



**HEALTHY
ECOSYSTEMS**



**HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**

HEHC NATURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Land Uses

Land uses and community sustainability

Land uses play an important part in the health of all ecosystems. Wise land use contributes to the prosperity and to the health and well-being of the people that live there. There are many types of land uses, which are often classified into the following general categories:

- private agricultural
- public land
- suburban and rural landowners
- recreational
- business and industrial

Working landscapes

When land is managed for multiple benefits or products, it is called “complementary” land use. Complementary land uses:

- encourages biodiversity, integrating wildlife habitats and natural resources management into current and proposed land uses
- offers amenity value for residents, such as landscapes which provide recreation, clean air and water, and
- can have economic benefits where working landscapes are productive community assets.

Protection of local water quality and quantity is also taking place at the community level through different types of land-use activities such as:

- community water quality festivals to educate citizens, students, and landowners about water protection and water saving measures
- local and regional flood control partnerships established within communities, counties, and watersheds to implement flood control measures and reduce damages caused by flooding
- wetlands established or restored for wildlife habitat or flood protection, and to filter out water-borne pollutants, and
- ground water recharge protection areas and source water protection programs to protect water quality and increase surface water recharge to vital water supplies.

Land use planning is the key to protection of local natural resources by allocating land uses which will provide the greatest short- and long-term benefits to your community’s assets.

Impacts to the environment and quality of surface and ground water quality are closely related to local land uses.

In particular, the Healthy Ecosystems-Healthy Communities (HEHC) planning process encourages active involvement of citizens whose livelihoods depend on the health of their natural resources and local amenities.

Good quality, well-designed parks and green spaces make a critical contribution to our communities and our quality of life, and play an important role in creating a “sense of place” that helps us identify our community.

Knowledge of local land uses will help your community in planning, managing, protecting and developing valuable local natural resources and open spaces to benefit your community and its residents.



Local Land Uses

Name of community: _____

Describe the boundaries your community has established for your HEHC assessments: _____

Instructions

1. Boundaries should be consistent for all assessments.
2. Some of the questions are “walk about” in nature--meaning that they can be answered by observation of what is easily identified in your community. Other questions may require some exploration. Internet resources and agency information are provided for questions when available. Your assessment team may want to invite agency representatives to conduct presentations, evaluations, or field trips in your community to expand the learning experience for students and adults not participating in your HEHC program. Some questions may benefit from the historic perspective of long-time residents or can be answered by a local hobbyist who has extensive knowledge in this resource area.
3. Attachments, supporting materials, and other information should be included with your assessment--remember--this report is for your community so include information you think is important.
4. Your answers can be hand-written into this form, or typed into an electronic file for the final planning document.
5. If assessment team members are using separate forms, their answers or input should be consolidated on one final report in order to capture all of the information the team has gathered.

NOTE: Completed assessments will be given to the HEHC coordinator to prepare the final planning document for your community's HEHC program work.

Some information (such as local land uses) may have been prepared especially for your community's assessment. Contact information for the organizations which prepared this information are referenced in case you have further questions.

Space is provided for additional questions you think are important to know about this resource. In addition, space is provided for your ideas or suggestions to preserve, protect, or restore special resources, and for ideas which would create sustainable educational, recreational, and/or economic opportunities for this resource in your community.

Let's begin . . .

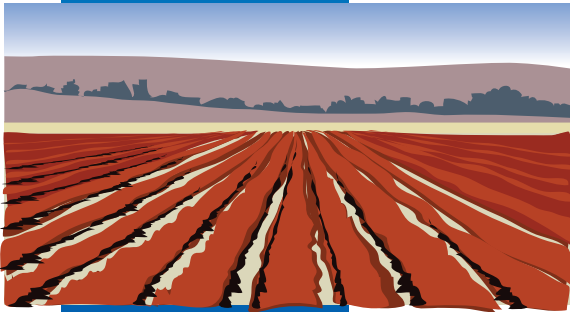
This assessment is divided into sections. Where appropriate, one or more information resource is given to help answer each question. Additional resources are provided in the appendices at the end of this document.

Community/Area Land Uses

1. List the dominant land uses within a 5 mile radius of your community? (See local land use map at the back of this assessment; it was developed by the Kansas Biological Survey for your community.)

Information Resource(s):

- *Kansas Natural Heritage Inventory (local land use maps and biological data)*
<http://www.ksnhi.ku.edu/>



- a. Which of these land uses provides the most economic impact to your community? (list or explain.)

2. How are open spaces utilized in your community?

Information Resource(s):

- *Green spaces*
<http://www.baltimoregreenspace.org/>

a. Are these open spaces currently used (over-used or under used) for community recreational or educational activities?

_____ Yes _____ No

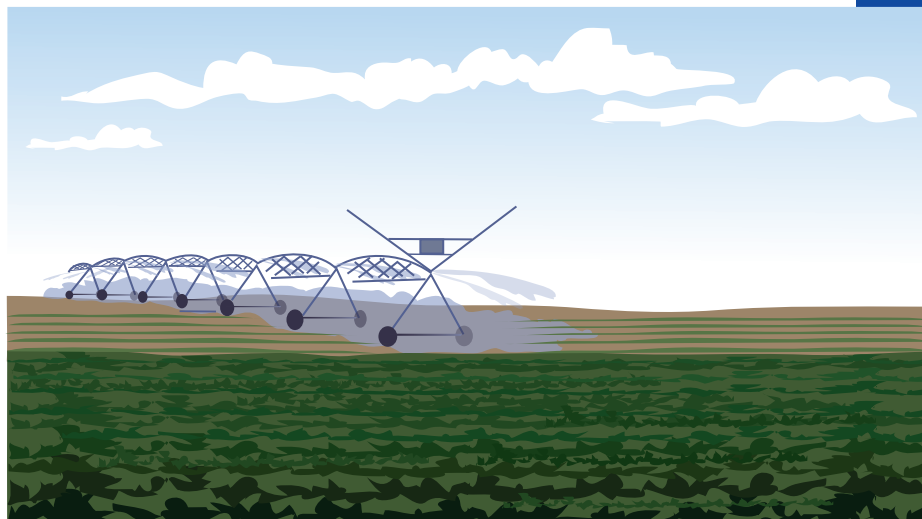
b. What is needed to make your open spaces more usable?

c. Has your community identified the need for additional open spaces and if so, for what uses?

3. Describe the conservation practices used by landowners in your area and explain how these practices benefit your community's natural resources?

Information Resource(s):

- *Common agricultural conservation practices*
<http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/solutions/>



4. Describe the types of water and soil conservation practices utilized in your community's public spaces such as native plant use or xeriscaping, low flow water toilets, and mulch or compost use.

Information Resource(s):

- *Green Practices for Parks and Open Spaces*

http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/parks/green_practices.htm

5. List local landowners utilizing their land or farms for Agriculture-based or Ecology-based tourism (concerts or music festivals, pumpkin patches, birding tours, fishing or hunting guides, etc.)? Please list types of tourism services provided.

Information Resource(s):

- *Agri-tourism information*

http://www.agmrc.org/commodities__products/agritourism/

6. How do the above independent tourism operators and your community work together to promote or create community economic opportunities?

Information Resource(s):

- *Tips for Building Marketing and Community Partnerships*

<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets/tips.html>

7. Does your community support public gardens of any kind?

_____ Yes _____ N

Information Resource(s):

- *Community Gardens*
<http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/parks/comgarden.aspx>
- *Community Garden Start Up Guide*
http://celosangeles.ucdavis.edu/garden/articles/startup_guide.html

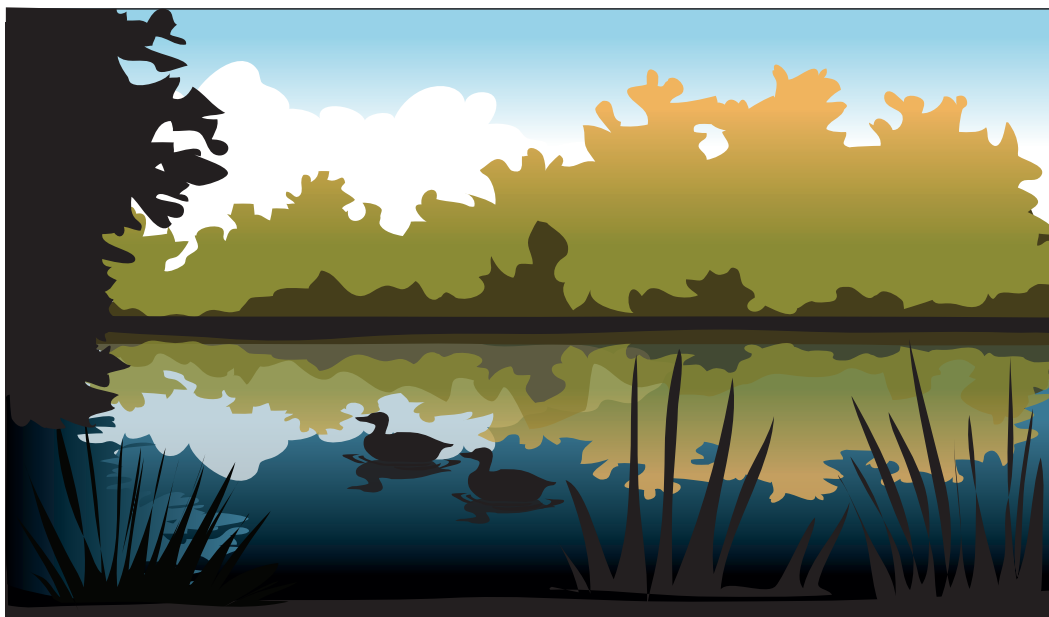
Describe the benefits of these gardens or suggest ways a community garden could be utilized by your citizens?

Wildlife Land Uses

8. Are there any lands designated as critical habitat areas for rare, endangered, or threatened species of wildlife in your community area?

Information Resource(s):

- *Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks lists threatened and endangered species by county. Specific locations of designated habitat areas are listed with each threatened and endangered species.*
<http://kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Other-Services/Threatened-and-Endangered-Species/Threatened-and-Endangered-Species/County-Lists>



Do any community activities/events take place in these areas? Do or could these activities impact those critical habitats? (Your local wildlife specialist may be able to assist with this evaluation.)

9. Describe local activities to restore wildlife habitat on private or publicly-owned land in your community area? (CRP, WHIP, Riparian buffer strips, public natural areas, wetlands development, etc.)

Information Resource(s):

- *Natural Resource Conservation Services offices: Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funding to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands*
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/>
<http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/>

- a. Do or could these areas provide recreational or educational benefit to the community? Describe.

10. Identify and describe any land conservation easement programs in your assessment area.

Appendices for Land Uses Assessment

Appendix A: Website information resources

1. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service
http://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/Subscribe_to_State_Reports/index.asp
2. Alternative Crop Production for small farms and communities
<http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/lavender.html>
3. Economic Benefits of Green Spaces
<http://www.projectevergreen.com/why-green-matters/economic-benefits/>
4. NRCS National Conservation Practice Standards (NHCP) lists standards for conservation practices for roads, grassed waterways, channel banks, constructed wetlands, forest trails and landscapes, fish passage, heavy use area protection practices, etc.
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/standards/nhcp.html>
5. Wildlife Habitat Protection:
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) The Pratt Operations Office houses staff which manages game, fish, non-game, and threatened and endangered (T & E) species, as well as the educational programs statewide:

512 SE 25th Avenue
Pratt, KS 67124-8174
Phone (620) 672-5911
Hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday-Friday
<http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us/>

KDWP can assist with identification of threatened and endangered (T & E) species, local activities underway to protect T & E species, and can provide technical assistance to those wishing to protect, preserve, or develop habitats for T & E or SINC species in Kansas.
6. Locate Agri-Tourism in or near your community at the Kansas Department of Commerce Website:
<http://www.travelks.com/s/index.cfm>
7. KDHE's Surface Water Reports with Designated Uses
<http://www.kdheks.gov/tmdl/site.htm>
8. Ecosystem tutorial (online)
<http://www.warnercnr.colostate.edu/~bobw/a/et/ecotut.htm>

- 9. Long term hydrologic impact assessment of land uses on water quality (L-THIA) tool; a modeling tool to estimate changes in groundwater recharge, runoff, and NPS resulting from past or proposed development in an area:

<http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/runoff/lthianew/>

- 10. Land Uses and Water Quality; document provides explanations of ground-water contamination and land uses.

<http://www.waterencyclopedia.com/La-Mi/Land-Use-and-Water-Quality.html>

Please list other resources you found helpful:

Appendix B: Agency Information Resources

- 9. Kansas Biological Survey provides information on local land uses, plants and animals in Kansas

<http://www.kbs.ku.edu/>

- 10. Kansas Forest Service Kansas Forest Service, Kansas State University, assists communities with identification of native trees and tree selections for public spaces, and can perform an “inventory” of the trees in your community to determine tree health, hazards, and condition. In addition, the Kansas Forest Service also has two watershed foresters to help communities with identification of trees and plants that can help stabilize stream banks and improve water quality.

<http://www.kansasforests.org/>

Community Forestry Program assists communities with all aspects of tree planting, maintenance and removal recommendation, etc. to improve public tree (and other plant) resources and maximize community benefits from trees.

Watershed Forestry Program provides technical assistance for management of forestland along rivers and streams to maintain and improve water quality.

Appendix C: Conservation Practices and Other Resources:

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Backyard Conservation

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/>

Bringing conservation from the country side to your backyard! Just as they do on the farm, conservation practices on nonagricultural land can help increase food and shelter for birds and other wildlife, control soil erosion, reduce sediment in waterways, conserve water and improve water quality, inspire a stewardship ethic, and beautify the landscape.

Ten conservation practices have been scaled down for homeowners and city residents to use in their yards. Tip sheets offer “how to” steps and helpful hints; there are ‘tip sheets’ on the following projects for homeowners at the above Web site:

- Backyard pond
- Composting
- Nutrient management
- Terracing
- Water conservation
- Backyard Wetland
- Mulching
- Pest management
- Tree planting
- Wildlife habitat

Appendix D: Funding/Assistance Resources

14. Natural Resource Conservation Services cost-share programs and technical assistance.

<http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/>

15. Kansas Forest Service cost-share programs and technical assistance to communities and citizens.

<http://www.klt.org/projects.htm>

16. Kansas Land Trust for Preserving Farm and Ranch Lands conservation easement and other basic conservation information.

<http://www.klt.org/projects.htm>

17. Kansas Office of Local Government provides technical assistance to communities with land use planning and environmental management needs.

<http://www.ksu-olg.info/cep.html>

- 18 Kansas PRIDE Program provides community development/improvement assistance to community volunteers and lists funding resources

<http://www.kansasprideprogram.ksu.edu/PRIDE/prideresources/funding.htm>