

The Human Dimension of Watershed Management

Course Description

Environmental protection programs, such as watershed projects, often focus on the chemical or biological processes associated with natural resource issues. To thoroughly address such issues, the social aspects of conservation must be considered; especially how land managers, landowners, and citizens interact with their environment must be considered. This interactive workshop will address how to incorporate consideration for human elements in watershed protection. Based on experience and research at the national, state, and local levels (including several projects in Minnesota), this workshop will present a number of “how to” recommendations that can be applied to your watershed efforts.

The workshop is organized into six modules accompanied by a handbook containing resource materials and references for each module. Each participant will receive a handbook at the beginning of the workshop.

Module 1. Why Involve People? Assesses the human dimension and why it is critical to any successful resource management program.

Module 2. Designing Your Watershed Strategy. Overall watershed strategies and how to bring people into your specific watershed program are examined.

Module 3. Assessing and Understanding People. This module describes why and how to assess behaviors and activities of the people in your watershed.

Module 4. Utilizing Assessment and Evaluation for Program Improvement. Examples will be provided about how to improve program design and implementation to make your efforts more effective.

Module 5. Participatory Program Implementation. There is a growing interest in how citizens can participate in watershed program design and implementation. This module will address issues of citizen involvement in program decision making.

Module 6. Communicating Successes. How you communicate your program and/or what your project does to important audiences such as public leaders, funders, agencies, and citizens will be explored.

The workshop will offer an opportunity for questions, small group discussions and workshop exercises. The overall objective of the workshop is to offer practical tools that will facilitate asking the right questions concerning the human dimensions of your project.