Healthy Watersheds

100 % of state-identified currently healthy waters and watersheds remain healthy

Current Indicators: None listed on indicators page, maps of state-identified healthy watersheds (update completed 2015)

Potential Indicators: Percentage of healthy waters and watersheds that remain healthy through time

Monitoring Plan: State definitions of healthy watersheds and their list/files of those existing, GIS data layers for determining watershed status

Science Needs:
- Indicator/metrics to report besides GIS dataset of healthy waters and watersheds
- Analyses plans/protocol for determining status of each watershed in succeeding years (is the watershed threatened?)
- Determine a way to track "marginally" healthy waters and watersheds (shared data gap with steam health workgroup)
- Address shifting baseline issue (states reassess and the "healthy watersheds" are changing annually)
- What metrics should be evaluated to determine health and threats?
- Formation of a tracking workgroup (STAR) – should include other GITs that have tracking needs

A framework for tracking healthy watersheds and waters protection could be thought as a four legged stool or feedback loop including: 1) maps of state-identified healthy watersheds, 2) the best available assessments of the vulnerability of those watersheds, 3) the most current information on protections that are in place to assure long-term sustainability of watershed health, and 4) analyses on land use change or other landscape characteristics to track the health and viability of the watersheds over time.