

NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
Regional Leadership Team Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2007
Hovde Lounge, Luther College Library, Decorah
12.00 pm – 2:00 pm

Present:

Allamakee County - Danielle Bucknell, Lana Snitker, Solveig Hanson

Clayton County - Haleisa Johnson, Tim Englehardt, Brian Rodenberg, Carol Glawe, Brandon Freidlein, Mila Hugo

Fayette County - Scot Michelson, Sue Burrack, Joe Organist, Vicki Rowland, Trent Moeller

Howard County - Rob Hughes, Elaine Govern, Ronda Huges, Tanner Burke

Winneshiek County - Eric Nordschow, Karen Foster, Rick Edwards, Lindsay Erdman, Kate Mansfield, Hannah Ranum

Diversity Representatives - Paul Rael

Co-Project Directors: Brenda Ranum, Lora Friest and Ann Mansfield

Guests: Teresa Wiemerslage, Cindy Baumgartner, Barb Shroeder

Brenda, Lora and Ann welcomed everyone. Introductions were made, group guidelines were reviewed, and members share 1-2 things happening in your county related to F&F since your last meeting:

- Regional Food Systems Working Group in Ames
- Preliminary discussions with Luther and County Conservation
- Increased number of people walking/biking to school
- Increased days for carpooling
- Wellness Center has been contacting businesses
- Afterschool programs focus on Food and Fitness
- Study biking
- Contacted businesses about FFI
- Interest in trails, Take a Kid Outdoors program
- Great attendance at county meeting
- Hiring a consultant for sidewalks
- 16 schools in IA will be looking at Wellness Policies—Starmont is the school in our area; Team Nutrition grant
- Volga is looking at a community garden
- Winneshiek Medical Center is a site for workplace wellness assessments
- Annual river cleanup was completed; fun run
- Fiesta Latina in Postville was a new event.
- Postville City crews have been trimming trees along sidewalks
- Cresco is looking at a day where the mayor walks with students. Modeled after a news report on program with Waterloo mayor
- Prairie Farmer bike trail has completed its bid lettering. A 20 mile paved section of trail will be finished by next summer. The group is working on getting Cresco area trails connected with Lanesboro and Harmony, MN.
- School Wellness Policy
- Schools are adding playground and fitness equipment

- Youth member encouraged his friends to participate in a dualthon (Gravel Grinder Run) to raise funds for local trails.
- Nov 10 will be the ribbon cutting for a 4 mile section of trail on the Wapsie Valley trail. The full dedication will be May 31. This trail is a gateway to Iowa and Minnesota.
- Local food will be served at Grant Writing Workshop on October 4
- GROWN Locally will host its Vegetball on Oct 21.

Team members reviewed the mission. Brenda, Lora, Ann Mansfield and Eric Nordschow shared information about the W.K. Kellogg Regional Technical Assistance (TAP) Team last month. The TAP Team members were greatly impressed with the assets we had to build on in our region (people are engaged and committed; great trails and pockets of producers growing local foods, etc.) The TAP Team felt we were ahead of other regions; we can take the time we need to assess our region and then discuss what we learn from those assessments. In our plan we can determine what is needed (infra-structure, programs, policies, promotions) so we can help our communities realize the vision for this initiative.

Brenda and Ann reviewed the past/future web casts for the County F&F Planning Team meetings:

- July - Community Approach to Active Living
 - Webcast #1: Fitness As A Personal Ideal
 - Webcast #2: Active Living By Design
- August – Active Living Assessments focused on School Environment
 - Webcast #3: Why Safe Routes To School Matter
 - Webcast #4: Safe Routes To School Assessment Options
- September – Active Living Assessment focused on Community Environments
 - Webcast #5: Mark Fenton on Walkable Communities
 - Webcast #6: Walkable Community Assessments
 - Walkable Bikable Community Mapping
 - Barrier Mapping Project
 - Trail Use Counter Program
- October – Assessments Focused on Worksites
 - Webcast #7: Worksite Wellness – What To Look For
 - Webcast #8: Worksite Wellness Assessment Opportunities for NE Iowa
- November – Assessments Focused on Schools and Community Members
 - Webcast #9: School Wellness Policies – What to Look For
 - Webcast #10: Lighten Up Iowa & Go The Distance
- December – Break???? or Framework for Local Food System
- January - Framework for Local Food System or NIFF Coalition Local Food Survey
- February - NIFF (NE Iowa Food & Farm) Coalition Local Food Survey Results
- March – NIFF Coalition Local Food Survey Results
- April –Nutrition & Wellness Educational Needs/Issues – Engaging People
- May – Nutrition & Wellness Educational Needs/Issues – Engaging People
- June – Regional Conference to Share Assessments and Learnings with Policy Makers and Community Members (Speakers, Panelists, etc.)
 - Schools (SRTS, School Wellness Policy, etc.)
 - Worksites (Worksite Assessments, Well Workplace University, Policy)
 - Communities (Active Living, Local Food System, Wellness Assessments & Policy)

Lora shared that by November 15th our NE Iowa F&F Initiative's Work Plan for Year 2 is due to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. She requested that members submit ideas/discussion items for County F&F Planning meetings (April 2008 – March 2009). County F&F Planning Team members should also share their ideas and the Regional F&F Team members should bring these ideas to Brenda, Lora or Ann soon. Regional F&F Team members submitted ideas on cards that included the following:

- Educate youth through sports. Teach them how to eat for that particular sport; how to lose weight in a healthy way and/or how to gain muscle, etc. (Mila Hugo)
- Have a registered dietician as a teacher/guest speaker. (Mila Hugo)
- Health classes in school required for graduation. (Mila Hugo)
- A community Recreation Center for children AND adults, year-round. Very few options for winter-time or for children (indoor pool, karate classes, dance, yoga classes, etc.) This would provide more jobs for high school students. (Mila Hugo)
- Next year I am speculating that food and nutrition in the schools will take time to build programs and policy changes for the new school year – NEED REPS FROM ALL SCHOOLS ☺ (Karen Foster)
- Assessment of trails from a county level. Information is need for how to continue developing these trails, costs, and funding. Share the road program, trails on private land, easements and such. Develop a plan to help policy makers and administrators plan.
- School is NOT involved with fitness at all – aside from sports. School hires separate company to cook food for school lunches. NO fresh fruit and you have to sign-up for salads.
- Fitness center closes at 8:00....24 hour gym would be excellent; Guttenberg has very few sidewalks and during the winter I go running. The city is very lazy with sanding the ice off the roads – makes it impossible to exercise during the winter!
- Webcast are great ideas? Budgeting will be important, especially to move forward as a region. Sharing information between counties will create more ideas for the region.

Brenda asked the Regional Team members to review and refine the following:

Criteria for Selecting Assessment and Learning Opportunities Requiring Funding Assistance:

- 1) **Each funded pilot project would need to collect specific data that would help us learn if this program:**
 - could be **replicated** throughout the region (Ex. Activities would be in a format that could be shared easily with other schools, is a “juried curriculum” and replicated at minimal cost)
 - had collected data that would indicate the program had a **positive impact** on the participants (base-line date at beginning of program compared to results at end of program)
 - schools, workplaces, communities receiving the pilot program have a **policy** in place to insure if the program meets the anticipated outcomes it will become a part of their way of doing business each year vs. a temporary “pilot” project dependent on outside funding
- 2) **Each funded pilot project would need to share data collected:**
 - at **Regional F&F Conference** tentatively planned for June 2008
 - with a school system at an in-service or with another organization/business at al meeting located in the region but outside of their home county

The Regional Team unanimously agreed these criteria were acceptable. Brenda then shared that the budget for our Initiative provides \$38,000 to complete assessments in our planning phase that will help us learn about our region's current status so that we can better plan for our future. The Regional F&F Leadership Team is to determine and select which assessments will be most useful to our region. The information gathered from these assessments will be shared at a

Regional F&F Leadership Conference planned for June 2008. It was asked if the \$38,000 could be used for just assessments that relate to sidewalks, trails, etc. or if some funds should also be used to support the assessments occurring with worksite wellness policies, school wellness policies and local food system assessments. Lora shared it could be used for all of these assessments. Brenda and Eric Nordschow shared that the Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition already has raised over \$40,000 for their assessments and these assessments will be completed by this winter and shared at the June 2008 conference. It was also asked if these funds could be carried over into Year 2. Lora shared that it could but we would have an additional \$18,000 - \$23,000 budgeted for assessments in Year 2.

Team members then reviewed and discussed the September County F&F Planning Team Meetings Webcasts.

- Key points reviewed from 2 or more counties from webcast #5 - Benefits children, youth and families could expect if we worked to create Walkable Communities?
 - Better sidewalks, better health, better relationships, decrease healthcare costs, less traffic, greater appreciation for the outdoors, look of a vibrant community; economic benefits, reduce carbon footprint
- Key points from 2 or more counties from webcast #6: Benefit to communities for data collected from the following 3 assessments?
 - Walkable Bikeable Community Maps:
 - Knowledge of trails, route distance for exercise and miles traveled, good for city planning purposes, economic development tool (market community and promote tourism), maps listed on website for locals and visitors, promote community recreation & walking clubs,
 - Environmental Barrier Mapping:
 - Knowledge of conditions of existing sidewalks; good for city planning; citizens could identify existing barriers; prioritize walking/biking access; add sidewalks – new developments; promote policy change; create community awareness and financial commitment for sidewalk repairs
 - Trail Use Counter Program
 - Not as important; it's more important people know where trails exist; could we buy a monitor and rotate it around the county?

Team members reviewed and discussed their County F&F Planning Team's recommendations for NE Iowa F&F Funding Assistance to conduct the following assessments in their county and why these assessments were selected:

1) Walkable/Bikeable Community Maps (2-3 maps per region/semester):

- Brenda informed Team members both ISU and Upper Iowa University faculty and students had indicated they could complete these assessments. Each could work with county teams to create approximately 2 maps for the region at the costs listed below:
- Cost:

\$800	<1000 people	(250 printed maps)
○ \$1,500	1,000 – 5,000 people	(500 printed maps)
○ \$2,250	5,000 – 10,000 people	(500 printed maps)
○ \$3,000	County-wide	
- County F&F Planning Teams requested the assessment in these communities/county
 - **Allamakee:** Lansing – tourism
 - **Clayton:** Volga and Guttenberg because they are flatter communities
 - **Fayette:** Entire County – it could really show us what we have for trails and how to go about connecting communities and counties
 - **Howard:** 15 of 25 people voted; was top priority in county after SRTS, but did not determine which communities in county would be a priority

- **Winneshiek:** Decorah and/or Entire County
- Following some discussion, Lora Friest announced that NE RC&D had interns that could provide this assessment to counties/communities for FREE! Lora said the interns could create any type of map, with specified landmarks and these maps could be posted on county websites. At the October, County F&F Planning Team meetings, Regional Team members will work with their teams to review which community/county trails they would like to see mapped and what should be included. It was suggested some counties may need to form sub-committees to determine their needs. This information will then be shared with Lora at RC&D and she will see the maps are developed by June 2008.

2) Safe Routes To School Assessment:

Lora shared information about the “Northeast Iowa Regional Safe Routes to School Initiative for Healthier Students” grant proposal she is planning to submit to the Iowa DOT on behalf of our Regional F&F Leadership Team. The goals, objectives and benefits of the plan were shared with the regional team. She stated that 36 schools have been included in this assessment. (This is many more than was originally identified by County Planning Teams, however, after her discussions with the State Coordinator for this grant, it was suggested we include many schools throughout the region. The 36 schools will participate in student and parent surveys; coordinate a SRTS school team; complete an environmental audit with the assistance of a hired consultant; complete a policy audit on bussing and safety education.

Lora shared that a consultant would be hired to conduct three “Safe Routes to School Design Charrettes” in the three participating schools that have the greatest student/parent/teacher participation to develop reports for those schools and share this information with community planning groups across the region as part of the NE Iowa F&F Initiative.

Some concerns were shared by Team members that their communities had not identified this assessment as a need due to their rural communities and the inability for most students to walk/bike to school. Another Team member shared a concern that this assessment could be viewed as the “schools” issue vs. the communities issue if the assessments are too school-based vs. community involvement.

3) Trail Use Counter Program

- Brenda shared that this assessment would require:
 - 2 Posts (standard chain link posts will work) and labor to install posts and trail monitor units
- Cost: \$300 to rent monitor units for 4 week period
 - **Allamakee:** not a priority
 - **Clayton:** not a priority, but ask Haleisa for Elkader city park trail and Tim for county trails?
 - **Fayette:** not necessary – more important to people know what’s there and won’t tell us what kind of users utilize trail
 - **Howard:** 14 of 25 voted; second highest priority but did not determine which community trails in county would be a priority
 - **Winneshiek:** not a priority – interested in type of usage of trail (walkers, runners, skaters, bikers, etc.)
- Team members had little time to discuss this assessment but said it was low priority in each of the five counties.

4) Environmental Barrier Mapping:

- Brenda shared that this assessment would require:
 - A Project Coordinator (collect and post photos on google site)
 - Community Volunteers: Take and submit digital photos to Project Coordinator of identified barriers to walking and biking in a community
- Cost: \$1,000/county with up to 10 community accounts thru 12/08
- County F&F Planning Teams requested the assessment in these communities/county
 - **Allamakee:** Waukon and Postville, other communities not represented
 - **Clayton:** Elkader, Monona, Luana, Edgewood, Volga, Guttenberg, and probably Strawberry Point
 - **Fayette:** secondary to Walkable/Bikeable Community Mapping the trails
 - **Howard:** 5 of 25 people voted; Lowest priority
 - **Winneshiek:** may be useful in Ossian or Calmar; not sure but SRTS assessment could cover this assessment
- Some discussion by Team members had begun. Lora shared that this assessment may not be necessary since it would be covered in communities engaged in the SRTS assessment.
- Some Team members shared that many of the schools in their county were not interested in the SRTS assessment. Their County Planning Team had indicated they wanted this assessment mainly to determine the barriers to walking the community and it would involve community members (PE class students from their high school and community members). Some shared they were concerned this assessment information could set neighbor against neighbor. Others shared that the opposite experience has occurred in their community. It actually helped to get sidewalk improvements when neighbors shared their frustrations/concerns over unwalkable sidewalks vs. just city council members.

At this point Lora ask the Team members to table this assessment discussion until next month so that in the last 15 minutes Barb Shroeder, Winneshiek County Conservation Board Director, could present information and request funding for the “Fit Environment Pilot Program” they would like to develop and pilot with 4th-8th graders at N. Winneshiek School. Her request for funding was \$10,000.

Due to lack of time, no decision was made regarding any further assessments. Brenda shared that at our next Regional Team meeting in October, the assessment discussion would be at the top of the agenda so Team members would be able to complete their discussion on Barrier Mapping, SRTS assessment, Walkable/Bikable Community Mapping, etc. Regional Team members were asked to go back to their County F&F Planning Team meetings in October and work to prioritize which communities in their county are most interested in a particular assessment and why. This information will help Regional Team members as they select a few communities for each assessment from throughout the region.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Suggestion Box Comments:

- How do we get those small communities that currently aren't involved, involved?

Reply from Brenda: We will bring this to our Organizational Partners (Economic Development, ISU Extension, Public Health) at our October 1 teleconference meeting.

- We need to do less introduction of people at the beginning. We know everyone and this takes too much valuable discussion time.

Reply from Brenda: At the July Regional Team meeting it was requested that Regional Team members have time to “share 1-2 things happening in your home county related to Food & Fitness since the last meeting”. The group agreed saying that it would help us learn about each other's counties and what's happening in the region. (Our evaluator's also find this information useful because it helps them access community engagement.) Please suggest this change to the Regional Team if you feel strongly that it is limiting our time to much I would suggest you raise this issue with the entire Regional F&F Team. (We're somewhat doing that now.) Others may feel the same way and would be willing to limit the sharing to 1 idea vs. 2.) Do others have suggestions or ideas?

- I like the idea of having more free discussion time.

Brenda's Reply: We will try to build this into the agenda. The discussion on assessments has taken much longer than anticipated and was extended due to the Kellogg TAP Team visit and the lengthy discussion related to a regional SRTS grant proposal.