

GREATER BONNE FEMME WATERSHED INITIATIVE OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION PLAN

This Outreach and Communication (O&C) Plan (Plan) designates a strategy for public information and marketing of the Greater Bonne Femme Watershed Initiative (GBFWI or the Initiative), develops methods and metrics for gauging the efficacy of O&C efforts, and helps to meet the goals of the Initiative and Watershed-Based Plan (WBP).

PLAN GOALS

1. Increase awareness about water quality and watershed issues
2. Strengthen understanding among stakeholders of how land use activities are connected to water quality
3. Encourage BMP implementation for the protection and improvement of water quality
4. Strengthen the community's understanding of how water quality links human, environmental, and ecosystem health

PRIMARY PARTIES

- Boone County, MO
- Greater Bonne Femme Watershed Initiative Implementation Committee
- Outreach and Communication Subcommittee

KEY PROJECT PARTNERS

A diverse background of project partners and member agencies are represented throughout the GBFW. These partners will play a key role in the success of the Initiative and will be particularly integral to the implementation of the O&C Plan. Key project partners that have formal involvement with Boone County include:

- City of Columbia / Boone County Health Department
- Boone County Regional Sewer District
- Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District
- City of Ashland, Missouri
- City of Columbia, Missouri
- Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture
- USGS / Columbia Environmental Research Center
- Columbia Public Schools
- Missouri Conservation Corps
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- Missouri Prairie Foundation

- Missouri River Bird Observatory
 - Missouri Soybean Association
 - Missouri State Parks
 - Missouri Stream Teams
 - The University of Missouri
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
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OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION (O&C) PLAN

1. IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCES

The cornerstone of making meaningful outreach is understanding people who live in and utilize the watershed, their value systems and beliefs regarding natural resources, and the socioeconomic context of the audience.

Key project partners have already been established (above), and surveys from the Return on Environment (ROE) Study Team to date have shown that there are five main target audiences that O&C should cater to:

2. TARGET AUDIENCES:

- Agricultural Producers
- Homeowners, Developers, HOAs
- General Public (Adults)
- Children
- Watershed Visitors

Action Items:

- Create a directory of contacts for key project partners (name, affiliation, role, email, phone number)
- Discuss with key project partners any audience organizations/individuals, or event/signage locations that warrant targeted O&C effort

3. DEVELOP OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS FOR EACH AUDIENCE

The information and outreach methods used by the Outreach and Communication Subcommittee are modeled after the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots and Shoots Program, which puts local communities at the heart of conservation by improving the lives of people, animals, and the environment. The development of deep-rooted, robust outreach programs focuses on fostering

community involvement, values, and pride in resources, and on developing strong water quality understanding and connections to aid the program's success and longevity.

Therefore, the types of programs for this O&C plan will be centered around a “Show-Me” attitude with an emphasis on events and programs with real-life tangible components.

4. TYPES OF PROGRAMS:

- Community Events & Public Meetings
 - Biannual Rock Bridge Memorial State Park Water Quality Monitoring Blitzes
 - Missouri Stream Team Events
 - Mizzou Extension Events
 - Water Festival at Rock Bridge Memorial State Park
 - Farm Demonstrations & Tours
 - Watershed Clean-Ups
 - Presentations at School Events & Fairs
 - Presentations at Other Community Events
 - Creek Week
- Educational Materials & Signage
 - Septic & Lagoon Awareness
 - Agricultural Best Management Practices
 - Native Landscaping & Water Conservation
 - Watershed Signage on Boone County Roadways
 - Storm Drain Marking & Stencils
 - Art Murals & Advertising

- Incentive Programs
 - o Stormwater Champions Program
 - o Water Friendly Recognition Program
 - o SepticSmart Wastewater Program
- Media & Digital Marketing
 - o Cave Watershed Website
 - o Boone County Stormwater Facebook Page
 - o Press Releases

Action Items:

- Develop appropriate materials and deliverables specific to each program
 - o Community Events & Public Meetings
 - Dates & Times, Locations, Frequencies, Event Details
 - o Education Materials & Signage
 - Literature review, draft materials, distribution format, and update frequency
 - o Incentive Programs
 - Program details: The Water Friendly Program will be designed to engage various target audiences, starting with the Agricultural Recognition Program and the Water Friendly Resident program.
 - o Media & Digital Marketing
 - Literature review, draft materials, distribution format, and update frequency
- Create a database of audience contact info to distribute information¹

¹ Email distributions with >50 contacts require coordination with Boone County Information Technology (IT) representatives.

- Synergize with any existing County listservs and supplement from key project partners above

5. IMPLEMENT OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS FOR EACH AUDIENCE

Outreach and communication approaches are dependent on the characteristics of the audience, and there is a wide range of knowledge, traditions, interests, and preferences found throughout the watershed. O&C effort should focus on the use of “Stewardship Language” and minimize the use of technical jargon where possible to effectively convey information to target audiences.

Action Items:

- Hold community events, distribute educational materials, begin incentive programs, and keep up-to-date with media marketing
- Create a master repository for information & events accessible to the public² (cavewatershed.org⁴ page or other digital community engagement platform)

6. DEVELOP METHODS/METRICS FOR GAUGING PLAN EFFICACY

An effective plan should result in increased adoption of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) by community members, a reduction in agricultural inputs, greater engagement and participation in community science and education programs, and the establishment of native vegetation in both natural and human-made environments. Assessing the plan's effectiveness varies depending on the audience, the program, and the strategies implemented.

Action Items:

- Develop appropriate methods and metrics for gauging plan efficacy by goal type and target audience, as applicable.

² Boone County may not digitally promote or otherwise advertise certain types of organizations, and any promotion of organizations or their events should be compliant with Boone County internal policies.

⁴ The website URL will be changing to cavewatershed.boonemo.gov in 2026.

7. EVALUATE PLAN EFFICACY

The voluntary adoption of BMPs and the improvement of water quality are the best ways to quantify the effectiveness of both the information and outreach program and the WBP itself. However, other techniques are equally valuable and can help track progress along the way.

- Action Items:
- Monitor water quality for improvement over time
- Annually survey the various target audiences
- Track email interaction frequency & quality using email marketing software or digital community engagement platform
- Track changes in state/federal conservation reporting for the county (NRCS, NIFA, etc.)*
- Maintain attendance metrics for public events, lectures, and tabling events
- Track O&C program efforts according to Appendix K of the Boone County Watershed-Based Plan (WBP)

8. GROW AND IMPROVE PROGRAMS VIA ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

Following the principles of adaptive management, a well-established outreach and communication program should be periodically evaluated and adjusted to build upon successful programs and campaigns and phase out unsuccessful programs and campaigns. At least annually, this O&C plan should be evaluated for efficacy and accuracy and updated as needed. This update may come in response to O&C Subcommittee meetings, from survey results, from the ROE study results, or at the request of any key project partner, committee, or subcommittee individual.

* To demonstrate adoption of practices that promote water quality and address watershed issues.