

CEAP WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS: ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW ADVANCES

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The Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) was established in 2003 to document the effects and benefits of conservation practices. CEAP conducts assessments at multiple scales – national, regional, and watershed scale – on croplands, grazing lands and wetlands, and to address wildlife concerns. A major part of CEAP since its inception included a collection of 42 small Watershed Assessment Studies, involving 3 USDA agencies along with numerous other Federal and university partners. These long term studies have documented cases of water quality improvements at the watershed and other scales in some circumstances and all have been key in identifying existing challenges to measuring the water resource outcomes of conservation implementation at the scale of a watershed. Recent accomplishments will be reviewed. Future opportunities will be discussed including continued assessment of conservation effects within watersheds, particularly in conjunction with targeted conservation implementation. Looming water and soil resource challenges and conditions will be considered and to better inform conservation treatment needs.

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