

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Southeast Wisconsin Conferences FINAL REPORT

Great Lakes Grant #GL-97553701-0

Principal Investigator: Vicki Elkin/Peter McKeever

Date: December 11, 2002

Work accomplished: Two successful conferences were held June 11 and June 12, 2002. Total attendance was 55 individuals, plus staff, facilitators, and speakers.

On June 11, 31 invited individuals from the counties of Racine, Kenosha, and Walworth representing local government (including a county executive, a county board supervisor, a town board chairman, and a town board member) several nonprofit land trusts, and other open space constituents met at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. Total attendance with speakers and facilitators was approximately 45 individuals. Break out sessions were held for each county, initial steps were taken to develop plans for the implementation of the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission (SEWRPC) Natural Areas plan for SE Wisconsin, county "conveners" were selected to coordinate follow up activities, individual work plans were developed, and planning began for follow-up meetings.

On June 12, individuals from the counties of Waukesha, Ozaukee, Milwaukee, and Washington, representing the same interest groups, met at Cedar Valley Conference Center in Washington County. Total attendance was about 45. Break out sessions were held for each county, initial steps were taken to develop plans for the implementation of the SEWRPC Natural Areas plan for SE Wisconsin, county "conveners" were selected to coordinate follow up activities, individual work plans were developed, and planning began for follow up meetings.

1. Written evaluations completed by the participants and comments received by workshop planners indicated a high overall level of satisfaction with the workshops. Since the workshops, many phone calls and additional contacts have been received indicating citizens in the counties are excited about building public-private partnerships for protection of natural areas and other open spaces and are eagerly engaged in starting the process.
2. Changes in the Object Class Categories: None
3. Problems encountered: On June 11 the agenda was too full. A debriefing was held that evening with staff, presenters, and facilitators, and revisions were made that greatly improved the second day.
4. Projected work for next quarter: This project is completed. However, we have received funding from some other sources to provide technical assistance and follow-up in the six of the seven counties, and that work has begun. We are seeking funding to support follow-up in the single remaining county.
5. Is the project work on schedule: Yes, workshops were held as the amended workplan and schedule called for.
6. Does the project funding work support the work progress: Yes
7. Change in the principal investigator: None
8. Did the project take longer than the approved project period? No.

Letter: Southeast Wisconsin Conferences

Sample Implementation Strategy and Action Plan and Membership List

December 11, 2002

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Re: FINAL REPORT
Project No. GL-97553701-0
Project Title: Southeast Wisconsin Conferences

Dear Karen,

Pursuant to the grant agreement referenced above, we are to submit a Final Report to the project officer. That Final Report is enclosed.

The workshops supported by this project were extremely successful. They have generated a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm for developing county-wide strategies for assuring the protection of sites identified by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission's (SEWRPC) Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin.

STAFF

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We have already received two additional grants to follow-up on the outcomes of the workshops. Thanks to the generous support of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation (\$20,000) and the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative (\$10,000), we are providing technical and programmatic support to conservation coalitions involving local officials, land trusts, and other open space advocates in six of the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin. Each coalition has agreed to work towards protecting at least one SEWRPC site in their county.

Thank you very much for the important part you played in making these workshops successful.

Sincerely,

Vicki Elkin
Executive Director

cc: Peter McKeever, Project Coordinator

Sample Implementation Strategy and Action Plan for Protecting Natural Areas in Milwaukee County

The following DRAFT strategy was developed by the participants at the Workshop supported by

EPA Project No. GL-97553701-0

Project Title: Southeast Wisconsin Conferences

Needs/Desired Outcomes

1. Affirm – don't set our sights high enough on vision
2. Importance of persistence
3. Differ – relatively few sites on map; vision needs to be broader but inclusive of these sites
4. SEWRPC is preventative rather than connective
5. This is minimum of open space need for total goal of life
6. Powerful – foundation as umbrella example
7. Private – public leverage
8. Differ expected, more conversation about community involvement in public participation process
9. Economic base is less than Detroit area
10. Collaborative, regional approval may create leverage
11. Broaden base outside the county to address all needs (open space)
12. Affirmed power/influence of organized NGOs
13. Lots of folks motivated in same direction
14. Time is of the essence
15. Enthusiasm for “referenda” approach
16. Need to do the organizing and getting big \$
17. Need to expand “stakeholder” base
18. Need for umbrella organization to facilitate the collaboration
19. People are everywhere to help
20. Use this forum to reconcile political, funds, voters
21. Thought this would be uphill, but now doesn't seem as bad
22. Differ – GreenWays idea of private funding
23. Change – use political process more
24. Many ways to structure private – public mix
25. Intrigues by example that pulled in development community
26. Underlying driver is \$ and using that tax base will be difficult
27. Integration of green space into communications increases economic value (like buying lots on water)
28. Need a good plan in order to get \$; conservation community has not provided this yet
29. Education (of taxpayers, conservation subdivision, builders, park developers) of values of keeping natural areas intact
30. Educate about the whole economic package (all open space benefits)
See spiral bound book 1992 Rivers & Trails Program – update it!
31. Proposal for metro/regional/county park system to replace existing – create an advisory board for this
32. Develop a relationship with the press; talk about success stories over time
33. Challenge of current political climate

Key Outcomes:

- An umbrella organization presence (such as Gathering Waters Conservancy or a new entity) is needed in the Milwaukee area to coordinate among the various conservation organizations and agencies
- A coalition of conservation groups, agencies and individuals needs to form to coordinate efforts, vision, etc.
- The general public and individual landowners need to be educated about:
 - Value of open space and conservation areas
 - Economics of open space
 - Options, opportunities and tools (such as conservation easements, CREP, etc.) for preserving conservation lands and open spaces
- The region needs a good comprehensive open space plan
 - SEWRPC's natural areas are bare minimum of open space
- More public funding for land acquisition is needed at the local level.
 - Push for countywide referendum on open space preservation fund.
- NGOs are a critical partner and can provide leadership.

Plan A: Desired Outcome: Umbrella organization/Conservation Coalition

Next steps
Create comprehensive list of orgs, contacts, etc. including those not in attendance
Meet again and broaden group of participants
Research possible conveners like the Milwaukee Foundation
Learn about COSP* and Milw. Regional forum in Sept. 02 (same goal from separate tracks)
Develop comprehensive plan for the coalition/umbrella organization
Address leadership issues – who needs to be involved? Who will take charge?
UOSF***, COSP and GW need to collaborate

Plan B: Desired outcome: Implement SEWRPC now

Next steps
Document what's being lost in terms of SEWRPC sites
Create Communication system to alert a land trust when sites are threatened; support land trust to do advocacy work
Conduct outreach to current landowners about status of properties and conservation options – focus on critical and threatened sites
Identify potential for this area – long term program capacity building
Use political process
Collaborate across groups to MALC; collaborate between land trusts; invite to St. Francis meeting June 25

- *Community Open Space Partnership
- ** Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy
- *** Urban Open Space Foundation

Formation of Conservation Coalition

In the period since the workshop was held a group from several agencies, community groups and nonprofit organizations has formed the Milwaukee County Conservation Coalition. The Coalition has set a goal of working together to assure the protection of at least one site within a year, and has selected two sites on which to focus its efforts: Potters Woods, in Hales Corners, and Seminary Woods/Lakeside Property in St. Francis.

The current membership list is attached.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY CONSERVATION COALITION

Membership List

November 21, 2002

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