Introduction: A Watershed Program Assessment Tool

- The need for local watershed partnerships will continue to rise.
- Evaluations of these partnerships have transpired in an effort to increase the likelihood of success, but they tend to “miss the mark”.
- Assessment tools that foster learning for improvement need to be created; my thesis will address this need.
Why is there a Need?

• Ideologies of the past have fostered command and control policies that have resulted in public exclusion & legislative deadlock.
• Adaptive governance structures have emerged in response to the inability of traditional institutions to handle these “wicked problems”.
• Watershed Initiatives are organizations, often grassroots, that take on these complex issues in a water quality context.
• Assessment tools to date are typically Outcome oriented.

Program Logic Model: Outcome Assessment

Goals

• To promote the improvement and sustainability of watershed programs while ultimately advancing the quality and effectiveness of environment management.
• Aid watershed support institutions like the U.T. Water Resources Research Center by contributing to their “toolbox”.
Objectives

• Consult the literature
• Develop a watershed assessment tool that addresses the issues of improvement and sustainability
• Apply this tool to the Beaver Creek Watershed Partnership
• Modify and tweak tool according to feedback

Beaver Creek Watershed

• Formed in March of 2003, the effort is "a community-based group of citizens living throughout the watershed, which includes the communities of Gibbs, Halls, Powell, Karns, and Hardin Valley/Solway".
Methods: Assessment Tool

- Review Research Literature and Agency documents
- Personal Interviews with practitioners
  - Theory Triangulation Method
  - Verification
  - Focus Group Evaluation
- Use of Hedelin’s Theory
  - Model gets at the Learn → Improve = Sustainability theme
  - Based on Extensive literature

Methods: Assessment Tool cont.

- Hedelin’s Theoretical Foundation

![Diagram showing Inductive Reasoning and Deductive Reasoning]

Tool Application & Testing

- Why Apply the tool?
  - Practicality
- Why Apply the tool to the Beaver Creek Watershed Partnership?
  - BCW is a mature, ongoing partnership
  - Willingness of the people involved in the partnership
  - There is a real need as there are significant impacts on the water quality in this watershed
  - Location of the watershed is conducive to my research
  - The expressed need for extensive documentation
Methods: Application

• Relevant Document Review
  – Records, correspondence, memoranda, charts, protocols etc.

• Personal Interviews
  – informal conversational interview
  – Snowball sampling

Preliminary Results:
Assessment Tool Matrix

• Structural Assessment: Resilience
  – Institutional capacity
    • Interagency partnerships (diversity) involvement
    • Extent of tools/data availability
    • Policy Influence and/or evidence of behavior outputs (ability to produce results)

Preliminary Results:
Assessment Tool Matrix cont.

• Process Assessment: Participation & Cooperation
  – Contributing to the Process: knowledge & ideological orientation inclusion
  – Generating commitment, legitimacy or acceptance: handling power asymmetries, procedures for inclusion of all relevant actors
  – Stakeholder Capacity: to what extent personal networks & relationships have been formed or pertinent knowledge gained
Preliminary Results:
Assessment Tool Matrix cont.

Process Assessment: Integration
– Across disciplines: integration of knowledge by relevant disciplines, handling different views of knowledge
– Across Values: identification of the most relevant values in relation to current issue

Acknowledgements

• Dr. Dave Ostermeier; Major Professor Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Dept.
• Water Resources Research Center; Tim R. Gangaware
• Julie Mawhorter; PhD Candidate Forestry Dept.
• Roy Arthur; Knox County Watershed Coordinator

Questions?