

*A Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*

## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH SUPPLEMENT

Many Phase I Action Items in the *Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas* relate to education and outreach — critical aspects to creating a long-term commitment to the future of our state’s water resources. Education action items range from K-12 and outside the classroom youth activities to university research and technical programs to prepare the future workforce in water resource career fields. The action items also call for enhanced educational programming for policy makers, community leaders and broadly to all Kansas citizens.

To develop strategies and receive additional stakeholder input on the education and outreach action items, an interagency and interorganizational coordinating team was formed in the fall of 2015. Throughout 2016 the coordinating team hosted a series of outreach meetings to solicit input into the development of statewide education and public outreach materials, and to develop tangible action plans aimed at strengthening Kansans’ knowledge and awareness of water and water-related issues. The following multipart educational strategic framework for target audiences of youth, municipalities, K-12, business entities, community leaders, media and the general public was developed to evaluate the education, communication and outreach action items from the Vision.

# KANSAS WATER

**PRESERVING TODAY. ENSURING TOMORROW.**

### Water Vision Education and Outreach Working Groups

In response to Phase 1 action items of the *Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*, the purpose of the working groups will be to identify needs, develop statewide education and outreach materials, and implement tangible action steps to help all Kansans understand the importance of water and water issues in the state.

### 2016 WORKING GROUP MEETING SCHEDULE

**January 7 • March 10 • May 12 • September 8 • October 6**

All working group meetings will be held at the  
**Kansas Farm Bureau Building,**  
**2627 KFB Plaza, Manhattan, Kansas 66503.**  
 All sessions are on a Thursday and will run from 12:30-3:30 p.m.



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## VISION EDUCATION-RELATED ACTION ITEMS

This document is designed to be a supplement to the statewide *Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas* and provides a strategic framework for addressing the following education-related action items contained in the Vision.

1. Appoint a task force to develop a multi-phased educational proposal for target audiences of K-12, community leaders and media to promote local conservation decisions. Existing educational efforts, programs and activities should be incorporated as appropriate. Ideas to be considered by the task force include:
  - *Implement community facilitation programs, with partners like K-State Research and Extension (KSRE), to develop ownership for local conservation districts.*
  - *Design and implement a statewide curriculum for K-12 on water conservation, building on current resources and knowledge such as Project WET and integrate water conservation into science curriculum, by working with partners such as the Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE) and the Kansas Department of Education.*
  - *Develop additional activities within youth and adult organizations such as 4-H and the K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) system to educate others and promote youth activities related to water conservation.*
2. Create a long-term commitment to water conservation education by designating responsibility for water conservation public information and outreach within agencies of the Water Resources Sub-Cabinet.
  - *Develop continual media plans and message maps related to water conservation and the importance of local engagement to be implemented by multiple partners through all aspects of traditional paid, earned and social media.*
3. Enhance educational programming specifically for state legislators as well as other state officials, the Congressional delegation and local policy makers.
4. Utilize agricultural education and 4-H to encourage young people to develop agricultural programs using water efficient technologies and less water intensive crops or crop varieties through recognition and incentive programs.
5. Develop models for the inclusion of water conservation into the agricultural education curriculum, including classroom, supervised agricultural experience and FFA activities.
6. Encourage the development of community college, technical programs and university programs to prepare the future workforce to work in irrigation efficiency technologies and with necessary expertise in less water intensive crops and crop varieties.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Following are guiding principles which directed the development of this supplement. These guiding principles will continue to serve as precepts for the implementation of the action items.

1. Nothing in this supplement is intended to displace current water education programs. Instead, the initiatives are designed to promote such programs and to encourage the development of complementary programs.
2. The initiatives and concepts described in this supplement are strategic in nature and, as such, do not describe the details of the implementation of the initiatives. The initiative implementation plans will be developed following the approval of the initiatives. Any local, regional or state agency, educational institution, non-government organization, private company or individual

stakeholders interested in water education programs are invited and encouraged to provide input and feedback regarding the implementation plans and to participate in these initiatives.

3. All of the initiatives will be unified through a social marketing campaign and a central web-based platform.
4. All strategies and action items within this supplement exist under the larger umbrella of the Vision, and will support its mission to provide Kansans with the framework, policy and tools to manage, secure and protect a reliable, long-term statewide water supply. A reliable water supply is dependent upon both sufficient quantity and quality.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

As described in the guiding principles, this supplement is not intended to displace any of the current water education programs. This strategic plan represents an opportunity to build upon and maximize the many successful education organizations and activities currently in place in Kansas. Just a few of these successes include the youth conservation poster and essay contests hosted through the County Conservation Districts, local community water festivals, the KACEE's Project WET, and the Awesome Aqua magazine and natural resource educator's guides developed through Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

While we have many successes to celebrate related to water resource education in Kansas, gaps still exist and opportunities remain to strengthen Kansans' knowledge and awareness of water and water-related issues. Filling these gaps will require cooperation and collaboration between many entities and agencies, and will begin with an open commitment by all partners to seek mutual support and improvement. Success in the end will require everyone on all levels working together with a common goal of conserving and protecting our water resources for the next generation.

## THEMES AND STRATEGIES

This section includes the themes and strategies identified during the education supplement development process.

During each working group meeting attendees focused discussion on the following themes:

- Community Facilitation and Learning
- K-12 Curriculum and Career Education
- Out-of-Classroom Youth Education
- Media and Public Outreach Campaigns
- Career Development

## STRATEGY OVERVIEW

- Develop and enhance a statewide marketing campaign to include brand recognition within our state's residential households.
- Establish a brand recognizable centralized website.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of Kansas youth on water-related issues through K-12 education and beyond-the-classroom opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for Kansans of all ages to increase their awareness of local water issues.
- Develop partnerships between industry, community, and educational institutions that will promote and train for water-related careers.

Similar to the overall *Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*, strategies are identified and categorized in Phases according to the priority for implementation.

- Phase I action items are the highest priority and will be initiated, but not necessarily completed, during the first year of this draft of the Vision supplement.
- Phase II action items will be initiated within five years.
- Phase III action items are longer-term and may require additional research, development and stakeholder coordination before the action item can be initiated.

## COORDINATING TEAM SUBGROUP CHAIRS

Dana Ladner, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture  
Chair, Coordinating Team

Ginger Harper, Kansas Water Office  
Community Facilitation & Learning Subgroup

Gregg Hadley, K-State Research & Extension  
Community Facilitation & Learning Subgroup

Kurt Dillon, Kansas State Dept. of Education  
K-12 Curriculum & Career Education Subgroup

Bobbi Luttjohann, Kansas Water Office  
Out-of-Classroom Youth Education

Heather Lansdowne, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture  
Media & Public Outreach Campaigns Subgroup

Katie Patterson-Ingels, Kansas Water Office  
Media & Public Outreach Campaigns Subgroup

Russell Plaschka, Kansas Dept. of Agriculture  
Career Development Subgroup

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## DEVELOP AND ENHANCE A STATEWIDE MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO INCLUDE BRAND RECOGNITION WITHIN OUR STATE'S RESIDENTIAL HOUSEHOLDS.

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### STATEWIDE ACTION ITEMS

#### PHASE I

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Assess Kansans' knowledge and awareness of water resources through a statewide assessment. Improve Kansans', as well as federal, state and other public officials, knowledge and awareness of water resources through a unified statewide message.

1. Work with the marketing firm under current state contract, assuming capabilities match the needs of the campaign.
2. Develop and conduct statewide awareness assessment through the marketing firm to establish baseline knowledge of Kansans' understanding and comprehension of water issues.
3. Analyze and share findings.

#### PHASE II

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Utilizing the marketing firm, develop a media plan and campaign message maps to improve knowledge and awareness of water resources and promote local citizen knowledge and engagement in water conservation.

1. Create a unified and recognizable brand for the media plan.
2. Develop a portfolio of water resource education messages.
3. Debut campaign through a concerted outreach launch event including social media, print coverage and television broadcasting.
4. Make modifications and improvements to media plan and message maps as necessary.
5. Conduct a mid-campaign survey to assess effectiveness of media plan, comparing results with initial findings of baseline survey.
6. Assess the success of the campaign through a post-campaign survey and adapt accordingly annually.
7. Continue to develop and incorporate digital strategies for end user interaction as identified by the marketing firm.

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## ESTABLISH A BRAND RECOGNIZABLE CENTRALIZED WEBSITE.

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### STATEWIDE ACTION ITEMS

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#### PHASE I

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Create an online “one-stop shop” of statewide water-related resources and information for all Kansans including federal, state and other public officials.

1. Work with a marketing firm, under current state contract, to develop the website resource.
2. Hire, or designate internally, a website administrator responsible for working with the firm on the website design, development and content management.
3. Collect and incorporate general information about the state’s water resources in the one stop shop site.
4. Collect current and relevant materials through contributions by water agencies and designated subgroups.
5. Initiate development and promotion of the centralized website.
6. Create a clearinghouse for resource libraries on the website. Information to be included, but not limited to the following: curriculum resources, vetted resources for K-12 for utilization in classrooms, scientific research based resources, economic indicator models, and water-related workshop resources as well as a list of experts and researchers who can provide information on water-related issues.

#### PHASE II

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Launch and continue adding to centralized website, utilizing materials and resources collected in Phase I, and promote website throughout the state.

1. Enhance centralized website by adding interactive user engagement opportunities such as online information requests and downloadable curriculum.
2. Maintain and add to resource library, keeping materials current and relevant.
3. Continue to assess the usefulness of the “one-stop shop” website.

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## INCREASE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF KANSAS YOUTH ON WATER-RELATED ISSUES.

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### STATEWIDE ACTION ITEMS

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#### PHASE I

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1. Establish baseline knowledge of youth in Kansas on water-related issues through a review of marketing research data on youth education.
2. Create opportunities to encourage collaboration between organizations currently involved in water education for youth:
  - a. Hold Governor's roundtable including the Kansas Commissioner of Education, the President and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, and leadership from organizations involved in water-related education for youth and which establishes a commitment for integrating efforts in water education.
  - b. Hold a statewide Summit on Water Education for educators and educational organizations to share best practices, resources, curriculum and services.
  - c. Develop a collaborative plan for sharing water educational resources on an ongoing basis, to include organizing them on the website and sharing them through professional development programs.
3. Develop a grant program for new and existing water education organizations to provide professional development, curriculum and resources which build on statewide messaging efforts.
4. Collaborate with youth-related organization leadership on water-related educational opportunities and establish sessions and experiences focused on water.

#### PHASE II

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1. Launch and promote statewide grant program and award grants for water education.
2. Provide information to K-12 educators about available resources that correlate with educational standards.
3. Provide information to beyond the classroom education organizations on water education curriculum, tools and resources.
4. Provide recognition and awards to youth on water-related projects, offered through schools, clubs and organizations.
5. Increase opportunities for professional development for educators on water-related curriculum to strategically emphasize information and education regarding the importance of water and water conservation practices. Some opportunities may be made possible through the grant program established in Phase I.
6. Conduct surveys to assess changes in youth awareness and knowledge in water-related conditions and issues.

#### PHASE III

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1. Continue grant program from Phases I and II.
2. Continue to assess changes in youth awareness and knowledge in water-related conditions and issues.

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PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR KANSANS OF ALL AGES TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF LOCAL WATER ISSUES.

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STATEWIDE ACTION ITEMS

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PHASE I

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1. Establish and hire Community Outreach Specialist position(s). The ideal candidate(s) will possess a water conservation background coupled with strong community discussion, education and facilitation skills.
2. Expand current collaboration efforts between university water researchers and water agencies to include higher education institutions in Kansas. Discussions would include state and regional water priorities, current and potential water research projects, and additional opportunities to collaborate.
3. Work with developers of centralized website to create links to existing economic indicator resources. Site should provide continual evaluation of the economic impacts of reduced water use based on decision support resources.
4. Establish the "Top 3" water conservation measures for each Regional Planning Area for household, agriculture and industrial/municipal water use. These should be developed by the Regional Advisory Committees using existing data and displayed on the central website.

PHASE II

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1. Utilize the statewide media plan and message maps to promote local engagement in water resource management.
2. Enhance working relationships between local and state entities for collaboration on water strategies. This should consist of a unified message disseminated throughout the state by local entities.
3. Coordinate workshops for local decision makers on water initiatives held throughout the state.
4. Develop a grant program to support Regional Advisory Committees and other organizations that are working with communities to raise awareness about water issues, recognize successes and engage citizens in water conservation initiatives.
5. Establish region-specific, targeted improvements for household, agricultural and industrial/municipal water conservation. These measures will be shared through the Community Outreach Specialist(s) and workshops and educational events.



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DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INDUSTRY, COMMUNITY, AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT WILL PROMOTE AND TRAIN FOR WATER-RELATED CAREERS.

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STATEWIDE ACTION ITEMS

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PHASE I

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1. Begin evaluation of higher education institutions current academic offerings and identify water-related courses and curricula.
2. Coordinate regional/topical workshops to facilitate development of partnerships between higher education and business and industry. Partnerships will analyze existing academic degree programs leading to water-related careers.
3. Develop workshops and professional developments based on information found in KDA Agriculture Workforce Needs Assessment and state meetings.
4. Develop a grant-sponsored internship/mentorship program in water-related careers, sponsored across water agencies.

PHASE II

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1. Host professional development opportunities to prepare individuals in multiple related career paths to understand water resources.
2. Seek opportunities to promote existing water-related degree programs at Regents institutions, based on evaluations of all academic offerings, apply for United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture funding through programs such as Higher Education Challenge Grants and Secondary Education, Two-Year Postsecondary Education, and Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom (SPECA) Challenge Grants.
3. Collaborate with higher education institutions to fill any gaps in the water-related academic career tracks that were identified during Phase I.
4. Initiate and evaluate internship/mentorship grant program.

PHASE III

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1. Evaluate and increase enrollment and business participation in the internship/mentorship program.
2. Complete and evaluate U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funded grant projects.