

WRAPS – a strategy, not a sandwich

My wife likes wraps. She used to like non-traditional sandwiches that used pita bread. I always found that pita bread was too small and too fragile for all the meat and cheese I stuffed inside. Now she likes to make wraps with a bread product like a tortilla, but they're different somehow. So different that some wraps come in a shade of green. I think those kind have spinach or some other vegetable mixed into the dough. She adds chicken, mayo, lettuce, celery, cheese. I like them too. They're better than the pita variety.

I doubt that there is anything wrong in using food to get a person's attention. Churches do it all the time if they want people to stay for a meeting after the service.

Wedding and retirement receptions, open houses, and athletic events often have food available to appeal to people. Hopefully, my reference to food has brought you this far and you'll keep reading right through to the dessert, I mean, to the end.

In Kansas, WRAPS has a far different meaning. It is an acronym for Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy. WRAPS has been mentioned in previous issues of the Kansas Lifeline, but it has not been explained in detail. And like food, I think WRAPS is too

important to ignore. You need this information, and I think you'll enjoy it.

In his 1998 State of the Union Address, President Bill Clinton invited Congress to join him in a

Environment (KDHE) to coin the term WRAPS. The Clinton Administration took the Initiative and made it a Clean Water Action Plan. This plan directed the states to complete a Unified Watershed

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new Clean Water Initiative. This invitation, during the 25th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, included a proposed increase of \$568 million to address continued improvement of the nation's water resources. Much improvement in the quality of the water in rivers, lakes, oceans

Assessment. When a state completed its Assessment, the state was to develop Watershed Restoration Action Strategies (WRAS) to address those shortcomings found by the Assessment. KDHE strongly believed that the existing resources which did not need restoration could easily need some restoration if some kind of protection wasn't put into place. WRAPS was born to do both restoration and protection, primarily to address Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs).

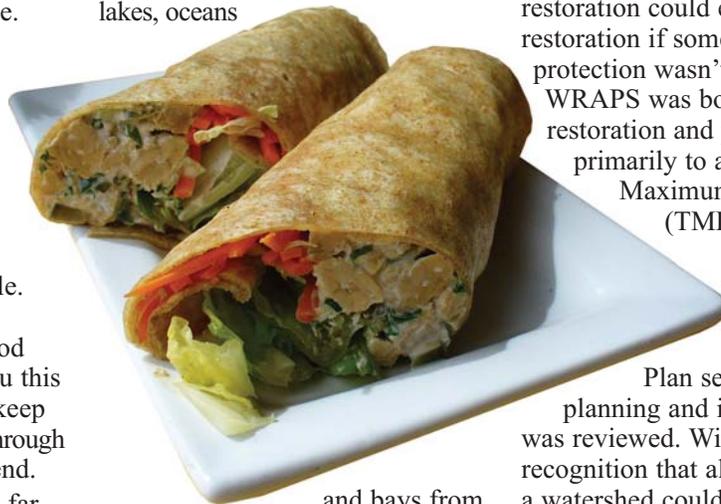
WRAPS got a boost in 2003 when the Kansas Water Plan section on basin planning and implementation was reviewed. With the recognition that all of the needs of a watershed could be addressed by a WRAPS project, and not just TMDLs, many other state agencies threw their support behind the concept.

Skeptics beware – WRAPS is for real

There are probably more than a few skeptics out there when it



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and bays from industrial and sewage treatment plant discharges had been accomplished since 1973. But there was more to do. It was time to move to the next phase: non-point source pollution.

It was this goal that led the Kansas Department of Health and

comes to new government programs, especially those known by an acronym. Many programs fade away in time or only pertain to a select few groups or individuals. I think WRAPS has the potential to be as important as any program to come around in years. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) got a lot of early attention when it came out 20 some years ago. My memory may be hazy, or maybe it was those shady friends of mine that speculated that a person could buy a farm with borrowed money and the government would pay off the loan's principle in 10 years. What a deal! Those details were not accurate of course, but CRP was (and remains) a very popular conservation program in Kansas and the nation. I think WRAPS has similar potential in Kansas, at least in terms of demand, once WRAPS' influence and success is known and understood.

Clean Water Act Section 319 Non-Point Source Management

Section 319 could be the topic of another article or two. Because it is so important for watershed restoration, it must be explained briefly here. Many people in the watershed business use the term "Section 319 funds" to describe certain moneys that are distributed to the states by the EPA to control non-point source pollution. To get these funds, the states must submit a plan for the use of these funds which is consistent with the guidelines issued by the EPA. There are many details in this plan which must be explained to qualify for the funds. The distribution of these funds in the state must also be consistent with the submitted plan, and subsequent reports on the performance of the states' management plans are to be submitted. With 50 states trying to grab as much of this funding as they can, the amount of money

that comes to each state can change from year to year and can be quite variable from state to state.

The amount of 319 funds received from the EPA in Kansas has averaged \$3.5 million over the

last five years. While the amount of federal funds has been decreasing over this period, the amount of money used for WRAPS projects has been increasing, because of increasing

What is a Total Maximum Daily Load?

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are quantitative objectives and strategies needed to achieve water quality standards. The water quality standards constitute the goals of water quality adequate to fully support designated uses of streams, lakes, and wetlands. The process of developing TMDLs determines:

1. The pollutants causing water quality impairments
2. The degree of deviation away from applicable water quality standards
3. The levels of pollution reduction or pollutant loading needed to attain achievement of water quality standards
4. Corrective actions, including load allocations, to be implemented among point and nonpoint sources in the watershed affecting the water quality limited water body
5. The monitoring and evaluation strategies needed to assess the impact of corrective actions in achieving TMDLs and water quality standards
6. Provisions for future revision of TMDLs based on those evaluations

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Visit <http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm> to get started.

state funding. Part of the reason for this is the work of the local WRAPS groups identifying and proposing solutions to water quality problems. With this work being done in the watersheds, KDHE and the other state agencies can show EPA that improvement is being accomplished.

WRAPS Projects are established statewide. There are no size restrictions, but many of them are based on the HUC 8-sized watershed. Kansas has all or parts of 90 different HUC 8 watersheds. WRAPS projects proposed for larger areas are possible and do occur, but there is a chance that these expanded projects would likely not be perceived to be “local” to the stakeholders. For example, the Middle Kansas River WRAPS Project, which covers parts of 11 Kansas counties, was encouraged by KDHE in the early stages of development to include the Upper Kansas Watershed because the Upper Kansas is in 5 of the same 11 counties as the Middle Kansas. The Upper Kansas is significantly smaller than the Middle Kansas and without adding any new counties, its scope is not significantly different. Some smaller watersheds that have local stakeholder interest have also been formed. Some of these are in the defined areas of larger

WRAPS projects and efforts are made to coordinate activities.

In the early stages of WRAPS project development, the projects that can influence the water quality in federal reservoirs and those believed to have the potential to reach TMDL targets will have a higher priority to receive “Section 319” and other state funding. The reason for this prioritization is to help as many Kansans as possible benefit from the funding but also to show EPA that funding is effective.

Cheney and Hillsdale

There are two projects that were started in the early 1990's that have been successful in their evolution to become non-profit (IRS 501(c) 3) corporations. The Hillsdale Water Quality Project, Inc. was the first to make this transition from a committee of the local Resource Conservation & Development project. The project was formed to address specific taste and odor problems that occurred in Hillsdale Reservoir. Cheney Lake Watershed, Inc. became a non-profit corporation separate from the Reno County Conservation District. Its primary mission is to address taste and odor problems in Cheney Reservoir. (See March 2008, *The Kansas Lifeline*.) Both were created to take advantage of

alternative funding sources and to achieve some independence, instead of relying only on government sources. Both still operate like WRAPS projects in that they work to identify threats to water quality and to preserve and protect the resources of a specific watershed. In some ways, they can be considered pilot WRAPS projects.

WRAPS recipe

KDHE has developed a series of steps the agency believes will lead to a successful WRAPS project. These steps are: 1) Development; 2) Assessment; 3) Planning and 4) Implementation. KDHE funding of WRAPS projects is more comprehensive when projects follow this schedule.

In the Development Stage, a WRAPS project will recruit stakeholders who have an interest in improving or protecting water resources. It is also during this stage that known information regarding the watershed is compiled and a leadership team is established. This stage is complete when the development project report is completed and submitted to KDHE.

In the Assessment Stage, the goal of the WRAPS project is to understand the overall components of the watershed. It is

also very important to convey this need of information to the stakeholders and to disseminate the compiled information back to the stakeholders. With an understanding of the needs of the stakeholders (safe drinking water, recreation, stream bank stabilization, fish and wildlife habitat, irrigation, TMDL compliance, etc.), discussions can occur which will lead to solutions. One of the most important criteria to fulfill in this stage is a consensus of the ideal conditions that can be achieved by the project.

The Planning Stage develops a document that provides the solutions to the identified problems and shows the way to achieve the ideal conditions proposed in the Assessment Stage. With consultation with the stakeholders and service providers, specific goals are established and the actions to reach these goals are chosen. Because goals aren't achieved just because they are made, the plan identifies who will pursue the goals, the timeline in which these actions will occur and how the actions will be funded.

The Implementation Stage is the final stage that makes the goals become reality. Finances are secured, service providers are assigned their projects, and evaluations of expected progress and results are made. Because conditions change, progress might not occur as predicted or new goals may be identified. The WRAPS projects are encouraged to reassess and do more planning

as part of the ongoing Implementation Stage.

KRWA involvement

Kansas Rural Water Association will be working closely with two WRAPS projects in the next few years. Both the

and successfully influencing the quality of water used by more than half a million people, it has been proven that local stakeholders can make a difference in Kansas. I am excited to be a participant in the Delaware and Middle Kansas WRAPS



The Hillsdale Water Quality Project hosted a gathering on December 3, 2007, at Hillsdale Lake to announce the awarding of an EPA Targeted Watershed Grant in the amount of \$900,000 for the Marais des Cygnes Watershed.

Delaware WRAPS (Jefferson, Jackson, Atchison, Nemaha and Brown counties) and the Middle Kansas WRAPS (Morris, Geary, Riley, Wabaunsee, Pottawatomie, Marshall, Jackson, Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas counties) have identified source water protection as a goal for the public water supply systems in their areas. Public water systems in these two WRAPS will be encouraged to participate in this goal and with their local WRAPS project. Public water systems in other WRAPS projects are also strongly encouraged to participate and influence the goals and actions of their WRAPS project.

With two watershed projects standing on their own two feet

projects. I'm hopeful some of you will participate in your local WRAPS project and feel the same way. If not you, who? In a few years, WRAPS could be one of the first 10 links retrieved by a Google search, where today seven of the first 10 links are for food, two are for clothing and one is for vehicle decals. A successful WRAPS project is in your successful future.

More information is available at the Kansas WRAPS Web site: <http://www.kswraps.org>. Or call for me at 785/215-9319 or e-mail me at dhelmke@krwa.net. I would be pleased to schedule a visit with you to further discuss WRAPS and source water protection.