EPA Fact Sheet

Better Assessment Science Integrating point and Nonpoint Sources, Version 3 (BASINS 3.1)

Summary
Version 3.1 of the Better Assessment Science Integrating point and Nonpoint Sources (BASINS) software system has been released. BASINS supports the objectives of facilitating examination of environmental information, supporting analysis of environmental systems, and providing a framework for examining management alternatives.

Background
Originally introduced in 1996 with subsequent releases in 1998 and 2001, BASINS is a multipurpose environmental analysis system designed for use by regional, state, and local agencies in performing watershed and water quality-based studies. This system makes it possible to quickly assess large amounts of point source and non-point source data in a format that is easy to use and understand. Installed on a personal computer, BASINS allows the user to assess water quality at selected stream sites or throughout an entire watershed. This invaluable tool integrates environmental data, analytical tools, and modeling programs to support development of cost-effective approaches to watershed management and environmental protection, including TMDLs.

What=s New in BASINS 3.1?
Like the previous release, BASINS includes a data extractor, projector, project builder, GIS interface, various GIS-based tools, a series of models, and custom databases. But instead of including that data on multiple CDs as in version 3.0, data are available entirely through a web data extraction tool. This web data extractor provides a tool for dynamic downloading of BASINS data from a variety of sources. Other significant enhancements in version 3.1 include a new tool to archive and restore BASINS projects, updated data holdings, and a tool to update the BASINS software interactively.

Access to data in BASINS 3.1 is web based. The user either downloads the core system from the BASINS web site or obtains a single CD containing BASINS software. The user then specifies a geographic area of interest and the software downloads appropriate data from EPA, USGS and other locations on the Internet. After the BASINS data are downloaded, they are extracted and projected to the user specified map projection. Once the projection change is accomplished, the new project file (the ArcView .apr file) is automatically built. This Web Data Download tool allows the user to add additional data to the BASINS project from a variety of data sources, and to check for more recent data and update the BASINS project data as appropriate.

The BASINS Web Data Download tool also has a built-in function for installing updates to any of the BASINS components. This feature automatically checks for components of the BASINS installation that have been updated; and if any are found, downloads and installs those updates. Through this feature the BASINS users can be assured that are running the most up-to-date software.

How to Get Additional Information
For further information about BASINS 3.1, contact basins@epa.gov

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The BASINS web site
http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/basins/