



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS FOR NEIWPCC QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLANS (QAPPs)

NEIWPCC

Effective 1/11/2023

Version 3.0

Approved by:

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02/02/2023

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DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Revised By	Date	Version	Summary of Changes
Peter Zaykoski, QAPM	10/1/2019	2.0	Added QAPP Unique ID system and process considerations; added file naming convention; clarified individual steps where needed.
Peter Zaykoski, QAPM	1/9/2023	3.0	Added LCBP delegated process as appendix; documented process for offsite designees; clarified communication procedures for QAPM or designee during review.

I. SUMMARY

This document was prepared to assist NEIWPCC staff in understanding the process for the review and approval of quality assurance project plans. It outlines roles, responsibilities, and procedures for two scenarios: the first covers projects funded by EPA; the second scenario covers projects funded by other organizations.

While this is intended to be a stand-alone document, it does not describe all aspects of the NEIWPCC Quality Program, the process for determining when a QAPP is needed, or specific components and requirements of a quality assurance project plan. For additional guidance on these topics, go to NEIWPCC's Quality Management website (neiwpc.org/quality).

Note that the procedures described below do not apply to a program that has QAPP-approval authority, in which case the program would have its own approval procedure.

II. DEFINITIONS

QMP	Quality management plan. Overarching document that describes NEIWPCC's quality program.
QAPP	Quality assurance project plan (including all associated appendices, checklists, and forms)
Unique identifier	Alphanumeric label assigned to each QAPP submitted for NEIWPCC review and approval
QAPP writer	Person responsible for writing and revising a QAPP (may be NEIWPCC employee or contractor)
NEIWPCC project manager (PM)	NEIWPCC staff person responsible for oversight of project in need of an approved QAPP
Checklist	Any of several review templates used to assess completeness of a QAPP. The checklist used is based on type of project (primary data, secondary data, or modeling).
Receiver	Designated administrative contact for QAPP tracking at the Lowell office (email: gapps@neiwpc.org)
QAPP Tracker	Database used to track information and status of QAPP review and approval
QAPM	Quality assurance program manager (currently Emily Bialowas) is the point-of-contact for all quality assurance activities
Designee	Quality assurance program manager designee. An appropriately trained and certified staff person selected by the QAPM to review and approve a particular QAPP
EPA project officer	EPA staff person responsible for project oversight
EPA QA reviewer	EPA staff person responsible for reviewing the QAPP and approving it once it complies with EPA QAPP requirements

III. PROCEDURE

The process for review and approval of all NEIWPCC QAPPs consists of nine steps in three phases:

Phase 1: Preparation and Initialization

- Step 1. Project Manager Review for Completeness
- Step 2. Initial Submission of Draft QAPP
- Step 3. Receipt of Draft QAPP

Phase 2: Review and Revision

- Step 4. QAPP Review Assignment
- Step 5. Reviewing Draft QAPP
- Step 6. Draft QAPP Revision
- Step 7. QAPP Revision Review

Phase 3: Finalization and Filing

- Step 8. Finalization of QAPP
- Step 9. Electronically Filing the QAPP

All QAPP review and approval processes share the same detailed process instructions for phases one and three; the specific process for phase two is dependent on the funding source of the project. Details for each step in the process are presented below and flow charts showing summarizing the steps for each scenario are provided in Appendix A.

Most NEIWPCC QAPPs are reviewed and approved through the centralized system, coordinated by the NEIWPCC QAPM in the NEIWPCC Headquarters office. However, pursuant to NEIWPCC's Quality Management Plan (QMP), NEIWPCC has a program that allows the Lake Champlain Basin Program to review and approve QAPPs for projects not funded by EPA. The specific processes for QAPPs that move through this delegated program are detailed in Appendix D.

PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND INITIALIZATION

Step 1: Project Manager Review for Completeness

1.1: Whether the QAPP writer is a NEIWPCC employee or a contractor, the NEIWPCC project manager (PM) will review the draft QAPP by comparing it to the appropriate checklist, project scope of work, and advisory committee guidance to ensure that the QAPP adequately describes the project activities to be conducted and that all necessary QAPP elements are included. In addition, the PM will ensure that all applicable aspects of the project are detailed in the QAPP. If the QAPP is found to be inadequate, the PM will provide specific directions to the QAPP writer, who will make the necessary modifications. The PM must verify that all issues have been adequately addressed before proceeding to step 2.

Step 2: Initial Submission of Draft QAPP

2.1: Once the PM has reviewed the draft QAPP and assessed it as adequate and complete, the PM will complete the electronic QAPP submission form (available at neiwpcc.org/quality).

2.2: The PM will email both an electronic version of the draft QAPP and the completed electronic QAPP submission form to the receiver. Any necessary appendices should be provided in the same submission.

NOTE: The PM is responsible for identifying all necessary reviewers (EPA, state agency, or other) before submitting the draft QAPP for review. The QAPM will assist in this process as necessary.

Step 3: Receipt of Draft QAPP

3.1: Upon receipt of the draft QAPP and corresponding QAPP submission form, the receiver will assign a unique identifier to the QAPP (see Appendix B) and create a new record in QAPP Tracker. (Additional details pertaining to QAPP Tracker are provided in Section IV of this document.)

3.2: The receiver will create a new folder using the unique identifier and short project title in the designated location on the Common drive (*I:\COMMON\QUALITY\QAPPS\QAPPS - PENDING*) and will save both the electronic draft QAPP (including appendices) and corresponding QAPP submission form within this folder, in accordance with the QAPP File Naming Convention (see Appendix C).

3.3: The receiver will email the draft QAPP to the quality assurance program manager (QAPM), copying the PM, including a screenshot of the QAPP Tracker record for reference in the body of the email.

NOTE: Once assigned by the receiver, the unique identifier should be included in all correspondence related to the QAPP. Similarly, once EPA provides an RFA number (typically once a QAPP has been reviewed), the EPA RFA number should be included in all correspondence during QAPP review.

NOTE: From this point forward, the PM should be copied on all emails regarding review and approval of the QAPP.

PHASE 2: REVIEW AND REVISION

Two scenarios are presented below covering: 1) projects with EPA funding, and 2) projects with funding from other organizations. Each describes the specific actions for steps 4-7 of the overall process.

SCENARIO 1: EPA FUNDED PROJECT

The key difference between review processes involving EPA Region 1 and Region 2 is in the order of review: the Region 1 review process occurs concurrently with NEIWPCC review, while Region 2 review occurs subsequent to NEIWPCC review. If approval of both EPA Region 1 and Region 2 is required, the concurrent NEIWPCC and EPA Region 1 review should occur before Region 2 review is initiated. Note that QAPPS for Long Island Sound Study (LISS) projects should be reviewed first by NEIWPCC and any state agency reviewers and then distributed to the EPA PO to coordinate EPA review.

Step 4: QAPP Review Assignment

4.1: Once the QAPM receives the draft QAPP, the QAPM may assign a designee to conduct the review and, if appropriate, update the QAPP Tracker accordingly. A designee is typically selected, in consultation with appropriate supervisory staff, based on availability and areas of technical expertise. If the QAPM does not delegate QAPP review to a designee, the QAPM remains the NEIWPCC reviewer.

4.2: The QAPM will email the draft QAPP to the appropriate reviewers. Should the QAPP require approval from EPA Region 1, the QAPM will email it to the appropriate EPA Region 1 project officer and the EPA Region 1 QAPP submission email address: R1QAPPs@epa.gov. Any additional reviewers identified as necessary by the PM, save for EPA Region 2 if applicable, will be included on this message. The message should also include the designee, if one was assigned by the QAPM. The message will request that the agency's staff review the draft QAPP and email any necessary modifications to the PM. The message will also communicate who the QAPM has assigned as designee, if applicable, and request that the agency's staff not approve (sign) the QAPP until the NEIWPCC review and approval process is complete. If the QAPP requires approval through EPA Region 2, that review will occur after NEIWPCC review and concurrent Region 1 review (if necessary). The Region 2 review process is described in steps 7.5 - 7.7 below.

Step 5: Reviewing Draft QAPP

5.1: The QAPM or designee will review the draft QAPP, using (and completing) the appropriate review checklist. **5.2:** Upon completion of the checklist, the QAPM or designee will generate a comment memo that details any needed modifications. The QAPM or designee will save the completed checklist and comment memo in the appropriate electronic project file (the project-specific folder in *I:\COMMON\QUALITY\QAPPs\QAPPs - PENDING*). If the designee does not have access to the project file on the Lowell office server, they should retain all documents generated as part of the review process and a record of the dates on which each step is completed, using the "Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page" document (Appendix E). The designee should provide this cover document and all applicable review documents to the receiver during step 8.4, as described below.

NOTE: All files saved in a project-specific QAPP folder should be named in accordance with the QAPP File Naming Convention contained in Appendix C of this document.

5.3: The QAPM or designee will email the comment memo to the PM and EPA Region 1 reviewers to initiate the revision process. Under most circumstances, the PM should receive the comment memo from the QAPM or designee within 10 business days from the time the QAPP was distributed for review.

5.4: The QAPM or designee will update the project record in QAPP Tracker to specify the date the comment memo was sent and will check the boxes indicating that the electronic checklist and comment memo have been saved in the appropriate folder. If the designee does not have access to the QAPP Tracker, they should retain copies of the electronic checklist and memo locally and note the date they completed the review on the Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

Step 6: Draft QAPP Revision

6.1: The PM will email the QAPM or designee's comment memo to the QAPP writer so that the writer can revise the draft QAPP to address issues identified in the memo.

6.2: The QAPP writer will also incorporate any modifications identified during the concurrent review of the draft QAPP from EPA Region 1 or any other applicable reviewers. (The PM is not required to save EPA or other reviewers' comments on the evaluation of the draft QAPP, but should this be desired, the PM may save additional comments to the project-specific QAPPS-PENDING folder. Files containing additional comments should indicate Do Not Delete in the file name. If the PM does not have access to the Lowell office server, the PM can email the necessary information to the receiver, who will save the file(s).)

Step 7: QAPP Revision Review

7.1: When revisions are complete, the PM will submit the revised QAPP to the QAPM or designee, EPA Region 1 project officer (if applicable), EPA Region 1 QA reviewer (if applicable) and any additional applicable reviewers to determine if revisions are adequate.

7.2: The QAPM or designee will update QAPP Tracker to specify the date the revised QAPP was received. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, the designee will add the necessary information to Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

7.3: If the QAPM or designee, EPA Region 1 project officer, EPA Region 1 QA reviewer, or other reviewer(s) (as applicable) determine that the revisions are inadequate, the PM will be notified by the appropriate reviewer so the QAPP can be further revised. Steps 6.1, 6.2, and 7.1 will be repeated until all applicable reviewers determine that the QAPP has been adequately revised.

7.4: Once the QAPM or designee determines that the current version of the QAPP satisfies their review comments and any revisions are adequate, they will send an email to the PM indicating their acceptance of the QAPP. The QAPM or designee should make it clear in the email that their approval is contingent on the approval of any other reviewers in the process and that the PM should wait to initiate the signature process until they have approval from all reviewers. The QAPM or designee will update the QAPP Tracker to reflect the date that revisions were accepted and save a copy of the email as a PDF in the appropriate project folder. The QAPM or designee will check the box in QAPP Tracker to indicate that the OK to proceed message has been filed. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, the designee will retain the PDF copy of the email and note the appropriate information on the Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

NOTE: If the PM has been notified by all applicable reviewers that the QAPP has been adequately revised *and* the QAPP does not require approval from EPA Region 2, skip steps 7.5, 7.6, and 7.7 and proceed to step 8. If the QAPP requires approval from EPA Region 2, continue to step 7.5.

7.5: Once the QAPM or designee, EPA Region 1 project officer (if applicable), EPA Region 1 QA reviewer (if applicable) and any additional reviewers determine that the revisions are adequate, the QAPM or designee will notify the PM that the QAPP meets NEIWPCC and EPA Region 1 QA requirements (if applicable) and can be sent to the appropriate EPA Region 2 project officer, who will coordinate the Region 2 review and approval process.

7.6: The PM will email a Word version of the QAPP to EPA Region 2, so that modifications can be identified via the Track Changes feature.

7.7: As the PM receives feedback on the draft QAPP from EPA Region 2, the PM will work to ensure that the QAPP is adequately revised to address identified issues.

NOTE: Upon completion of step 7.7, continue to Phase 3 of the process.

SCENARIO 2: PROJECT FUNDED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Step 4: QAPP Review Assignment

4.1: Once the QAPM receives the draft QAPP, the QAPM may assign a designee to conduct the review and, if appropriate, update the QAPP Tracker accordingly. A designee is typically selected, in consultation with appropriate supervisory staff, based on availability and areas of technical expertise. If the QAPM does not delegate QAPP review to a designee, the QAPM remains the NEIWPCC reviewer.

4.2: The QAPM will email the draft QAPP to the appropriate reviewers. Should the QAPP require approval from other organizations, the QAPM will email the draft QAPP to the appropriate reviewer(s), including the designee, if one was assigned by the QAPM. The message will request a review of the draft QAPP with any necessary modifications emailed to the PM. The message will also request that the other organization(s) not approve (sign) the QAPP until the NEIWPCC review and approval process is complete.

Step 5: Reviewing Draft QAPP

5.1: The QAPM or designee will review the draft QAPP, using (and completing) the appropriate review checklist.

5.2: Upon completion of the checklist, the QAPM or designee will generate a comment memo that details any needed modifications. The QAPM or designee will save the completed checklist and comment memo in the appropriate electronic project file (the project-specific folder in I:\COMMON\QUALITY\QAPPS\QAPPS - PENDING). If the designee does not have access to the project file on the Lowell office server, they should retain all documents generated as part of the review process and a record of the dates on which each step is completed, using the "Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page" document (Appendix E). The designee should provide this cover document and all applicable review documents to the receiver during step 8.4, as described below.

NOTE: All files saved in a project-specific QAPP folder should be named in accordance with the QAPP File Naming Convention contained in Appendix C of this document.

5.3: The QAPM or designee will email the comment memo to the PM to initiate the revision process. Under most circumstances, the PM should receive the comment memo from the QAPM or designee within 10 business days from the time the QAPP was distributed for review.

5.4: The QAPM or designee will update the project record in QAPP Tracker to specify the date the comment memo was sent and will check the boxes indicating that the electronic checklist and comment memo have been saved in the appropriate folder. If the designee does not have access to the QAPP Tracker, they should retain copies of the electronic checklist and memo

locally and note the date they completed the review on the Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

Step 6: Draft QAPP Revision

6.1: The PM will email the QAPM or designee's comment memo to the QAPP writer so that the writer can revise the draft QAPP to address issues identified in the memo.

6.2: The QAPP writer will also incorporate any necessary modifications identified during the concurrent review of the draft QAPP by other approving organizations (if applicable). If the PM would like to save any comments (optional) on the evaluation of the draft QAPP, the PM can save them to the project specific QAPPS-PENDING folder. Files containing comments should indicate Do Not Delete in the file name. If the PM is not located in the Lowell office, the PM can email the necessary information to the receiver, who will save the file.

Step 7: QAPP Revision Review

7.1: When revisions are complete, the PM will submit the revised QAPP to the QAPM or designee and any other reviewers (if applicable) who will determine if revisions are adequate.

7.2: The QAPM or designee will update QAPP Tracker to specify the date the revised QAPP was received. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, the designee will add the necessary information to Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

7.3: If the QAPM or designee or other reviewer determines that the revisions are inadequate, the PM will be notified so the QAPP can be further revised. Steps 6.1, 6.2, and 7.1 will be repeated until the QAPM or designee and all applicable reviewers determine that the QAPP has been adequately revised.

7.4: Once the QAPM or designee determines that the current version of the QAPP satisfies their review comments and any revisions are adequate, they will send an email to the PM indicating their acceptance of the QAPP. The QAPM or designee should make it clear in the email that their approval is contingent on the approval of any other reviewers in the process and that the PM should wait to initiate the signature process until they have approval from all reviewers. The QAPM or designee will update the QAPP Tracker to reflect the date that revisions were accepted and save a copy of the email as a PDF in the appropriate project folder. The QAPM or designee will check the box in QAPP Tracker to indicate that the OK to proceed message has been filed. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, the designee will retain the PDF copy of the email and note the appropriate information on the Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

NOTE: If the PM has been notified by all applicable reviewers that the QAPP has been adequately revised, proceed to step 8.

PHASE 3: FINALIZATION AND FILING

Step 8: Finalization of QAPP

8.1: The PM (or person assigned finalization responsibility within the QAPP) will circulate the complete, final QAPP to the appropriate individuals to obtain signatures. The QAPP should be circulated via email, with signatures added electronically, unless hard copies with original

signatures are required. Generally, NEIWPCC and project staff should sign first before the final signature from EPA.

8.2: Upon receipt of the signature page, the QAPM or designee will check the box in QAPP Tracker indicating that the signature page was received, when the final QAPP is circulated. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, they should make note of the date on the Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page.

8.3: Once the PM (or assigned individual) receives all signatures, the PM (or assigned individual) will email a PDF of the complete, approved QAPP to the distribution list.

8.4: Upon receipt of the complete, approved QAPP, the QAPM or designee will forward a copy of the approved QAPP to the receiver with finalization instructions. The QAPM or designee will instruct the receiver to save a copy of the approved QAPP (with all signatures included) in the appropriate project folder, update the project record in QAPP Tracker to specify the date that the final QAPP was received and fiscal year of completion for the review process, and move the project folder from the “QAPPS - PENDING” directory to the appropriate fiscal year folder in the “QAPPS - COMPLETE” directory. If the designee does not have access to the Lowell office server, they should include a copy of their completed Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page and all relevant documents in their email to the receiver, who will file them appropriately in the project file.

NOTE: The QAPM or designee must confirm that all fields in the QAPP Tracker for which they are responsible have been completed before providing finalization instructions to the receiver.

Step 9: Electronically Filing the QAPP

9.1: Upon receiving finalization instructions from the QAPM or designee, the receiver will save a copy of the complete, approved QAPP (with all signatures included) in the appropriate project folder. Once the complete QAPP has been saved, the receiver will delete intermediate drafts of the QAPP and ensure that the folder also contains the checklist, comment memo, submission form, and the email authorizing initiation of the signature process. The receiver will retain any files designated Do Not Delete and the initial draft QAPP, which will be retained for training purposes. If the designee provided an Offsite Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page and relevant documents in their finalization email, the receiver will file the attached documents in the project file.

NOTE: If QAPP is an amendment, then the receiver should go back into QAPP tracker record for the original QAPP and define the end date as the day previous to the day of approval of the amendment.

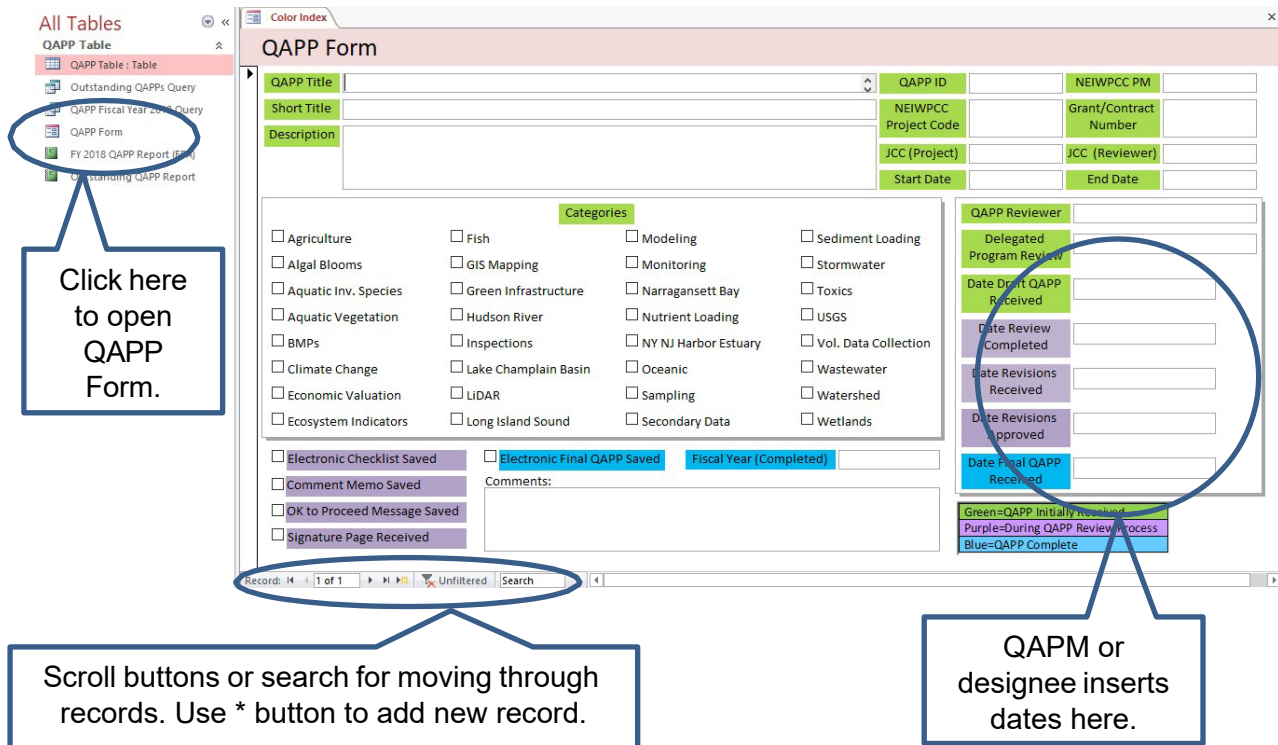
9.2: With the aforementioned documents included, the receiver will relocate the project folder to the “QAPPS - COMPLETE” folder on the Common drive (for example, *I:\COMMON\QUALITY\QAPPS\QAPPS - COMPLETE\Completed FY2023 QAPPS for fiscal year FY2023 projects*) and update QAPP Tracker accordingly.

IV. QAPP TRACKER

QAPP Tracker (Figure 1) is an Access database used to compile project-specific information pertaining to the QAPP review and approval process. It can be found at *I:\COMMON\QUALITY*.

- Once QAPP Tracker is opened, the QAPP Form can be opened from the navigation pane.
- When a QAPP is submitted for review, the receiver will create a new record for the project and populate the fields within the record using information provided on the QAPP Submission Form.
- When the QAPM or designee (or receiver) updates the project-specific record within QAPP Tracker, the appropriate record is first found using the scroll buttons or search function. The fields for inserting relevant dates for that record are located at the far right of the form.

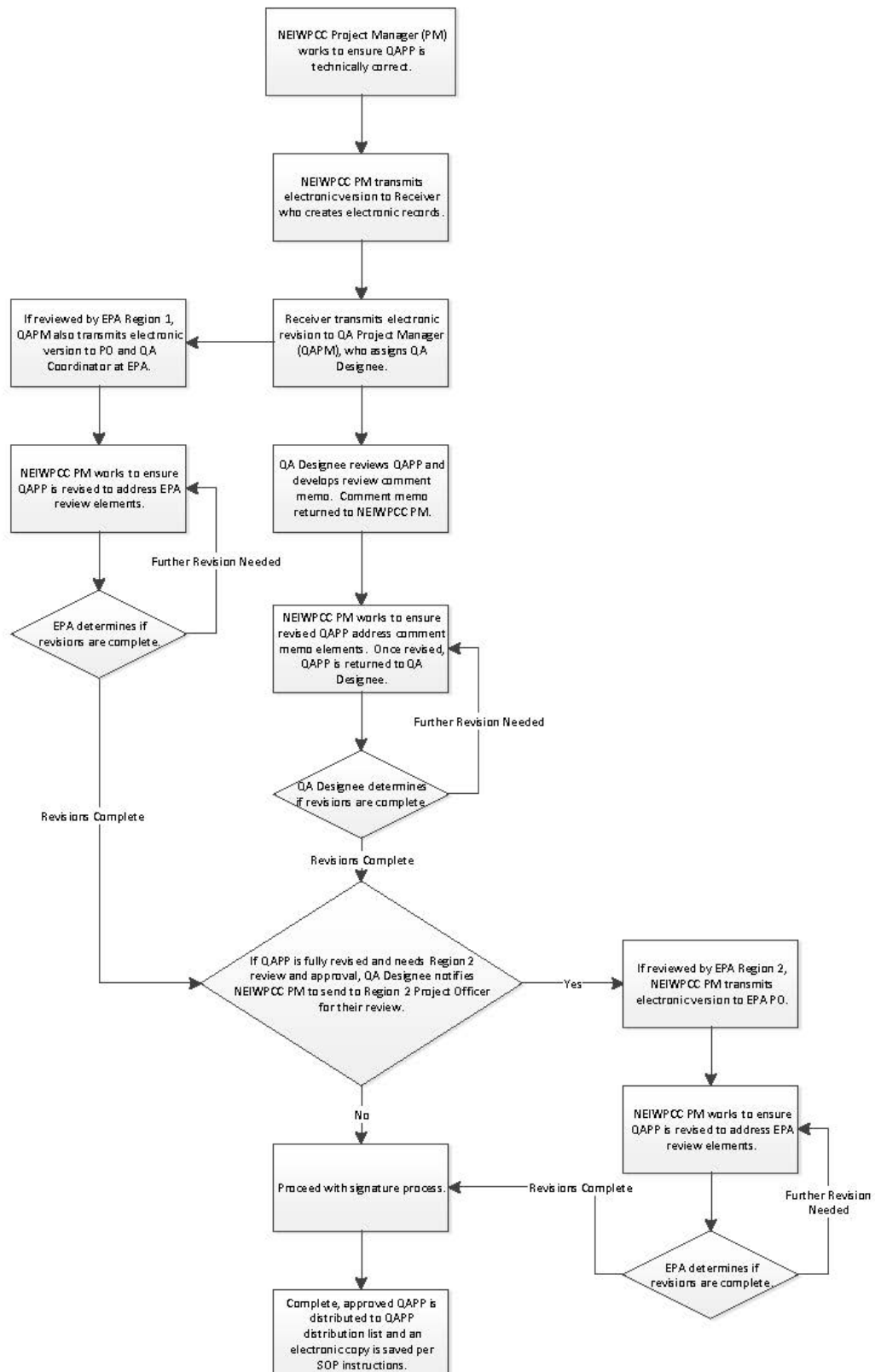
Figure 1



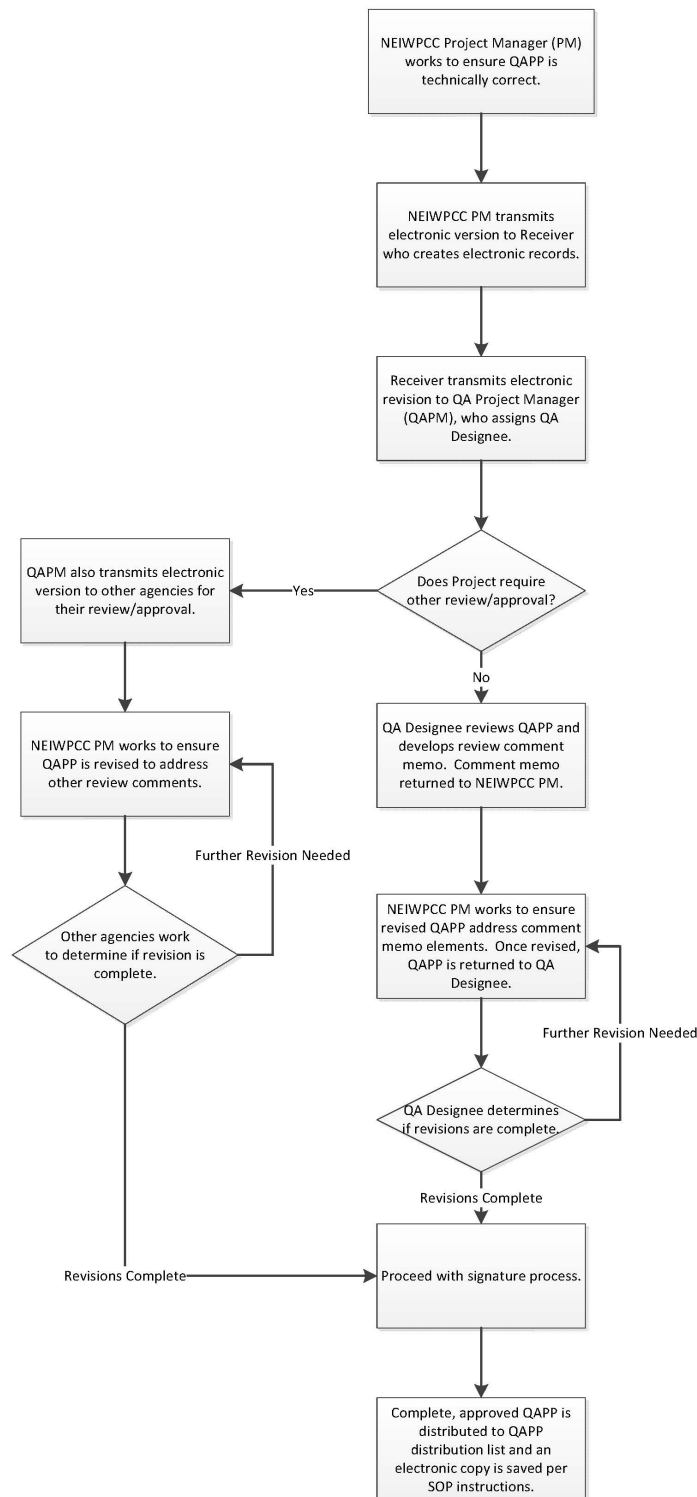
The screenshot shows the 'QAPP Form' interface. On the left, a navigation pane lists various tables, with 'QAPP Table' highlighted. A callout points to this link with the text: 'Click here to open QAPP Form.' The main form area contains several sections: 'QAPP Title', 'Short Title', and 'Description' at the top; a 'Categories' section with multiple checkboxes for project types (e.g., Agriculture, Fish, Modeling); a 'QAPP Reviewer' section with a dropdown and date fields; and a 'Comments' section at the bottom. A legend at the bottom right explains the color coding for the review process: Green for 'QAPP Initially Received', Purple for 'During QAPP Review Process', and Blue for 'QAPP Complete'. A callout points to the date fields in the 'QAPP Reviewer' section with the text: 'QAPM or designee inserts dates here.' At the bottom of the form, a record navigation bar shows 'Record: 1 of 1' and a search bar. A callout points to these controls with the text: 'Scroll buttons or search for moving through records. Use * button to add new record.'

APPENDIX A: PROCESS FLOWCHARTS

EPA Funded Project



**Project Funded by
Other Organizations**



APPENDIX B: QAPP UNIQUE ID SYSTEM

In order to better track quality assurance project plans (QAPPs) through the NEIWPCC review and approval process, a system of unique identifiers has been instituted for all QAPPs entering the review process, beginning in fiscal year 2020. This will allow clear correspondence, accurate records, and better quality control of our QAPP review and approval process data.

DEFINITIONS

Table 1. Identification System Elements

ID Element	Description
FY	The fiscal year when the QAPP was submitted for review
QAPP #	The number of the QAPP as it was received in a given fiscal year
Amendment #	The number of the amendment

FORMAT

The format of unique identifier for each QAPP is built from the elements in Table 1, above, as follows:

Q[FY]-[QAPP #]-A[Amendment #]

With the following rules:

- FY is preceded by “Q” to differentiate these identifiers from other unique identifiers used in NEIWPCC systems (e.g. agreement numbers).
- FY is specified by two digits
- QAPP # is sequentially defined by the Receiver at the time of receipt. It is specified by a three digit number (e.g. 012) and resets to 001 at the beginning of each fiscal year.
- Amendment # is only used if the QAPP that is submitted is an amendment to an existing QAPP. The number of the amendment should be preceded by “A” and the FY and QAPP # should be the same as the original QAPP.

EXAMPLES

- QAPP submitted on 10/27/19 and is the second QAPP received during fiscal year 2020: **Q20-002**
- Amendment 1 to Q20-002 submitted on 1/20/21: **Q20-002-A1**

APPENDIX C: FILE NAMING CONVENTION

This file naming convention applies to those files and folders created during the NEIWPCC quality assurance project plan (QAPP) review and approval process as well as final, approved QAPPs. This convention was developed to be consistent with the NEIWPCC Filename Convention Rules.

This convention came into effect October 1, 2019.

DEFINITIONS

Table 1. File & Folder Name Elements

File Name Element	Description
QAPP ID	The unique identifier assigned to each QAPP by the Receiver at the initialization of the review process
Short Title	A brief title assigned to each QAPP and provided by the Project Manager on the Submission Form
Document Type	The short name for each type of document created during the review process (e.g. review checklists or comment memos). Specific shorthand names are defined in Table 2 below
Additional Detail	In some cases another element is necessary to capture the content of the file. This element is flexible.
Date	The date of creation of the file, most recent edit, or approval as appropriate

TABLE 2. QAPP REVIEW DOCUMENTS

Document Type	File Name Shorthand	Description
Submission Form	submission form	Form provided by NEIWPCC project manager during initial submission of QAPP for review
Draft QAPP	QAPP DRAFT	Initial QAPP as submitted to the receiver for review
Final, Approved QAPP	QAPP FINAL	Approved and signed QAPP used during project implementation
Appendices	APPX	Any appendices that are not included within the body of the QAPP and provided as separate files
Review Checklist	checklist	Any of several review templates used to assess completeness of a QAPP (The checklist used is based on type of project (primary data, secondary data, or modeling).

Document Type	File Name Shorthand	Description
Review Comment Memo	memo	Document used to communicate revisions requested by the QAPM or designee to the NEIWPCC project manager
Authorization Message	ok to proceed	A copy of the email sent to the project manager indicating that all revisions requested have been made and the QAPM or designee is ready to proceed to signature

FORMAT

For both QAPP folders and the documents contained within those folders, a combination of the elements above are used to create consistency using the following formats. Note that underscores should be used between elements as delimiters.

For each **QAPP folder**, the unique identifier and the short title are used as follows:

[QAPP ID]_[short title]

For each **review document** the format is as follows:

[QAPP ID]_[document type]_[additional detail]_[date]

With consideration of the following rules:

- Document type descriptors should use the shorthand names as defined in Table 2, above.
- For any appendices filed, the document type element in the file name should correspond to the version of the QAPP with which they belong (“QAPP DRAFT” or “QAPP FINAL”) and the appendix number or letter should be appended to the abbreviation, “APPX”, and included in the “additional detail” element.
- All dates should conform to the rules of the NEIWPCC file naming convention, which specify that they should be ordered by MONTH, DAY, YEAR, using two digits each and separated by periods.
- Additional information can be coded into the “additional detail” element as necessary. It is important that the length of this element is minimized and only included when necessary.
- If there are any additional documents that need to be filed in the QAPP folder, they should generally follow the above format using logical names in the “document type” element. If these additional files should be retained beyond the duration of the review process, they should be labeled “Do Not Delete” in the “additional detail” element.

EXAMPLE

A finalized QAPP with the following details:

- QAPP ID: Q20-023
- Short Title: Hudson Invasive Species Survey
- Two appendices submitted: A & B

Would be filed in the following folder: “Q20-023_Hudson Invasive Species Survey” listed in the appropriate fiscal year folder in the “QAPPs - COMPLETE” directory. The following files would be included in the folder (dates represent arbitrary timeline):

- Q20-023_submission form_05.20.20
- Q20-023_QAPP DRAFT_05.20.20
- Q20-023_QAPP DRAFT_APPX A_05.20.20
- Q20-023_QAPP DRAFT_APPX B_05.20.20
- Q20-023_checklist_05.22.20
- Q20-023_memo_05.22.20
- Q20-023_ok to proceed_05.26.20
- Q20-023_QAPP FINAL_05.29.20
- Q20-023_QAPP FINAL_APPX A_05.29.20
- Q20-023_QAPP FINAL_APPX B_05.29.20

APPENDIX D: LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PROGRAM DELEGATED QAPP REVIEW & APPROVAL PROCESS

SUMMARY

NEIWPCC developed a process in 2014 to allow for the internal delegation of specific programs to approve their own quality assurance project plans, under certain circumstances. The Lake Champlain Basin Program is authorized under this policy to approve any non-EPA (i.e. GLFC or NPS) funded projects that originate in the Grand Isle, VT office. This document outlines the procedures used by LCBP staff as part of the delegated review process.

DEFINITIONS

These definitions supplement those provided in the NEIWPCC SOP, “Review and Approval Process For NEIWPCC Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs).”

QAPM	Quality assurance program manager (currently Emily Bialowas) is the point-of-contact for all quality assurance activities
LCBP QAPM Designee	Lake Champlain Basin Program quality assurance program manager designee. An authorized QAPM designee based in the LCBP.
LCBP Program Manager	NEIWPCC Headquarters-based staff responsible for oversight of LCBP activities.
LCBP Project Officer	LCBP staff responsible for oversight of a particular project. Equivalent to the NEIWPCC project manager role.
Project QA Officer	Individual responsible for oversight of quality assurance-related activities on a given project. May be an LCBP staff person or a contractor.
LCBP Office Manager	LCBP staff responsible for maintaining project records at the Grand Isle, VT office.
Contractor Project Manager	Individual at the firm contracted by NEIWPCC to complete a given project that is responsible for overall oversight and management of that project.

TYPES OF QAPPs APPROVED IN-HOUSE BY LCBP STAFF

Review and approval under the delegated process can be made by LCBP-based Quality Assurance Program Manager (QAPM) designees. The current list of QAPM designees is maintained by the NEIWPCC QAPM on the NEIWPCC Lowell HQ server.

Exceptions include:

- EPA-funded projects, which are treated like any other EPA-funded project and routed for review and approval as described in the Standard Operating Procedure: “Review and Approval Process For NEIWPCC Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs)”.
- LCBP in-house projects with a data collection or analysis component. Examples include the State of the Lake report or recent climate change projects. These projects require review and approval from the LCBP Program Manager at NEIWPCC and/or the NEIWPCC QAPM or designee.

- The Lake Champlain Long-term Monitoring Program, for which EPA has continued to serve as a QAPP signatory regardless of funding source.
- If an LCBP QAPM designee is unavailable for an extended period of time (e.g. 10 business days or longer) that will prohibit the timely review of a QAPP, the appropriate LCBP Project Officer will submit the QAPP for review through NEIWPCC's centralized QAPP review and approval system.

LCBP DELEGATED QAPP REVIEW PROCESS

Once a QAPP is completed by the contractor and returned to LCBP for review, the assigned LCBP QAPM designee will complete the following tasks, unless otherwise noted:

- a. Read through the QAPP and compare it to the project workplan, if available.
- b. Fill out the appropriate checklist depending on the project type. The current checklists can be found in the "Grant Tools/QAPP docs" folder on the LCBP server.
- c. Write a memo to the Contractor Project Manager describing any deficiencies noted through use of the checklist. The template for the QAPP review memo can be found in the Grant Tools/QAPP docs folder on the LCBP server.
- d. Once revisions are made to the QAPP, check them against the memo to make sure all concerns were addressed.
- e. Obtain approval signatures which should include at a minimum, the LCBP QAPM designee, LCBP Project Officer, Project QA Officer, and the Contractor Project Manager, and other signatures as necessary.
- f. The LCBP Project Officer will send the approved QAPP to the distribution list, which should include at a minimum, all signatories of the QAPP, the LCBP Program Manager, the LCBP Office Manager, the NEIWPCC QA Receiver, and the NEIWPCC QAPM.
- g. Assemble and retain a standardized Project QA folder for each QAPP in a dedicated location on the LCBP server (regardless of funding source) that contains:
 - i. Project Workplan
 - ii. All versions of the QAPP
 - iii. Email correspondences pertaining to the QAPP
 - iv. A completed checklist
 - v. Memorandum to the Contractor
 - vi. Signature Page(s)
 - vii. A separate cover page that contains basic information about the QAPP (template attached)
- h. Send a completed cover page along with the draft QAPP, completed checklist, the comment memo, a PDF copy of the email providing approval to move to signature, and the final approved QAPP to the LCBP Program Manager at NEIWPCC and the NEIWPCC QA Receiver.
- i. LCBP will send the entire Project QA folder to the LCBP Program Manager at NEIWPCC at the close of every project.

All LCBP Staff are familiar with the contents of [NEIWPCC's Quality Management Plan](#).

Reference documents (these documents also are located on the LCBP server in "Grant Tools/QAPP Docs"):

- QAPP Guidance Document
- EPA QAPP Template
- GLFC QAPP Template
- LCBP QAPP Review Cover Page (for NEIWPCC tracking)

- R5 Fillable Checklist
- Modeling Project Checklist
- Secondary Data Checklist
- Cover Memo Example

Updates/Revision Tracking:

- June 2014: Clarified procedure if one or more of the LCBP QAPM designees is unavailable for an extended period of time
- January 2023: Clarified roles and responsibilities; updated to align with current processes.

**LCBP GLFC-funded QAPP Cover Page**

Project Title: _____
Short Title: _____
For Amendments only, Original QAPP ID: _____
NEIWPCC Job Cost Code: _____
NEIWPCC Contract Code: _____
Anticipated Start Date of Field Work: _____
Project End Date: _____
Name of LCBP Project Officer: _____
Name of LCBP QAPP Reviewer: _____
Date QAPP Draft Received: _____
Date QAPP Draft Reviewed: _____
Date Draft QAPP Revisions Received (if any): _____
Date Draft QAPP Revisions Approved (if any): _____
Date Final QAPP Received: _____

Brief Project Description (a few sentences about project objectives and the type of data to be collected and analyzed): _____

Project Categories (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Modeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algal Blooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Invasive Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient Loading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Vegetation | <input type="checkbox"/> Sampling (Primary Data) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Best Management Practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary Data |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Sediment Loading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Valuation | <input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ecosystem Indicators | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish/Fisheries | <input type="checkbox"/> USGS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GIS Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Data Collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inspections | <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Champlain | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LiDAR | |

ATTACHMENTS:

- ☐ Original QAPP Draft
- ☐ QAPP review memo (completed by LCBP QAPP reviewer)
- ☐ R-5 or acceptable alternate checklist (completed by LCBP QAPP reviewer)
- ☐ OK to proceed message (sent by LCBP QAPP reviewer)
- ☐ Final approved QAPP with fully signed signature page

APPENDIX E: OFFSITE DESIGNEE QAPP FINALIZATION COVER PAGE



QA Designee QAPP Finalization Cover Page

QAPP ID: _____

Date QAPP Draft Reviewed: _____

Date Draft QAPP Revisions Received (if any): _____

Date Draft QAPP Approved: _____

Additional Comments: _____

ATTACHMENTS:

- ☐ QAPP review memo
- ☐ R-5 or acceptable alternate checklist (completed by designee)
- ☐ OK to proceed message in pdf (sent by designee)
- ☐ Final approved QAPP with fully signed signature page