

Background

EPA's Nutrient Scientific Technical Exchange Partnership and Support (N-STEPS) program provides technical support to state and tribal water quality agencies for the development of scientifically sound numeric nutrient criteria. N-STEPS provides EPA and states/tribes a mechanism to work in partnership for addressing scientific issues related to numeric nutrient criteria derivation.

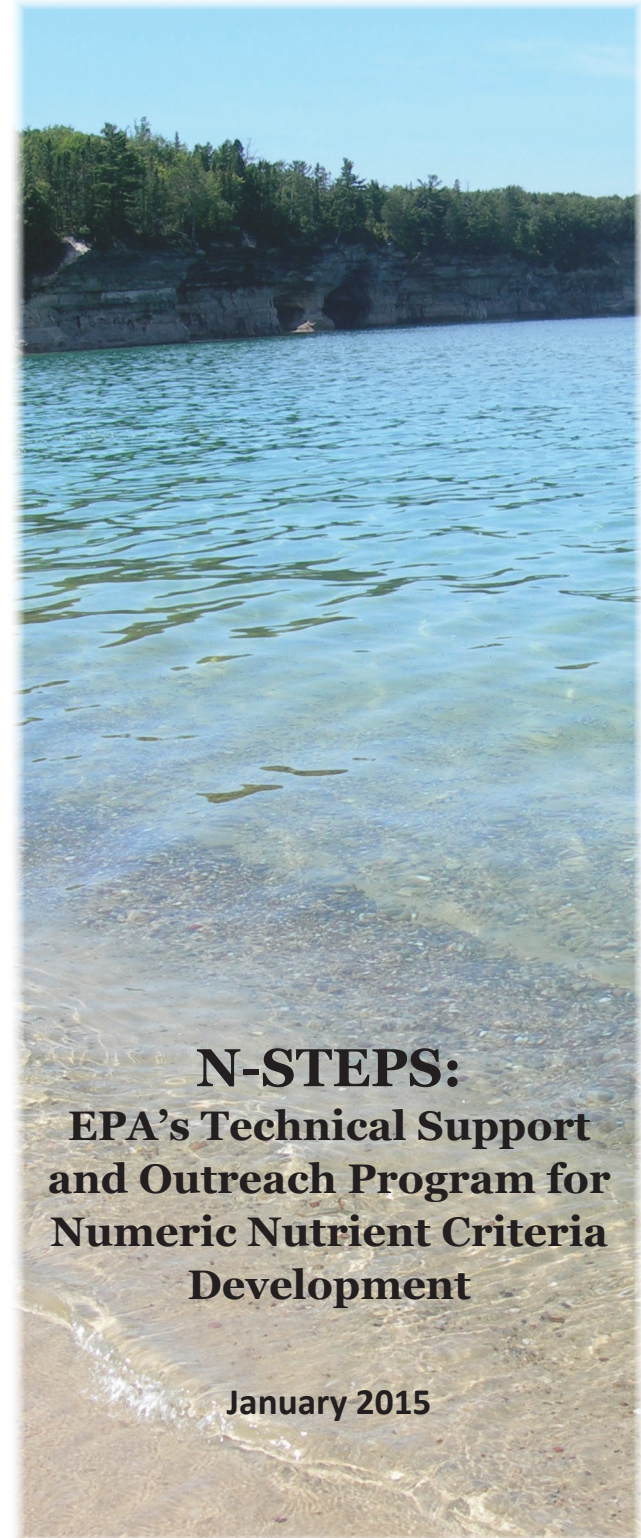
For More Information

The N-STEPS program is administered by EPA's Office of Science and Technology in the Office of Water and projects are coordinated through EPA's Regional Offices. Requests for proposals are generally considered each summer for planning purposes.

For additional information about N-STEPS or to submit a proposal to N-STEPS for technical assistance, please see:

- N-STEPS website
(<http://www.nsteps.org/about.html>)
- Contact your regional nutrient coordinator
(<http://www.nsteps.org/contacts/StateandRegionalContacts.html>)

For general information regarding this program, contact Jacques Oliver at EPA's Office of Water, Office of Science and Technology: 202-566-0630 or oliver.jacques@epa.gov.



N-STEPS: EPA's Technical Support and Outreach Program for Numeric Nutrient Criteria Development

January 2015

Finding Solutions and Advancing Development of Numeric Nutrient Criteria

The scientific process of deriving numeric nutrient criteria involves a number of steps:

- Data preparation and management
- Data exploration
- Analysis and model development
- Scientific literature reviews
- Peer review

State and tribal water quality agencies are invited to submit proposals to EPA for technical assistance in these areas. These proposals can be tailored to address their individual needs specific to where they are in the process.

The N-STEPS program facilitates technical exchanges and collaboration between EPA,

independent scientists, and state/tribal agencies. States and tribes can increase their technical capacity for projects by gaining access to EPA and independent scientists through N-STEPS. These scientists have expertise across a range of technical fields, including:

- Limnology
- Marine science
- Statistical/mechanistic modeling
- Biogeochemistry
- Hydrology
- Aquatic ecology
- Biology
- Environmental statistics

The website also provides online access (<http://www.nsteps.org/>) to a variety of technical tools and materials associated with numeric nutrient criteria derivation:

- Scientific literature reviews
- Environmental sampling and measurement methods
- Statistical methods
- Models
- Archived webcasts and presentations

It has long been EPA's position that numeric nutrient criteria, informed by the scientific understanding of the relationship between nutrient loadings and water quality impairment, are ultimately necessary for effective state programs. The goal of the N-STEPS program is to provide states and tribes access to technical resources and scientific expertise in those areas that they believe will do the most to facilitate completion of scientifically sound numeric nutrient criteria.

