

Natural Environment

“As I near graduation and consider where I want to live and work, I know I want a community that strives towards sustainability. To me this means a city with respect for the natural environment, protected and accessible green space, businesses that value sustainable practices, easy options for alternative transportation and planning to encourage vibrant urban centers rather than sprawl.”

— Brett Marler, Drury University, Class of 2010

The economic downturn has reminded citizens that the ways of sustainability – protecting and preserving our environmental, economic and human resources for future generations – are the common sense ways of the Ozarkian culture. Local citizens pride themselves on being thrifty, resourceful and respectful of their environment and raise their children with these values.

BLUE RIBBONS (2004 – 2007)

- Water Quality
- Air Quality
- Solid Waste Management

CURRENT STATUS OF 2004 – 2007 RED FLAGS

Water Quantity

The 2005 *Community Focus* report identified water quantity as a red flag due to rapid and steady population growth within the Springfield-Greene County community. Unfortunately, groundwater demand has continued in this region. According to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, demand for public water supply wells in southwest Missouri increased by 37% between 2000 and 2006. In addition, groundwater depletion continues in some areas of southern Missouri with no groundwater use laws.

Progress has been made to address water quantity issues. On November 24, 2008 the governors of Arkansas and Missouri signed a bi-state agreement to work cooperatively on water quantity and quality issues. In 2009, Greene County was awarded Ground Water Guardian status for the 14th year with the help of the Water Guardian Community. The city of Willard recently completed a Wellhead Protection plan, which identified potential threats to the drinking water well and provided an action plan

to deal with contaminants. Finally, the Watershed Committee of the Ozarks is developing a Source Water Protection plan in conjunction with City Utilities.

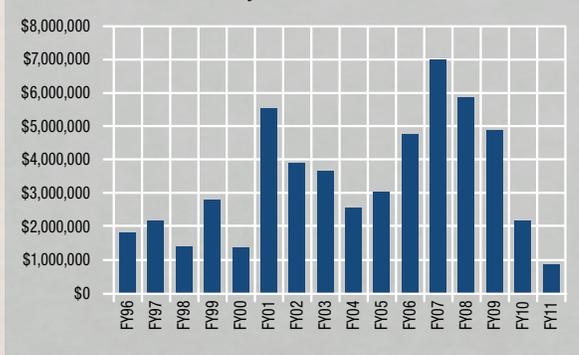
Although water conservation initiatives are becoming more prevalent, water quantity remains an issue of interest in this region. More vigorous programs that promote conservation are needed. In addition, maintaining the current supply of high quality, abundant and inexpensive drinking water is a future concern as the Springfield-Greene County area continues to experience population growth.



Stormwater Management Funding

Stormwater management involves issues related to flood control and water quality protection. Both the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports classified storm water management funding as a red flag for two main reasons: funding shortages to comply with increasing mandates from the federal government and the aging and deterioration of Springfield’s stormwater infrastructure. A five-year Parks/Waterways ¼ cent sales tax was approved by the voters in 2006; half of the funding is dedicated to Springfield and Greene County for projects and programs that enhance runoff water quality. However, funding sources have only been approved through 2012 although ongoing maintenance and federally mandated water quality requirements will need to be funded on a long-term basis. In addition, steady growth in the urban service area makes ongoing maintenance and system upgrades essential. Therefore, stormwater management funding continues to be an area of concern for Springfield-Greene County.

STORMWATER BOND PROJECT EXPENDITURES





■ Solid Waste Management Funding

In both the 2005 and 2007 *Community Focus* reports, solid waste management funding was a red flag due to the lack of a stable funding source to sustain Springfield's Integrated Solid Waste Management System (ISWMS). Reduced revenue for ISWMS was attributed to its reliance on landfill tipping fees and the lack of general or tax revenue for support and competition from out-of-town landfills owned by national solid waste corporations. Recently, the City of Springfield has reached a voluntary agreement with the two major solid waste haulers that will stabilize the funding level available for the city-provided recycling/waste reduction services of the voter-approved ISWMS. The remaining component of the ISWMS is curbside recycling which is provided by independent private trash haulers.

City Recycling/Waste Reduction Services

- Education and Information Program
- Household Chemical Collection Center
- Market Development Program
- Recycling (Drop-off) Centers
- Springfield Sanitary Landfill
- Yardwaste Recycling Center

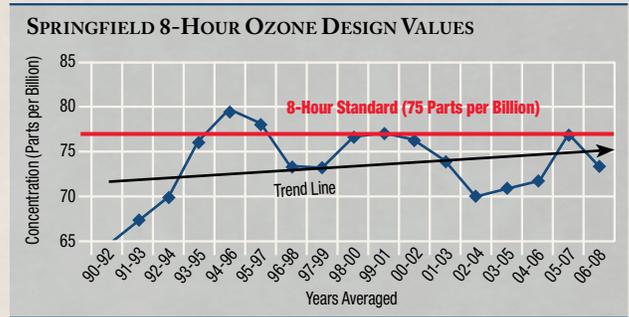
EMERGING ISSUES

◆ A Community Sustainability Plan

Proactive preventive planning would avoid costly reactive responses to increasingly rigorous standards and regulations while protecting our environment and investing for the future. A plan is needed as a roadmap to sustainability. However, buy-in of all stakeholders will be key to the success of such a plan.

◆ Air Quality

The trend of ground-level pollution in Springfield and Greene County continues to be an area of concern. Exceeding standards places a community at risk of being declared "non-attainment" with the federal standards. In addition, the health effects of ground-level ozone can be significant for children, individuals active outdoors and those with respiratory illnesses.



TYPICAL ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS OF OZONE EXPOSURE

- Aggravated asthma or other respiratory illnesses
- Inflamed and damaged cells that line the lungs
- Reduced lung capacity making it difficult to take deep breaths
- Increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses
- Increased hospitalizations by aggravating respiratory illnesses

As a proactive effort to safeguard the region's air quality, the Ozarks Clean Air Alliance (OCAA) was formed as a subcommittee of the Community Partnership of the Ozarks' Environmental Collaborative. The OCAA now includes 15 counties in southwest Missouri, committed to working together to protect and improve air quality. The OCAA has completed the Clean Air Action Plan – an outline guiding those efforts.

◆ The Built Environment

Built environment refers to manmade surroundings including buildings and supporting infrastructure. In addition to promoting sustainable practices in the private sector, funding to address needs of maintaining and improving publicly owned structures and infrastructure must be secured. Accelerated increases in fuel costs, air quality issues and economic forces highlight a growing need for increased availability of alternative modes of transportation, particularly public transportation.

◆ Increase Participation in Recycling

Recycling is the most accessible green activity and often stimulates further engagement in sustainable behaviors. With most haulers offering single stream recycling and extended availability of city recycling centers, encouraging a higher participation rate in recycling is a priority. With the increase in availability, a concerted effort to educate and encourage community participation can produce significant gains.

