

Education and Outreach Coordinating Team and Working Group
Kansas Water: Preserving Today. Ensuring Tomorrow.
A Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas
January 7, 2016 Summary

The first public meeting of the Education and Public Outreach working group was held in Manhattan at Kansas Farm Bureau on Thursday, January 7. Fifty nine stakeholders were in attendance.

An introduction of the process and purpose of the Coordinating Team and Working Group was shared with attendees by Dana Ladner:

To strengthen Kansans' knowledge and awareness of water and water related issues.

For two hours the attendees had the opportunity to go to a breakout group and provide input and were free to visit more than one group.

Breakout Groups and Leaders

- Community Facilitation and Learning – Ginger Harper
- K-12 Curriculum and Career Education – Kurt Dillon
- Out-of-Classroom Youth Education – Bobbi Luttjohann
- Media and Public Outreach Campaigns – Katie Ingels
- Career Development – Russ Plaschka

Each of the groups followed the same format to receive input:

- Introductions.
- What is important to participants and their agencies, organizations, schools, etc.?
- What programs/efforts are currently being utilized?
- What resources are currently available?
- What are the gaps?
- What resources are needed?
- How useful are programs/efforts?
- Are current programs/efforts successful? Yes/no.

Summaries from each group:

Community Facilitation and Learning

- There are really two groups of “general public” - those who are already interested in or working with water, and those who are not.
 - To determine who you are messaging to and how you are delivering the message, a marketing firm with expertise needs to correctly identify these groups
- Data: We need data to share with some, but for others, in order to change their culture, it will be emotion or incentives. People react to stories, experiences, and emotion.

- Local efforts must break down the details of “why” for a particular area. While a state-wide message is great – and needed – people are going to act locally.
- People do not want to learn from their government. A Peer-to-Peer network would be more effective.
 - This develops a need for more local leadership
 - Current local influencers need to be more knowledgeable about state-wide water issues
- There must be an endorsement of the education efforts.
 - It was suggested by the group that a percentage of the State Water Plan Fund be earmarked for education-related activities

K-12 Curriculum and Career Education

- Identify Kansas K – 12 standards and competencies related to water issues, or those that could include water issues and link to resources.
- We already have plenty of water education resources, no need to develop new ones. There is the need to provide a central place to access current resources.
- Develop a template that local educational units may use to develop a water education plan for inclusion in existing curriculum.
- Design/develop professional development opportunities for teachers that include hands-on, getting dirty activities. Provide research experiences, externships, internships, etc. for teachers to develop real understanding of water issues.
- Endorsement by state level education leaders (Governor, State Commissioner of Education, Kansas State Board of Education, Kansas Association of School Boards, United School Administrators, Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals, etc.) is critical to provide incentive for schools and teachers to participate.
- Financial resources are needed to provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers to meet to develop templates and plans.

Out-of-Classroom Youth Education

- There is a lack of connection between programs and awareness.
 - Coordination and awareness from/between agencies/organizations
- Consistency is needed:
 - Guidelines
 - Information
 - Location to find information
 - Define success in programs.
- An inventory of all resources/programs is needed.

Media and Public Outreach Campaigns

The campaign needs to be short and simple, calling all Kansans to action regarding our state's water issues.

- Create a general enough message that can be adapted so that each water agency and organization can utilize the message to reach their specific audiences.
- The message needs to be unifying, not dividing east vs. west.
- Kansans are the audience:
 - Conscious users
 - Unconscious users
 - Policy/decision makers.

Career Development

- What are water related jobs? Jobs that require knowledge of water and water related issues.
- Identified 15 different job categories.
- Identified 25 degrees/certifications that are currently offered.
- There are numerous jobs out there that have no formal training or education required but are in desperate need of it.

Wrap Up:

The Coordinating Team will meet in February to further discuss the finding of the first Working Group meeting and develop a plan for 2016. The second Working Group meeting will be held March 10 in Manhattan at Kansas Farm Bureau from 12:30-2:30.

It is anticipated the second meeting will be similar to the January 7 meeting to gather ideas. Return participants will be encouraged to meet with a different sub-group, as they have diverse backgrounds and experience to contribute to the education and public outreach effort.

After the March 10 meeting, the Coordinating Team will then meet to work on a set of water education goals and recommendations for the state.