



**Title:** The Missouri Watershed Initiative – Comprehensive Watershed Planning

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**Organization:** University of Missouri-Columbia

**State:** MS      **Region:** Heartland

**Year of Funding:**

**Theme:** Watershed Management

**Situation:** In Missouri, as in many other states, surface water constitutes the primary source of drinking water. Hence, water quality and, ultimately, safety become paramount concerns. Watersheds with a multiple of uses will generally result in a receiving water body with a multiple of contaminants. The Missouri Watershed Initiative incorporates a process addresses such a complex situation through planning by using science-based evidence to objectively identify kinds and sources of contaminants. Further, stakeholders are involved and educated to identify possible solutions.

**Objectives:** Specific objectives relating to the process utilized in a pilot watershed planning process are as follows: 1) Identify specific contaminants, their quantities and sources, 2) Identify, engage and educate local stakeholders in the overall watershed planning process, 3) Use a facilitated process to identify specific solutions, 4) Measure environmental and economic impacts of plan implementation.

**Methods:** Members in the stakeholder group were identified by community leaders through a facilitated process where specific user and interest groups were identified and representatives were named. These individuals were invited to join the watershed steering committee; scientists conducting the assessment projects served as educators for the group. Several public meetings have been held and numerous presentations made to various stakeholder and service groups in the community. Two demonstration-research projects within the watershed are extending information on technological advances.

**Partnerships:** Partnerships were created with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri Departments of Natural Resources and Conservation, the City of Macon, Macon Schools, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and several private groups.

**Research:** Through design, the Missouri Watershed Initiative process integrates research through the initial assessment process, education of the stakeholder group, as well as involvement of agency personnel, and outreach to the public within the watershed community through demonstration-research projects and accompanying field days. The process effectively brings science-based, objective information to the forefront of watershed planning by providing a forum for exchange among the various involved groups.

**Resources:** The project leveraged in excess of \$4 million in direct payments. Sources included US EPA, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, University of Missouri Outreach and Extension and the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the USDA EQIP program.

**Results:** Outputs: Eleven assessment studies were conducted in the watershed to characterize the biological, physical, social and economic dimensions of the watershed and affected persons and groups. In addition to educational activities, two demonstration-research projects were instituted with accompanying field days. Outcomes: Steering committee members developed a vision statement and identified goals and actions to improve water quality. A significant amount of cropland was enrolled in the CREP, and a grant was received from the state for additional conservation practices.



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