

How to Develop a Watershed Association in Oklahoma



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The Watershed Movement

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Audience

This guidebook will benefit any person with an interest in forming a watershed association. Previous experience with organizing a watershed association is not required as this guide provides a foundation to get you started. Users must be willing to dedicate time and effort to forming a watershed protection group. The target audience includes:

- ✓ Anyone – parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, YOU
- ✓ Federal, state, and local government agencies
- ✓ Tribal environmental and natural resource agencies
- ✓ Existing watershed associations
- ✓ Non-profit organizations

This guide is intended for individuals who are determined to protect water and land in their community using local support.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidebook is to help you develop a watershed association in Oklahoma and provide helpful material for existing associations. Use this guide as a starting point to develop your own association and serve as a reference for continued success! This guide provides the following:

- ✓ Benefits of watershed management and citizen involvement
- ✓ How to organize an association following step-by-step instructions
- ✓ Where to identify issues and development of watershed planning
- ✓ Outreach, technical monitoring, and association effort evaluations
- ✓ Existing Oklahoma watershed association contact information and “Lessons Learned”
- ✓ Additional watershed specific resources

Although the document is directed towards efforts within Oklahoma, it’s available as a tool for anyone to use anywhere!

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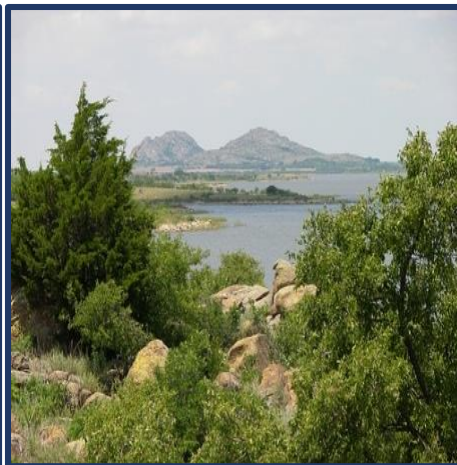
Introduction

What is your favorite memory of visiting a creek, river, or lake when you were a child? Perhaps it was fishing with your family, splashing your brother or sister, lifting rocks in search of crawfish and bugs, snorkeling to watch aquatic life, jumping into the deepest swimming hole, floating weightlessly, or skipping rocks and making wishes. These memories are as priceless as the emotional bond created when you dip your toes into water or land a trophy-size fish. Water prompts an ecological fascination that gives one a sense of connecting with nature. It's a feeling of respect to water and land that encourages a person to go a step above and beyond what is required of them.

Gathering people with a mutual respect of watershed protection is one of the greatest inspirations to influence change in a community. In Oklahoma we have many beautiful creeks, rivers, and lakes that may benefit from improved water quality and habitat. Our state has a diverse ecosystem that is home to many unique animals and plants that depend on a healthy watershed. This guidebook is the first of its kind in Oklahoma to provide people with the tools they need to develop a protection group. Your enthusiasm and this guidebook are key ingredients needed to develop your new watershed association in Oklahoma.



Illinois River
Tahlequah, OK



Great Plains State Park
Mountain Park, OK
Courtesy of: travelok.com



Spring Creek
Peggs, OK

What is a Watershed Association?

To define what a watershed association is, it may be easiest to define each of the individual words that make up this phrase. A watershed is an area of land that drains water into an outflow point, such as, a creek, river, lake, estuary, wetland, or ocean. Hills and ridgelines, also known as a drainage divide, separate individual watersheds. The watershed consists of surface water (runoff, creeks, rivers, lakes, wetlands) and all the underlying ground water. An association is an organized group of people who share a common interest or goal. Therefore, a watershed association is a group of individuals who share a common goal to protect water, land, and the ecosystem within the community.



Source: Blue Thumb and Grand River Dam Authority water quality training

Why is a Watershed Association Needed?

A healthy watershed benefits humans, wildlife, and plants that depend on safe water quality. Watershed health is determined by ecological information, such as, landscape, habitat, hydrology, geomorphology, water quality, and biological condition of watershed features (EPA 2016). Each watershed has unique issues caused by human and natural activities that affect the aquatic ecosystem. People are taking action to address local issues by building trust through partnerships and by spreading awareness through public education. People are the first line of defense to protect water; forming an association helps the whole community create a vision for their watershed and works to keep the community focused on watershed issues (Iowa State University 2006). The following table list reasons why a watershed association may develop:

<u>Protection of:</u>	<u>Threats from:</u>
Instream flow	Mining / Landfills
Water quality	Logging/forestry
Drinking water	Leaking septic systems
Recreation / Tourism / Urban amenities	Urban runoff
Water quantity	Land development
Fish and wildlife	Trash
Native plants	Agricultural water runoff
Habitat	Concentrated animal feedlots
Groundwater aquifers	Hazardous waste
Cultural resources	Dam construction
Soil and bank stability	Water diversions (irrigation)
Floodplains	Channelization and dredging

A watershed association allows people to protect natural resources and have fun doing it. Solving issues in a watershed through a watershed association entails spirited community support, effective communication, substantial time commitment, and financial support. This guidebook sets a foundation to establish a new watershed association and offers information to help guide your efforts.

How is a Watershed Managed?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) governs the Clean Water Act (CWA) in the United States. The CWA developed the Water Quality Standards Program to protect and restore surface water quality through a watershed approach. EPA requires each state to submit an integrated report (305(b) Report and 303(d) List) that documents the condition of the state's waters (EPA 2016). The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Conservation Commission and Oklahoma Water Resources Board are responsible for monitoring the state's waterbodies to ensure that water quality standards are met. Oklahoma's water quality is affected by point and non-point source pollution. Point source pollution is managed by the use of

discharge permits issued to industries and municipalities that discharge or dispose of chemically treated wastewater into a waterbody. Non-point source pollution is managed by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission (OCC).

The OCC Water Quality Division - Nonpoint Source Group is made up of federal, state and local agencies, environmental and landowner groups, and Indian tribes that work with local groups and other agencies to develop a watershed-based (management) plan in priority watersheds. Plan objectives include: identify issues that need to be controlled, obtain financial assistance, set schedules to meet goals, conduct effort evaluation, and outreach education. Planning begins at the local level with Conservation Districts and other stakeholders forming a Watershed Advisory Group and Educational Watershed Advisory Group. The groups determine how the plan and education program will be applied at the local level (OCC 2016). Government agencies depend on the community to fulfill a watershed-based plan.

Often, a watershed-based plan has not been written but local residents want to address watershed issues. They are taking action in the form of a grassroots movement to bring environmental awareness to their community. These people think globally and act locally to manage watershed issues through watershed planning. In collaboration with their community and government agencies, locally-led grassroots watershed associations advocate for safe water quality through public outreach and education.



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Guidebook Overview

This guidebook contains information compiled from documents written by existing watershed associations, government agencies, non-profit organizations, university extensions, published papers, and personal experience. Informative discussion boxes provide additional information.

- ✓ Nine step-by-step instructions are separated into three sections for easy accessibility.
 - Section 1 – Establish Your Association
 - Step 1: Identify Your Watershed Area
 - Step 2: Recruit the Founding Board of Directors
 - Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting
 - Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed
 - Step 4: Identify Issues
 - Step 5: Collect Information Relevant to the Issues
 - Step 6: Present Issues to Future Members Using Outreach
 - Section 3 – Association Actions
 - Step 7: Recruit Members
 - Step 8: Organize and Complete the Kick-off Meeting
 - Step 9: Evaluate Efforts

- ✓ Discussion boxes provide additional information.
 - Oklahoma Watershed Association and Mission Statement
 - Differences in Association Names
 - Non-Profit Organization Information

- ✓ The Resources section provides contact information for existing Oklahoma watershed associations and various Oklahoma agencies.

- ✓ The Reference section includes direct website links to supporting material used to create the guidebook.

- ✓ The Appendices provides additional information:
 - Multiple checklists
 - Existing Watershed Association’s “Lessons Learned”
 - GIS, Informational, and Outreach resources

The guidebook steps provide basic instructions on how to develop your watershed association. The steps are inter-changeable; feel free to follow the steps in an order that best suits your association’s needs.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Section 1 – Establish Your Association

Thank you for taking action to protect your watershed. You will now begin an exciting journey full of many emotions. Take pride in your decision to dedicate time and energy to environmental conservation of your community. Find comfort researching, networking, and using existing resources to expand your efforts. Refer to the Resources section at the back of the guidebook for Oklahoma Watershed Association Contact Information. The association logo, mission statement, and social media/contact information is provided.

Steps included in this section are as follows:

- ✓ Step 1 - Identify Your Watershed Area
- ✓ Step 2 – Recruit the Founding Board of Directors
 - Grassroots Recruitment
 - Recruitment Through Partnerships
- ✓ Step 3 – Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting
 - Board of Director Responsibilities
 - Association Structure
 - Finance Options
 - Initial Association Meeting Details

Discussion boxes in this section are as follows:

- ✓ Discussion Box: Differences in Association Names
- ✓ Discussion Box: Non-Profit Organization Information

If you are uncertain if you are ready to lead the formation of a watershed association, the Iowa State Community Readiness quiz may help you decide. Appendix 1.1 provides eleven questions relating to water quality, community issues, and public involvement. Responses provide “Yes”, “No”, or “Don’t Know” to assess your readiness.

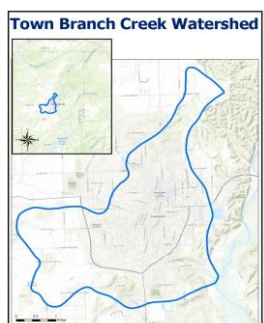
Step 1: Identify Your Watershed Area

A watershed encompasses an area of land that drains water into a stream, creek, river, or lake; it embraces water that falls within the drainage basin which is defined by ridges and hills. The watershed boundary directs runoff from headwater springs towards tributaries flowing into larger waterbodies and further downstream to an adjacent watershed basin. Watersheds can be as small as a footprint or large enough to encompass all the land that drains water into a common outflow location; the drainage basin includes surface water, wetlands, and groundwater (United States Geological Survey 2016). The watershed boundary is defined by topography (drainage divide) of the land. A topography map depicts contours that easily help determine watershed boundaries. Free maps are available through the following websites;

- United States Geological Survey - The National Map, US Topo Maps website
<http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/basic/?basemap=b1&category=ustopo&title=US%20Topo%20Download>

- TopoQuest website <https://www.topoquest.com/map.php>.

A digital GIS map or a hand-drawn map may be used to define the watershed boundary. Refer to Appendix 4.1 GIS Resources for information on how to create digital maps and where to find data. To hand-draw the watershed boundary, complete the following: start at the waterbody outlet and make a line that follows the highest relative elevation (drainage divide) until the line loops around to intersect with the outlet (this may have variable levels of accuracy). For further instructions, refer to Lake Notes – Determining Your Lake’s Watershed, published by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, which is be found at <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/conservation/lake-notes/determining-watershed.pdf>.



Step 2: Recruit the Founding Board of Directors

On your mark, get set, GO! You will now begin what feels like (for many associations) the most difficult step. Recruitment of the founding Board of Directors takes time and commitment. These are people who want to have a direct role in watershed protection. They attend meetings, identify and work to resolve issues, and promote the association. Board of Directors include those who contribute resources and assistance (refer to Appendix 1.2, Identify Founding Board of Director Skills and Resources, for a list of skill sets). Building a functional, long-term relationship among the Board of Directors with diverse interests is both difficult and rewarding. They may be motivated to join for many different reasons, including:

- ✓ Concerns about economic development
- ✓ They may use the waterbody for recreation
- ✓ Worry about complying with regulatory requirements
- ✓ Love the water for its spiritual value or natural interest
- ✓ Have a job or political office with water-related responsibilities

Be prepared to conduct meetings and conversations with people from various educational and social backgrounds. The two basic ways to recruit the founding Board of Directors are:

- ✓ Grassroots recruitment (with individuals)
- ✓ Build partnerships (with existing groups with similar or complementary interests)

Keep the Board of Directors small, five people is the perfect amount. Ensure that a variety of interests are represented early in the recruitment process, as this will help avoid conflict later on.

Grassroots Recruitment

Grassroots is defined as ordinary people who conduct action on a local level to affect change in their community. Grassroots recruitment involves engaging in conversation about watershed issues with individuals. Conversations can happen anywhere and at any time in the community. These concerned people are passionate about protecting the well-being of their community and may be interested in a specific watershed issue. Grassroots members may include landowners,

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Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

teachers, university professors, retired persons, religious leaders, and professionals. They will take initiative to acquire necessary skills and resources to advance the association and develop future actions.

Recruitment Through Partnerships

At least a portion of the Board of Directors should be influential in the community that you plan to reach. Identify and target key individuals who are community leaders. Include champion superiors, these people are respected pillars of the community who are able to motivate and inspire local support for the association. Urban watershed associations should contact local city officials for support. Rural watershed associations should contact local agriculture agencies.

Potential partnership options are listed in the following list:

- Lawyers
- EPA Region Six
- Local tribal officials
- Financial institutions
- Local and county officials
- Local newspaper and radio station
- Professional environmental consultants
- City Departments:
 - Tourism
 - Planning
 - Stormwater
 - Public Health
 - Transportation
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Economic development
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Utilities (water and sewer)



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

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Contact people and organizations that have an interest in water quality. Many organizations are already involved in watershed protection, either locally or statewide. Enlist help from established watershed associations in your area, as they have experience to help guide your efforts. If they don't directly join your association, they may suggest other members or provide future support. Refer to the Resources section at the back of the guidebook for Oklahoma contacts.

Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

Finally, the moment has arrived to establish your association. This is the beautiful moment when a bud opens into a flower, when a headwater spring joins a stream, and when your association transforms from a thought into an action. Ideas and opinions come together through an arrangement of activities that enhance a need to express an association identity.

The Board of Directors should be ready to contribute their time to the association and need to know what is expected of them. The first meeting consists of defining the Board of Directors responsibilities, forming an identity for the association, organizing the association, and developing a financial plan. It takes time and commitment to get an association up and running.

Board of Director Responsibilities

It is important to immediately define the Board of Director's responsibilities. A strong association is made up diverse skillsets. The Board of Directors responsibilities include:

- ✓ Hard work
- ✓ Fundraising
- ✓ Provide expertise
- ✓ Provide member training
- ✓ Represent association efforts
- ✓ Continuously recruit members
- ✓ Conduct education and outreach
- ✓ Review and comment on reports
- ✓ Collect information regarding watershed issues



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

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Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

- ✓ Provide input about best management practices
- ✓ Develop evaluation criteria for analyzing association efforts
- ✓ Represent important resources (ex. fish, wildlife, plants, riparian area)

Each Board of Director has unique talents that enhance the success of the association. With a variety of skills joined together, the association may now begin to develop an identity for itself.

Mission Statement

A clear mission statement will raise awareness about the association’s purpose. It briefly describes what the association is about and provides direction. Keep it short and to the point in one or two sentences. Long mission statements usually reflect serious disagreement or confusion. As the association successfully addresses watershed issues, it is okay to revise the mission statement. Review the mission with the Board of Directors often to ensure that efforts are directed toward the appropriate purpose. Narrow the mission to one issue to more effectively focus efforts. Refer to the Discussion Box: Oklahoma Watershed Association and Mission Statement for examples.

Discussion Box: Oklahoma Watershed Association and Mission Statement	
<u>Watershed Association</u>	<u>Mission Statement</u>
The Watershed Movement	The purpose of The Watershed Movement is to inspire and educate people to care for watersheds and create projects that benefit watersheds. Reconnecting people with watersheds is important for the continued protection of our land and water resources achieved through education, consultation, inspiration, and environmental protection.
Save the Illinois River, STIR	To protect and preserve the Illinois River, its tributaries, and Tenkiller Lake.
Spring Creek Coalition	To unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed.
Friends of Town Branch Creek	To preserve the unique biology and aesthetic value of Tahlequah’s Town Branch Creek watershed through public outreach and involvement.

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Grand Lake O’ the Cherokees Watershed Alliance Foundation	Assist in preserving, protecting, and restoring water quality in the 10,298 square mile, over 500,000 population, Grand Lake Watershed.
Lake McMurtry Friends	The mission of Lake McMurtry Friends is to enhance, promote, and operate Lake McMurtry Natural Resource and Recreation Area in a sustainable manner while providing a high quality outdoor experience for the benefit of the public.
People for the Protection of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer	Preserve and protect the springs and waterways of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer; Promote understanding of these important water sources through education and community action; Prevent threats of these water sources by waste, pollution or transfer to other areas through formal protests, testimony and other efforts; and Cooperate with people and groups in other counties promoting similar missions.

Goals

Goals define what the association wants to achieve and provides a foundation for planning. A strong set of achievable goals reflects knowledge of watershed issues and provides direction for future actions.

Objectives

Objectives describe how the group will achieve goals through specific actions. Activities should be SMART – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. Objectives include the following four components:

- ✓ Activities that need to occur
- ✓ Who will complete these activities
- ✓ Incentives that will be provided to facilitate change
- ✓ Means to evaluate results



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Objectives allow your association to take action to achieve goals. The public’s concerns and visions are incorporated into objectives to ensure that public interest is supported.

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Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

Association Name and Logo

The name of your association should be descriptive, simple, and positive. Make use of the name to clearly portray the association purpose and goals to an effort to deter bias (i.e., citizens do not “jump to negative conclusions” before facts are presented). Most names involve a description of conservation efforts, an adjective, and the type of association. Refer to the Discussion Box: Differences in Association Names for examples of interchangeable words used by watershed associations.

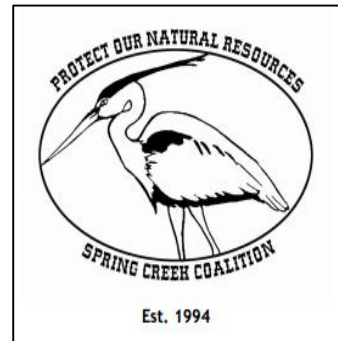
Discussion Box: Differences in Association Names

<u>Descriptor</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Type</u>
Watershed	Advisory	Group
Restoration	Management	Task Force
Ecosystem	Planning	Council
Habitat	Cooperative	Committee
Landscape	Conservation	Alliance
River / Creek	Working	Association
Resource	Consensus	Partnership
Riparian	Economic	Coalition
Natural	Community	Friends
Flora / Fauna Species	Sustainable	Team
Lake / Estuary	Coordinated	Program
Mountains	Grassroots	Federation

Borrowed from River Voices Volume 11, No. 2, Page 9.

Develop a logo that captures the meaning of the association name; for example, if your association is dedicated to preserving a particular fish species then include a picture of that fish. Ensure that it represents something positive, which visually depicts the mission statement.

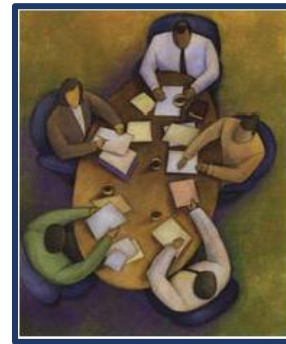
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Association Structure

The Board of Directors will organize efforts to address specific tasks. Recruit five Board of Directors to ensure the decision-making process is reasonable; the fifth person will be a tie-breaker. The Board of Directors structure includes:

- ✓ Chairman / President / Director
- ✓ Vice Chairman / President / Director
- ✓ Secretary
- ✓ Treasurer
- ✓ Subcommittees



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency.
Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters

The Board of Directors first duty is to establish meeting dates and times and set ground rules. Subcommittees are made up of contributing members that support specific issues.

Selecting which decision-making process to use depends on your association's structure. Establish rules by which decisions will be made; consensus, vote, or a mixture. Also consider who will make decisions; the Board of Directors, subcommittees, members, or whomever attends meetings. Members are essential to establish strength within the association. Determine if membership is open to all people, a representative from an organization or agency, or is based on monetary dues.

Section 1 – Establish Your Association

Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

Finance Options

Obtaining funds is an on-going task that requires a great deal of planning. Elements of budgeting include projecting income and expenses and establishing a method for keeping them in balance. The association must develop a target figure and decide where to look for assistance. Knowing your target figure provides a valuable marker for measuring your progress and knowing where you need to be financially at any given point in time. It also gives donors a giving goal.

A financial case statement is a formal way to ask a donor for financial assistance. The document describes association goals and costs required to achieve objectives. It represents the association's mission and creates a degree of consistency for outreach material. It should be brief and contain these important points:

- ✓ Description of the association
- ✓ Issue(s)
- ✓ Mission statement
- ✓ Specific goals
- ✓ List of people and groups supporting the association
- ✓ A monetary goal
- ✓ Level of citizen support needed
- ✓ Equipment needed
- ✓ Volunteer resources needed
- ✓ Expertise needed for recruitment



Source: River Voices

Section 1 – Establish Your Association

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People and organizations who contribute money are happy to do so, as it allows a way to express commitment to the association. There are many forms of funding available. Start with information from this guidebook, but continue to search for additional sources. Listed are several funding sources:

- ✓ Loans
- ✓ Grants
- ✓ Donations
- ✓ Sponsorships
- ✓ Membership dues
- ✓ Host special events
- ✓ Fundraising / Sales from association merchandise



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Many donors contribute if assistance is tax deductible, which requires legal incorporation as a 501 (c) 3 organization. If your association is not tax-exempt, you may be able to collaborate with an established non-profit who is able to accept donations on your behalf. Refer to Discussion Box: Non-Profit Organization Information for additional clarification.

Discussion Box: Non-Profit Organization Information

At some point, members may decide to organize formally to become a legal entity. This includes adopting bylaws and filing articles of incorporation. Bylaws are governing rules specifying how an organization will be managed, board member terms, tax status, and legal structure. It may be necessary to obtain insurance to minimize risk when conducting association activities.

The primary purpose of a non-profit organization is not to generate profits for members or directors. A 501(c) 3 organization focuses on outreach and allows contributors to deduct donations on their income tax returns. Restriction imposes a strict limit on “direct” political lobbying. A 501(c) 4 organization has been granted tax exempt status by IRS and allows surplus income for campaign efforts. This is an option for associations with a goal to petition government.

A non-profit guide is available from the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, entitled *Package 1023-Application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code*, obtained at www.irs.gov. This package contains directions and forms for applications and should be acquired if you are considering nonprofit organizational status.

Source: [How to Save a River](#)

Section 1 – Establish Your Association

Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

Public Funding Assistance

Loans and grants are available for watershed protection. Watershed associations may be eligible for funding that supports management, restoration, or education. Many grants or loans are only available to non-profit organizations; take care to research application details.

EPA Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection: A searchable database of financial assistance sources (grants, loans, cost-sharing) available to fund a variety of watershed protection projects. Website: <https://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/watershedfunding/f?p=fedfund:1>

EPA Environmental Education Grants. Supports environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. Website:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grants>

EPA Polluted Runoff: Nonpoint Source Pollution, The Watershed Approach. A watershed approach is the most effective framework to address today's water resource challenges. It is hydrologically defined, involves all stakeholders, and strategically address water resource goals. Website: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/watershed-funding>.

Initial Association Meeting Details

This is a busy meeting full of conversations and decisions. The following are some basic ideas to keep in mind:

- ✓ Discuss watershed issues
- ✓ Present current outreach efforts
- ✓ Conduct the meeting in a community building
- ✓ Review agreements made by the Board of Directors
- ✓ Schedule professionals to present watershed issues
- ✓ Speak one at a time and assure that everyone is heard
- ✓ Ensure subcommittee assignments and responsibilities are clear
- ✓ Find a secretary to record main points discussed on a large paper pad or marker board

Section 1 – Establish Your Association

Step 3: Organize and Complete the Initial Association Meeting

- ✓ Find a facilitator to help organize, keep time, and ensure that meeting objectives were accomplished

Conflict is often inevitable; the challenge is to redirect controversy to engage the Board of Directors to find a common ground upon which to better manage the watershed. Your association should celebrate, for this meeting is the product of hard work, dedication, and a passion to protect your watershed.



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed

Congratulations on the success of your efforts up to this point. The fact that you are forming a watershed association likely means that an issue has already been identified. Alternatively, perhaps you are an established association looking for fresh ideas or new techniques, Sections 2 and 3 are just what you are looking for.

Steps included in this section are as follows:

- ✓ Step 4 - Identify Issues
- ✓ Step 5 - Collect Information Relevant to the Issues
 - Where to Collect Data
- ✓ Step 6 – Present Issues to Future Members Using Outreach
 - Types of Material to Present



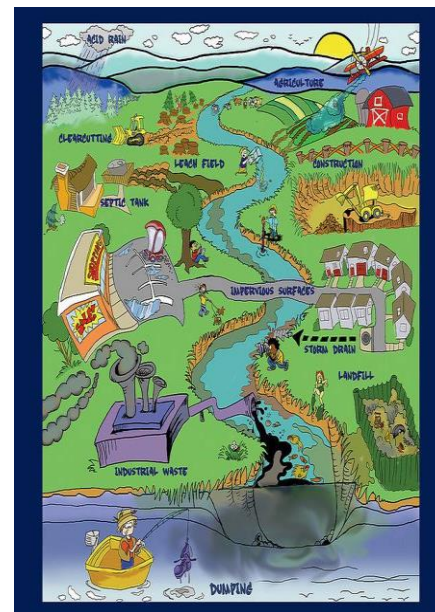
Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Step 4: Identify Issues

Issues are clarified by considering sources of watershed threats. Issues may be easily recognized by people; however, not all issues are obvious. The Board of Directors formulate questions about issues and determine objectives for providing answers to those questions. It will take effort and persistence to identify all watershed issues, but this information is crucial to the efficiency of your watershed protection efforts. The following is a list of ways to identify issues:

- ✓ Input from people at public meetings
- ✓ Neighborhood survey
- ✓ Oklahoma water quality reports:
 - Oklahoma’s Impaired Waterbodies List (303(d) List)
 - Water Quality Inventory Report (305(b) List)

http://www.deq.state.ok.us/wqdnew/305b_303d/index.html
- ✓ Trash clean up data
- ✓ Flood data
- ✓ Talk with:
 - Educators
 - Natural resources agencies
- ✓ Talk with city, county, state, and tribal offices:
 - Engineers
 - Chamber of commerce
 - Economic development
 - Planning department
 - Sanitation department
 - Stormwater department
 - Transportation department
 - Utilities department
- ✓ Examine public discharge permits
 - <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/wqdnew/genpermits.html>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pennington-Creek/153309854681118>

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed

Step 4: Identify Issues

You may compile a large list; it is now the Board of Directors responsibility to determine the order of importance of these issues. Of course all issues are important, but issues that have the greatest negative impact on the environment and human health should be addressed first. How you decide the level of an issue's importance depends on your association's mission, goals, and objectives. It may be more efficient to initially limit efforts to issues that are more easily addressed. Many issues require scientific data or machinery not easily attained by a newly formed association; therefore, focus on issues within the capacity of your budget and volunteer resources. Now that issues are determined, it is time to collect supporting facts to present to the association and future members.

Spring Creek Coalition Website Page

Issues


- STREAMBED DEGRADATION
- LOSS OF COVER
- GRAVEL MINING
- FLY ASH
- FOREIGN SPECIES
- LAWSUIT
- POULTRY
- ISSUES - WHO TO CALL

Streambed Degradation

TWO MAIN CAUSES OF STREAMBED DEGRADATION

TIMBER HARVESTING AND LAND CLEARING


Timber in the watershed is harvested and cleared for pasture and construction. It takes 25 years for one native Red Oak to reach 10 inches in diameter. Many of the best trees are being taken out with the idea that the smaller ones will grow. This is like selling the top end of your cowherd and keeping the culls. Reproduction is left to those of lesser quality.



Timber provides food and shelter for wildlife. Along with other vegetation, it stabilizes the topsoil, slows runoff and retains moisture by keeping the land cool and shaded. One acre of Riparian forest is capable of filtering 7,000 gallons of water each day.

REMOVING TREES AND BRUSH FROM BANKS

Current studies on Spring Creek indicate that a main problem is deterioration of the creek banks.



Trees/brush and their roots are very beneficial. They hold the banks together, provide food and cover for game and fish, and cool the water with shade. Trees and brush filter sediment and pollutants from water running off the land during storms. Grasses alone do not provide all of these benefits.

Removing trees and brush from around creeks results in bank erosion. When this happens, creeks fill with fine sand and gravel. They become more shallow, wider, and warmer. This accounts for the lack of deep pools and pool-dwelling game fish that many long-term residents of Spring Creek recall. As the creek widens, pastures, forest lands and roadbeds are lost to washouts.

Living next to the creek, it's natural to want to embrace it. If we aren't careful, we will spoil what we came to the creek to enjoy. So, when thinking about "cleaning up the creek banks", please consider the fish, wildlife, and your downstream neighbors. Leave a wide border of trees and brush at least fifty feet from each bank. Build pathways to the water instead of wide clearings.

Source: SpringCreek.org

Step 5: Collect Information Relevant to the Issues

With your list of issues ranked by importance, you are now ready to collect information to support those issues. This step provides what types of data to investigate and various methods on how to collect information. Many watershed factors are included when investigating watershed issues. Relevant data consists of:

- ✓ Air quality
- ✓ Bank erosion
- ✓ Biological data
- ✓ Climate
- ✓ Drinking water supply
- ✓ Ecological changes
- ✓ Endangered / threatened species
- ✓ Floodplain degradation
- ✓ Flow alterations
- ✓ Groundwater-surface water connection
- ✓ Habitat modification
- ✓ Hydrology
- ✓ Impervious surface
- ✓ Invasive plants
- ✓ Land management practices
- ✓ Non-point source pollution
- ✓ Nutrients
- ✓ Pathogens
- ✓ Pesticides
- ✓ Point source pollution
- ✓ Population growth
- ✓ Sedimentation
- ✓ Sensitive or protected areas
- ✓ Toxic substances
- ✓ Water-quality reports
- ✓ Wetland reports

Once a sufficient amount of data has been collected, it is compiled for analysis. A pitfall to avoid is trying to gather too much information about one issue and neglecting other equally important issues. Gathering information from a broad spectrum of issues may direct efforts away from the mission and goals. Findings often lead to other questions and unforeseen issues may arise. In this case, the association may consider revising their mission, goals, and objectives in order to address these new discoveries.



Source: Blue Thumb

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed
Step 5: Collect Information Relevant to the Issues

If you have a specific activity occurring in your watershed here are some things to consider:

- ✓ The threatening activity
- ✓ The rationale for the activity (the real need)
- ✓ Actions or potential impacts of the activity
- ✓ Key players
- ✓ Solutions to the issues
- ✓ How the solution works
- ✓ Solution alternatives



Tar Creek, Pitcher, OK

Source:
<http://soil5483.okstate.edu/Tar%20Creek%20site%20visit/TarCreek2.JPG>

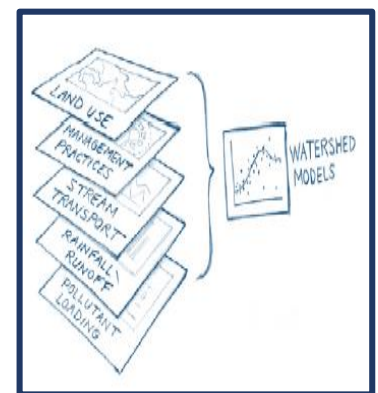
Communication with parties directly involved with the specific activity provides an opportunity to share information about the issue. Obtaining data directly from the source ensures that information is up-to-date and accurate.

Where to Collect Data

Mapping

This sort of watershed cruising allows you to explore dynamics of land and water. Traveling your river corridor or lake allows you to pinpoint visual issues and assess the area. Prior to your cruising adventure, examine the area using Google Earth or a map to ensure that you are familiar with the area you will survey. Take with you a waterproof camera and supplies to record notes. Consider taking a device to record latitude and longitude locations to ensure accuracy when documenting specific issues. Basic points include:

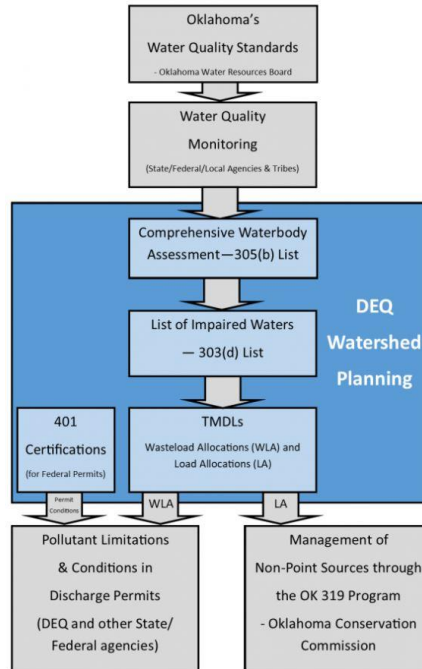
- ✓ Point sources
 - Oklahoma Water Resources Board
http://www.owrb.ok.gov/maps/pmg/owrbdata_GW.html
 - Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
<http://gis.deq.ok.gov/maps/>
- ✓ Recreational use
- ✓ Urban development
- ✓ Geology and topography



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed
Step 5: Collect Information Relevant to the Issues

on the website, found at <https://www.deq.ok.gov/divisions/wqd/>. The ODEQ Watershed Planning sections focuses on preparing the Integrated Report which is updated every four years, protection through pollutant discharge limitations, and the development of Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) restoration plans.



Source: Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality Watershed Planning

Technical Monitoring

On your own after proper training, or in collaboration with a government agency, your association has the ability to collect scientific data in your watershed. Ensure that your association follows an approved Quality Assurance Protocol and chain of custody. Training ensures that volunteers understand the equipment and methods used to:

- ✓ Obtain water quality samples
- ✓ Conduct habitat assessments
- ✓ Collect biological samples
- ✓ Interpret results



Source: Blue Thumb water quality monitoring at Town Branch Creek, Tahlequah, OK

With this data the association is then able to create a database of their own that will help establish the amount of pollutant in the waterbody. Certain issues may be more easily identifiable after a routine monitoring schedule has been established and changes become

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed
Step 5: Collect Information Relevant to the Issues

apparent. Gathering your own data acts as an early warning system which presents an opportunity to get a jump-start on protection efforts. This data should be publically available.

Public Knowledge

Much will be learned from people by listening to their thoughts and opinions. They are interacting in the watershed and witnessing activities that affect water quality in the community. Understanding public knowledge, motivations, commitments, actions, and behaviors is helpful when addressing watershed issues. There are a variety of ways to collect information:

- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Meetings
- ✓ Focus groups
- ✓ Questionnaires
- ✓ Direct observation
- ✓ Local stories from people

Understanding the public's response is necessary to accurately relate their thoughts to the issues. Ensure that questions and discussions are presented in a manner that respect people's beliefs, values, and attitudes. *Beliefs* are feelings that something is correct or true. *Values* are what one feels is important. *Attitudes* are feeling a good/bad or positive/negative response rather than logic or investigation. Learning about public perceptions offers a strong predictor regarding future behaviors, new ideas, courses of action or social change.

You cannot protect what you do not know, educating yourself with watershed facts is the most effective way to solve issues and conduct outreach. The association should communicate with future members regarding what is being learned. Information you collect should be reliable, credible, and complete; your association will present this information to the public and professionals. This step takes patience and persistence, but information learned will benefit the future of your association.

Step 6: Present Issues to Future Members Using Outreach

Future members need to know how issues impact the quality of life in their watershed. The association will present research and results through outreach education. It provides literature and activities to enhance watershed knowledge in a manner easily understood by diverse people. Refer to Outreach Resources in Appendix 4.3 for more information. Developing outreach involves understanding future members' knowledge and concerns of issues. Gather information about public interaction in the watershed. Consider the following questions to learn more about public perspectives:

- ✓ Who do people trust?
- ✓ How do people use the watershed?
- ✓ Where do people get their information?
- ✓ What are the public's attitudes, values, and beliefs?
- ✓ What are key local activities in the watershed?
- ✓ What do people value in the watershed?
 - Quality of life – clean community
 - Health – human, wildlife, environment, water quality
 - Heritage – preserve cultural resources for future generations
 - Economics– conserve natural resources to benefit economy and public interests

Answers come from public meetings, outreach efforts, and continuous engagement in the watershed. Develop an understanding of how issues affect people lives to create an effective outreach message. Create a message that motivates action, knowledge, and attitudes needed to obtain change. Ensure it is easy-to-read and appealing to generate interest. Consider the following questions to develop message objectives:

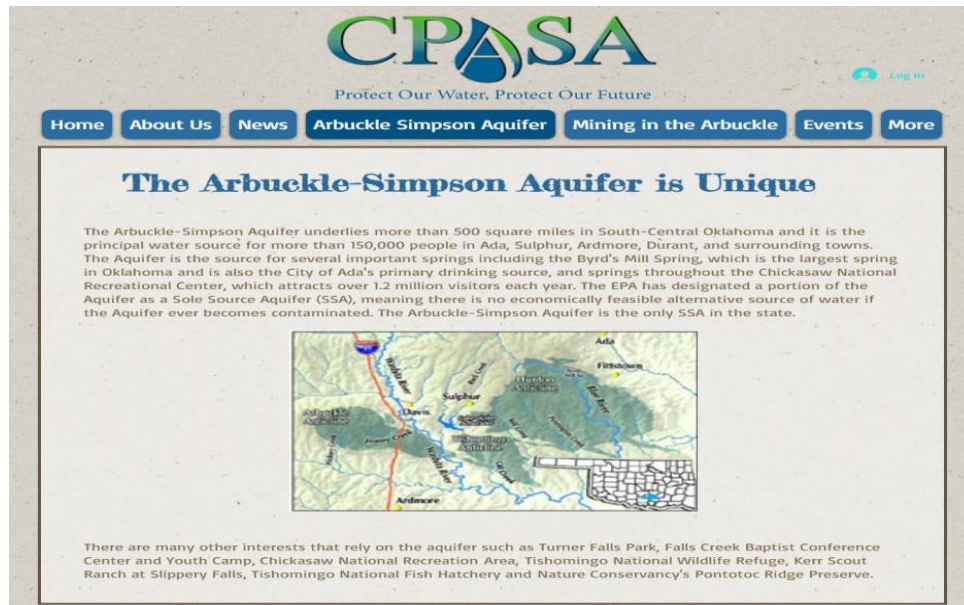
- ✓ What is the current issue we intend to address?
- ✓ How will achieving the outcome impact the future?
- ✓ What behaviors need to change to achieve the outcome?
- ✓ What knowledge do people need to change behavior?
- ✓ Which outreach material will best present the issue?

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed

Step 6: Present Issues to Future Members Using Outreach

- ✓ What resources are required to achieve the outcome?
- ✓ What language and messages motivate people?

Members will most likely take action when presented with an issue that directly impacts their lives.



Source: Citizens for the Protection of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer website: <https://www.cpasane.net/arbuckle-simpson-aquifer>

Make it clear that member action is necessary to solve issues with support from reliable research and data. Emphasize irreplaceable resources and clearly explain issues. The following questions may guide efforts to describe issues:

- ✓ Who is affected by issues - where do they live, work, and play
- ✓ How will solving issues help people locally and regionally?
- ✓ How will solving issues help people in their everyday lives?
- ✓ What are social, economic, and environmental indicators of the issues?
- ✓ What are likely consequences if nothing is done to resolve the issues?
- ✓ What are actual or projected costs linked to the issues?
- ✓ What other projects address the issues?

People may be sensitive to certain issues; take care to ensure that facts, not opinions, are presented in a non-offensive manner.

Section 2 – Issues in Your Watershed
Step 6: Present Issues to Future Members Using Outreach

Types of Material to Present

Members want to have fun while learning new information about their watershed. Get creative when designing your outreach material. Use vibrant colors and attractive pictures. Brainstorm with the association which material type effectively conveys appropriate information to future members. Keep within your budget and develop a plan for distribution actions. Remember to think quality not quantity. Following is a list of popular outreach material types:

- ✓ Flyers
- ✓ Facebook/Instagram
- ✓ Pamphlets
- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Testimonials
- ✓ GIS modelling
- ✓ Demonstrations
- ✓ Displays at events
- ✓ Prompts (signs, stickers, posters)
- ✓ Public presentations from professionals



Crow Creek Community Newsletter

The most effective outreach is the actual waterbody. Allowing people to get their feet wet provides an opportunity to visualize threats and express an emotional connection to the watershed.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pennington-Creek/153309854681118>

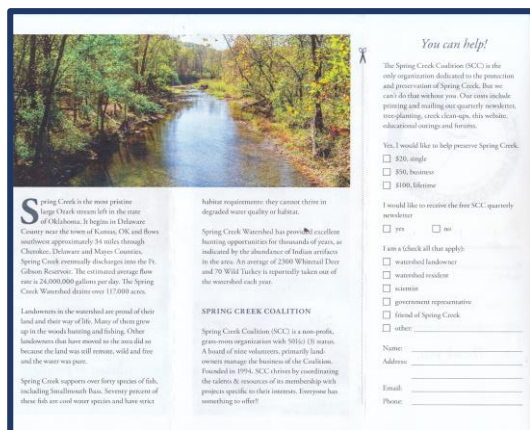
Section 3 - Association Actions

At this point your association has everything it needs to operate: A Board of Directors to make decisions, knowledge about watershed issues, and a means to communicate issues. The association's future depends on member involvement. Members may want to improve the quality of life in the watershed through partnerships and taking action. Others may simply want to attend events at their convenience.

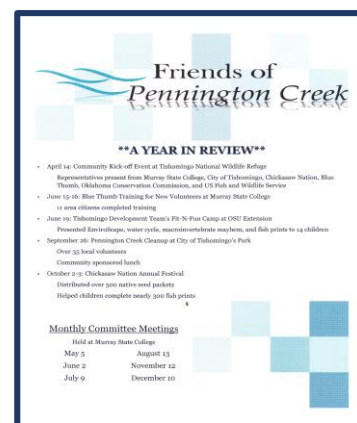
Steps included in this section are as follows:

- ✓ Step 7 – Recruit Members
 - How to Recruit
 - How to Organize a Member Recruitment Meeting
 - How to Motivate
- ✓ Step 8 – Organize and Complete the Kick-off Meeting
- ✓ Step 9 – Evaluate Efforts
 - How to Evaluate Success
 - Existing Watershed Association Survey

At this point your association may want to confirm that you are on the path towards success. Refer to Appendix 1.3 to Re-affirm Association Development Steps. It provides nine key points as a reminder of the general development process.



Spring Creek Coalition Membership Flyer



Friends of Pennington Creek Newsletter

Step 7: Recruit Members

Members are anyone and they are everywhere. These people may have limited time to contribute; however, they attend meetings and support the mission. They raise awareness about issues that may otherwise go unnoticed and conduct outreach. They may help increase monetary support and muscle power. Members opinions and thoughts are necessary to ensure decision-making processes involve public perspectives. It is important to contact people who may be skeptical or defensive. This may be a difficult task, but offering an opportunity to voice concern may be just what it takes to gain their support. Let them know they provide useful facts and opinions necessary to identify watershed issues. Involving people from various backgrounds ensures association efforts are more acceptable to the community; in turn, establishing future success for the association. This step will help you determine how and where to recruit, as well as, provide ways to increase member motivation.

How to Recruit

Get creative and develop your member recruitment activities specific to your watershed. Hold events that are educational and entertaining for all ages. Existing recruitment methods include:

- ✓ Plantings
- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Direct contact
- ✓ Games / contests
- ✓ Distributing flyers
- ✓ Field trips / site visits
- ✓ Water quality monitoring events
- ✓ Promotions from local businesses
- ✓ Advertisement in a local newspaper
- ✓ Advertisement on a local radio station
- ✓ Advertisement on a local news station
- ✓ Demonstrations
- ✓ Trash clean-ups
- ✓ Canoe / kayak trips
- ✓ Handing out brochures
- ✓ Testimonials from members
- ✓ Educational events for schools
- ✓ Lake boat cruise / Stream walks
- ✓ Prompts (signs, stickers, posters)
- ✓ Festivals that promote the watershed
- ✓ Public presentations from professionals
- ✓ Presentation at a homeowner's association meeting

Section 3 – Association Actions

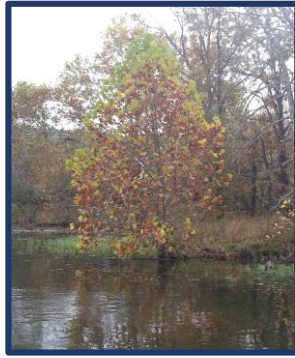
Step 7: Recruit Members

If you experience difficulty and only minor success with member recruitment efforts, don't give up. Remember this: your efforts are not a sign of failure, but rather a means to re-evaluate your actions and try new techniques. Stay positive and consider this innovative opportunity as a chance to recruit members in various locations. The more you put yourself out there, the better chance of recruiting members.

Where to Recruit

Where you recruit depends on where members are located, as well as, suggestions from your association. Take advantage of communicating with people and distributing outreach material as a way to visit the entire watershed. There are an endless variety of places to recruit, including:

- ✓ Parks
- ✓ Festivals
- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Public events
- ✓ Neighborhoods
- ✓ The waterbody
- ✓ Local businesses



- ✓ Farmer's market
- ✓ Public access areas
- ✓ City hall meetings
- ✓ Community building
- ✓ Schools / universities
- ✓ Non-profit group meetings
- ✓ Community events

Members need more than information, they need opportunities to make a difference, to express their concerns, and to get involved. Holding a public meeting allows people to discuss issues that have an impact in their lives.

How to Organize a Member Recruitment Meeting

The goal for this meeting is to recruit members and gather public perspectives. Every person brings important information and ideas conveyed through friendly conversation. Their opinions reflect views about how the public uses and values the watershed. You want people to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts; ensure they feel welcomed, valued, and respected.

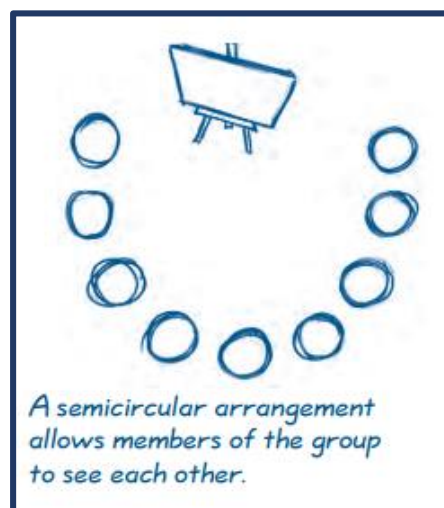
Section 3 – Association Actions

Step 7: Recruit Members

Holding a town friendly meeting in an open environment ensures all viewpoints are heard and discussed. Being prepared and organized will ensure a successful meeting; refer to Appendix 1.4 for a helpful Meeting Checklist. Keep in mind the following tips for a successful meeting:

- ✓ Promote future meetings
- ✓ Introduce the watershed
- ✓ Clarify expectations for members
- ✓ Ask people to introduce themselves
- ✓ Find a secretary to take discussion notes
- ✓ Ask questions to engage people in conversation
- ✓ Ask people why they decided to attend the meeting
- ✓ Recruit at least 3-7 people to help organize the meeting
- ✓ Strategically place the seating arrangement to provide a “conversation” setting
- ✓ Confirm that the meeting is an opportunity to discuss issues; voting and decisions will not be addressed

Think about those who attend as fitting into groups: committed members, curious, uncommitted, convince me. Structure the meeting so that sufficient information is provided to all groups. An important point to remember is that every member must feel that their opinions are appreciated.



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Section 3 – Association Actions

Step 7: Recruit Members

How to Motivate

Members need incentives and recognition to keep them interested in promoting the association.

Recognize contributions from each individual, no matter how small. The following is a list of ways to say “Thank You”:

- ✓ T-shirts
- ✓ Awards
- ✓ Gift Certificates
- ✓ Outstanding service
- ✓ Drawings for prizes
- ✓ Volunteer of the month / year
- ✓ Beautiful photos of the watershed
- ✓ Number of years of service award
- ✓ Saying, writing, or emailing a sincere thank you
- ✓ Recognition at an event, dinner, lunch, or social gathering

These incentives should also be given to volunteers who donate their time to promote outreach efforts. Awarding a sincere appreciation for a job-well-done makes members and volunteers feel proud to be a part of your watershed association.

Step 8: Organize and Complete the Kick-off Meeting

The kick-off meeting is meant to attract new members and volunteers. Of course, a regular indoor meeting is always an option. But let's be honest, people who are interested in the waterbody will want to get outside and your association is able provide that opportunity. Promoting the association's mission and presenting issues in a friendly, natural environment enhances a watershed connection. You want this meeting to be as entertaining as possible. Consider hosting activities that engage people in a hands-on style. This is your association's opportunity to create the most interesting event your community has ever seen. Provided are meeting examples:

- ✓ host a new annual event
- ✓ water activities for kids
- ✓ concert with local artists
- ✓ watershed trash clean-up
- ✓ contests for various games
- ✓ presentations about watershed issues
- ✓ water races with various floating gear
- ✓ auction items that represent the watershed
- ✓ festival with booths showcasing unique watershed characteristics
 - geology
 - water quality
 - historic features
 - beautiful locations
 - uses of the waterbody
 - fish, wildlife, and plant species



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Make certain that your meeting is well organized, involves various watershed aspects, brings people to the waterbody, and is interactive for all people regardless of age or social status. Recruit food and beverage donations to entice people to attend. Don't forget to present past and current outreach efforts. It's time to celebrate your hard work and achievements conquered over the last several months. This meeting should be **FUN FOR EVERYONE!**

Step 9: Evaluate Efforts

Evaluation refers to measuring the VALUE of association efforts. A great deal of time and energy is spent establishing an association, addressing issues, and conducting outreach.

Evaluation is a way to better understand results of your association's actions. Evaluation efforts are not limited to:

- ✓ monitoring projects
- ✓ education and outreach projects
- ✓ extent of agreement reached among members
- ✓ implementation of restoration projects
- ✓ specific problems in the watershed
- ✓ meeting effectiveness

Evaluate ALL association actions to ensure that your efforts are beneficial to the community and association. Evaluation will help identify and define outcomes that may arise from outreach efforts. Simultaneously evaluate as you conduct activities to document effort effectiveness and to enhance watershed knowledge. Document measurements of success to encourage member motivation and reassure funding sources that they contribute to a useful association. Refer to Appendix 1.5 for a three-page questionnaire Assessing Your Organization. As a watershed group progresses, members should continue asking themselves:

1. Where are we now?
 - ✓ What stage is our association currently in?
2. Where do we want to be?
 - ✓ What future tasks do we focus on?
3. How do we get there?
 - ✓ What tasks need completed in order to achieve goals?
 - ✓ Are actions occurring that obstruct success?
4. How will we measure our progress?
 - ✓ Planning Evaluation
 - ✓ Impact Evaluation



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Continuous evaluation ensures that outreach objectives are met and keeps activities sharply defined. In a sense, your association has to answer to itself.

How to Evaluate Success

A successful evaluation program requires originality, different perspectives from members, and insight from available sources. Organized evaluation techniques are built upon precise planning and measuring outreach results.

Planning and Impact

Planning evaluations assess a likelihood that outreach efforts will achieve objectives within a scope of schedules, budgets, and resources. This sort of outreach focus approach includes:

- ✓ determine whether sound objectives were developed
- ✓ target audience was properly identified
- ✓ appropriate messages were crafted

This evaluation occurs prior to beginning an activity. Care must be taken when designing evaluation tools to ensure objectives are met. Refer to Appendix 1.6 Outreach Evaluation Questions for steps to ensure your objective was received as intended.

Impact evaluations are directly tied to objectives and assess outreach outcomes. This type of evaluation measures outreach effectiveness on a target audience by asking, “To what extent did we achieve our objective?”. There are a variety of ways to assess your efforts. A few options include:

- ✓ amount of material distributed
- ✓ number of attendees at an event
- ✓ increased knowledge of an issue
- ✓ repeat participation in an activity
- ✓ changes in perceptions and beliefs
- ✓ continually monitor volunteer satisfaction



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Handbook for developing watershed plans to restore and protect our waters.

Resources – Oklahoma Watershed Association Contact Information

- ✓ actual measurement of water quality improvements
- ✓ assessing knowledge before and after outreach efforts
- ✓ volunteer training or monitoring pre- and post-evaluations

A common impact evaluation tool is to compare behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs of the target audience before and after outreach efforts begin. Document your efforts through pictures, videos, and accurate notes. Design pre-evaluations with the objective in mind. Research lessons learned from existing watershed association efforts and compare to your efforts. Refer to Appendix 2 Watershed Associations “Lessons Learned” for reasons why existing associations have succeeded or failed.

Resources

Oklahoma Watershed Association Contact Information

The Watershed Movement

Email: Kim@watershedmovement.com

Website: <https://watershedmovement.org/>

Facebook Page – The Watershed Movement

Instagram: The Watershed Movement

Twitter: @WatershedsMove

Mission Statement:

The purpose of The Watershed Movement is to inspire and educate people to care for watersheds and create projects that benefit watersheds. Reconnecting people with watersheds is important for the continued protection of our land and water resources achieved through education, consultation, inspiration, and environmental protection.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



Save the Illinois River

Contact: (918) 284-9440

24369 E 757 Rd.,

Tahlequah, OK 74464

Website: <http://www.illinoisriver.org/>

Facebook Page – Save the Illinois River, STIR

Mission Statement:

To protect and preserve the Illinois River, its tributaries, and Tenkiller Lake.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



Crow Creek Community

Facebook Page – Crow Creek Community



Spring Creek Coalition

Contact: (918) 906-6762

2434 E. 56th Pl

Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

Email: info@springcreekok.org

Website: <http://springcreekok.org>

Mission Statement:

To unite as citizens and actively engage in the preservation of the Spring Creek Watershed.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Friends of Town Branch Creek

Email: townbranchcreek@gmail.com

Website: <https://friendsoftownbranchcreek.weebly.com/>

Mission Statement:

To preserve the unique biology and aesthetic value of Tahlequah's Town Branch Creek watershed through public outreach and involvement.



Friends of Bishop Creek

Contact: (405) 650-5434

1506 Morland Ave

Norman, Oklahoma

Facebook Page – Friends of Bishop Creek



Friends of Pennington Creek

Email: Candice.miller@conservation.ok.gov

Facebook Page – Friends of Pennington Creek

Greater Tenkiller Association

Contact: 918-457-4403

PO Box 245,

Cookson, OK, 74427

Website: <http://www.laketenkiller.com/>

Facebook Page: GreaterTenkillerAreaAssociatio



Grand Lake O' the Cherokees Watershed Alliance Foundation

Contact: P. O. Box 451185,
Grove, OK 74345
Email: glwafadmin@gmail.com
Website: <http://glwaf.org/index.html>

Mission Statement:

Assist in preserving, protecting, and restoring water quality in the 10,298 square mile, over 500,000 population, Grand Lake Watershed.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



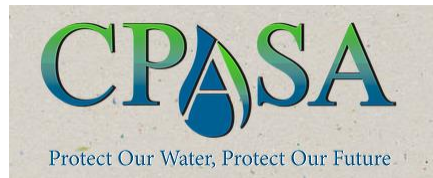
Lake McMurry Friends

Contact: 405-747-8085
Email: info@lakemcmurtry.com
Website: <http://www.lakemcmurtry.com/>
Facebook Page: Lake McMurry

Mission Statement:

The mission of Lake McMurry Friends is to enhance, promote, and operate Lake McMurry Natural Resource and Recreation Area in a sustainable manner while providing a high quality outdoor experience for the benefit of the public.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization



People for the Protection of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer

Contact: 580-371-6446
P.O. Box 891,
Tishomingo, OK 73460
Email: cpasa288@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.cpasanet/>
Facebook Page: CPASA

Mission Statement:

The purposes of this organization is to:
Preserve and protect the springs and waterways of the Arbuckle Simpson Aquifer; Promote understanding of these important water sources through education and community action; Prevent threats of these water sources by waste, pollution or transfer to other areas through formal protests, testimony and other efforts; and Cooperate with people and groups in other counties promoting similar missions.

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Oklahoma Contacts:

Blue Thumb (Oklahoma Conservation Commission)

4545 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Phone: 405-334-6343

Website: <http://www.bluethumbok.com/>

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture

4456 Kerr Rd, Poteau, OK 74953

Phone: 918-647-9123

Website: <http://kerrcenter.com/>

Mesonet

120 David L. Boren Blvd., Suite 2900, Norman, OK 73073

Phone: 405-325-2541

Website: <https://www.mesonet.org/>

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

800 N Lincoln Blvd # 160, Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Phone: (405) 521-2384

Website: <https://www.ok.gov/conservation/>

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture

800 N Lincoln Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Phone: 405-521-3864

Website: <http://www.oda.state.ok.us/>

Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality

707 N Robinson, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Phone: 405-702-0100

Website: <https://www.deq.ok.gov/water-quality-division/watershed-planning/>

Resources – Oklahoma Contacts

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
2145 NE 36th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111
Phone: 405-521-3855
Website: <http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/>

Oklahoma Clean Lakes and Watershed Association
Website: <http://www.oclwa.org/index.php>

Oklahoma Water Resources Board
3800 N. Classen, Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Phone: 405-530-8800
Website: <http://www.owrb.ok.gov/>

Oklahomans For Responsible Water Policy
PO Box 1061, Antlers, OK 74523
Phone: 580-420-3040
Website: <http://www.orwp.net/>

The Nature Conservancy
10425 South 82nd East Avenue, Suite 104, Tulsa, OK 74133
Phone: 918-585-1117
Website:

http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/oklahoma/index.htm?siteInks=OklahomaTNC&src=sea.AWP&gclid=CM24473ctdACFYI8gQod_qEPyA

The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation
2510 Sam Noble Parkway, Ardmore, OK 73401
Phone: 580-223-5810
Website: <https://www.noble.org/>

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Phone: 918-669-7366

Website: <http://www.swt.usace.army.mil/>

United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

100 USDA, Suite 206, Stillwater, OK 74074

Phone: 405-742-1204

Website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/ok/home/>

United States Department of Agriculture

Southern Regional Water Program

Website: <http://srwqis.tamu.edu/oklahoma/program-information/contacts-in-oklahoma/>

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

9014 E 21st St, Tulsa, OK 74129

Phone: 918-581-7458

Website: <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/>

United States Geological Survey

Oklahoma Water Science Center

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192

Phone: 703-648-5953

Websites: <http://ok.water.usgs.gov/>

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ok/nwis/>

Oklahoma State University

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

139 Agricultural Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078

Phone: 405-744-5398

Website: <http://www.oces.okstate.edu/>

Oklahoma Low Impact Development

Website: <http://lid.okstate.edu/>

Oklahoma Water Resources Center

139 Ag Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078

Phone: 405-744-5615

Website: <http://water.okstate.edu/>

The University of Oklahoma

Oklahoma Climatological Survey

120 David L. Boren Blvd., Suite 2900, Norman, OK 73072

Phone: 405-325-2541

Website: <http://climate.ok.gov/>

Oklahoma Biological Survey

111 E. Chesapeake St., Norman, OK 73019

Phone: 405-325-4034

Website: <http://www.oknaturalheritage.ou.edu/>

Oklahoma Geological Survey

100 East Boyd St., Suite N131, Norman, OK 73019

Phone: 405-325-3031

Website: <http://www.ou.edu/ogs.html>

Oklahoma Water Survey

301 David L. Boren Blvd., Four Partners Place, Ste 3030, Norman, OK 73072

Website: <http://oklahomawatersurvey.org/>

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Checklists

- 1.1 Community Readiness Quiz
- 1.2 Identify Founding Board of Director Skills and Resources
- 1.3 Re-affirm Association Development Steps
- 1.4 Meeting Checklist
- 1.5 Assessing Your Organization
- 1.6 Outreach Evaluation Questions

Appendix 2. Existing Watershed Association’s “Lessons Learned”

Appendix 3. Additional Resources

- 3.1 GIS Resources
- 3.2 Informational Resources
- 3.3 Outreach Resources

Appendix 1.1 - Community Readiness Quiz

Community Readiness			
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1. Is water quality or quantity a topic of informal discussions when residents get together?	1	2	3
2. Do people talk about swimming, boating, and fishing in local waters?	1	2	3
3. In the last year or so, has your watershed been in the news? Have there been newspaper, radio or TV stories, letters to the editor and opinion pieces about flooding or local water quality/quantity problems?	1	2	3
4. Do you have one or more local groups that feel passionate about the environment and are involved in activities to improve it?	1	2	3
5. Are residents "showing up" at planning board, town council, or county supervisor meetings and expressing concern about the impact of development on the environment?	1	2	3
6. Are leaders and staff of agencies and organizations promoting watershed management planning and are they willing to listen to and involve citizens?	1	2	3
7. Are farmers and landowners searching for solutions to soil and nutrient loss to reduce input costs and retain soil productivity?	1	2	3
8. Do you have business leaders who want to draw new business to the region and see water resources as a valuable amenity?	1	2	3
9. Do the people in the watershed drink the water from their watershed region?	1	2	3
10. Has a water crisis occurred in the last 5 years (flooding, drought, accidental chemical spills, discovery of an endangered species)?	1	2	3
11. Is the watershed on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 303d impaired waters list? (This watershed is a prime candidate for state and federal regulation and intervention.)	1	2	3

If you answered "yes" to any of the following questions, your community is ready for an association. If you answered "yes" to a majority of the questions, you may consider developing an association soon. If the majority of answers are "Don't Know", more information is needed about watershed issues. Courtesy of:

[http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/watersheds_manual/contents/WatershedManual\(RevisedMay2006\).pdf](http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/watersheds_manual/contents/WatershedManual(RevisedMay2006).pdf)

Appendix 1.2 - Identify Founding Board of Director Skills and Resources

Identifying Stakeholder Skills and Resources

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Skills/resources	If you possess these skills or have access to these resources	Comments
Skills In Stakeholder Group		
Accounting		
Graphic design		
Computer support		
Fund-raising		
Public relations		
Technical expertise (e.g., geographic information systems, water sampling)		
Facilitation		
Other		
Other		
Resources Available		
Contacts with media		
Access to volunteers		
Access to datasets		
Connections to local organizations		
Access to meeting facilities		
Access to equipment (please describe)		
Access to field trip locations		
Other		
Other		
Other		

Please identify any other skills or resources you bring to the group:

Courtesy of: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/membersguide.pdf>

Appendix 1.3 - Re-affirm Association Development Steps

1. One person who is passionate about the watershed and willing to talk to others about it acts as a catalyst. The actions of this one person (it could be a Soil and Water Conservation District commissioner, your neighbor, a school teacher, a student, you or me) connect others who care about local water issues.
2. As a result, a core planning group develops to prepare a community-wide information meeting. This community meeting is not just called in "crisis" situations but when-ever citizens want to get together to improve their watershed or see symptoms that could lead to water quality or quantity problems.
3. A community-wide meeting is held for people to exchange with each other what they know about their watershed and how they view it.
4. A voluntary watershed group of self-selected citizens meet regularly around a growing vision of their watershed. This vision is created through building personal knowledge of their watershed and reflectively thinking about its past, present and future.
5. Experts are invited to share the science of the ecological system and technical responses so that the watershed group and community at large can build personal knowledge for evaluating problems, proposing alternatives and solutions.
6. The watershed group develops a clear mission statement with objectives to guide action and puts in place a leadership structure for guiding group activities.
7. The group frequently communicates to the whole watershed community what the group is learning and doing as well as continually extends invitations for others to join and participate.
8. Watershed citizens undertake activities that support the community vision and the watershed group intent and mission.
9. The group continually engages their environment, strengthening relationships and knowledge about: social (schools, developers, land use rules and regulations); political (elected commissioners, supervisors-taxation, rules and regulations); environment (flooding, excessive bacteria counts, high nitrogen levels) and works with the community to seek solutions. The group negotiates, leverages, cajoles, and cooperates with others to achieve the community watershed vision.

Courtesy of:

[http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/watersheds_manual/contents/WatershedManual\(RevisedMay2006\).pdf](http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/watersheds_manual/contents/WatershedManual(RevisedMay2006).pdf)

Appendix 1.4 – Meeting Checklist

Meeting Checklist

Meeting Name: _____

1. Determine the meeting purpose.
2. Determine the expected outcome of the meeting.
(*What do you want people to gain from the meeting?*)
3. Select a convenient date and time (start and end).
Date/time _____ to _____ location _____
4. Select a “neutral” meeting location. _____
5. Develop an agenda.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
6. Announce the meeting with plenty of notice (at least two weeks prior).
Announce meeting by: _____
7. Circulate the agenda so a few founding members have the opportunity to suggest modifications. Circulate to: _____

8. Select someone to facilitate the meeting (make introductions, closing comments, etc).

9. Select a note recorder. _____
10. Arrange the room so that everyone can take part in discussions.

Courtesy of: [http://www.wvca.us/wvwn/pdf/WVWN Watershed Manual Directory.pdf](http://www.wvca.us/wvwn/pdf/WVWN_Watershed_Manual_Directory.pdf)

Appendix 1.5 – Assessing Your Organization

Assessing Your Organization

The following self-assessment incorporates a number of organizational “Best Management Practices” taken from various articles, publications and studies on nonprofit organizations. While this checklist is designed for staffed organizations, many of the practices also apply to all-volunteer groups.

By Pat Munoz
River Network

Give yourself a score of 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest) for each item. Then total your points for each category. The highest possible score for each category is 24.

Governance (Board of Directors)

- The board is diverse in terms of age, gender, race, talents, and other pertinent criteria and clearly represents the organization’s constituencies.
- The board consists of at least eight active board members.
- The roles of board and staff are clear and separate.
- There are stated terms limits for board members which are adhered to.
- There is ongoing recruitment of new board members based on an assessment of current board needs.
- Board meetings are well attended and well run with agendas, minutes, reasonable time limits and clear follow-up and decision-making mechanisms.
- There is an orientation process for training new board members.
- The board supports the Executive Director and gives him/her appropriate decision-making authority (does not micromanage).

SCORE

Financial Management

- The organization has an annual income and expense budget based on past performance that reflects the plans and activities of the organization.
- The board approves the annual budget and reviews financial statements regularly.
- There is an accounting system in place which gives an understandable, up-to-date picture of the financial situation.
- The organization usually meets its budgetary targets.
- There is an annual outside review of finances (e.g., an audit or formal independent review) which is reviewed by the board.
- The organization has a cash reserve for emergencies and policies governing its use.
- There is a system of internal controls to prevent misuse of funds.
- There is adequate insurance coverage.

SCORE

cont. on page 28

Assessing Your Organization, cont.

cont. from page 27

Staff Management

- The board hires the Executive Director; the Executive Director hires staff.
- The organization has written personnel policies.
- Staff members have written, up-to-date job descriptions.
- Salaries (and benefits) are regularly evaluated to insure that they are adequate to attract and retain qualified staff.
- Staff members are provided opportunities for input into the organization's decision-making/planning process.
- Staff members have the resources (space, equipment, technology) needed to carry out their jobs.
- Staff members are regularly evaluated and given feedback by the Executive Director (or their supervisor); the Executive Director is regularly evaluated and given feedback by the board.
- Staff members have opportunities to receive training to expand their capabilities.

SCORE

Program, Planning and Evaluation

- The organization has a written mission statement that clearly expresses its purpose and which is revisited annually.
- Staff, board and other leaders in the organization understand and can articulate the mission.
- There is a written annual program plan clearly reflecting the mission, approved by the board and containing measurable goals and objectives.
- Staff have work plans and measurable goals that reflect the annual plan.
- Board, staff and other important stakeholders get together and evaluate the organization's performance annually.
- There is a long-term vision and a three- to five-year strategic plan put together jointly by the board and staff.
- The organization is committed to gathering feedback from its constituencies to use in shaping its programs and plans.
- Partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborations are used to leverage opportunities and strengthen the organization's ability to achieve its mission.

SCORE

Fundraising

- The organization has a fundraising "culture"; everyone (including board, staff and volunteers) is expected to help raise funds.
- There is a written fundraising plan that identifies realistic goals, funding sources and tasks, assigns responsibility and outlines a fundraising calendar/timeline.
- The funding base is diverse—with no more than one-third of income coming from any one source (such as foundations or government grants).
- All funders/donors are thanked promptly (within a week) and recognized in the newsletter, annual report or by other means.
- There is fundraising expertise on the board and/or staff.
- All board members make a personally significant annual financial contribution.
- Individual members/donors are asked to give several times a year.
- There is a system (preferably computerized) for tracking donations.

SCORE

Assessing Your Organization, cont

Volunteer Management

- There is a plan and goals for working with volunteers.
- Volunteers are recruited systematically.
- There are job descriptions for volunteers.
- Volunteers' skills and expectations are carefully matched with organizational needs.
- There is effective support and training for volunteers.
- Volunteers are given regular feedback on their performance.
- Volunteers are thanked and recognized for their contributions.
- Volunteers are given input into the organization's decision-making/planning process.

SCORE

Public Communications

- The organization's target constituencies and funders, including critical decision-makers, are well informed about its program, goals and accomplishments.
- There are effective printed materials (newsletters, brochures, annual reports) for distribution to the public.
- There is an attractive, informative, up-to-date website.
- Staff or board speak regularly to other groups and make presentations at public meetings where relevant issues are discussed.
- Members of the organization know key officials and leaders in the community.
- The organization gets media coverage regularly and tracks this coverage.
- The organization uses computers, email and electronic media to streamline communications with its members and stakeholders.
- The organization regularly solicits community/stakeholder feedback and acts upon that feedback.

SCORE

TOTAL SCORE:

SCORING:

A total score of 21-24 points in any category indicates that you are following most of the recommended practices in this area; review your progress annually and share your success and techniques with other groups. A score of 0-10 means you and your board should work to determine the necessary steps to implement some of the best management practices; consider attending a course (or reading a book) on this topic. A score of 11-20 means you are headed in the right direction, but there is still room for improvement; review the missing pieces and determine how and when you can incorporate them into your organization's structure.



Appendix 1.6 – Outreach Evaluation Questions

Outreach Evaluation Questions

Refer to the following questionnaire when developing outreach material.

Step 1: Define goals and objectives

- Are objectives consistent with goals?
- Are objectives specific, measurable, and with time limits?
- Are resources available to accomplish objectives?
- Is the Association able to evaluate if objectives were met?

Step 2: Identify your target audience

- Is the audience for each objective sufficiently defined?
- Is there sufficient data on the target audience?
- How much time is needed to collect data from the audience?

Step 3: Create the message

- Is the message relevant and accessible to the target audience?
- Is the language appropriate to the target audience?
- Is the message specific for each audience?
- Is the message presented in an easy, convenient way?

Step 4: Package the message

- Is the message format appropriate?
- Are resources available to efficiently distribute messages in this format?
- Are there enough materials for the entire target audience?

Step 5: Distribute your message

- Will the planned distribution method reach the target audience?
- Does the material fall within a budget?
- Was material publishing and distribution time considered?

Step 6: Evaluate your outreach plan

- What tools will be used to assess impacts of outreach efforts?
- Who will be responsible for tracking budgets and schedules?
- Will a baseline on target audience behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes be established?
- Are resources available to conduct pre/post survey or other assessments?

Courtesy of: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/files/memborguide.pdf>

Appendix 2 – Existing Watershed Association’s “Lessons Learned”

Success is defined by the longevity and credibility established by the association through its efforts. A well-defined organizational structure involves:

- ❖ ability to monitor or enforce watershed protection
- ❖ broad membership
- ❖ local knowledge
- ❖ effective communication
- ❖ collaborative decision making
- ❖ pooled resources
- ❖ adequate funding
- ❖ shared environmental values between members
- ❖ engage in a limited scope of activities
- ❖ good interpersonal relationships and trust
- ❖ low level of conflict
- ❖ active participation from technically skilled staff from state, federal, local government
- ❖ well-defined rules
- ❖ attainable goals
- ❖ consistent evaluation

Failure is defined as not achieving a goal or objective and an outcome does not meet your expectations. Listed are several reasons why associations do not succeed:

- ❖ unresolved conflict
- ❖ goals or time frames are either unrealistic or poorly defined
- ❖ key interests or decision-makers are not represented
- ❖ lack of commitment
- ❖ unquestioned acceptance of opinions as facts
- ❖ unable to overcome past failures
- ❖ some members stand to benefit more than others
- ❖ partnership isn’t needed because one entity could achieve the goals alone
- ❖ funding runs out
- ❖ lack of consensus
- ❖ lack of motivation
- ❖ opposition from people and public organizations
- ❖ lack of ability to interpret data
- ❖ lack of effort evaluation

Appendix 3.1 - GIS Resources

Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) Data Viewer

Website: <https://gis.deq.ok.gov/maps/>

ESRI ArcExplorer

Website: <https://learn.arcgis.com/en/projects/get-started-with-arcgis-online/>

OKMaps Oklahoma

Website: <http://okmaps.org/ogi/Search.aspx>

Oklahoma Water Resources Board

Website: <http://www.owrb.ok.gov/maps/pmg/DMindex.html>

United States Department of Agriculture

Geospatial Data Gateway

Website: <https://gdg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

United States Geological Survey

Earth Explorer

Website: <http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/>

United States Geological Survey

Oklahoma GIS Information and Data

Website: <http://ok.water.usgs.gov/infodata/gisdata.html>

United States Geological Survey

Oklahoma StreamStats

Website: <http://water.usgs.gov/osw/streamstats/oklahoma.html>

Appendix 3.2 - Informational Resources

Center for Watershed Protection

Website: <http://www.cwp.org/>

Conservation Technology Information Center

Know Your Watershed

Website: <http://www.conservationinformation.com/Know%20Your%20Watershed/>

EPA Healthy Watersheds

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/hwp>

EPA How's My Waterway

Website: www.epa.gov/mywaterway

EPA Office of Water

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water>

EPA Surf Your Watershed

Website: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/state.cfm?statepostal=OK>

EPA Watershed Academy

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy>

Izaak Walton League of America

Website: <http://www.iwla.org/conservation/water>

Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee

Website: <http://www.lmrcc.org/>

National Park Service

Website: <https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

National Watershed Coalition

Website: <http://www.watershedcoalition.org/>

River Network

Website: <https://www.rivernetwork.org/>

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service, Watershed Restoration Program

Website: http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/Watershed_Restoration/overview.shtml

United States Geological Survey

Science in Your Watershed

Website: <http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/index.html>

Water Footprint Network

Website: <http://waterfootprint.org/en/>

The WetNet

Website: <http://thewetnet.net/about/>

Appendix 3.3 - Outreach Resources

A Watershed Sleuth Challenge

EPA National Environmental Education Foundation

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy/grade-k-through-12-watershed-learning-links>

Blue Thumb

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Website: <http://www.bluethumbok.com/>

Kansas Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy

Website: <http://www.kswraps.org/library>

Oklahoma State University 4-H Program

Water Quality Program (4 – H₂O)

Website: <http://4h.okstate.edu/projects/science-and-technology/4-h20-2013-water-quality-and-conservation-kits/4h2o>

Project WET

Website: <http://www.discoverwater.org/>

United States Geological Survey

Science in Your Watershed

Website: http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/wshed_education.html

United States Geological Survey

Water Science School

Website: <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/>

Value of Water Campaign

Website: <http://thevalueofwater.org/mediakit/preview>

WaterEd

Oklahomans For Responsible Water Policy

Website: <http://www.orwp.net/2015/03/watered-helps-quench-thirst-for-knowledge/>

What You Can Do: Healthy Watersheds Projects in Your Area

EPA: Healthy Watersheds Protection

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/hwp/what-you-can-do-healthy-watersheds-projects-your-area>

The Watershed Game

University of Minnesota

Website: <http://www.northlandnemo.org/watershedgame.html>