What is a QAPP? A QAPP is a written document that describes the quality assurance procedures, quality control specifications, and other technical activities that must be implemented to ensure that the results of the project or task to be performed will meet project specifications. Primary data collection, secondary data usage, and data processing project activities funded by EPA are described and documented in QAPPs. For a list of EPA QAPP “Example Activities”, please see page 2.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) QAPP Requirements: EPA funded projects require approved QAPPs for all applicable projects and tasks involving environmental data to ensure the project and task is documented and reviewed before the work is started (http://www.epa.gov/irmpoli8/policies/21060.pdf) when EPA is funding a project under a grant, contract, or other agreement. A National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) review has determined that your project requires a QAPP. EPA Quality Assurance/Quality Control: EPA uses a “graded approach” in the documentation of the application of quality assurance and quality control activities to an activity-specific effort. The level QAPP detail is based on this approach; therefore, it varies according to the nature of the work being performed and the intended use of the data. As a result, an acceptable plan for some environmental data operations may require a qualitative discussion of the experimental process and objectives while others may require more documentation to describe a complex environmental program.

QAPP Development: Development of a QAPP should be a multi-step process involving a number of people, but you may apply your specific organizational processes according to your preferences. The following is a process summary:

1. Assemble a project team to develop your data quality objectives and what needs to be done. Reference the QAPP Preparation Checklist to assist you with this process. The checklist is found at: https://www.nfwf.org/lisff/Documents/qapp-checklist-guidance.pdf
2. Reference EPA’s QAPP Requirements as follows:
   - EPA National Quality Assurance: www.epa.gov/quality/epa-qar-5-epa-reQUIREmENTS-QUALITY-ASSURANCE-PROJECT-PLANs
3. Develop the QAPP using a QAPP template to help ensure all required elements have been addressed. The templates can be found at: https://www.nfwf.org/lisff/Pages/quality-assurance.aspx. The QAPP template is easily adaptable:
   - Insert the appropriate information where you see these “<<text>>” guides.
   - “Notes” have been inserted into the QAPP template to guide you through each step. Additionally, you may wish to review the “Tables” templates at the end of the QAPP to assist with formulating some of the QAPP language.
   - If your project does not contain some of the elements requested in the template, you may insert the following language, “This activity does not apply to this project”, in each applicable QAPP section. Utilize as much of the proposal language as possible. At the final development stages, you will want to remove all of the italicized notes and unused “Tables”, etc., prior to submittal.
   - Submit the draft QAPP in Word. This must be one document with all attachments/appendices.
4. Submit the draft QAPP via the ShareFile link provided to you or email to Victoria.Mangus@NFWF.org. NFWF will work with EPA to review the QAPP, comment and issue the final QAPP.
5. Once approved, sign the QAPP (along with any other applicable partners referenced on the QAPP signature page) and send Jessica the original copy. She will then gather necessary NFWF and EPA signatures and send a copy back to you. You should then distribute copies of the signed QAPP to all pertinent project partners and field staff.
6. Begin work, but remember to: Document any changes in the QAPP; and if necessary, get re-approval (if changes were made to methods or other data applications) and distribute the updated version to all persons, and Review the QAPP on a systematic basis to ensure that it remains up-to-date.
EPA QAPP Example Activities

Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. For EPA, environmental data include both primary data (i.e., information collected directly from measurements) and secondary/existing data (i.e., data that were collected for other purposes or obtained from other sources, including literature, industry surveys, models, data bases, and information systems). Example activities covered by the EPA Quality System that involve environmental data include, but are not limited to:

- Characterize and/or evaluate the states and/or conditions of environmental or ecological systems and the health of human populations;
- Characterize and/or evaluate chemical, biological, physical, or radioactive constituents in environmental and ecological systems, and their behavior and associated interfaces in those systems, including exposure assessment, transport, and fate;
- Establish the ambient conditions in air, water, sediments, soil, etc. in terms of physical, chemical, radiological, or biological characteristics;
- Determine and/or categorize radioactive, hazardous, toxic, and mixed wastes in the environment and to establish their relationships with and/or impact on human health and ecological systems;
- Quantify and/or monitor the waste and effluent discharges to the environment from processes and operations (e.g., energy generation, metallurgical processes, chemicals production), during either normal or upset conditions (i.e., operating conditions that cause pollutant or contaminant discharges);
- Develop and/or evaluate environmental technology for waste treatment, storage, remediation, and disposal; pollution prevention; and pollution control and the use of the technology to generate and/or collect data (e.g., treatability and pilot studies);
- Map environmental processes and conditions, and/or human health risk data, etc. (e.g., geographic information system);
- Support enforcement and/or compliance monitoring efforts;
- Develop or evaluate methods for use in the collection, analysis, and use of environmental data;
- Develop and/or evaluate models of environmental processes and conditions and use models to characterize environmental processes or conditions;
- Develop, revise, or use information technology and management system operations that impact the quality of the results of environmental programs (e.g., electronic databases with environmental information including data entry, handling, transmission and analysis and laboratory information management systems).