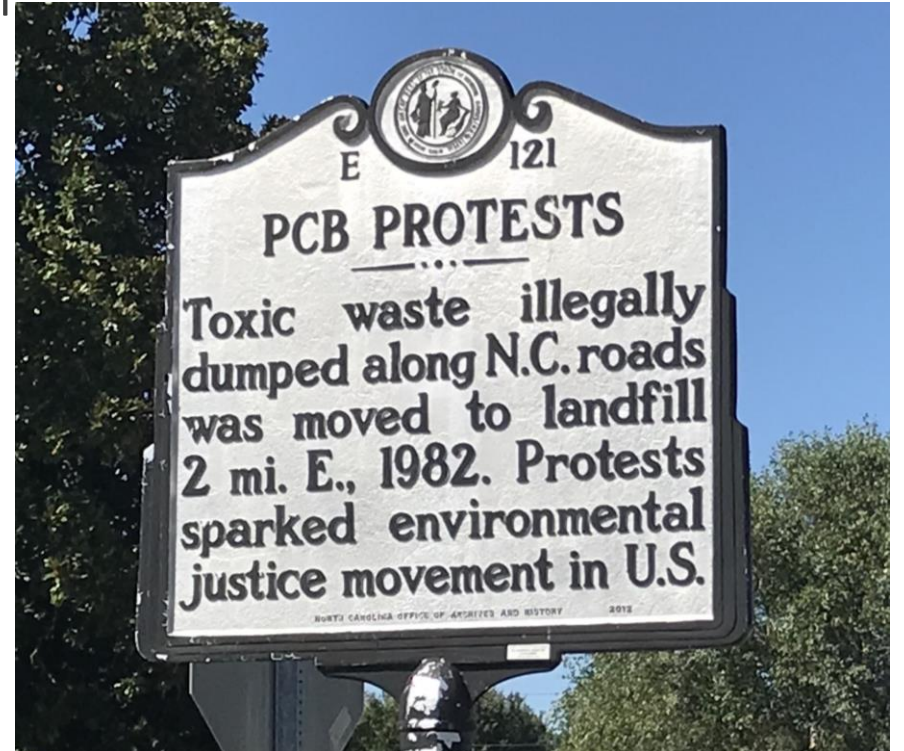
- Regulatory requirements
 - Public notice Lists and TMDLs
- Vision
 - Coordinate with other programs to work towards shared goals
 - Build and maintain external partnerships through shared goals to help get the work done
 - Engage stakeholder with clear and effective communication

Environmental Justice

EPA will work with states, territories, and tribes to assist in integrating environmental justice into EPA CWA Section 303(d) program activities.

Example of opportunities in pollution-burdened, underserved, and tribal communities include:

- Actively engage the public and stakeholder
- Enhance understanding of the water quality of waterbodies
- Prioritize TMDLs and other plans



Tribal Water Quality and Program Development

EPA works closely with tribal partners to support tribal nations as they protect and steward their waters.

The objectives of this Focus Area are to help interested tribes:

- Administer the CWA 303(d) program,
- Assess waters,
- Plan for restoration and protection of tribal waters,
- Ensure meaningful consultation opportunities, and
- Enable tribes to engage with EPA on CWA 303(d) program activities relevant to their interests.



Toxic Contaminants and Vision

- Will TMDLs or other plans be developed by 2032 to restore toxic-related impairments?
- Are we collecting and sharing data effectively?
- Do we know the water quality in waters near communities with EJ concerns?
- How well are we working with federal, state, and local partners outside the CWA program areas (TSCA, RCRA, CERCLA, EPCRA, Superfund, CAA, etc.)?

Questions or Follow-up

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