Geographic Prioritization Framework

In order to achieve state standards for contact recreation in the BIG region's waterways, all stakeholders will need to be responsible for some aspects of I-Plan implementation. Some Implementation Activities (IAs), such as additional requirements for wastewater treatment facilities as described in Implementation Strategy 1.0, will be implemented throughout the BIG region. Others, such as addressing failing onsite sewage facilities (IA 3.1) and pilot studies to evaluate results of education efforts (IA 8.1.2), will be implemented in targeted areas. It is this second group of IAs, those that are geographically targeted, which need a framework of prioritization. The framework described here provides guidance to communities in setting local implementation priorities.

As a community prioritizes actions within its watersheds it should consider five main categories of concern: bacteria level, accessibility, use level, implementation opportunities, and future land use changes. Table *** lists criteria included in these categories. Communities may want to gather input from residents when setting priorities. This can be accomplished through public meetings or surveys. However, a logical approach needs to be considered as well, such as targeting specific watersheds or suspected sources.

Table ***. Criteria to consider in watershed prioritization

Category	Criteria to Consider
Bacteria Level	• Is the 7-year bacteria geometric mean for the waterway above the water quality criteria for bacteria? If yes, what is the magnitude of the exceedance? • Based on land use surrounding the waterway, is the source of bacteria more likely human or animal? • Is the flow in the waterway primarily effluent from wastewater treatment facilities? • How many impaired stream segments could be affected by the transport of bacteria downstream from the waterway?
Accessibility	• Is there a large population within 0.25 miles of the waterway? [Note: The meaning of the phrase "large population" can differ from community to community.] • Are there public access points (ramps, bridges, trails, developed parks) to the waterway?
Use Level	• Is contact recreation occurring in the waterway? • If the waterway is not currently used for recreation, would the waterway be used for recreation if the bacteria level were low? • Is the waterway part of a drinking water supply? • Are there signs that the waterway is being used for recreation (rope swings, fishing debris, beer cans, or graffiti)? • Is there an existing group that promotes protection and improvement of the waterway as a community asset? • Are the characteristics of the waterway such that individuals could use it for recreation (appropriate flow, depth, natural or man-made banks)?
Implementation Opportunities	• Are there existing groups to partner with for implementation? • Is there political will to lower a particular waterway's bacteria level? • What funds are available?

	• Can funding be leveraged with funding from upstream or downstream jurisdictions to expand spatial extent of an IA? • What are initial construction or installation costs? • What are estimated long-term maintenance costs? • Is there a waterway that could easily meet the standard? • Can a specific source of bacteria be singled out to better target IAs? • How much land is available to develop storm water treatment facilities?
Future Land Use Changes	• What development is expected in the watershed? • Is the waterway threatened, but not yet listed as impaired? [Note: H-GAC Clean Rivers staff periodically analyzes water quality data to determine trends and can provide this information to interested communities. Additionally, raw data is available for download from the H-GAC website.]