

Impact Reporting From Indiana

One project funded with RREA funds is the Natural Resources Leadership Development Institute. Impacts from this program to date are as follows.

1. Impact Title Natural Resources Leadership Development Institute

2a. Start Date 10/01/2003

2b. Duration Continues indefinitely.

3. Issue/Need Natural resource professionals and volunteers who work with natural resource and environmental issues frequently find the issues to be very controversial, emotional, and frustrating to resolve. While many people have technical knowledge about water quality, forest management, soils, and wildlife, they often have little training in how to work with others in collaborative ways, how to resolve conflicts, how to identify common interests, how to deal with emotions during public meetings, or how to communicate in a way that it does not escalate the conflict. This program was developed to teach collaborative leadership skills to enable people who work in such situations be more effective.

4. What you have done Dr. Janet Ayres coordinates the program and is the primary instructor. Dr. William Hoover is program manager. Dr. Ayres developed the curriculum, and revises it each year based on evaluations, developed the participants' notebooks, and the promotional brochure. Three, three-day sessions are held September to November with around 30 participants. The program was started in September 2003 and offered again in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Two follow-up sessions are held between spring and fall to bring participants from the various classes together and to continue their learning. One session focuses on skills development and the other on a current issue.

5. Impact The program is always evaluated very highly by the participants with a composite score of 9 on a 10-point scale with 10 being "Excellent". All of the participants responded that the program was "well worth their time" and made positive comments about the content such as the following, "...I now have the confidence, the concepts, the tools and the networks necessary to further myself professionally and personally." Participants are using the information to form collaborative relationships and to address controversial issues in new ways. One participant formed a multi-agency collaborative effort to address lake issues in northern Indiana. Another person has used the information to facilitate a multi-county watershed planning effort. Still another graduate has created a multi-agency conservation group. In the long-run the program is expected to increase collaborative efforts to resolve conflicts over natural resources, while reducing confrontations among parties on issues, as well as legal actions.

6. Impact Summary Primary impacts have been increased confidence of participants to deal with controversial issues, the establishment of collaborative groups to solve problems before they lead to legal action, net working among participants to exchange information, obtain

suggestions for ways to deal with issues, encourage each other as they face challenges, and bring faster resolutions to issues.