Section XII: Adapting and Evaluating the Plan: Establishing Long-term Sustainability

The Center for Earth and Environmental Science (CEES) as part of the Central Indiana Water Resources Partnership (CIWRP) and in partnership with the Eagle Creek Watershed Task Force applied for a Section 319 grant for Phase 1 implementation, education and public outreach in Eagle Creek Watershed to begin fall 2005. The union of these groups is called the Eagle Creek Watershed Alliance (ECWA); and with the implementation grant, the ECWA proposes to accomplish a series of initiatives including BMP implementation, demonstrations, monitoring, watershed education, and public information and outreach. A watershed coordinator and farm promoter will be funded through the implementation grant. These positions will ensure the coordination of stakeholder meetings, assistance to land owners, and the overall progress of implementation.

The ECWA will hold quarterly meetings to evaluate the plan implementation progress and assess success of the BMP implementation, monitoring and demonstration program, and outreach and education campaign. The management plan will continue to be re-evaluated during the ECWA quarterly meetings and revisions/updates will be made by the watershed coordinator when appropriate. For instance, should a TMDL be developed for Eagle Creek Watershed, the management plan will be updated accordingly.

The ECWA believes that this Watershed Management Plan will provide a good foundation from which more ambitious and holistic management initiatives can be developed. As the current paradigm of stream remediation turns more towards stream restoration, the future initiatives of the ECWA will evolve to reflect this more holistic understanding of improving stream water quality through restoring the natural structure and function of a stream ecosystem. This process includes reestablishing a stream's natural diversity and aquatic habitats to approximate pre-settlement conditions (Berger, 1990; National Resources Council, 1992) or, more pertinently, the return of a degraded ecosystem to a close approximation of its remaining natural potential (USEPA, 2000). Such an initiative could begin with the reestablishment of stream structure, riparian zones, and wetlands. The ECWA understands that while the proposed remediations detailed in this document may redress some water quality degradation, they fall short of re-creating true sustainable riparian and aquatic ecosystems. This is no small feat. As population demands for drinking water and land continue to stress these ecosystems, a balance must be struck, a common ground between resource use and resource conservation. The ECWA recognizes that creating sustainable riparian and aquatic ecosystems cannot happen unless there is a concerted effort by all stakeholders to change. As Wendel Berry wrote in his essay Getting Along with Nature, "Humans, like all other creatures, must make a difference; otherwise, they cannot live. But unlike other creatures, humans must make a choice as to the kind and scale of the difference they make." It is the goal of the ECWA that this Watershed Management Plan will provide a catalyst from which long-term, positive change in Eagle Creek Watershed can be made.