Overview of Extension Agent Training

Working With Watershed Action Groups

Watershed Education Network
CSREES National Water Quality Conference
October 25, 2005
Lexington, KY
What does a typical Extension agent feel like during these uncertain times?
What We Want...

Through sound, innovative training programs, these same agents just might have a different outlook on their work and their colleagues....
Simple Overall Training Goals

- Increase the capacity of Cooperative Extension Agents to meet the changing needs of their clientele
- Share innovative ideas for valuable Extension programming
- Identify areas for regional collaboration
- Explore options for increasing, leveraging, or extorting additional resources
- Have some good, clean fun!
Agent Training – Clemson, SC

- Examining Extension’s Role in Local Citizen Watershed Action Groups: *A Multi-State In-Service Training Workshop for Extension and Sea Grant Professionals*

- States Participating in the Planning:
  - South Carolina
  - North Carolina
  - Georgia
  - Alabama

- When: June 2 & 3, 2004

- Where: Madren Conference Center, Clemson University
Funding Sources

- 406 Regional Coordination Funds
- Additional Travel Money Supplied by Participating States
Training Workshop Objectives:

- Build capacity among Extension agents and specialists to organize new groups or mobilize existing watershed action groups to address issues of mutual concern; and

- Broaden the use of watershed action groups by demonstrating the effectiveness of volunteers in addressing critical water quality issues.
Structure and Content

- General Sessions
- Series of Facilitated Panels:
  - Working with Watershed Action Groups
  - Adopting a Watershed: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly
  - Using Watersheds for Demonstration and Education
  - Handling Controversial Issues
- Field Trips
- Evening Social and Old-Fashioned Southern Barbeque
- Conference Evaluation
What Is a Watershed Action Group?

Introduction by Dick Millward

- President of Friends of Lake Keowee Society
- 1,500-member organization
- Dedicated to better water quality on the Lake
Working With WAGs

- Role playing exercise
  - Lead by Christy Perrin and Eve Brantley
  - Participants had prepared “roles”
  - Designed to explore various scenarios of working with WAGs
Field Trip

- Little Garvin Creek restoration project
  - Simpson Research Farm

- Lake Keowee Projects
  - Shoreline vegetation
  - Periphyton tiles
  - 4 H2O Pontoon Classroom
Networking Reception

- Clemson University Outdoor Classroom
- FOLKS Board of Directors
- CU Administration
Day 2 – Facilitated Panels

- Adopting a Watershed – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
- Using Watersheds for Demonstration and Education
- Handling Controversial Issues
Conclusions

- 61 agents attended
- Participants from SC, NC, AL, GA, FL, and KY
- Evaluations indicated a high level of learning
- Model for future agent trainings in other states and regions
- Need to determine the pressing issues for agents
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