



Education Working Group
Meeting Notes
Thursday, November 17, 2014
9:00 PM – 10:30 AM
CWSD Conference Room

Present:

John Cobourn, UNCE
Linda Conlin, River Wranglers
Sarah Green, Alpine Watershed Group
Brenda Hunt, Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD)
Ed James, CWSD
Toni Leffler, CWSD
Nicole Lutkemuller, AWG
Duane Petite, TNC
Mary Taitano, NDWR
Mary Kay Wagner, NDEP
Courtney Walker, CWSD

1. **Welcome and Introductions** - Introductions were made around the room.
2. **Brief Announcements/Two Minute Updates**
 - a. **Snap Shot Day (Mary Kay)** – Mary Kay reported that the 9th annual Snap Shot Day at 11 sites was a very successful monitoring event. The class assigned to the Dresslerville pulled out at the last minute, but Dan Greytak and other Washoe Environmental Protection Department staff monitored the site. A total of 245 students, 36 facilitators and 36 teachers and assistant parent chaperones participated. Mary Kay will update NDEP's education webpage. The river was very low. Fort Churchill was not able to get samples as there was no running water, just standing pools. Mary Kay received good feedback from new facilitators and several would love to come back again.
 - b. **Conserve Carson River Work Days (Linda)** – Linda noted that this year is the 20th anniversary of Carson River Work Day events. Last week three work days were held in Dayton Valley completing the events for 2014. In total there were eight workdays, three in Carson Valley and five in Dayton Valley. All of the high schools and most of the elementary schools were reached.
 - c. **Conservation Tours update (Linda)** – Linda explained that River Wranglers assumed contract responsibility of the Conservation Tours grant when Pat Fried closed Great Basin Sports. The grant is used for community clean-up and stream-side learning events of which there were two this year: one with the Nevada Appeal and one with the Kiwanis Club.
 - d. **Flood Awareness Week (Courtney)** – Brenda reported that there were a series of events for Flood Awareness Week last week. Mary Taitano, Rob Palmer, Courtney

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Walker, and John Cobourn went to the Douglas County Library with the flood model and Eric Nilssen talked about Douglas County flood events. Mary stated about 12 people who stopped by on Monday and about 15 people on Friday. On Wednesday, Courtney, Brenda, Rob, and Mary went to Carson Montessori School to demonstrate the flood model. On Thursday Carson City had a sand bag demonstration and flood model at Mills Park. The event was not well advertised and it was a cold day so there were only about two or three members of the public that attended.

John explained that Flood Awareness Week is on the list of suggested actions in the Regional Floodplain Management Plan which originated in the CRC River Corridor Group. US Army Corps of Engineers was interested in extending the week beyond the Carson River watershed to all of northern Nevada. While the turn out was small, it was a good start to the program, and John expressed his gratitude for funding for advertisement on the university radio station, KUNR, many newspaper articles, and billboards in Carson Valley and Sparks, along with website NevadaFloods.org which won an award from the Flood Management Association.

The Flood Awareness message has been going on since October 10 when Governor Sandoval declared Flood Awareness Week. The week targets individuals wanting to know if their home is safe, as well as to the community to protect the natural functions and values of floodplains. The message speaks to water quality, habitat, groundwater recharge, and vegetation, in addition to reducing flood damage. The CRC should be proud that they were the driving force in getting Flood Awareness Week started.

- e. **319 Grants (Brenda)** – CWSD received a 319 grant from NDEP for the Watershed Coordinator position. The funding includes monies to purchase another flood model and have a custom transport case built, as well as additional funding for SWAG. CWSD also received renewed grant funding for the Environmental Education Program (EEP). The EEP grant includes additional funding for Linda to get an assistant. CWSD did not receive 319 grant funding for completion of the Regional Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) plan which has been started with Indian Hills GID with the assistance of Resource Concepts Inc. (RCI).
- f. Aspen Festival in Alpine County (Sarah) – Sarah thanked CWSD and River Wranglers for their support of this event. She reported that despite the cold, snowy weather that day, there were over 300 participants and over 70 new members to the Alpine Watershed Group. It was a very fun event which brought about lots of ideas for next year.
- g. Drought Awareness Flier (Sarah) – The flier is entitled “Drought Relief through Headwaters Protection” and is focused around what it means to do meadow restoration. John also mentioned that today at 5:30 p.m. at the UNCE office in Minden will be about *Agriculture in Times of Drought* class to address what ranchers can do in the event of additional drought years. The cost is \$15 and includes a light supper.

2. **Floodplain Model Training (Mary Taitano)** – Mary explained that Judy Soutiere at the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) purchased the floodplain model for us about two weeks ago. Mary and Rob Palmer (Nevada Division of Water Resources) along with Courtney and Brenda, have taken it to the Carson Montessori School and Rob and Mary to Grace Christian Academy. It is a great tool for explaining the floodplain. She explained the model components to the Education Working Group: wetlands (sponges), a retention basin, a parking lot representing an impermeable surface, two rain maker trays to demonstrate a small or big storm, modeling clay to build levees, dams, etc., Monopoly pieces and trees for kids to build a community, and a drain bucket.

Mary Kay suggested that it might be a good opportunity to talk with the kids about the importance of communities having flood ordinances to control building in the floodplain. May noted that kids love the hands-on element. John suggested talking about the headwaters wetland and how the landscape acts like a damp sponge and the water infiltrate into the ground. Linda mentioned that there is a good Capture, Store & Release exercise with sponges which would be good desk activities for kids after they saw the model demonstration.

Mary also discussed maintenance of the model and the need to be super careful to not stress the model by putting it on its side as the seals may break. Also, make sure everything is dried out thoroughly so there is not mold build up. The model is available to bring to schools etc. We are also welcome to borrow it for classrooms or other groups. CWSD will be purchasing a model and carrying case with funds from the Watershed Program 319 grant in 2015.

4. **Watershed Literacy Grant Updates (Brenda/Courtney)**

- a. **Draft Outreach and Action Plan (Courtney and Brenda)** – Brenda reminded the group of the workshops with Steve Lewis a few years ago where audiences and driving forces for the messages were identified. Courtney has been working on the Watershed-Literacy Plan. Three audiences were identified: adult public, youth, and policy/decision makers (politicians and planning staff). There are messages for each audience. Brenda explained reading about a “sell the sizzle” project which recommended presenting more positive messages.

A baseline watershed-literacy survey that is repeatable every 5 years will be conducted to find out what people are learning so we can measure the knowledge about watershed issues overtime. We are aiming to improve their knowledge. A wide cross-section of the community will be surveyed. Creating an action plan is first step prior to the survey. Brenda thought perhaps the group could pick themes for the marketing messages. The timeline to get back to Brenda with ideas is by the latest, the end of December. The survey will be developed next year. Brenda went over the overarching message about watershed: “The watershed is our home; home means the Carson River, our lifeline in the desert.” Mary Kay noted that the message is missing

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the value of the headwaters as the source water as pristine water for rest of the watershed. Courtney liked the message: "We all live downstream." Brenda explained that she had spoken to Martin Swineheart with Tenderbox LLC who has worked with TNC to provide a fresh eyes for marketing tips. Sarah suggested emphasizing the connectedness of the entire watershed. The habitat prompted message included: "plant, don't pave; we all love a pretty place; habitat, haven, home; multiple benefits for people and nature; habitats good for animals/great for people." Mary Kay suggested putting the phrases into Google to see what comes up.

Brenda noted that this will be in the Education and Outreach section of the Stewardship Plan which makes the survey more credible. A group out of Region V has already vetted a lot of questions which can be the starting point for our survey questions.

- b. Draft Carson River watershed map back panels (Courtney and Brenda) –**
Courtney and Brenda explained the draft back panels for new watershed map. Once this group reviews it and gives suggestions, the draft will be given to the artist to modify artistically. Brenda will send a PDF of the panels to the group to review for comments/suggestions. The "Challenges in the Carson River Watershed" pictures link to the CWSD website and are the Stewardship Plan categories. Items on the timeline will also link to more information. Brenda would like feedback by the end of the month. John suggested little facts with points on the timeline, like wettest year produced 10 times as much water as the driest year.
- c. Additional on-line outreach tool development - See:**
http://water.epa.gov/action/adopt/earthday_index.cfm and review/provide ideas on adaption to Carson River Watershed – Continued from last meeting and continued again to next meeting.
- 5. Environmental Education Program Planning –** Continued to next meeting.
 - a. **Identify and compile current educators and school contracts –**
 - b. **Identify service groups -**
 - c. **Identify coverage gaps -**
 - d. **Creation of contact spreadsheet -**
- 6. Discuss individual program evaluation processes and creating consistent measures required in 319 grants (Duane/Brenda/Linda) -** *For those of you with existing grants; please bring what you have created thus far.* Continued to next meeting.
- 7. Other Items –** none
- 7. Set date for next meeting –** Wed., 1/7/15, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.: This meeting is cancelled and will be rescheduled in February.