

2008 WRAPS Conference

Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities

Presented by

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Kansas PRIDE

- Partnership of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas Department of Commerce, and Kansas PRIDE, Inc.
 - Encourage and assist local government and volunteers in making their community a better place to live and work
- Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities (HEHC) Project
 - Works with PRIDE and other communities
 - Currently funded through watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) programs

Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities (HEHC) Project

HEHC model is based on:

- Engaging citizens to protect their local assets
- Increased citizen appreciation of natural, built, cultural/historical resources
- Citizen evaluation, selection, and completion of projects to protect/improve community and ecosystem health
- Adoption of an planning process for community's future
- Exploration of activities/project aspects which enhance other aspects of community (capitals framework) for maximum benefit for citizens and local resources

Community Capitals

- **Built**: water systems, sewers, utilities,
- **Natural**: Air, soils, water: quantity and quality, landscape, biodiversity, landscape
- **Cultural**: language, rituals, traditions
- **Human**: health, education, skills, self-esteem
- **Social**: leadership, bridging and bonding networks, groups, trust, reciprocity
- **Political**: power, inclusion, voice,
- **Financial**: Income, security, investment, credit

HEHC Program Work

A 'third-party' facilitated process offers impartial guidance to communities through:

- Public forums for citizen participation and decisions
- Hands-on exercises help community establish:
 - values and visions
 - condition of local assets natural, human, built
 - goals and projects to protect assets and water quality
- Local ownership and control of projects
- Development of partner opportunities and resources

Examples of Community Benefits

Melvern, Kansas: confluence of Marais des Cygnes and Long's Creek

- Over 500 hours of citizen participation in community planning
- Community-based decision to develop a hiking/biking river trail system
 - New recreational opportunity for citizens and visitors
 - Outdoor classroom for water quality and natural resources
 - Community health and fitness program
 - New partnerships: Kansas Trail Council, Westar Energy Green Team, and Fort Hayes Center for Civic Leadership
- Identified storm water protection opportunities
- New funding sources for environmental protection and community health
- Exploring ways to use river trail resource for new economic opportunities
- *Planning document* for community use/reference

Examples of Community Benefits

Rossville, Kansas: located on Cross Creek, 5 miles from Kansas River

- Over 350 hours of citizen participation in planning process
- Community-based decision to build a rain garden structure in public park
 - Beautify park, enhance habitat for birds and butterflies
 - Reduce storm water contaminants
 - Absorb greater volumes of water to reduce flooding
- Partnership with Middle Kansas Watershed WRAPS to fund educational outreach and community celebration to teach citizens about water quality.
- *Planning document* for community use/reference

What's the HEHC process? Citizen Engagement

1. Establish why resource planning is important/needed in your community?
2. Stakeholder identification:
 - Key players will seek support for the project – who are they and why should they be involved?
 - Local, county, area-wide, state?
 - Why should they be involved?
3. What approaches could be used to get these people involved?

What's the HEHC process?

Resource Planning

Blue print for change helps communities:

- recognize its development assets and opportunities;
- identify trends and activities that shape the community;
- analyze the community's context and link to the larger region;
- get the support of state, federal, private, and nonprofit partners;
- identify resources needed to support community change; and
- integrate the perspectives of a variety of community members in the plan for change.

What's the process?

Characterize Your Community

Identifies aspects of your community that would be important to community planning

- Boundaries
- Natural Resources
- Demographics
- Economy
- Environmental Awareness
- Education
- Capacity for Activism

Characterize Your Economy

How would you describe the economic health and vitality of your community (number of people on welfare, cost of living, etc)?

Describe the main source of income in your community, and/or types of industries of businesses in your community; are they large or small or family owned?

What types of jobs do people in your community have?

Is there one business sector doing better than others, and if so, why?

What is the unemployment rate in your community and has it changed over time?

Are there people working in natural resource-oriented jobs (forestry, ecotourism, farming, conservation offices) If so, who are they?

What percentage of people who live in your community work in your community?

Characterize Your Natural Resources

- Identify local natural resources found in your community:
- Identify natural resources your community is dependent upon and comment on the quality of each:
- Which natural resources are utilized and valued for recreational activities in your community; identify which ones and who uses them:
- Are there any natural resources that are compromised, endangered or threatened in your community? Are citizens involved in any activities underway to address these
- Do citizens utilize natural resources for income? Identify types of resources used, how they are used, and who is involved:
- Are there any citizen groups (who?) which have undertaken wildlife habitat or protection activities in your community?

What's the Process?

Assess Community Resources

Pilot communities assess their natural, built, and human resources

- Form teams and participate in natural resource assessments—exploration and discovery
- Work with local, area, and state experts: county conservation districts, local WRAPS programs (watershed restoration and protection strategy); NRCS; universities
- “Advisors” help teams prioritize *most important* information to share in public meeting.

Assessments

Water: ID watershed, rivers, streams, local water uses—today and historically, storm water drainage flow mapping, soil types, re-charge areas, public water supplies, wetlands, riparian areas and condition of stream banks, sources of pollution, abandoned wells.

Infrastructure: ID road types and conditions, sidewalks, walking accessibility, drinking water delivery systems and quality, wastewater systems, energy services/availability, schools, etc.

What's the Process? Identify Action Plans

Public forum:

- Assessment teams report out
- Review community's values and visions
- What projects that will move their community into the future?
- Which are suited for a water quality project?

How could top projects enhance:

- Economic opportunities
- Cultural events/activities
- Social benefits
- Citizen health
- Environmental protection/preservation/restoration

What's the Process?

Implementation

- Identify, prioritize and select projects by consensus
 - promote environmental protection
 - Forward community goals and visions
- Develop an implementation plan and teams to complete projects
- Develop a water quality protection plan (required)
- Develop planning document for community use or reference
- Evaluate projects and celebrate success
- Continue to implement projects by priority

Implementation Planning and Teams

- Work on projects with most support by community; but which is feasible
- Must make community aware of project-news releases, posters in public places, notices in church bulletins, emails and phone calls to schools and civic groups.
- Establish committees up front--avoid having 1 or 2 people “in charge” of project
- Set timeline and conduct regular meetings; keep public informed and invited to meetings and work days.
- Celebrate/publicize your successes and build on them for next projects

Examples of Capitals Enhancement

Melvern: River Trail

– Environment:

- Resource partnerships: local NRCS agent, and Westar Energy “Green Team” participation, KACEE
- Protection of critical habitat for threatened and endangered (T & E) species
- Land conservation easements and riparian area protection

– Economic:

- Tie trail to Eisenhower State Park trail system (500,000 tourist visits per year) for increased trail use/tourism in community area
- Sell products at local store and restaurant to trail users, convenience store

Examples of Capitals Enhancement

– Culture:

- Biking or other event for Sunflower Days
- Halloween “haunted trail” event
- Christmas candlelight walk
- Name trail loops: high school history teacher, contest for students to use Native American history/significance
- Water festival or other ethnic festival (picnic area) for family events
- Archeological assessment of Native American sites

Examples of Capitals Enhancement

– Health:

- Get It-Do It Partnership for Healthier Kansans
- Exercise stations on trail
- Community use

– Social

- School involvement for outdoor classroom use
- Ag educator for stream bank stabilization
- Natural amphitheater for concerts, events
- Partner with local counties for educational field trips
- Local water festival

Program Goals 3 & 4

Program Goal 3

- Assist communities with development of action plans for water quality projects
- Assist with development of planning document with resource planning focus
- Provide options for community use of planning document
- Assist with identification of funding and other resources for continued project implementation

Program Goal 4

- Educate and engage other communities in environmental assessment and planning process

Any Questions?

Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities Web site:

<http://www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu/healthyecosystems/>

<http://www.communityecosystem.com>

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