SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

PROGRAM EVAULATION

Goal for this Project :

Support local decision- making that protects the watershed.

- Create 1998 land use/cover database

- Assess land use cover change

- Forecast future land use

- Facilitate environmentally sound land use practices

AWRI

John Koches
Annis Water Resources Institute
Grand Valley State University
740 West Shoreline Drive
Muskegon, MI 49441

Phone: 616.331.3792
Fax: 616.331.3864
Email: kochesj@gvsu.edu

MSU

Patricia L. Machemer
109 UPLA Building
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1221

Phone: 517.353.9047
Email: machemer@msu.edu

MSU

Robert Walker
Department of Geography
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1221

Phone: 517.432.7058
Email: rwalker@msu.edu

We're on the web!
Www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/sustain

Effective land use planning that draws upon accurate land use data is key to successful watershed management. Partners working to protect the Muskegon River Watershed recognize the need for up-to-date land use and land cover information, as well as tools to make accurate predictions about expected changes in land use. This Project is working to create a current land use and land cover database for the Muskegon River Watershed that is scientifically defensible, readily accessible, and inherently useable.

The project will also develop several tools used to manipulate and visualize this information. These tools are specifically intended to assist local officials, area decision-makers, and land use planners as they contemplate better, more environmentally sustainable land use practices. These tools include:

- a web based interactive Decision Support System
- map atlases for individual townships
- a model forecasting future land use change
- a *Watershed Planning Handbook*,
- and a *Riparian Owner's Guidebook for Watershed Management*.

Inherent in the development of these tools and the subsequent dissemination strategy is a program of self-evaluation. One of the objectives in the Project is to develop and implement several evaluation techniques to track the success of the Project. Effective evaluation techniques provide flexibility so that elements can be modified or supported during the campaign based on the information collected.

There are two major components of the project that will need to be evaluated: the process and the impact of the project.

1. Process evaluations focus on implementation of activities as they relate to budget requirements, schedules, staff resources, and tasks/activities. They determine-
- whether sound objectives were developed,
- target audiences were properly analyzed,
- and if appropriate messages were crafted.

2. Impact evaluations assess the outcome or impacts produced by the campaign and are directly tied to the original objectives. They measure the effect of the project on the target audience by asking to what extent did we achieve our objective? Did the project-
- increase awareness or knowledge of an issue,
- make changes in perceptions or behavior,
- gain repeat participation in a targeted activity or water quality improvements.

There are three components to the evaluation process:

- **Baseline pre-survey–** to collect baseline information from watershed residents on values and awareness of open space issues.

- **Process evaluation-** an internal evaluation of the process used to develop the various land use planning tools.

- **Impact evaluation-** intended to increase the number of sustainable land use choices made in the watershed by local officials and area decision-makers.

Table 1.0 Summary Table of Evaluation Tools To Be Used in the Sustainable Futures Project

Project Task	Evaluation Questions	Tools
BASELINE PRE-SURVEY		
Goals/objectives "To collect baseline information from Muskegon residents on values and awareness of open space issues" **Target audience** Muskegon Watershed residents	• Do Muskegon Watershed residents care about open space and land use planning? • What do Muskegon Watershed residents value in their community?	• Telephone survey to determine baseline awareness of watershed issues and values in the community
PROCESS EVALUATION		
Goals/objectives "To conduct an internal evaluation of the process used to develop the tools" **Target audience** Project Team	• Are the planned activities being implemented according to the schedule? • Is additional support needed? • Are additional activities needed? • Do some activities need to be modified/eliminated? • Are the resources allocated sufficient to carry out the tasks? • Are all of the target audiences being reached? • What feedback has been received, and how does it affect the project?	• Project team fills out individual evaluation forms after team meetings
Goals/objectives "Hold workshops to present the tools to decision-makers" **Target Audience** Decision-makers	• How many participants were at the workshop? • How did they hear about the workshop? • How well was the information presented?	• Review mailing list used to publicize the workshop and availability of tools • Review promotional material used to invite participants • Workshop evaluation form handed out at the conclusion of the workshop
Formats Watershed Planning Handbook	• Is the watershed-planning handbook written in a style that is appealing and easy for decision makers to use?	• Pretest the handbook with a select group of decision makers to review the contents
IMPACT EVALUATION		
Goals/objectives "To increase the number of sustainable land use choices made in the Muskegon River Watershed by local officials and area decision-makers using the products developed by the Sustainable Futures Project."	• Did any of the decision-makers use the tools developed?	• Post survey from workshop attendees to determine if they used the tools • Resource line: track the number of phone calls received from decision makers that ask for assistance in implementing tools