

DOE/OR/22202-1

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY WELDON SPRING CITIZENS COMMISSION**  
**COMMUNICATION EDUCATION PROJECT OVERVIEW FOR 1995**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The Weldon Spring DOE grantee, St. Charles County, is seeking an early renewal on the Weldon Spring Grant in order to match the grant's reporting calendar with the County's fiscal calendar which is January through December. Therefore, this renewal application will cover five months time instead of 12 months. This notified annual overview bridges a two month period that precedes the appointment and activation of the Weldon Spring Citizens Commission in February 1995.

In the original grant application the County described its intent to select a volunteer Citizens Oversight Commission to monitor the cleanup activities at the DOE's Weldon Spring Site. This commission would serve as the County's watchdog group by monitoring Weldon Spring Site activities and provide on-going communication to the County's residents through publications and forums.

The first eight months of the project involved setting up the project office and working with a three member "Section Panel/Work Group" to select the Citizen's Commission. These activities were coordinated by a Project Director hired by the County and funded from the initial grant funds.

In late January of 1995, the St. Charles County Executive appointed seven St. Charles County residents to be members of the Weldon Spring Citizens Commission, an oversight committee for the U.S. Department of Energy's Weldon Spring site Remedial Action Project (WSSRAP). The seven appointed Commission members were selected by the three member Selection Panel/Work Group. This group consisted of one member selected by each of the following: The DOE, St. Charles County Executive, and the St. Charles County Council. The Weldon Springs Project office received 89 applications requests for membership to the Commission as a result of an announcement in the local newspapers. Of the 38 completed applications received, seven were selected and appointed leaving a pool of 31 applications available for replacement as needed.

The first year of this project has seen significant activity and many accomplishments, as detailed in the narrative of the application. However, there has been a great deal of debate over the future direction of the project. As the various components of the project came on line, decisions had to be made as to lines of authority between the County, the project director and the volunteer commission. Much of the debate carried out over the past few months has resulted in the Mission and Goal Statement of the Citizen's Commission which has been submitted to and approved by the County Executive.

The more difficult issue has been the job description of the project director. During the start-up phase of the program, the project director took a leadership role in establishing the office, developing initial policies for the development of the Citizen's Commission, developing community education materials and providing the required financial reports to DOE. However, with the selection of the Citizen's Commission, the responsibility of the project director began to change. At the direction of the County Executive, direct supervision of the director was delegated to the Commission. The financial reporting requirements were shifted to the County's Director of Finance. As the Citizen's Commission began to adopt policies and procedures and to develop its mission statement, it began to identify needed changes in the job description of the project director. The Mission Statement, prepared by the Citizen's Commission and submitted to the County, clearly establishes the Commission as being

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responsible for the goals and objectives of the grant and that project director's role is to provide clerical and administrative support to the Commission.

In discussing this with DOE staff, it is their belief that the Citizen's Commission is the responsible agent to fulfill the goals and objections of the grant and that it is the County's responsibility, with funds from the grant, to provide only the necessary clerical support to assist the Commission in accomplishing its goals. The County administration agrees with the Citizen's Commission and with the DOE staff that using grant monies to fund a full-time project manager is not warranted. As discussed with DOE staff, the budget request in the application reflects this change in staffing.

Included in this application are:

- 1) Application for Federal Assistance, Standard Form 424;
- 2) A Narrative Report on the Activities and Accomplishments of the Project;
- 3) Budget Page; and,
- 4) Budget Narrative

## **ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The Citizens Commission began meeting in February 1995. A supplemental meeting included a two-hour DOE orientation at the WSSRAP Site. This meeting allowed members of the Citizens Commission the opportunity to meet with DOE staff and to begin assimilating the historical evolution of the project as well as its current progress and future challenges. A four hour basic radiation safety training course was completed by all members and one member completed a 24 hours advanced radiation safety training course (SHARPS). These courses allow general admission to the site by commission members. The Commission has defined and documented their Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives (see Appendix 1), and toured both the Weldon Spring Quarry Site and the WSSRAP Chemical Plant Site.

Further education of the commission was accomplished through presentations by invited speakers from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who briefed them on the State's Weldon Springs oversight activities. The Commission has held regular monthly meetings and established the following subcommittees: Administrative, Communications and Community Outreach, Public Health, and Technical Oversight. Two Commission members attended the DOE's Environmental Restoration Management Conference in Denver, Colorado in August.

## **TECHNICAL OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Technical Oversight Subcommittee (TOS) made trips to the WSSRAP site to familiarize itself with certain site issues and the work in progress. This subcommittee has arranged to meet with DOE and MDNR once a month to keep abreast of current projects and upcoming activity. The subcommittee heard a presentation detailing water reuse for dust abatement, cleanup of property adjacent to the KATY Trail, quarry cleanup issues, and cell design.

Technical issues identified for tracking by the TOS include; the possible transfer of Army's incinerated waste ash into the DOE's final disposal cell, the Record of Decision (ROD) of the final disposal cell design, quarry clean-up, clean-up of property adjacent to the KATY trail and county well

field, water treatment, on and offsite transportation of material, and borrow pit activity. Monitoring of these and other issues are to be documented in the form of open files and briefing papers in the Weldon Spring Project Office. This documentation will be available to commission members and the general public.

## **THE COMMUNICATONS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Communicaitons subcommittee has documented their Purpose, Goals, and Objectives. Their purpose is "to improve community understanding of WSSRAP, and to act as an informational link between the community, WSSRAP, and MDNR. The 24-hour Weldon spring Information Telephone Line was established in August. All calls are being logged and reviewed.

Future scheduled items in the Communications Subcommittee's Action Plan include community networking and contact development among groups such as the St. Charles County's school districts, parochial schools, Hospital Outreach Groups, a St. Charles County umbrella network called Community 2000, St. Charles City & County Library District (seven branch libraries), Catholic Churches, Lutheran Churches, and a County Ministerial Alliance for other Protestant churches, Jewish organizations, Missouri University Extension Clubs, 4-H Clubs, and regional environmental organizations.

This subcommittee will send a general announcement letter about the Commission's existence and its goals and objectives accompanied by a personal note from each Commission member to each of their respective County Council representatives as well as other elected representatives (state and federal). The subcommittee will, in consultation with the St. Charles City & County Library District branches, create a directory of Weldon Spring reports and papers. Presently, reports are somewhat fragmented between library branches. A consolidated directory will provide a more useful resource to the public and the Commission.

Alternative outreach efforts are also being studied. These efforts use established internal information networks of various organizaitons to disseminate information from the Commission. This supplemental approach may prove more productive than relying solely on a quarterly publication. This budget request does include funds necessary to ensure publication and distribution of at least three newsletters during the specified grant period. Inserting a community educational piece into the local newspaper is another option being considered.

The educational community has been identified as another outreach resource. Initial distribution of Commission publications to local public and private schools is scheduled for completion by October 31, 1995. The intent is to offer a study topic for students involved in general research in science or community affairs. Outreach will also extend to the instructors, especially science teachers. This outreach might include WSSRAP site tours conducted by DOE and an informational forum focused at educators.

Finally, community questions and answer forums to promote increased public participation are under consideration. This approach may be desirable on major topical issues such as the Record of Decision (ROD) for the final design of the DOE's disposal cell for WSSRAP, quarry cleanup, cleanup of property adjacent to the KATY Trail and county well field, water treatment, on and offsite transportation of material, and borrow pit activity.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE**

The administrative subcommittee was established to address those issues that have to do with how the Commission fulfills its goals and objectives as well as the practical matters of coordination of work delegated to working subcommittees.

One of the first issues addressed by this subcommittee was ensuring that Commission members were informed of the ongoing status of the Commission's budget. The modified nature of this renewal application came out of efforts by this subcommittee to simplify this grant renewal and ongoing budget process, as well as adding some basic checks and balances. The County Finance Department is now able to issue monthly updates in spreadsheet format that greatly simplify tracking on a monthly basis.

This group also acts as a coordinating arm of the Commission to assimilate the work of all subcommittees in drafting the agenda's for each monthly meeting. This subcommittee is also responsible for drafting internal commission policy. For example, the issue of how the commission should respond to outside informational requests was addressed through a policy document produced in this committee. In general, matters that involve internal policies and procedures fall under the responsibility of this working group.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE**

The goals of this subcommittee are to study WSSRAP issues that may impact public health. The three initial issue areas that the subcommittee has chosen to study and respond to are: health concerns from recreational activities at Busch Wildlife, health concerns from public drinking waters supplies adjacent to the quarry, and the relationship of recently publicized county-wide Leukemia rates and the Weldon Spring site. Other ancillary issues such as the release of treated water to the Missouri River may also receive attention depending on progress on the initial three issues detailed above. Plans for the coming year include the production and distribution of informational material describing what public information is available on these topics, where to obtain the information, and a brief summary in lay terms of what is known and what informational gaps remain.

The format of the material is still under consideration and may include video production by students in the communications departments of local colleges as well as Commission-generated documents in question and answer formats. Other alternative outreach techniques include speaking engagements by Commission members at public forums. The selection and execution of whatever format(s) is chosen will be coordinated through the Communications and Community Outreach Subcommittee.