



Maintaining Long-term Agency- Extension Partnerships: Wisconsin's Basin Education Initiative

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Emphasis: Partnership Opportunities and challenges

- Importance of partnerships
- Agency & Extension roles
- Wisconsin's experience – Basin Education Initiative
- General lessons

Importance of Partnerships

- Storm water
- Rural nonpoint source
- Invasive species
- Protection and restoration
- Forestry
- Drinking water/
groundwater
- Volunteer monitoring
- Lakes



Basic Elements

- Common goals
- Complementary skills/contributions

Agencies:

- Legislative mandates
- Management needs and priorities
- Financial resources
- Staff and technical resources

Extension:

- Public engagement, outreach, education
- Coordination/group process
- Organizational development
- Program planning and evaluation
- Educational and outreach materials
- University research/connection
- Local connection/networks

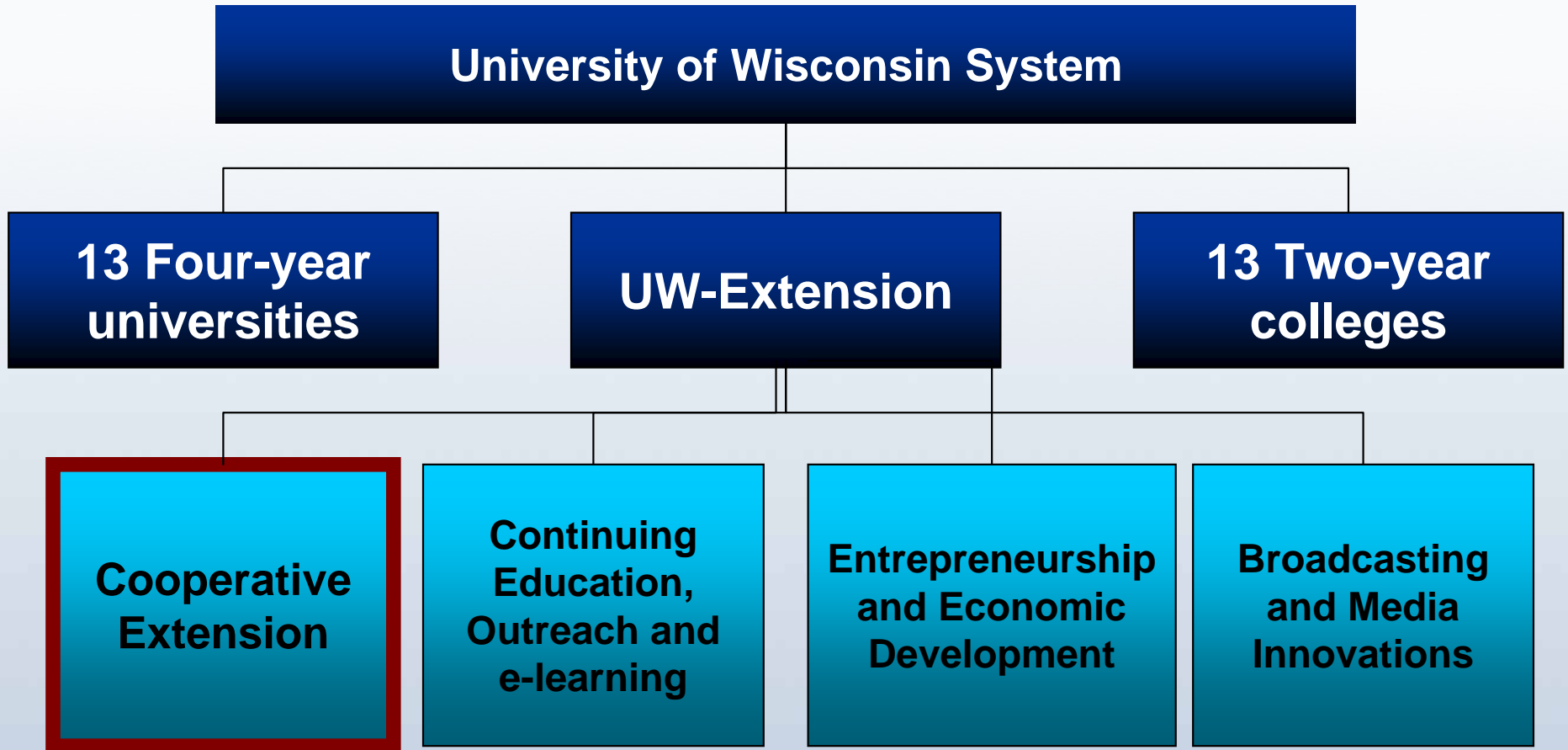
Challenges

- Cultural differences
- Accountability/performance measures/constraints
- Agency understanding of Extension
- Agency preference for in-house PR/communications
- Extension preference for capacity building
- “The scientific evidence will be persuasive”
- “Participation?”

Wisconsin Experience

- For today, focus on state-level experiences
 - Web of supportive arrangements (Grants, Contracts, MOUs, working groups)
- Partnership-driven programs:
 - Lakes partnership – 30 years
 - Solid and hazardous waste – 30 years
 - Water Action Volunteers (WAV) – 15 years
 - Basin Education Initiative – 10 years
 - Aquatic Invasive Species – 6 years
 - Expanding partnerships: nutrient management; Freshwater estuaries

Wisconsin Overview



Wisconsin Idea: "The boundaries of the University are the boundaries of the state"

UW Cooperative Extension

Program Areas

Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension (ANRE)

Community Natural Resources & Economic Development (CNRED)

4-H/Youth Development

Family Living

State Specialists

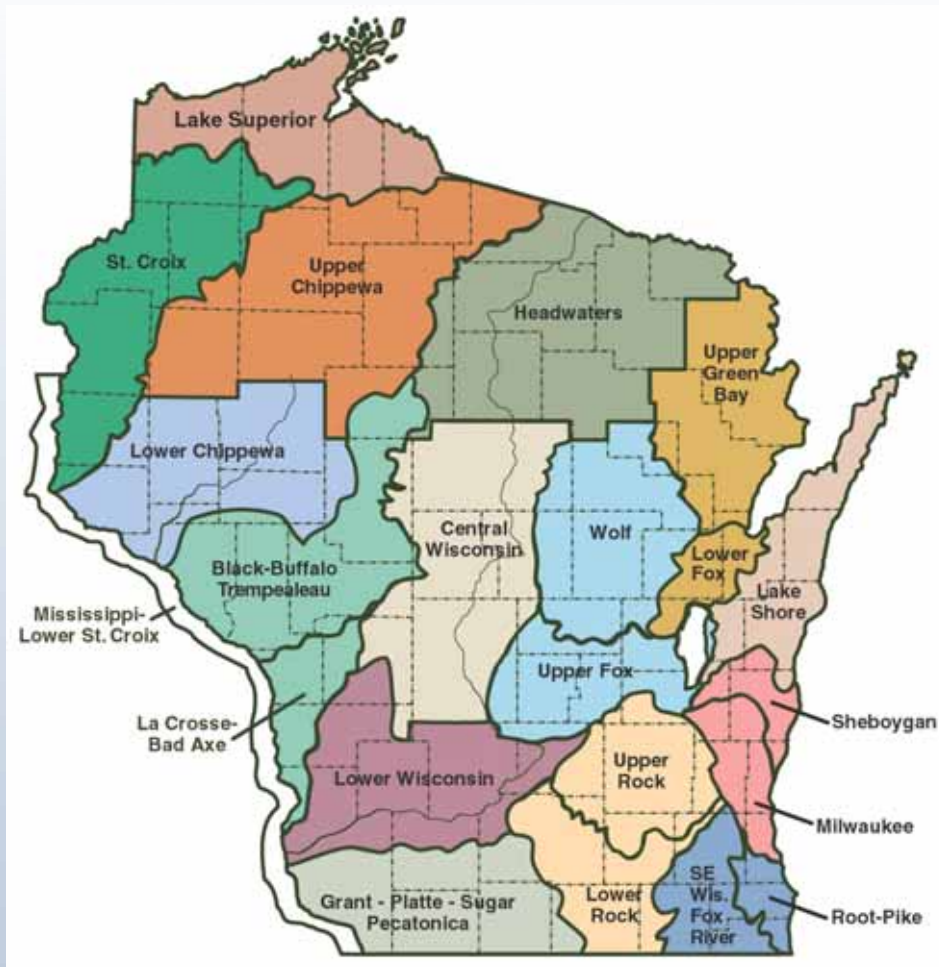
Housed at Multiple UW campuses

Local Extension educators

All 72 counties

Wisconsin Basin Education Initiative

- 15 Basin Educators/ 21 River Basins
- State-level support
 - Educational materials/ pubs
 - Evaluation
- WDNR reorganization 1995
- Expansion from "Area" model
- Emphasis in 1998:
 - Partnership facilitation and organizational development
 - Natural resources content – locally driven



Working Relationships

- Funding from two WDNR Divisions: Water, Forestry
- Integration with WDNR programs
 - Central office
 - Regional offices
 - Field staff
- Integration with UW-Extension programs
 - Campus specialists, local educators, districts
- Protocols
 - Joint hiring and review
 - Quarterly professional development/interaction
 - Annual work-planning/reporting

Changing Tides

- 1998-2004 – emphasis on basin partnerships/integration
- 2002 and 2004 – WDNR Re-reorganizations
 - De-emphasis on basins
- Since 2004 – State budget pressures
 - steady funding in midst of WDNR cuts
- Since 2004 – emphasis on priorities of funding division
 - Forestry: private landowners, fire, health, urban
 - Water: rural nonpoint source, storm water, monitoring
- 2009 – funding challenges and new new potential

Basin Initiative Insights

- Recognize joint priorities and common goals
 - Engage citizens in natural resource management
 - Improve integration of RM
 - Protect and restore resources
- Identify and develop roles & functions that complement agency needs
 - Organizational development, group process
 - Program development/planning
 - Educational materials, evaluation
- Maintain, nurture, and adapt
 - Personal relationships at multiple levels
 - Administrative flexibility – e.g., new positions
 - Appropriate accountability measures

General Lessons

- Remain open to new opportunities
- Promote Extension's niche services
- Coordinate within Extension system
- Develop strong professional/personal relationships
- Formalize arrangements
 - Training and professional development
 - Local coordination and facilitation
 - Program planning and evaluation
 - Educational materials and communication

Critical Considerations

- How do we convey the breadth and complexity of Extension work to our partners?
- What are reasonable expectations for Extension accomplishments in water and natural resources?
- What accomplishment measures resonate with agency leaders and legislators?
- How do we stay fresh and relevant through agency changes?