Perspectives on Watershed Organization Structure

Nikki Dictson
Texas Water Resources Institute

Materials also provided by: Roger Miranda and Matt Berg both formerly from the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership

Long-term Sustainability for Watershed Partnerships

- As watershed protection efforts move beyond the planning stages and transition to implementing and maintaining public involvement can be challenging.
- There are multiple approaches for sustaining your watershed group once your watershed plan has been developed.
Incorporating Sustainability into Watershed Protection

- Clean Water Act Section 319(h) funds are limited and not permanent
- State funding is not currently earmarked for WPP Implementation
- WQ improvement and protection requires a long-term commitment
- Local funding fosters better local stewardship
- Local funding bestows more local control
- It’s a good investment for local governments and businesses
- Lowers overall cost of watershed protection through prevention

Existing Models for Sustainability

- Governmental Organizations
- Quasi-governmental Organizations
- Cooperative Extension Programs/ Universities
- Non-governmental Organizations
- Fee-based Systems
- Hybrid Models
Governmental Organizations:

- Local, State, and Federal Governments sometimes allocate permanent funding for local or regional resource protection
- Example = National Estuary Programs

Quasi-governmental Organizations:

- Require Legislative Action for Creation
- Examples = River Authorities and Underground Water Conservation Districts, Councils of Governments
Non-governmental Organizations:

Tax exempt organizations under Section 501(c) of the US Tax Code

- Noted for their ability to create and sustain grass-roots stewardship
- Self-funded; usually rely on donations, grants, fund raising events
- Often viewed as providing a counterbalance to government and industry

Examples = Foundations, Trusts, etc.

Fee-based Systems:

Interlocal/Intergovernmental Contractual Arrangements

- Participation is strictly voluntary
- Funded through interlocal contracts
- Often administered by academic or other tax exempt organization, including quasi-governmental organizations
- Can provide services to local or regional governments in addition to fostering stewardship

Example = Regional Planning Partnerships; Task Forces; COGs(?)
Hybrid Models:

Tax exempt organizations that also receive permanent support from local, state, or the federal government

- Very few examples available for study
- Example below began as governmental organization

Example = Coastal Bend Bays Estuary Program

Fee Based-hybrid Model:

- Funded through interlocal contracts with local entities or individuals, but also through individual grants from state and federal government
- Can provide services to local entities in addition to fostering stewardship and ensuring implementation of WPP efforts
- Administered by academic or other non-profit organization
- Can include participation by local NGO(s)
- Examples include LRGV Stormwater Task Force and Plum Creek Watershed Partnership
How is your Organization Structured and Funded? What are Other Watersheds Doing?

- Are you using one of the existing methods mentioned?
- What are watershed organizations doing across the nation?

Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Long-term Sustainability

- Moving into a fee based-hybrid model
- GBRA led the effort to develop and submit a proposal for additional §319(h) grant funds from TSSWCB for a watershed coordinator
- Developed an inter-local agreement with partner entities and 40% match requirement
- The FY2011 grant was funded through the TSSWCB and EPA.
Interlocal Agreement and Match Structure

• Presentations were conducted for City Councils, County Commissioner Courts and Boards to update them on project implementation and providing match for this next grant.
• The interlocal agreement was reviewed by all of the legal councils for the entities
• The Long-term Sustainability Partners developed the match structure with both population and land area for each entity to determine their share of the match.

Meetings with Counties and Cities to Update and Discuss Sustainability

- January 20, 2011 – Luling City Council Meeting
- February 2, 2011 – Hays County Commissioner Mark Jones
- February 7, 2011 – Caldwell County Judge Tom Bonn
- March 1, 2011 – Sustainability meeting with partner entities
- March 2, 2011 – Uhland City Council Meeting
- May 5, 2011 - Sustainability meeting with partner entities
- May 12, 2011 – City of Uhland
- May 16, 2011 – Caldwell County Commissioners Court
- May 17 – Hays County Commissioners Court
- May 17 – Plum Creek Conservation District
- May 17 – City of Buda
- June 21 - Polonia Water Supply Corporation Board Meeting and Buda City Council
Entities involved in the continued support of the PCWP!

- Caldwell County
- Hays County
- Kyle
- Buda
- Lockhart
- Luling
- Uhland
- Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority
- Plum Creek Conservation District
- Polonia Water Supply Corporation
- Hays County SWCD
- Caldwell-Travis SWCD

### Match Spreadsheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entities</th>
<th>2009 Population</th>
<th>Area Acres</th>
<th>Area (sq. Miles)</th>
<th>Cost Portion for $48,000</th>
<th>Population Portion (50%)</th>
<th>Land Portion (50%)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell County</td>
<td>35,899</td>
<td>350,080</td>
<td>547</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell County (In Watershed)</td>
<td>17,488</td>
<td>189,709</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>296.42</td>
<td>$3,022</td>
<td>$5,932</td>
<td>$8,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hays County</td>
<td>15,166</td>
<td>434,559</td>
<td>679</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hays County (In Watershed)</td>
<td>8,622</td>
<td>38,628</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>$1,490</td>
<td>$2,08</td>
<td>$2,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>28,700</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>9.38</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,960</td>
<td>$1,348</td>
<td>$6,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockhart</td>
<td>14,238</td>
<td>7,210</td>
<td>11.26</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,461</td>
<td>$225</td>
<td>$2,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luling</td>
<td>5,502</td>
<td>2120</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td></td>
<td>$951</td>
<td>$66</td>
<td>$1,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buda</td>
<td>7,784</td>
<td>1451</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,345</td>
<td>$49</td>
<td>$1,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBRA</td>
<td>26,110</td>
<td>24,8637</td>
<td>388</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,513</td>
<td>$7,775</td>
<td>$12,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCCD</td>
<td>26,110</td>
<td>24,8637</td>
<td>388</td>
<td></td>
<td>$4,513</td>
<td>$7,775</td>
<td>$12,287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uhland</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>1171</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>$79</td>
<td>$37</td>
<td>$116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polonia WSC</td>
<td>3855</td>
<td>23968</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$666</td>
<td>$749</td>
<td>$1,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watershed</td>
<td>83,334</td>
<td>24,8637</td>
<td>388</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>138,866</td>
<td>767,531</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET** = 120,000
**ANTICIPATED GRANT AWARD 60% OF BUDGET** = 72,000
**ESTIMATED BUDGET BALANCE AFTER GRANT** = 48,000
A National Perspective - Informal Watershed Survey by Matt Berg

- Calls to watershed groups and projects across the United States
- Questions about watershed group trends
  - How did efforts in your watershed originate?
  - Who currently coordinates efforts in your watershed?
  - How are efforts in your watershed funded?

Corsica River Watershed (Maryland)

- Significant navigation and fishery use “…relatively large watershed area approximately 40 square miles)…”
- Coordinated by MD Dept. of Natural Resources
- Significant city leadership from early stages – Plan to transition to city funds
- Selected for governor’s initiative in 2005
- Approximately $800,000 through 319(h) grant, nearly $20 million total project cost
- 319(h) funds support city position for stormwater retrofits and support SWCD position for cover crop installation
- Organization structure decentralized – includes city, county, SWCD, state, industry, and local non-profit representatives
Millers Creek Watershed (Michigan)

- Small urban watershed (approximately 2.4 square miles) - Concerns regarding loss of land use through erosion
- Industry (Pfizer, Inc.) served as initial driving force provided significant funding early
- University of Michigan significant local landowner
- Pfizer, Inc. closed operations in 2008, withdrawing major funding
- Project funding and coordination through Huron River Watershed Council
  - Focus on education efforts
  - Involvement in 3 locals schools
  - Primary emphasis on adult ownership of stream

Upper Gila River Watershed (Arizona)

- Large watershed in semi-arid agricultural area
- Utilized Bureau of Land Management seed money to form non-profit organization
- Strong local leadership by individual with marketing background
- Soft funding led executive director to lean toward resigning but demonstrated 30-fold return on every dollar invested
- Counties, cities realized economic benefit of strong watershed group leadership and contributed to pay base salary
- Continue to produce cost-benefit report each year
- Current focus on education programs
Watershed Lessons and Trends

- One size does NOT fit all when it comes to organization structure, coordination, or funding
  - Reliance upon 319(h) funds
  - River councils/authorities
  - Non-profit/501(c)(3) organizations
  - Agreements with cities/counties
  - Councils of government (COGs)
  - University/Extension programs (AgriLife)

- Significant cause and local presence required for long-term sustainability

- Unique personality required for watershed coordinator

Sustainability?

- How will you find funding for the future and implementation?
- Who will continue conducting and coordinating the implementation efforts and the watershed organization?
- Which one of the existing methods are you using and is it sustainable?