



## *Community Involvement in Watershed Management Sustains Water Quality*

The Heartland Community Involvement in Watershed Management (CIWM) team coordinates research-based information, education and extension resources of land-grant universities as related to water quality and the management of agricultural nonpoint source pollutants. Through strengthening of multi-state and interagency partnerships, the Heartland Initiative seeks to make these resources more accessible to federal, state and local water quality improvement efforts in EPA Region 7. Participating land-grant universities in the Heartland Region include the University of Missouri - Columbia, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Kansas State University – Manhattan, and Iowa State University – Ames. Representatives from EPA, USDA, other state agencies and Extension programs who work in the areas of community development, water quality, and conflict management are included on the CIWM leadership team.

While many natural resources agencies employ personnel capable of writing watershed management plans based on scientific research, this activity does little to foster implementation or acceptance by local citizens. The sustainable water quality outcomes sought by professionals

working in watershed management issues, are most likely to occur when local residents take ownership of both the problem and the solution. The Heartland CIWM team seeks to address water quality problems through the human dimension lens by focusing on community-led decision making. Watershed management groups that are sustainable take responsibility for their watersheds, thereby leading to long-term protection of water quality. The goal of the CIWM issue team is to foster locally-driven watershed management.



### *Objectives*

- Improve regional communication and coordination among land grant university extension educators and researchers working on community development to address water quality and other agriculture/environmental management issues.
- Facilitate a regional network of extension educators and agency personnel with knowledge and skills to manage conflict and conduct public deliberation in dealing with watershed issues.
- Add to/increase knowledge base about community involvement in order to develop better practices.
- Build capacity among the four states – Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.
- Build capacity among institutions in each state.
- Build capacity in local communities.



## Heartland CIWM Leadership Team

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## Areas of Emphasis

- Research and Publication
- Conflict Management
- Partnerships
- Watershed Response to Regulation
- Heartland CIWM Issue Web Site

Kathleen Fenton,  
EPA Region 7

June 2005  
Lied Lodge  
(Arbor Day Foundation)  
Nebraska City, NE



## Workshops

Since the Heartland project began in 2003, the CIWM team has held two regional conferences to provide a region-wide, face-to-face forum for watershed professionals, focusing on the role of human interaction in water quality.

- **Community Involvement in Watershed Management, March 2004:** This conference served as a means to share experience and knowledge in fostering citizen involvement in watershed management; to identify useful resources; knowledge and resource gaps and needs; and ways to continue sharing our expertise and resources. Participants from the first training provided feedback on social capacity needs in the region, identifying conflict resolution as a high priority for addressing the human dimension of watershed management. As a result, a conflict resolution sub-committee was formed within the CIWM team, bringing in new land grant university partners and expanding the CIWM resource base.
- **Conflict Management, June 2005:** Participants from four states attended the CIWM workshop to increase understanding of conflict resolution in the context of watershed planning. Topics included the types and sources of conflict, and the use of community assessment tools for addressing conflict in regional watershed problems. Special emphasis was placed on exploring the function of scientific and technical information in citizen-based groups dealing with controversial water quality issues, and to the various roles played by resource professionals in addressing community conflict.

## Resources

- Publications and resources related to community/organizational development, citizen involvement, conflict deliberation, leadership, and watershed management planning are accessible via the Heartland WQ Initiative website ([www.heartlandwq/iastate.edu](http://www.heartlandwq/iastate.edu)), and are searchable by word or key phrase.
- An interactive geo-spatial map of the four-state area is currently being developed for access on the Heartland website to facilitate regional partnerships, citizen outreach and the sharing of successful watershed management resources. The map will include agency and extension professionals in water quality who have been trained in CIWM and/or conflict management.