

POTOMAC RIVER BASIN DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PARTNERSHIP

Partnership Framework April 13, 2004

Introduction

Water utilities which rely on the Potomac River as their source water and the governmental agencies involved in Potomac River source water assessments and protection have a common interest in protecting the river for water supply purposes. The two groups can complement each other and enhance their effectiveness for source water protection by working together as partners. Towards this end, these groups have formed the Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership.

This document outlines a framework for the Partnership, which allows the two groups to pursue their common interests jointly and in a coordinated manner.

Mission

To serve as a cooperative and voluntary partnership working towards the goal of improved source water protection of the Potomac River in recognition of the vital role of the river in supplying drinking water to millions of people within the Potomac watershed and in support of the multi-barrier approach to safeguarding the drinking water supply for public health.

The mission/charter of the Partnership includes the following tasks:

- A) Identify regional priorities for source water protection efforts.
- B) Coordinate, where appropriate, source water and drinking water protection efforts to benefit multiple water systems.
- C) Establish and maintain a coordinated dialogue between water suppliers and government agencies involved in drinking water source protection within the Potomac River Watershed.
- D) Establish and maintain a coordinated dialogue between the Partnership agencies and other groups working towards watershed protection within the Potomac River Watershed.
- E) Promote information sharing among groups working on, and affected by, safe drinking water issues.

F) Enhance coordinated approaches to water supply protection measures in the Potomac basin, especially for boundary waters and for project planning that impacts interstate waterways.

G) Develop new initiatives within the drinking water community and with partners that will fill program voids ensuring higher quality drinking water supplies.

Principles

The focus of the Partnership is to give the drinking water utilities and their governmental counterparts a stronger voice and more effective position in the numerous watershed protection efforts and decision making levels that are already in place for the Potomac River Basin, while also providing opportunities to create new programs as needed.

A) The Partnership provides a complementary voice advocating watershed protection efforts to ensure that drinking water issues are adequately addressed.

B) The Partnership provides a forum to develop basin-wide commitment and cooperation to enhance efforts towards source water protection.

C) The Partnership will use complementary technical/operational and regulatory expertise from water suppliers and government agencies to assess priorities and to address the identified issues.

D) The Partnership will work with existing programs where possible, but may also create new programs that are needed for source protection.

Structure

The structure of the Partnership is depicted in Figure 1. The Partnership decisions will be consensus based whenever possible. Each Committee shall make every attempt to reach consensus among its members and with the other Committees in order to develop joint positions on issues and initiatives. In exceptional cases where a consensus can not be reached among the committees, each Committee is free to develop its own positions, following its procedures.

- *Participation*

Any community water system that derives all or a portion of its drinking water supply from the waters of the Potomac River Basin is invited to participate in the Partnership and is welcome to attend any Partnership meeting or appropriate Utility Source Water Protection Committee meeting.

Any state, interstate, and federal agency that has a role in source water protection in the Potomac River Basin is invited to participate in the Partnership and is welcome to attend any Partnership or Governmental Partner Committee meeting.

- *Governmental Partner (GP) Committee*

The GP Committee will include representatives from state (Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania), interstate, and federal agencies and the District of Columbia. The representatives should represent the agency responsible for Source Water Protection programming.

The GP Committee members will elect a Chairperson to facilitate meetings and represent the group. The GP Committee will operate on a consensus basis and will make every attempt to also reach consensus with the other Partnership committees. Where conflicts between the committees cannot be resolved, the GP Committee may establish its own position.

- *Metropolitan Area Utility Source Water Protection (Metro USWP) Committee*

The Metropolitan Area Utility Source Water Protection Committee will be focused on water supply for the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and will include representatives from the D.C. metropolitan area water suppliers.

The Metro USWP Committee members will elect a Chairperson to facilitate meetings and represent the group. The Metro USWP Committee will operate on a consensus basis and will make every attempt to also reach consensus with the other Partnership committees. Where conflicts between the committees cannot be resolved, the Metro USWP Committee may establish its own position.

- *Other Regional Utility Source Water Protection Committees*

Additional Utility Source Water Protection Committees will be formed for other areas of the basin to focus on source water protection in those regions. The new USWP committees will be free to develop their own internal procedures, but will make every attempt to reach consensus with the other Partnership committees on Partnership issues. Where conflicts between the committees cannot be resolved, the new USWP committees may establish their own positions.

- *Chairpersons*

Each Partnership committee will select a chairperson to facilitate meetings and represent the group. At Partnership meetings including more than one committee, the chairperson for the joint meeting will rotate on an annual basis among the chairpersons of the committees in attendance.

- *Partnership Coordinator*

The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, as an independent agency whose charter encompasses the entire Potomac River Basin, will work with the Partnership committee chairpersons to host meetings, prepare agendas, and meet other basic administrative needs for Partnership and Committee meetings. Additional administrative tasks that may be required to implement Partnership initiatives or otherwise undertake activity beyond the basic functioning of the Partnership will require separate funding and will be provided either by members of the USWP or GP Committees or through separate

grants obtained by the Partnership Coordinator. Additional administrative support will be provided on a voluntary basis by staff of USWP and GP Committee members.

- *Working Subcommittees*

Working Subcommittees may be developed for issues relevant to the entire Partnership, or for issues specific to one of the Partnership committees. Membership on Partnership Working Subcommittees is open to staff of any participating water supplier or governmental organization. Membership on USWP Working Subcommittees is open to staff of any participating water supplier, and membership on GP Working Subcommittees is open to staff of any participating governmental organization.

- *Local Advisory Panel*

The GP Committee will seek to form regionally-based local advisory panels consisting of watershed groups and local government agencies. The local advisory panels will be consulted on an ad-hoc basis to take advantage of their knowledge of local issues and to address local community needs.

Operations

- *Meetings*

Partnership meetings shall be held quarterly, or more frequently as needed.

- *Due Process*

The Partnership shall attempt to reach consensus where possible. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, each Committee may form its own position.

Funding

- *No appropriations required by this framework*

This framework does not require appropriations. Individual projects, monitoring programs, contractors, studies, or other efforts will be provided for by members of the USWP or GP Committees or through grants that may be sought by individual Partners on an as needed basis.

Modifications to Partnership framework

This framework may be modified from time to time, with the consensus of the Partnership, in order to accommodate the addition of other regional committees or to meet other needs.

**Figure 1:
Potomac River Basin
Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership**

