

Kansas Water Plan Guiding Principles and Priorities

Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources

Background & Issue

As the *Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas* was being developed and more than 600 public input meetings were held across Kansas, one message heard repeatedly was the need for increased education and outreach for Kansans of all ages on water resources issues within the state. While there are many existing water-related educational programs available for both youth and adults, it was noted through these public input meetings that a central message and coordinated educational resources were lacking to help better connect users to their water resources. Many of the Action Items in the *Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*, as well as some goals developed by Regional Goal Leadership Teams, highlight the need for additional development of a state-wide water message and “one-stop-shop” for information and learning resources. To meet this goal, an inter-agency and inter-organizational coordinating team was formed in 2015. This team met throughout 2016 and hosted a series of outreach meetings to solicit input into the development of statewide education and public outreach materials as well as develop tangible action plans aimed at strengthening Kansans’ knowledge and awareness of water and water-related issues. From those meetings a Vision Education Public Outreach Supplement Section to the Vision was created and now serves as the foundation for the *Kansas Water Plan* Guiding Principle and Priority of Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources.



- Additional information to help build the case?



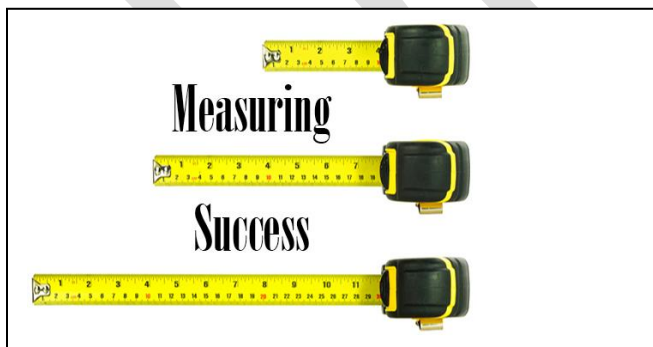
Management Approach

The following are overarching principles which directed the development of the Vision Education Public Outreach Supplement Section to the Vision. These overarching principles will continue to serve as precepts for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources within the *Kansas Water Plan*.

- No actions are intended to displace current water education programs. Instead, the initiatives for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources are designed to promote such programs and to encourage the development of complementary programs. **Include recognition of other programs utilized for overall education efforts here**
- The initiatives and concepts described for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources are strategic in nature and, as such, do not describe the details of the implementation of the initiatives. The initiative implementation plans will be developed following the approval of the initiatives. Any local, regional or state agency, educational institution, non-government organization, private company or individual stakeholders interested in water education programs are invited and encouraged to provide input and feedback regarding the implementation plans and to participate in these initiatives.
- All of the initiatives for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources will be unified through a social marketing campaign and the Kansas Runs on Water website.
- All strategies and action items for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources exist under the larger umbrella of the *Kansas Water Plan*, and will support its mission to provide Kansans with the framework, policy and tools to manage, secure and protect a reliable, long-term statewide water supply. A reliable water supply is dependent upon both sufficient quantity and quality.

Measuring Success

As previously noted, actions identified for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources are not intended to displace any current water education programs in Kansas. This collaborative represents an opportunity to build upon and maximize the many successful education organizations and activities currently in place in Kansas. Just a few of these successes include: youth conservation poster and essay contests hosted through the County Conservation Districts, local community water festivals, Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) Project WET, as well as the Awesome Aqua magazine and natural resource educator’s guides developed through Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.



While we have many successes to celebrate related to water resource education in Kansas, gaps still exist and opportunities remain to strengthen Kansans’ knowledge and awareness of water and water-related issues. Filling the gaps and success in the end will require everyone on all levels working together

with a common goal of conserving and protecting our water resources for the next generation. Potential metrics which could be utilized to measure success towards Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources include but are not limited to:

- *Develop and conduct statewide awareness assessment to establish baseline knowledge of Kansans' understanding and comprehension of water issues*
 - *Any information from partners which could be highlighted to help establish current baseline?*
 - *Conduct mid-campaign survey to assess effectiveness of plan, comparing results with initial findings of baseline survey*
 - *Assess the success of outreach campaign efforts through a post-campaign survey*
 - *Establish baseline knowledge of youth in Kansas on water-related issues through a review of marketing research data on youth education*
 - *Any information from partners which could be highlighted to help establish current baseline?*
 - *Conduct follow up surveys to assess changes in youth awareness and knowledge in water-related conditions and issues*
 - *Evaluate increased participation over time in education and outreach-related efforts*
 - *Development and implementation of Kansas water-related educational resources/curriculum*
 - *Information from partners on current educational programs/resources provided*
- Partner feedback regarding desired written order of bullet points above would be appreciated.*

Recommended Actions and Strategies

Policy/Program Recommendations:

1. Appoint an advisory group in conjunction with KSDE guidance to develop a multi-phased educational proposal for target audiences of K-12, community leaders and media to promote local conservation decisions. Existing educational efforts, programs and activities should be incorporated as appropriate. Ideas to be considered by the advisory group include:
 - *Implement community facilitation programs, with partners like K-State Research and Extension (KSRE), to develop ownership for local conservation districts*
 - *Design and implement a statewide curriculum for K-12 on water conservation, building on current resources and knowledge such as Project WET and integrate water conservation into science curriculum, by working with partners such as the Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) and the Kansas Department of Education*
 - *Develop additional activities within youth and adult organizations such as 4-H and the K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) system to educate others and promote youth activities related to water conservation*
2. Create a long-term commitment to water conservation education by designating responsibility for water conservation public information and outreach within agencies of the Water Resources Subcabinet.
 - *Develop continual media plans and message maps related to water conservation and the importance of local engagement to be implemented by multiple partners through all aspects of traditional paid, earned and social media*
3. Enhance educational programming specifically for state legislators as well as other state officials, Congressional delegation and local policy makers.
4. Utilize agricultural education and 4-H to encourage young people to develop agricultural programs using water efficient technologies and less water intensive crops or crop varieties through recognition and incentive programs.
5. Develop models for the inclusion of water conservation into the agricultural education curriculum, including classroom, supervised agricultural experience and FFA activities.

6. Encourage the development of community college, technical programs and university programs to prepare the future workforce to work in irrigation efficiency technologies and with necessary expertise in less water intensive crops and crop varieties.

Implementation Actions:

Strategy 1: Develop and enhance a statewide marketing campaign to include brand recognition within Kansas households.

Action 1: In collaboration with a marketing firm, develop a media plan and campaign message maps to improve knowledge and awareness of water resources as well as promote local citizen knowledge and engagement in water conservation.

Short Term Action Steps:

- *Develop a portfolio of water resource education messages*
- *Showcase campaign through a concerted outreach launch event including social media, print coverage and television broadcasting*
- *Make modifications and improvements to media plan and message maps as necessary*

Mid Term Action Steps:

- *Conduct a mid-campaign survey to assess effectiveness of media plan, comparing results with initial findings of a baseline survey*
- *Assess the success of the campaign through a post-campaign survey and adapt accordingly annually*
- *Continue to develop and incorporate digital strategies for end user interaction as identified by a marketing firm*



Strategy 2: Establish a brand recognizable centralized website.

Short Term Actions:

Action 1: Create an online “one-stop shop” of vetted and approved statewide water-related resources and information for all Kansans including federal, state and other public

officials.

- *Finalize development and promotion of the centralized website*
- *Create a clearinghouse for resource libraries on the website. Information to be included, but not limited to the following: curriculum resources, vetted resources for K-12 for utilization in classrooms, scientific research-based resources, economic indicator models, and water-related workshop resources as well as a list of experts and researchers who can provide information on water-related issues*

Action 2: Continue adding to centralized website utilizing materials and resources collected in Phase I, and promote website throughout the state.

- *Enhance centralized website by adding interactive user engagement opportunities such as online information requests and downloadable curriculum*
- *Maintain and add to resource library, keeping materials current and relevant*
- *Continue to assess the usefulness of the “one-stop shop” website*

Strategy 3: Increase awareness and knowledge of Kansas youth on water-related issues through K-12 education and beyond-the-classroom opportunities.

Short Term Actions:

Action 1: Establish baseline knowledge of youth in Kansas on water-related issues through a review of marketing research data on youth education.

Action 2: Create opportunities to encourage collaboration between organizations currently involved in water education for youth:

- Hold Governor's roundtable including the Kansas Commissioner of Education, the President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, as well as leadership from organizations involved in water-related education for youth which establishes a commitment for integrating efforts in water education
- Hold a statewide Summit on Water Education for educators and educational organizations to share best practices, resources, curriculum and services tied to standards/science teaching and include professional learning
- Develop a collaborative plan for sharing water educational resources on an ongoing basis to be included on the website as well as through professional development programs

Action 3: Develop a grant program for new and existing water education organizations to provide professional development, curriculum and resources which build on statewide messaging efforts. This includes identification of existing programs which align with water education goals and establish cooperative agreements which foster collective action and develop a grant program for innovations and/or to fill existing identified gaps in programs or services.

Action 4: Collaborate with youth-related organization leadership on water-related educational opportunities and establish sessions and experiences focused on water.

Strategy 3 (Continued): Increase awareness and knowledge of Kansas youth on water-related issues through K-12 education and beyond-the-classroom opportunities.



Mid Term Actions:

Action 5: Launch, promote and award financial resources for statewide water education program.

Action 6: Provide information to K-12 educators about available resources that correlate with educational standards.

Action 7: Provide information to beyond the classroom education organizations on water education curriculum, tools and resources.

Action 8: Provide recognition and awards to youth on water-related projects, offered through schools, clubs and organizations.

Action 9: Increase opportunities for professional development for educators on water-related curriculum to strategically emphasize information and education regarding the importance of water and water conservation practices. Some opportunities may be made possible through the grant program noted within Short Term Action Items.

Action 10: Conduct surveys to assess changes in youth awareness and knowledge in water-related conditions and issues.

Long Term Actions: Issues for future consideration for this specific strategy to be highlighted here. Partner feedback requested.

Strategy 4: Provide opportunities for Kansans of all ages to increase their awareness of local water issues

Short Term Actions:

Action 1: Establish and hire Community Outreach Specialist position(s). The ideal candidate(s) will possess a water conservation background coupled with strong community discussion, education and facilitation skills.

Action 2: Expand current collaboration efforts between university water researchers and water agencies to include higher education institutions in Kansas. Discussions would include state and regional water priorities, current and potential water research projects, as well as additional opportunities to collaborate.

Action 3: Work with developers of centralized website to create links to existing economic indicator resources. Site should provide continual evaluation of the economic impacts of reduced water use based on decision support resources.

Strategy 4 (Continued): Provide opportunities for Kansans of all ages to increase their awareness of local water issues

Action 4: Establish the “Top 3” water quality and quantity-related conservation measures for each Regional Planning Area for household, agriculture and industrial/municipal water use. These should be developed by the Regional Advisory Committees using existing data and displayed on the central website.



Mid Term Actions:

Action 5: Utilize the statewide media plan and message maps to promote local engagement in water resource management.

Action 6: Enhance working relationships between local and state entities for collaboration on water strategies. This should consist of a unified message disseminated throughout the state by local entities.

Action 7: Coordinate workshops for local decision makers on water initiatives throughout the state.

Action 8: Develop a grant program to support Regional Advisory Committees and other organizations that are working with communities to raise awareness about water issues, recognize successes and engage citizens in water conservation initiatives.

Action 9: Establish region-specific, targeted improvements for household, agricultural and industrial/municipal water quality and quantity-related conservation. These measures will be shared through the Community Outreach Specialist(s), workshops and educational events.

Strategy 5: Develop partnerships between industry, community, and educational institutions that will promote and train for water-related careers.

Short Term Actions:

Action 1: Begin evaluation of higher education institutions current academic offerings and identify water-related courses and curricula.



Action 2: Coordinate regional/topical workshops to facilitate development of partnerships between higher education and business and industry. Partnerships will analyze existing academic degree programs leading to water-related careers.

Action 3: Develop workshops and professional development opportunities for multiple water-related career paths.

Action 4: Develop a grant-sponsored internship/mentorship program in water-related careers, sponsored across water agencies.

Strategy 5 (Continued): Develop partnerships between industry, community, and educational institutions that will promote and train for water-related careers.

Mid Term Action Items:

Action 5: Seek opportunities to promote existing water-related degree programs at Regents institutions. In addition, based on evaluations of all academic offerings, apply for United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture funding through programs such as: Higher Education Challenge Grants and Secondary Education, Two-Year Postsecondary Education, and Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom (SPECA) Challenge Grants.

Action 6: Collaborate with higher education institutions to fill any gaps in the water-related academic career tracks that were identified during Phase I.

Action 7: Initiate and evaluate internship/mentorship grant program.

Long Term Actions:

Action 8: Evaluate and increase enrollment and business participation in the internship/mentorship program.

Action 9: Complete and evaluate U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded grant projects.

Data, Research and Studies: As noted previously within this Guiding Principles section of the *Kansas Water Plan*, research and data analysis to characterize current baseline knowledge and

understanding of Kansas water resource issues for all ages to provide a mechanism for evaluation of the overall success of implementation efforts to increase awareness of Kansas water resources. Data, research and studies which would support this evaluation include:

- *Partner feedback regarding data, research and studies to consider for inclusion*



Funding and Resource Needs:

Financial resources needed to fully implement the recommended strategies and actions for Increasing Awareness of Kansas Water Resources could be in excess of \$1,000,000 per year depending on the extent to which a full education and

outreach campaign is implemented. These financial resources would be utilized for items such as: media buying, social media management, campaign ad development, video development, website maintenance, educational resource development, professional development, and support/evaluation on delivery of educational programs. There are just a few examples for implementation of the recommended actions and strategies previously noted. Development of public-private partnerships to allow for the full execution of these actions and strategies will be vital to the overall success of these efforts.