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Sustainable and Healthy Communities (SHC) Research Program

U.S. EPA's Office of Research and Development

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SHC's Vision & Priorities



EPA Strategic Priorities



Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities



Cleaning Up Communities and Advancing Sustainable Development



Working Toward a Sustainable Future



SHC Program Vision

To understand the associations and causal relationships between public health, well-being, and ecosystem services. SHC is developing the underlying research and tools to offer solutions to community-based decision makers within and outside the Agency



Figure 1. The nested relationships of a resilient economy existing within a healthy society dependent on an intact, functional environment illustrates the holistic definition of sustainability that recognizes the hard constraints imposed by environmental limitations.



The Ceiling of Environmental Protection

- Traditional approaches have set a "high floor"
- Systems approach necessary for sustainable environmental, economic and social outcomes

SHC research will develop science-based tools, data, and information to support sustainable regulatory and non-regulatory approaches



Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Program

Hypothesis: Community-based decisions using a sustainability paradigm (i.e., a systems approach) will result in positive environmental, social & economic outcomes



SHC's Perspective on Sustainability

The depletion of resources through the tragedy of the commons is an economic theory by Garrett Hardin¹, and is often cited in connection with sustainable development, meshing economic growth and environmental protection resulting in improved well-being. Commons in this sense has come to mean nature's benefits such as the atmosphere, oceans, rivers, fisheries; i.e., ecosystem goods and services. SHC subscribes to the view of Elinor Ostrom² who found the tragedy of the commons not as difficult to solve. She looked at how communities manage common resources, such as fisheries, land, water, air, and identified a number of factors conducive to successful sustainable management. All of these factors tend to operate as a holistic system with appropriate community-based rules and procedures in place with built-in incentives for responsible use and consequences for overuse.

SHC's research program is intended to understand the science of sustainable development and to develop tools that allow communities to avert the tragedy of the commons by using these tools to make informed decisions leading to improved well-being.

¹ The Tragedy of the Commons". Science **162** (3859): 1243–1248.

² Ostrom, E. (2009). "A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems". Science **325** (5939): 419–422.



SHC Priorities

- ✓ Research to help the Agency build sustainability into its day-to-day operations
- Develop the data, models and tools to expand community stakeholders' capabilities to consider the impacts of decision alternatives
- Research and technical support for cleaning up communities, ground water, and oil spills, restoring habitats and communities, and advancing sustainable development
- ✓ Development of a Sustainability Assessment and Management Toolbox



Integrated Solutions = A Sustainability Assessment Toolbox



The National Academy of Sciences Recommends:

- Sustainability Assessment and Management toolbox
- Analyze consequences of alternative decision options on the full range of social, environmental, and economic indicators
- Show distributional impacts to vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and ecosystems



SHC Structure

Program Design: SHC Builds on ORD's Historic Strengths



⇒EPA

SHC's Research Topics and Project Areas

Decision Support and Innovation

1.61 Decision Science and Support Tools

1.62 EnviroAtlas: A Geospatial Analysis Tool

1.63 Environmental Workforce and Innovation



2.61 Community-based Ecosystem Goods & Services

2.62 Community Public Health & Well-Being

2.63 Assessing Health Disparities in Vulnerable Groups

2.64 Indicators, Indices, & the Report on the Environment



Sustainable Approaches for Contaminated Sites and Materials Management

3.61 Contaminated Sites

3.62 Environmental Releases of Oils and Fuels

3.63 Sustainable Materials Management



Integrated Solutions for Sustainable Communities

4.61 Integrated Solutions for Sustainable Communities



Topic 1: Decision Support & Innovation

Develop tools and approaches to assist community stakeholders in making environmental decisions.

Project 1.61	Decision Science & Support Tools (a) Decision-focused Design and Use of Tools; (b) Software Re-Configuration; (c) Tool Development, Support & Delivery
Project 1.62	EnviroAtlas: A Geospatial Analysis Tool (a) Improved Functionality & Case Studies; (b) New Tools & Data Layers; (c) Outreach & Communication
Project 1.63	Environmental Workforce and Innovation (a) STAR & GRO Fellowships; (b) People, Prosperity, & the Planet (P3) and Small Business Innovation (SBIR



Topic 2: Community Well-Being (Public Health and Ecosystems Goods and Services)

Provide research and metrics to predict interactions between natural and built environment to promote individual and community well-being and maintain or restore high environmental quality.

Project 2.61	Community-Based Ecosystem Goods & Services (a) Classification, Metrics & Production; (b) Benefits; (c) Climate/Stressors; (d) Coordinated Case Studies; (e) Integration, Synthesis & Communication
Project 2.62	Community Public Health & Well-being (a) Engagement, Assessment Tools & Decision-Support; (b) Enviro Drivers of Community Health & Well- being; (c) Improving Community Health, Well-being, and Exposure Assessments
Project 2.63	Assessing Health Disparities in Vulnerable Groups (a) Children's Environmental Health; (b) Tribal Communities; (c) Disproportionately Impacted Communities
Project 2.64	Indicators, Indices & the Report on the Environment (a) State of the Practice for Sustainability Indicators; (b) Development of Indicators of Ecological & Community Resilience; (c) Interpreting Environmental Conditions; (d) Report on the Environment (ROE)



Topic 3: Sustainable Approaches for Contaminated Sites and Materials Management

Provide science and technical support to assess and manage contaminated sites. Develop science that supports materials reduction, reuse, recycling, and disposal to minimize environmental impacts.

Project 3.61	Contaminated Sites (a) Technical Support; (b) Site Characterization, Remediation, & Management; (c) Impacts of Contaminated Ground Water
Project 3.62	Environmental Releases of Oils and Fuels (a) Oil Spills; (b) LUST
Project 3.63	Sustainable Materials Management (a) Life Cycle Management; (b) Re-use of Organics & Other Materials; (c) Regulatory Support



Topic 4: Integrated Solutions for Sustainable Communities

Integrated sustainability assessments: Develop tools and research to assist communities in holistically evaluating their decisions so they can optimize economic, societal, ecological, and human health outcomes (while minimizing adverse impacts and costs).

Project 4.61

Integrated Solutions for Sustainable Communities

(a) Sustainability Tool Box; (b) Sustainability Assessment & Management for Communities; (c) Case Studies

Representative Products

Structured Decision-Making

A process to elicit and organize key stakeholder values and relevant scientific knowledge for making decisions

DASEES (Decision Analysis for a Sustainable Environment, Economy, and Society)

- a web-based tool supporting community decision-making
- Facilitates the application of Structured Decision Making (SDM) through organizing and processing information used for identifying common goals, and creating, evaluating, and implementing alternatives for complex environmental management and policy problems



Project 1.61



Application of a Structured Decision Process for Informing Watershed Management Options in Guánica Bay, Puerto Rico

Project 1.61

Guánica Bay, Puerto Rico Watershed Management



Decision Context – Conceptual Mapping



Scenario Modeling



Objectives, Measures, Management Action



Alternative Evaluation and Trade-offs

EnviroAtlas

An online decision support tool giving users the ability to view, analyze, and download geospatial data and other resources; designed to inform decisionmaking, education, and additional research

EnviroAtlas includes:

- Geospatial indicators
- Supplemental data (e.g., boundaries, land cover, soils, hydrography, impaired water bodies, wetlands, demographics, roads)
- Analytic and interpretive tools

Developed through cooperative effort amongst multiple Federal agencies and other organizations



EnviroAtlas is a collection of tools and resources Ecosystem Sentces and Biodiversity People and Built Spaces Supplemental Maps EnviroAtlas



Eco-Health Relationship Browser

Mapping Tools

Analysis Tools

The Eco-Health Relationship Browser

http://enviroatlas.epa.gov/enviroatlas/Tools/EcoHealth_RelationshipBrowser/introduction.html

Agro-Ecosystems

4 ecosystems:

- Forests
- Urban Ecosystems
- Wetlands
- Agro-Ecosystems

6 Ecosystem Services:

Health promotional services

- Aesthetics & Engagement with Nature
- Recreation & Physical Activity

Buffering services

- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Heat Hazard Mitigation
- Water Hazard Mitigation



Anxiety

Heat Stroke

Urban Ecosystems

Heat Hazard

Mitigation

Hospital Admissions Mortality

Mental Health

30+ health outcomes:

- Asthma
- ADHD
- Cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Heat stroke
- Healing
- Low birth weight
- Obesity
- Social relations
- Stress
- ... many more

Incl. extensive bibliography (n ~ 300)

Environmental Innovation and Sustainable Education

Grooming the Next Generation of Environmental Scientists and Engineers

- Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Graduate Fellowships (1786 since 1995)
- Greater Research Opportunity GRO (362 since 1997)





People, Prosperity, Planet (P3) Student Sustainability Competition



Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)

Final Ecosystem Goods and Services

"components of nature, directly enjoyed, consumed, or used to yield human well-being" (Boyd & Banzhaf 2007)

Environmental Class + Beneficiary -> FEGS



Estuaries and Near Shore Marine



Recreational Food Pickers and Gatherers



Flora and fauna, such as mussels, seaweed, crabs, etc.

Project 2.61

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Decision Support Tools for Communities

C-FERST is a web-based "tool-kit" to help communities learn more about environmental health issues, gather information, and develop options

guidance, local exposures and risks, best practices, potential solutions



user-friendly interface, GIS maps, community reports



dvancing Risk Assessme



CARD

Roadmap

- Includes step-by-step guidance to inform community-based assessments
- Addresses challenges and needs identified by NRC, NEJAC, others
- Provides a venue for communicating science; EPA recommendations and options to address issues



Health Impact Assessment



Social Determinants of Environmental Health: Complementary animal and population-based approaches

Complementary animal and human approaches show how:

- Prenatal and early life environments impact children's growth, development, health, and future well-being as adults;
- Community stressors impact both individual and community resilience and well-being.

Factor Interactions & Lifecourse Impacts





Animal Studies:

Reliable methods were developed and used to measure key health outcomes in rodent models, These experimental approaches will now be used to evaluate causation and attribution of risk for multiple stressors

Population-based studies:

Exposure to air pollution from wildfires was shown to have a greater impact on health in lower SES communities based on the frequency of emergency room visits for asthma and cardiovascular incidents.

Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Grants

RFA Titles	Periods of Performance
Healthy Schools: Environmental Factors, Children's Health & Performance, & Sustainable Building Practices	FY 2015-2019
Science for Sustainable and Healthy Tribes	FY 2015-2019
Issues in Tribal Environmental Research and Health Promotion: Novel Approaches for Assessing and Managing Cumulative Risks and Impacts of Global Climate Change	FY 2008 -2012
Lifestyle and Cultural Practices of Tribal Populations and Risks from Toxic Substances in the Environment	FY 2003- 2006
Understanding the Role of Nonchemical Stressors & Developing Analytic Methods for Cumulative Risk Assessments	FY 2011-2014
Exploring Linkages Between Health Outcomes and Environmental Hazards, Exposures, and Interventions for Public Health Tracking and Risk Management	FY 2010 -2013
Development of Environmental Health Outcomes Indicators (2006 & 2007)	FY 2007-2010; FY 2008 -2011
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Centers for Children's Environmental Health



- Asthma and allergy
- Adverse impacts linked to exposure to flame retardants
- Environment and Autism
- Health and safety of whole family agricultural workers and vulnerable groups

Intended End Users

Research Community

•e.g., Dartmouth College Children's Center

Decision Makers

• Federal, State and local (e.g., FDA arsenic and rice studies)

General Public

ConsumerReports



Los Angeles Times

Proximity to freeways increases autism risk, study finds

More research is needed, but the report suggests air pollution could be a factor. December 16, 2010 | By Shari Roan, Los Angeles Times

Children born to mothers who live close to freeways have twice the risk of autism, researchers reported Thursday. The study, its authors say, adds to evidence suggesting that certain environmental exposures could play a role in causing the disorder in some children.

"This study isn't saying exposure to air pollution or exposure to traffic causes autism," said Heather Volk, lead author of the paper and a researcher at the Saban Research Institute of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. "But it could be one of the factors that are contributing to its increase."



Recipients of EPA-NIMHD Centers of Excellence on Environment and Health Disparities Research

Institutions	
Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell University	
University of Illinois at Chicago	
University of Kansas Medical Center	
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Drexel University, Jackson State University	
Georgia State University	
University of South Carolina at Columbia, University of Maryland	
Meharry Medical College, Charles Drew University of Medicine & Science, National Space Science and Technolog Center, Tulane University of Louisiana, University of Maryland - Baltimore, University of Tennessee - Knoxville	ξŶ
Columbia University Medical Center	
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center	
The University of Texas at El Paso, The University of Texas Health Science Center Houston	

Environmental Quality Index

Multiple Environments



Multiple Environmental Benefits and Hazards

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



Public Access To EQI

http://epa.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=90ab3f8d668c4a4 e88144d586ea34141

https://edg.epa.gov/data/Public/ORD/NHEERL/EQI

Goals:

- To construct an environmental quality index (EQI) for all counties in the U.S. taking into account:
 - multiple domains that influence exposure and health
 - five domains: air, water, land, built environment, and socio-demographic
 - incorporates data representing the chemical, natural and built environment
- Developed to explore associations with adverse health effects



Project 2.64

Human Well-Being Index (HWBI)



- A holistic approach to characterize the current state of well-being
- Relevant to any community at any spatial scale and over time
- Highlights the link between the flow of ecological, economic and social services, and human well-being
- Intended to inform and empower communities to equitably weigh and integrate human health, socioeconomic and environmental factors to foster sustainability in their built and natural environments

Project 2.64

Report on the Environment (ROE)

ROE is now an online, interactive website





Temporal/Spatial Impacts of Ground Water Decisions on Public Health



Passive Sampling for Contaminants in Waters & Sediments

Passive sampling is a tool for sampling the bioavailable concentrations of contaminants of concern in waters and sediments

Passive sampling is a scientifically-robust, costeffective and logistically-simpler tool compared to conventional sampling methods

This research provides guidance to Superfund Remedial Project Managers (RPMs), States and Tribes for using passive sampling to make scientifically informed decisions at their sites



Bioreactor Landfills

- Bioreactor landfill operation accelerate the short-term landfill gas (LFG) generation rate, which increases opportunities for economically viable and beneficial utilization of methane in renewable energy options
- Bioreactor research and development has contributed to a notable reduction in methane emissions



Beneficial Use of Industrial Materials in Roadways and Structural Fill Emplacements



Reference: U.S. EPA, Report on Potential Risks Associated with the Use of Chat from the Tri-State Mining Area in Transportation Projects. RTI project 0208860.003.020



Figure 3-1. Cross section of typical road illustrating engineered layers.

RIMM Problem: Hazardous Material Reuse in Roadway Construction

Systems Approach to Assessing the Durham Light Rail Project



The dynamic systems model (DSM) is a tool that integrates actions and policies from multiple sectors with knowledge about their interactions and feedbacks to achieve greater net benefits. Consistent with the goals of Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Durham Light Rail seeks to increase mobility, decrease VMT and air emissions, while providing affordable housing, increasing public health and safety, enhancing economic development, improving water quality and resources, reaching vulnerable and underserved populations, and creating an overall improved sense of "place."



Project 4.61

The Green Infrastructure Wizard [GIWiz]

- GIWiz is an EPA Internet Web Application that quickly and simply connects users with EPA's tools and resources related to Green Infrastructure.
- It is a collaborative, cross-agency, priority project led by OP, ORD, and OW, with help from EPA regions and program offices.
- The Web Application accesses a database of Green Infrastructure tools and resources (TARs) that are available currently on EPA's various internet sites.
- GIWiz has two primary functions to access Green Infrastructure information: 'Quick Links,' and 'Explore.'
 - The Quick Links function allows users to very quickly access information with two clicks. They first click one of four areas: 'Learn,' 'Research,' 'Design,' or 'Assess,' then click a subarea, and receive a dynamic table of tools and resources.
 - The Explore function allows users to pick and choose areas of interest from a set of Green Infrastructure categories that narrows the dynamic results table to their specific needs.



Set EPA

Cross-Cutting Research

SHC collaborates with all of ORD's research programs on cross-cutting issues, for example

- Children's Environmental Health Co-funding with NIEHS of Childrens' Environmental Health Research Centers
- Nitrogen and Co-pollutants 9 SHC research products in FY14 addressing nutrient pollution
- Climate Change Developing sustainable community responses to climate change
- Environmental Justice Community-based pilot studies using tools such as EnviroAtlas and approaches to cumulative assessment



	SHC Topic Area			
ORD Roadmap	Decision Support and Innovation	Community Well-Being: Public Health and Ecosystem Goods & Services	Contaminated Sites and Material Managment	Integrated Solutions for Sustainable Outcomes
Climate Change	~	\checkmark	✓	✓
Environmental Justice	~	\checkmark \checkmark	~	~
Children's Health		\checkmark \checkmark		
Nitrogen & Co-Pollutants	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark

Relationships

Examples of SHC's Regional Interactions



SHC Interactions



Opportunities for Communication

Webinars

- SHC Monthly Seminar Series
- Scientific presentations at monthly partner meetings
- Scientific presentations at monthly SHC team meetings

Engagement in Research Planning

- Program and Regional Office input in:
 - Strategic Research Action Plan
 - Project Charters

Newsletter

• Bi-monthly Science Matters e-newsletter highlights ORD research

Annual Communique

- Highlight research and direction (in person and via webinar)
- 260 attendees, including 140 from program offices and regions
 - OSWER: OBLR, OEM, ORCR, OSRTI, OUST, IOAA, other
 - All 10 Regions, OAR, OP (OCHP, OSC), OW

Workgroups and Meetings (examples)

- OSWER: Community engagement, OUST, Contaminated ground water
- Regional Science Liaisons
- OAR: OAQPS, ORIA
- OSC
- Community Facilitation Team
- Quarterly meetings with OSWER AA
- Monthly Call for All Partners, includes "science moment"
- Monthly Call with SHC Implementation Team

Budget

Set EPA

FYI5 Operation Plan

Appropriation	FY 2015	FY 2015	
	Planning (\$k)	Op Plan (\$k) ¹	
Science & Technology	\$43,918	\$149,975	
Fellowships	\$9,346		
STAR Grants	\$10,528		
SBIR	\$4,474		
People, Prosperty, Planet (P3)	\$1,607		
Inland Oil Spill Programs	\$517	\$664	
Leaking Underground Storage	ŚGO	\$320	
Tanks	پ 02	Ş320	
Hazardous Substance Superfund	\$1,094	\$14,032	
Total Budget Authority /	¢ле е01	<u> </u>	
Obligations	\$45,591	\$164,991	
Total Workyears	332.4	503.5	

Op Plan levels include personnel costs and benefits (PC&B)

ORD's FY 2016 Budget by Research Program Projects



SEPA

General Charge Questions

- *Question 1*. Given the research objectives articulated in the StRAP, are the topics and project areas planned and organized appropriately to make good progress on these objectives in the 2016-2019 time frame?
- *Question 2.* How effective are the approaches for involving the EPA partners in the problem formulation stage of research planning?
- *Question 3*. How well does the program respond to the needs of EPA partners (program office and regional).

SHC-Specific Charge Questions

- *Question 1.* SHC has committed to integrating ecological and human health to better address issues of human and community well-being. Does the research program contain the elements necessary to integrate these two critical elements of EPA's mission?
- *Question 2.* SHC's portfolio includes both hypothesis-driven research and the development of decision-support tools to aid Agency, state, and community stakeholders. Is the balance of research and tool development appropriate for this program?
- *Question 3*. SHC has a mission to address the short-term needs of EPA's Office of Solid Waste & Emergency Response for research on contaminated sites, oil and fuel spills, and sustainable materials management. How can SHC best leverage these short-term research goals with longer term community sustainability and environmental justice goals?

THANK YOU



Background Slides ORD "101"

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Aligning Research with EPA Strategic Goals



Strategic Research Action Plans

• What is a Strategic Research Action Plan (StRAP)?

EPA

- Describes our research program for internal and external audiences
- Serves as our guide for resource planning activities
- First generation covered 2012-2016
- Currently completing 2nd generation to over FY16-19 (final release October 1, 2015)
- Developed in consultation with advisors (Science Advisory Board and Board of Scientific Counselors), EPA partner offices, other stakeholders

Air, Climate & Energy



Chemical Safety for Sustainability



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Human Health Risk Assessment



Safe & Sustainable Water Resources

SEPA



Homeland Security



SEPA

Science to Support EPA's Mission



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ORD Research Facilities



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EPA Research Grants to Universities

STAR Research Grants by State

