Section 2, Chapter 3
Education and Outreach

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Introduction

The recommended projects and conservation practices within this plan are solely up to the stakeholders to implement; therefore, it is essential to prioritize education and local engagement. The goal here is to educate local stakeholders of the value in addressing water quality concerns and empower them to implement and maintain the recommended conservation practices.

Education and outreach efforts focus on engaging landowners, producers, and the supporting community. Topics of education are the creation of this watershed plan and what it entails, existing concerns throughout the watershed, and the potential improvement that recommended projects could have if implemented on stakeholder property. Education and outreach efforts will continue throughout the duration of the plan. This plan requires education, planning, monitoring, meetings, investigations, and follow-up. The purpose of the plan is to address and improve water quality issues, but more importantly, the education, active participation, follow-through, and maintenance of these projects is vital to long-term success.

Existing Opportunities

Various outreach groups and education opportunities already exist within the area to encourage local participation and increase awareness:

- The local library has related presentations and workshops.
- The University of Illinois Extension has helpful links.
- Prairie Club gives presentations about prairies and native plants.
- Driftless Projects Bus Tour by Trout Unlimited and the Driftless Area Restoration Effort

Trout Unlimited and the Driftless Area Restoration Effort hosted the Annual Driftless Projects Bus Tour in October of 2018. They visited nearby projects within the Driftless Area within Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Although not specific to the East Fork Creek watershed, this free opportunity provided examples of stream and watershed projects appropriate for the region with similar topography, land use, and other natural features. Since this is an annual tour, we hope that more will be available in the future. See website for more details. http://www.darestoration.com/

Opportunities of Interest

The stakeholders expressed ideas and interest involving various education and outreach opportunities that ranged from newsletter articles to bus trips and demonstration projects. *Table 3.1* below categorizes these ideas based on new homeowner welcome packets (WP), demonstration projects (DP), education programs (EP), and publications (P).

Table 3.1 Educational Opportunities of Interest

Welcome Packet:

Estimated Timeframe	Quantity	Ref. #	Amendment Description	Suggested Lead	Cash Needed
Year 1	1 clause by first year	WP - 1	Include a "Right to Farm" brochure in the welcome packet for new homeowners so that they will be expected to accept the noises, smells, traffic interruptions, and other aspects of living within a rural, agricultural community.	Lake Carroll Assoc.	$0

Demonstration Projects:

Estimated Timeframe	Quantity	Ref #	Project Description	Suggested Lead	Cash Needed
Year 1-3	2-3 islands by third year	DP - 1	Launch 2-3 floating islands at hatchery pond.	Fishing Club	$15,000
Year 1-10	1 event/year	DP - 2	Conduct educational tours to demonstrate BMP implementation within the watershed and larger region.	Lake Carroll Assoc., Prairie Club, NRCS, JoDaviess Conservation Foundation, Natural Land Institute, Blackhawk Hills Regional Council	$0-3,000/year

Educational Programs*:

Estimated Timeframe	Quantity	Ref #	Program Description	Suggested Lead	Cash Needed
Year 1-10	1 event/year	EP - 1	Offer seed packets to stakeholders, picked by volunteers from local prairies.	Prairie Club	$0
Year 1-10	1 event/year	EP - 2	Offer professional consultation free to homeowners.	Lake Carroll Assoc. HOA	$2,500/year
Year 1-10	1 event/year	EP - 3	Offer rural peer-led workshops to share experience in applying agricultural BMPs.	Agricultural Producers, NRCS, and SWCD Board	$0-$1,500/year
Year 1	1 event	EP - 4	Host a farm-to-table dinner celebrating conservation efforts in the watershed with educational presentation by a Michael Fields Agricultural Institute speaker.	Lake Carroll Assoc.	$3,000**

Year 1-10	1 event/year per club	EP - 5	Invite educational speakers to present at local clubs (women's club, fishing club, golf club).	Lake Carroll Assoc.	$0-$500/year
Year 1-10	1 meeting/year	EP - 6	Conduct a contractor's meeting to educate landscaping companies and other registered vendors of watershed concerns and regulations.	Lake Carroll Assoc. Prairie Club	$0-$500/year

*During each Educational Program, advertise the publications referenced below.
**Cost can be offset by selling tickets for event.

Publications:

Estimated Timeframe	Quantity	Ref #	Publication Description	Suggested Lead	Cash Needed
Year 1-10	1 distribution/ year	P - 1	Distribute to stakeholders the educational fliers found in this chapter and other publications that provide specific, detailed direction with examples for implementing best management practices (via mailings, social media, newsletter).	Lake Carroll Assoc.	$0-$1,500/year
Year 1-10	monthly	P - 2	Publish monthly articles in the LCA newspaper and other local newspapers about each recommended BMP.	Prairie Club	$0
Year 1-10	1 event/ year	P - 3	Offer "how to" guides on managing forest lands.	Prairie Club	$0
Year 1-10	as needed	P – 4	Distribute a Welcome Packet to new homeowners that includes a copy of this plan's Executive Summary.	Lake Carroll Assoc.	$0-$200/year
Year 1	as needed or at each event	P - 5	Provide a website link to this Plan, Executive Summary, and Educational Fliers from this Chapter.		$0

Table 3.2 estimates the minimum and maximum cost for education and outreach for each year depending on availability of knowledgeable volunteers or need to hire professional consultants to provide tours and presentations. In most years, annual costs are estimated to fall between $2,500 and $9,700. Year 1 reflects an additional $3,000 to host a farm-to-table dinner celebrating conservation efforts by rural and residential community members within the watershed (Ref #EP-4). This cost can be offset by ticket sales. Year 3 includes an additional $15,000 to launch three floating treatment wetlands at the hatchery pond as a demonstration project (Ref. #DP-1).

Table 3.2 Cost Summary for Education & Outreach

Year	Minimum Estimated Cost	Maximum Estimated Cost
Year 1	$ 5,500.00	$ 12,700.00
Year 2	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 3	$ 17,500.00	$ 24,700.00
Year 4	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 5	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 6	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 7	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 8	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 9	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Year 10	$ 2,500.00	$ 9,700.00
Total	**$ 43,000.00**	**$ 115,000.00**

The group talked about targeting education efforts towards the Lake Carroll board, community, and maintenance staff; landowners; and surrounding watershed residents, including FFA (Future Farmers of America) groups and outside vendors of pesticide application for the Lake Carroll community. Educating the people and operators who experience the problems and who can make decisions and implement the plans proved to be a priority. The group acknowledged that education should be a continuous process to ensure the stakeholders are acquainted with project updates and progress. Educational and project updates should be communicated through the Lake Carrol Association website, email blasts, social media (i.e. Lake Carroll Association Facebook page), and newspapers.

Stakeholders expressed an interest in staying current on best management practices, which could be accomplished through a series of articles within the LCA newspaper and local newspapers (Ref #: P-2). It was suggested that these articles be sent out for 12 months and shared through multiple media avenues. Newspaper articles may feature how to install a prairie garden, rain garden, vegetated buffer strip, vegetated swale, and buried downspouts, for example. They could highlight the importance of various covenants and bylaws. Successful articles will answer the question, “what’s in it for me?” and address the need to focus on critical areas to thwart the misconception that a person would need to rip up their entire yard and forego enjoyment and use. Another newspaper topic could be appropriate use and application of fertilizers. One resource that could be sent to the stakeholders is the Natural Land Institute’s *Guide to Natural Areas in Northern Illinois* (Ref #: P-4), which can be found online at https://www.naturalland.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Natural_Areas-Guide3_finalfullbook-2.pdf. Visiting these areas may help stakeholders to appreciate native plants slated to be used in some recommended projects such as vegetated swales, filter strips, and rain gardens.

The group also discussed having specific educational programs geared towards registered Association vendors and the rural community. Any contractor or vendor interested in working within the Lake Carroll Association community must first become registered through the Lake Carroll Association office. In order to ensure lawn care and pesticide applicator vendors are educated on the issues and concerns of the watershed, the group suggested that the Association requires all interested vendors to attend an educational meeting about watershed concerns and changes in regulations (Ref #: EP-6). Additionally, the rural community discussed an interest in participating in peer-led education workshops with other local producers that have had success with various best management practices (Ref #: EP-3). We acknowledge that some of the most practiced and knowledgeable people in agricultural production and associated conservation were represented by our stakeholders. Even so, individuals successfully applying our recommendations for this watershed within the region may be able to shed light on some of the obstacles found by local producers. Providing an organized format for discussions could lead to communication between producers who may not otherwise have the opportunity. Example topics of discussion would likely include continual no-till planting, preservation of soil integrity, and successful methods for improving overall farming operations and yields when using conservation practices.

Other outreach and education ideas arose at community meetings. The group expressed a need for "how to" guidance for managing forest lands (Ref #: P-3). Stakeholders also acknowledged potential locations for educational opportunities. The Lake Carroll Clubhouse could host a farm-to-table dinner event and present an educational slide show, bringing to light and celebrating conservation efforts by community members (Ref #: EP-4). Michael Fields Agricultural Institute could provide a speaker for this farm-to-table event. See website for more details on the Institute: http://michaelfields.org/the-institutes-big-brown-barn/. Local outdoor clubs, such as the Women's Club, Fishing Club, and Golf Club, could also host educational speakers to present on selected watershed issues (Ref #: EP-5). Within the region, other locations discussed had potential for demonstrating BMP implementation via tours: the fish hatchery to Lake Carroll's East Marina could demonstrate streambank stabilization with rip rap; the Lost Lake River Conservancy District could showcase turf reinforcement and bank stabilization at Babbling Brook and on a private farm upstream of the lake; the Nature Conservancy at the Nachusa Grasslands in Franklin Grove, IL, could demonstrate various conservation techniques; Candlewick Lake Association in Poplar Grove, IL, could demonstrate vegetated swales and rain gardens; Levings Lake in Rockford, IL, could demonstrate floating islands, filter strips, and constructed wetlands; and dairy and hog operations around Lake Carroll could highlight BMP success/implementation (Ref #: DP-2). One particular farm, Hunter Haven Farms in Pearl City, IL, has installed contour farming, no-till planting, grassed waterways, dry basins, ponds, manure management, and leachate management. Ideally, self-guided tour booklets would be offered at these locations to further assist in education. Moreover, by installing BMPs like filter strips, vegetated swales, riparian buffers, floating islands, and permeable pavers, residents and stakeholders can easily view BMP application nearby and become more aware of their benefits (Ref #: DP-1).

Education Planning

The watershed planning participants met two times to specifically discuss educational opportunities and brainstorm ideas for outreach, plus another time to review associated costs. At these meetings they decided on various communication channels for raising awareness of the watershed issues and watershed plan at-large: word-of-mouth, website updates, email blasts, blog, and social media. Another avenue for communication could be the drafting of a Welcome Packet to be given to all Lake Carroll Association members. The Welcome Packet could include a copy of the watershed plan's executive summary as well as education and benefits of the recommended practices and literature about living in

an agricultural area. On February 28, 2019, a group of stakeholders met to discuss education needs and opportunities for the rural community of the East Fork Creek watershed. On March 9, 2019, the group held another meeting to discuss education needs and opportunities for the residential community of the East Fork Creek watershed. On March 22, 2019, the Lake Carroll Association Board of Directors approved funding for planning, implementing, and educating the public on the watershed plan. June 1, 2019, marked the beginning of the Lake Carroll Association member education process.

Table 3.3 Schedule of Education Meetings and Agenda

Date	**Agenda**	**Completion Status**
February 28, 2019	Choose rural education/outreach opportunities: Setting objectives and short-term/long-term efforts	Completed
March 9, 2019	Choose residential education/outreach opportunities: Setting objectives and short-term/long-term efforts	Completed
Sept 23, 2019	Review education efforts and costs	Completed

Educational Fliers

The following pages contain educational fliers that describe each best management practice prioritized for residential and rural areas within the watershed. These fliers can be used to support education and outreach efforts discussed above.