

## Appendix E

### Social Indicators and Social Monitoring

#### Background:

Social monitoring, like environmental monitoring, yields valuable information on current conditions as well as for planning future strategies for implementation. Social data assists planners in evaluating current social conditions related to Nonpoint Source (NPS) pollution and helps them identify optimal outreach approaches to maximize future implementation of best management practices. For these reasons, Michigan's NPS Program strongly encourages the collection of baseline social data in all watershed management planning efforts.

The following information has been developed for those developing a watershed management plan, monitoring social indicators, or implementing outreach or education actions from a watershed management plan.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 5 Social Indicators Work Group developed the Social Indicator Planning and Evaluation System (SIPES) for using social indicators to help plan, implement, and evaluate NPS outreach and education projects. The benefits of standardized social monitoring protocols include:

- Better education and outreach components of watershed management plans,
- Standardized protocols for social surveys across watersheds in Michigan,
- Standardized assessments of the effectiveness of NPS outreach efforts, and
- Comparability at the watershed, regional, and state scale.

SIPES and the associated Social Indicator Data Management and Analysis (SIDMA) tool are **required** to be used by all Michigan NPS grantees that are conducting social monitoring as a component of developing a watershed management plan. The [SIDMA tool](#) is a web-based project management aid that supports SIPES watershed projects. The SIDMA tool can be used by project coordinators to collect, organize, and use social indicators related to water quality improvements.

SIDMA includes the following features:

- **Survey builder:** Provides survey questions to be selected and adapted for use by a watershed project. Custom questions can also be developed as needed.
- **Data input screens and database:** Use to input and store responses from questionnaires and other social indicator data.
- **Online survey tool:** Allows potential respondents to complete social indicators survey online.

- **Data analysis tools:** Generates basic statistics from survey data for individual questions as well as social indicators. The tool also includes a compare feature that compares responses or social indicator scores between any two surveys in the SIDMA system.
- **Report creating tools:** Helps with communicating social indicator data including custom made graphs and charts.
- **SIDMA training:** A short video series is included on the SIDMA “Help” tab. Individualized in person training is also available through the NPS Program.

### Guidance:

Applicants for projects that include social monitoring should reference [The SIPES for Nonpoint Source Management Handbook](#). NPS grant-funded projects should use this SIPES guidance and SIDMA tool as follows:

- In the absence of existing social monitoring data for the targeted planning area or adjacent areas, projects **must** use the SIPES protocols and should use the SIDMA tool to develop surveys to collect baseline information for the general public and target audiences regarding existing knowledge, beliefs, and behavior about environmental and NPS issues. A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will be required.
- The results of a properly designed SIPES/SIDMA assessment can easily be used to develop recommendations for education and outreach activities for the general public as well as target audiences to address element E of the USEPA’s nine required elements of a watershed management plan.
- All NPS-funded social surveys conducted within the Coastal Nonpoint Boundary **must** include an enhanced OSDS (On-Site Disposal System) section consisting of selected stock questions from the SIDMA tool and custom questions to demonstrate voluntary homeowner compliance with the federal Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments Section 6217 Management Measures, see [Appendix D](#) for details.

When a full SIDMA based survey is *not* required for projects that include social monitoring:

- When preparing a watershed plan that is:
  - “Nested” in a larger watershed with current and appropriate social monitoring data.
  - Neighboring or near a watershed with current and acceptable SIDMA data and similar demographics, land use, and issues.

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