



WATERSHED STRATEGIES FOR A NEW ERA



Protecting the Environment & the Bottom Line

November 2nd—4th, 2005
Holiday Inn University Plaza &
Sloan Convention Center
Bowling Green, Kentucky

**8TH ANNUAL SOUTHEAST WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE &
3RD ANNUAL KENTUCKY STATE WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE**

Executive Report



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BY

THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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- Western Kentucky University, Center for Cave and Karst Studies
- Western Kentucky University, Center for Water Resource Studies
- Western Kentucky University, WATERS Laboratory
- World Wildlife Fund





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2005

ROUNDTABLE

PLANNING

COMMITTEE



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Christine Olsenius, Southeast Watershed Forum

Marjan Peltier, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Judith Petersen, Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Linda Potter, KY Dept. for Natural Resources

Margaret Shanks, KY Division of Water

Tim Slattery, City of Bowling Green

Wendy Smith, World Wildlife Fund

Kurt Spitzer, Florida Stormwater Association

Judy Takats, World Wildlife Fund

Jack Wright, Warren County



Executive Summary

As the Kentucky countryside showed off its finest fall colors, representatives of environmental organizations and agencies from across the Southeast gathered to discuss important issues and innovations in water quality and watershed assessment and management. The 8th annual Southeast Watershed Roundtable and the 3rd annual Kentucky State-wide Watershed Roundtable—collectively, the Roundtable—was held at the University Plaza Holiday Inn and Bowling Green Conference Center on November 3-4, 2005. The event, jointly organized by the Southeast Watershed Forum and Kentucky Waterways Alliance, developed new local and regional partnerships that were a key to the success of previous Roundtables.

The 2005 Roundtable was located in the Green River Watershed, which The Nature Conservancy has called, “the crown jewel of river systems and a national treasure of biodiversity.” It was an appropriate place to focus on the Roundtable theme: “Watershed Strategies for a New Era: Protecting the Environment & the Bottom Line.”

“I live in the Green River basin... and I was thrilled to welcome watershed professionals and volunteers from across Kentucky and eight other southeastern states to my watershed.”

**- Judith Petersen,
Kentucky Waterways Alliance**

Kentucky Waterways Alliance Executive Director Judy Petersen noted: “This third Kentucky State Watershed Roundtable marked the first time we had hosted the event outside of Lexington. I live in the Green River basin, Kentucky Waterways Alliance’s office is located in the Green River basin, and I was thrilled to welcome watershed professionals and volunteers from across Kentucky and eight other southeastern states to my watershed.”



Christine Olsenius, Southeast Watershed Forum

Southeast Watershed Forum Director Christine Olsenius stated that the Forum is “very appreciative of all the work that the Kentucky Waterways Alliance and the Kentucky Division of Water did on our behalf....It is only the second time that a state and regional roundtable have been held jointly and we now look forward to doing it again in 2006 with our North Carolina partners.”

LaJuana Wilcher, Secretary of the Kentucky Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, remarked that watershed protection is not optional: It is the only effective way to address our water quality problems. She challenged attendees to leverage partnerships for maximum environmental results. Geoffrey Anderson, Director of EPA’s Smart Growth



From L to R: Judith Petersen, Kentucky Waterways Alliance; Christine Olsenius, Southeast Watershed Forum; Geoffrey Anderson, EPA Smart Growth Office; LaJuana Wilcher, Kentucky Environmental & Public Protection Cabinet

Office, encouraged the audience to use economics to encourage watershed-friendly land use practices. Anderson captivated Roundtable attendees with new research from EPA showing the direct reduction in stormwater runoff when denser development is used in conjunction with open space protection. In the concurrent sessions, 25 speakers provided local and regional success stories in watershed protection in three main conference tracts: Community Strategies, Conservation Strategies, and Watershed Strategies.

The World Wildlife Fund hosted a panel on the value of habitat protection and land preservation and state and federal resource agency representatives discussed innovative partnering efforts for aquatic habitat protection. Innovative stormwater management initiatives were discussed along with watershed planning efforts, forestry programs, acid mine reclamation projects, and citizen monitoring efforts.

This year, the Roundtable provided some exciting feedback: 64 percent of the attendees said that the information learned at the Roundtable **will** change the way they do business in their agency, organization, and/or business. This is the highest percentage ever recorded for this question. It is a testimony to the value of presenting proven watershed strategies and practices that can be replicated in other communities.

There was more exciting feedback regarding the Roundtable's effort to foster dialogue among diverse stakeholders: 79 percent of attendees found the state / watershed breakout discussions helpful. That is another record percentage. And more importantly, as a result of the discussions, 37 percent of participants developed new initiatives and 34 percent developed new partnerships!

79 percent of attendees found the state/watershed breakout discussions helpful. That is another record percentage.

The conference organizers are grateful for the partnership, interest and support of the Kentucky Division of Water, Tennessee Valley Authority, The City of Bowling Green, Warren County, Western Kentucky University, Third Rock Consultants and PRIDE. We hope to see all of you at the next Roundtable for another celebration of success stories in watershed protection!

Christine Olsenius
Executive Director
Southeast Watershed Forum

Judith Petersen
Executive Director
Kentucky Waterways Alliance



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

LaJuana Wilcher, Secretary, Kentucky Environmental & Public Protection Cabinet



LaJuana Wilcher during her keynote address

Watershed protection is not optional. It is the only effective way to address our water quality problems. Simply controlling point sources of pollution **will not get it!** What's required is a holistic approach, attacking multiple pollution sources.

The Clean Water Act mandates such an approach, but we somehow lost sight of real watershed management over the years and drifted away from it in practice. *The Watershed Protection Approach*, published by EPA in 1991, spelled out the essential elements of a watershed protection project - one of which was to identify and target the most significant threats to water quality. We question whether Kentucky has done so.

We need to ask ourselves: Are we targeting protections toward the greatest threats to our water quality? Are we engaged in discrete activities with clear objectives? Unless we can say yes, we risk an end result that may feel good but is lacking in substance.

“Watershed protection is not optional: it is the only effective way to address our water quality problems.”

SETTING THE ROUNDTABLE THEME

Geoffrey Anderson, Director Development Community and Environment Division, EPA

Growth and development expand communities' opportunities by bringing in new residents, businesses, and investments. Growth can give a community the resources to revitalize a downtown, refurbish a main street, build new schools, and develop vibrant places to live, work, shop, and play. However, with the benefits come challenges. The environmental impacts of development can make it more difficult for communities to protect their natural resources. Where and how communities accommodate growth has a profound impact on the quality of their streams, rivers, lakes, and beaches. Development that uses land efficiently and protects undisturbed natural lands allows a community to grow and still protect its water resources.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that U.S. population will grow by 50 million people, or approximately 18 percent, between 2000 and 2020. Many communities are asking where and how



they can accommodate this growth while maintaining and improving their water resources. Some communities have interpreted water-quality research to mean that low-density development will best protect water resources. However, some water-quality experts argue that this strategy can backfire and actually harm water resources. Higher-density development, they believe, may be a better way to protect water resources.

To more fully explore this issue, EPA modeled three scenarios of different densities at three scales—one-acre level, lot level, and watershed level—and at three different time series build-outs to examine the premise that lower-density development is always better for water quality. EPA examined stormwater runoff from different development densities to determine the comparative difference between scenarios. This analysis demonstrated:

- The higher-density scenarios generate less stormwater runoff per house at all scales—one acre, lot, and watershed—and time series build-out examples;
- For the same amount of development, higher-density development produces less run off and less impervious cover than low-density development; and
- For a given amount of growth, lower-density development uses more of the watershed.



Geoffrey Anderson networking with roundtable attendees

Taken together, these findings indicate that low-density development may not always be the preferred strategy for protecting water resources. Higher densities may better protect water quality—especially at the lot and watershed levels. Denser developments consume less land to accommodate the same number of houses as lower density. Consuming less land means creating less impervious cover in the watershed. EPA believes that increasing development densities is one strategy communities can use to minimize regional water quality impacts. To fully protect water resources, communities need to employ a wide range of land use strategies that include a combination of development densities, based on local factors, incorporating adequate open space, preserving critical ecological and buffer areas, and minimizing land disturbance.



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

All Watershed groups reported on some type of communication, whether it was called marketing, education, public outreach, media, or public involvement. Some of the approaches used were quite innovative from “Weather in your Watershed” reports on the local weather station, to local demonstration projects. Communication experts recommend utilizing strategies when working with the media, including audience identification. Another idea is developing “key messages” that all core members of your group can use wherever and whenever an opportunity arises. These messages should focus on the goals of your group and be relevant to the audience. They also need to be concise and easily understood (no jargon).

The best relationships with partners, landowners and the public are maintained by integrity and honesty.

Another common element to these presentations was the importance of partnerships. Ideas ranged from creating “friends of” groups to working with atypical groups such as for profit gas companies. Partner involvement varies by project as each partner has their own objectives and resources.

All of the approaches outlined depend on good relationships. The best relationships with partners, landowners and the public are maintained by integrity and honesty. Transparent goals for your watershed organization and walking the talk establish credibility. Do the people bring the money, or does the money bring the people? We could contend that it is both. Sustainable organizations result from good relationships.



Gerri Spring, lead facilitator during the breakout sessions.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Below are specific comments for each group:

Alabama/Mississippi

The science basis adds credibility to your work and connects with current research efforts. Working across state boundaries with scientific credibility increases chances for federal funding. The concept of supporting your stakeholders and helping to meet their needs really builds a strong coalition.

Cumberland River

This is another huge watershed requiring focus on priorities to connect institutional resources. This group works with both state governors and local officials. Consider political connections with other groups both within and outside the watershed. The hard part is taking big plans and getting local implementation.

Kentucky River

This is a huge watershed! Good job identifying values and to influence change by demonstrating tree planting in areas that were traditionally mowed grass and showing how this "new" practice meets the community values.

Maryland/North Carolina/Tennessee

The common goal and team approach work well in your marketing efforts. What an innovative idea to have a daily segment on the local weather to keep the idea of watersheds in the public eye. Integrating with education, Kindergarten through college is another great tool. When you ask for what you need it also means you need to identify what you need. For example ask for money to accomplish specific goals rather than just asking for money.

Salt River

Connecting livability when educating local officials should meet constituent needs. Elected officials are rational beings; they consider how their actions influence their next election. Education of the public can persuade local officials only if the voters let their elected representatives know what actions they want taken. This links in with your concept of "the right mix of people." Going beyond just the economic incentives, this group identified the need for choice, community, legacy, and



quality of life as motivations for citizens. Now if these motivations will get voters to tell their elected officials what they want done...

Licking River

The direct sell on water quality and connection to financial motivations is great. When looking at public involvement, you consider what the public gets out of it. Be careful with consent decree monies as they can be seen as "payoffs."

Green River

River clean up days are a great way to establish and maintain good relationships with landowners! Based on your knowledge of these landowners, who greatly influence water quality, what motivates them? Are the karst studies and TNC/COE flow project making an impact on these landowners? This group obviously walks the talk.



EVALUATIONS

What Purpose Does the Roundtable Serve for Your Organization or Agency?

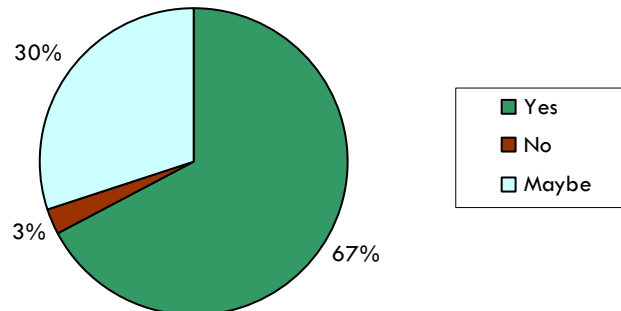
Participants chose as many responses that applied

| | |
|--|-----|
| Gives me a chance to network with other organizations and agencies | 93% |
| Gives me new ideas for implementing watershed programs | 62% |
| Gives me a better sense of local watershed needs / concerns / issues | 58% |
| Provides innovative programs that can be replicated in my city / watershed | 55% |
| Helps clarify state and national watershed programs | 47% |



“Learning information about the positive economic benefits of good growth will help me sell to elected officials.”

Do You Feel the Information, Programs, or Networking at the Roundtable Will Change the Way You Do Business in Your Community, Organization or Company?

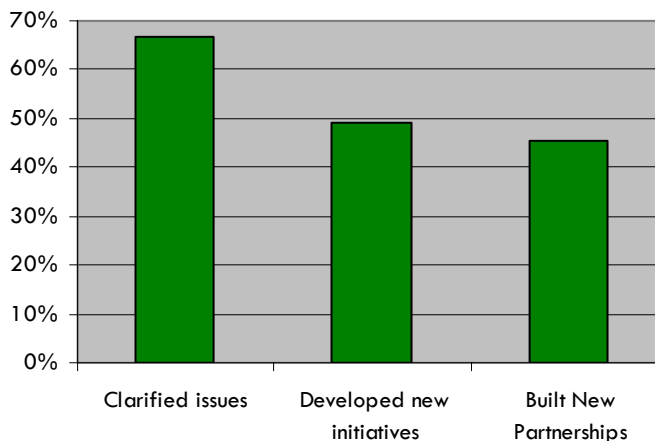


“I will become certified in erosion control and educate myself with TDMLs.”

EVALUATIONS

Did You Find Your State/Watershed Breakout Session Helpful? Yes (78%)

If so, how?



“It has added further resolve and commitment to the team approach for water resource management”

Please Rate the Quality of the Roundtable Breakout Sessions You Attended.

| Thursday, November 3 | Poor | Good | Excellent |
|-------------------------|------|------|-----------|
| Watershed Strategies | 0% | 97% | 3% |
| Community Strategies | 0% | 48% | 53% |
| Conservation Strategies | 0% | 62% | 38% |
| | | | |
| Friday, November 4 | Poor | Good | Excellent |
| Watershed Strategies | 0% | 96% | 4% |
| Community Strategies | 0% | 58% | 42% |
| Conservation Strategies | 0% | 67% | 33% |

“Ideas presented here give me new ways to approach resolving problems within the watershed.”





CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

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**Thank you
for making the 2005 Southeast Watershed Roundtable
and the Kentucky State Roundtable
a Success**



**See you in Asheville!
2006 Roundtable
August 2-4, Crown Plaza Resort**