Additional Information About the Discharge Mapping Tool:
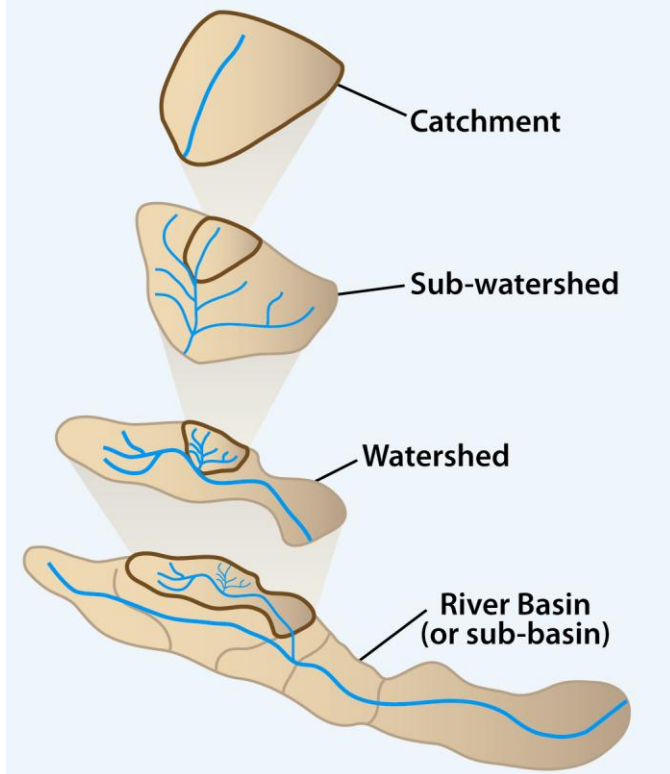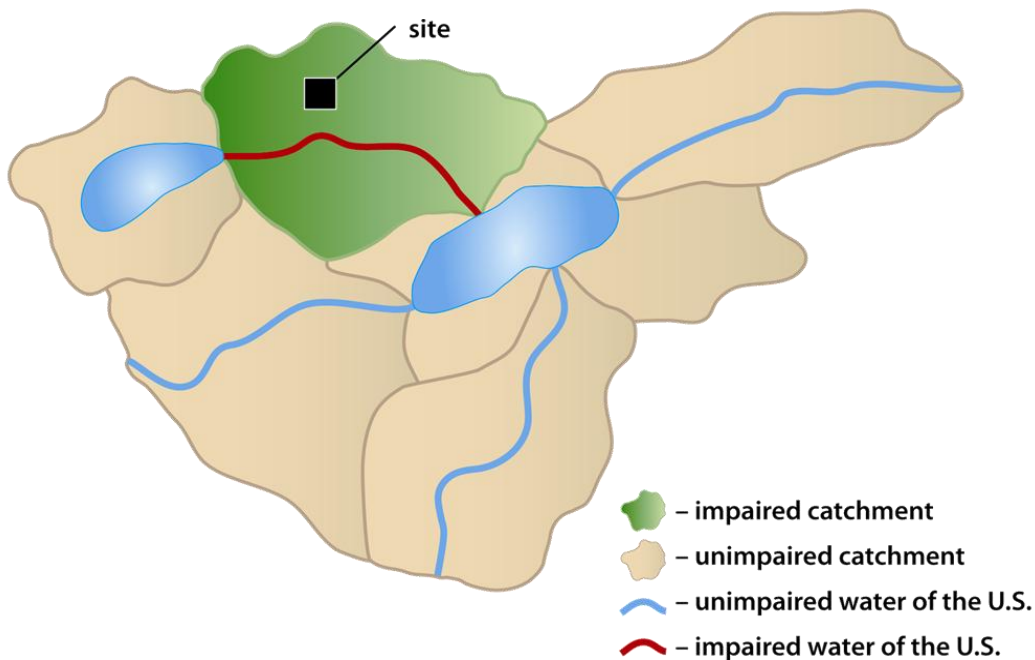
Background

The basic function of the Discharge Mapping Tool is to determine the surface waters to which a site/facility discharges, and whether or not the waters that a site/facility discharges to are impaired or have a TMDL. The Discharge Mapping Tool uses the National Hydrologic Dataset Plus (NHDPlus) catchment datalayer and NHD waters indexed with Section 303(d) listing and TMDL information for the analysis of whether a site/facility is located within the catchment of an impaired water. The NHDPlus datalayer catchments are delineated based on the unique catchment that drains to each NHD stream segment. See Figure 1 for an illustration on how a catchment relates to a larger watershed. During conditions that generate stormwater discharges from a point within a catchment, it is assumed that this discharge will eventually reach the water segment associated with the catchment. Using this concept to determine whether a site/facility discharges to an impaired water, if the point of discharge from the site/facility is located within a catchment that drains to an impaired stream segment, pond, lake or to a water segment that is listed as impaired on the 303(d) list or is addressed by an approved or established TMDL, then EPA considers that site to be discharging to an impaired water. Likewise, if the point of discharge is located within a catchment that does not include such a water segment, then that site is not considered to discharge to an impaired water. See Figure 2.

Figure 1 Relationship between a catchment and other watershed units.

Figure 2 Example of a site that discharges to an impaired water.

How to Use the Discharge Mapping Tool

To use the tool to determine your site/facility's discharge information, follow the following three basic steps:

Step 1: Enter in your site/facility's address or a latitude and longitude point of your project's location.

Step 2: Using the drawing tools, draw an outline of the area of your site/facility. Or, if you know your site's exact discharge points, draw the points where your site will discharge.

Step 3: Click "Execute Query" to determine your discharge information.

Once you click "Execute Query", the Discharge Mapping Tool will provide an output table that includes information about the surface to waters to which you discharge, including any surface waters to which you discharge that are impaired and the pollutants for which they are impaired, and any surface waters to which you discharge that have a TMDL and the pollutants for which there is a TMDL.

Caveats

The Discharge Mapping Tool utilizes the best available geospatial data to determine a site's discharge information. In the absence of information demonstrating otherwise, EPA assumes that the analysis performed by the tool provides accurate discharge information. However, due to limitations with the data, EPA recognizes that there could be circumstances where the mapping tool does not generate the correct results or where the tool is not able to be used. If you are unsure or if you do not agree with the tool's analysis, it is recommended that you use alternate sources to determine your receiving waters information.

Additional Information

To learn more about the data that is used in the Discharge Mapping Tool, refer to the following links:

- Information about the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD): http://nhd.usgs.gov/

- 303(d) Listed Impaired Waters NHD Indexed Dataset Metadata Details: https://geogateway.epa.gov/geoportal/catalog/search/viewMetadataDetails.page?uuid=%7b66F27299-6B1B-42BF-8AA0-1127D7646631%7d&innoContentType=livedata

- 303(d) Listed Impaired Waters NHD Indexed Dataset Metadata: https://geogateway.epa.gov/geoportal/rest/document?id={66F27299-6B1B-42BF-8AA0-1127D7646631}&xsl=metadata_to_html_full

- 303(d) Listed Impaired Waters Factsheet: http://www.epa.gov/waters/doc/factsheets/303d_impaired_waters_gis.pdf

- Impaired Waters with TMDLs NHD Indexed Dataset Metadata Details: https://geogateway.epa.gov/geoportal/catalog/search/viewMetadataDetails.page?uuid=%7b73AC1C8A-BBCF-4E7E-A4CE-AA5337D82ACA%7d&innoContentType=livedata

- Impaired Waters with TMDLs NHD Indexed Dataset Metadata: https://geogateway.epa.gov/geoportal/rest/document?id=%7b73AC1C8A-BBCF-4E7E-A4CE-AA5337D82ACA%7d&xsl=metadata_to_html_full

- Impaired Waters with TMDLs National Geospatial Dataset Fact Sheet: http://www.epa.gov/waters/doc/factsheets/impaired_waters_with_tmdls.pdf