



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Developing and Implementing Locally Led Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies

A promising approach to achieving sustainable water resources is the development of watershed restoration and protection strategies that are locally led and driven. We have developed and are implementing a process in Kansas that encourages and supports locally led watershed protection while providing the necessary science-based information, expertise, and financial assistance to achieve this outcome. The implementation process has been a joint effort among federal, state, and local agencies, non-government organizations, and local leaders and citizens. Known as WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies), it is our main strategy for addressing TMDLs and has been financed primarily by USEPA, USDA, and the state of Kansas. Our process is multidisciplinary, highly collaborative and nonlinear, and includes at least six aspects: 1) Local awareness and education; 2) Local organization, engagement and leadership development; 3) Watershed assessment; 4) Planning; 5) Implementation; and 6) Monitoring and evaluation. The key inputs from local communities include leadership, responsibility, management, and time and financial resources. The key inputs from universities and government agencies include science-based information, education, and technical and financial assistance. K-State Research and Extension has played a major role in facilitating the process in several high priority TMDL watersheds. Success depends on: 1) identifying and supporting strong local leadership, 2) integrating local and "outside" inputs, 3) collaboration, and 4) adequate resources. Necessary resources include knowledge (technical information and how to apply it), infrastructure and organization, finances, and time. The process represents a new model of service provision focusing on the holistic concept of the watershed outputs versus the traditional notion of disciplinary/agency inputs. The challenges of implementing this approach will be discussed and prospects for higher-order benefits are identified.

Author: W.L. Hargrove

University Affiliation: Kansas State University

Co-Author(s): D.L. Devlin, J. Leatherman, K. Mankin, and D.D. Snethen