
 **EPA** United States Environmental Protection Agency

2011 Community Involvement Training Conference
Community Involvement in the 21st Century: Embracing Diversity,
Expanding Engagement, Utilizing Technology

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CARE- A Model for Community-Based
Environmental Problem Solving
July 19, 2011 12:45pm
Michael Wenstrom



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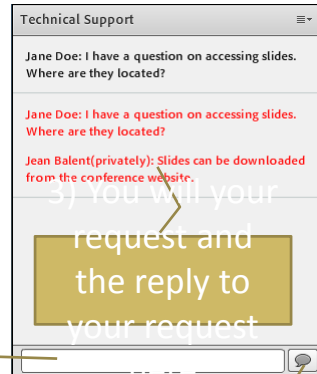
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Thank you!

Let's begin today's session!



Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)

A Model for Community-based
Environmental Problem Solving



What is CARE?

CARE is a community-based,
community-driven
program created to build **partnerships**
to help **underserved communities**
understand and reduce risks from all
sources of pollution using grant funding
and technical assistance.



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A Model for Agency Community Work



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CARE's Origin

- **CARE launched in 2005, influenced by a number of factors:**
 - **NAPA evaluations:** Need changes to “stovepipe structure,” need cross-media, better efforts in communities.
 - **Low-income communities:** EPA regulations and programs NOT impacting their pollution problems, not addressing small and diverse area sources.
 - **2004 NEJAC:** EPA should “initiate community-based collaborative, multi-media, risk-reduction pilot projects” in EJ communities.
 - **Build on Success.** Success with regional CARE-like projects to give targeted assistance to high-risk communities; Lessons learned from CBEP, Targeted Watershed, EJ, P2



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CARE Grant Funding

- FY05 12 Grants= \$1.9M
- FY06 16 Grants= \$2.6M
- FY07 22 Grants= \$3.4M
- FY08 18 Grants= \$2.5M
- FY09 9 Grants= \$2.0M*
- FY10 14 Grants= \$2.1M**
- FY11 10 Grants Selected=\$1.6M



101 grants to 85 communities = \$16.1M



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CARE Benefits

- Addresses **multimedia problems**
- Creates local partnerships that **leverage** resources and **sustain** environmental health efforts over time
- Delivers EPA Tools and technical assistance
- Tests **grassroots innovation** and new ideas relevant to EPA programs
- **Expands the conversation** on the environment
- Creates change by requiring Agency staff to work across Agency stovepipes – **one-stop shop**
- Improves local environments



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From 2005–2009 CARE Communities Have:

- Leveraged dollar-for-dollar EPA grant funding.
 - Communities leveraged **over \$15M** from local and national sources.
 - Received in-kind donations of an **additional \$2M.**
- Engaged over **1,700 partners** in local projects (local organizations, businesses, local and state agencies, universities, foundations, federal agencies).
- Visited over **4,000 homes** providing information and/or environmental testing
- Provided environmental information
 - Over **2,800 businesses**
 - Over **50,000 individuals**
- Engaged over **300 schools, 6,300 y**



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CARE Addresses the Administrator's Priorities and Strategic Plan Goals

- 100% of 68 CARE communities are addressing the Agency's Priorities and Goals in EPA Strategic Plan
 - 54% of CARE communities are Taking Action on Climate Change
 - 92% of CARE communities are Improving Air Quality
 - 76% of CARE communities are Assuring the Safety of Chemicals
 - 73% of CARE communities are Cleaning up their Communities
 - 87% of CARE communities are Protecting America's Waters
- CARE models the Administrator's vision of "One EPA" and "Expands the Conversation on the Environment"
- 90% of CARE Communities are in EJ Communities



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CARE Creates Change in EPA



- CARE builds on current and past community-based programs (CBEP, Watersheds, EJ)
- Strong HQ – Regional partnership for implementation
- CARE's unique organizational structure **requires** us to work together across Agency stovepipes
 - ▶ Changes the way environmental programs are framed so they are seen by EPA staff the way citizens see them – a cumulative risk approach
 - ▶ Encourages two-way communication between EPA and communities

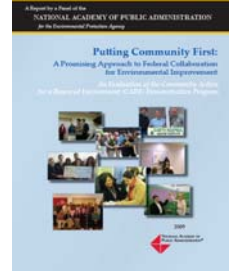


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Strong Support for CARE

NAPA Report May 12, 2009:

- "CARE complements EPA's traditional regulatory and enforcement efforts to provide additional **targeted assistance to communities at highest risk.**"
- "The CARE partnership engages the energy of the community and the expertise of EPA to identify and reduce pollutants..."
- "CARE makes EPA more responsive to communities needs and priorities through an emphasis on community-driven priorities."



NEJAC Letter to Administrator:

- "CARE has already proven to be a high quality community tool that supports environmental justice"
- "... CARE Program is a community tool (EJ communities) need"
- "NEJAC is compelled to advise and encourage expansion of and increased funding for the CARE program by your Agency."

Community Support:

- "CARE has given us a voice"
- "There would have been virtually no progress without the CARE partnership"



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CARE:

A View from an EPA Region

What does a Region do with CARE?

- ▶ Encourages/trains potential grant applicants
- ▶ Recruits and mentors Project Officers
- ▶ Marshalls EPA Resources
- ▶ Brings Federal and State Partners on Board
- ▶ Monitors progress
- ▶ Mid-course corrections
- ▶ Talks a lot

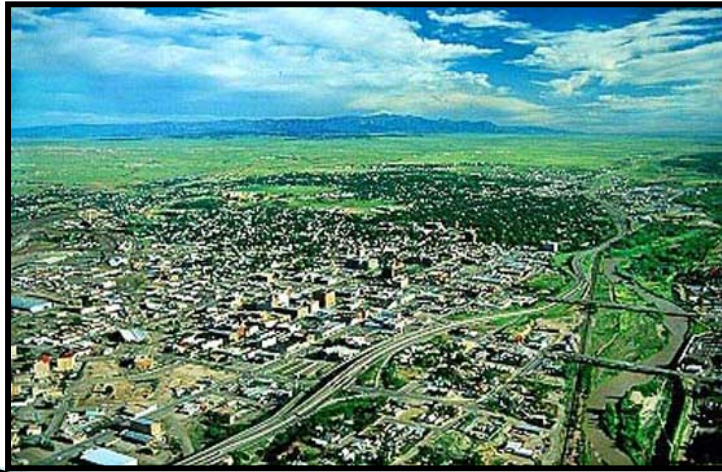


What does a Project Officer do?



- ▶ Traffic cop
- ▶ Choir Director
- ▶ Factor
- ▶ Agent
- ▶ Advocate
- ▶ Cheerleader

Pueblo, Colorado – CARE Level 1



The Pueblo Story



How we got started –

Met with neighbors

Asked questions

Reviewed environmental
data for Pueblo

Examined enforcement
data

Looked for quick action
opportunities



A Salt Creek Living Room

CARE works with the community:

- ▶ Environment “101” Classes
- ▶ Community meetings –
Neighborhood by Neighborhood
- ▶ Engaging partners
- ▶ Identifying environmental risks
(Real and perceived)
- ▶ Assessing and ranking risks

How we worked an issue: Radon, for example



Capturing Community Energy: A Bias for Action

- Stormwater protections
- Brownfields
- Mercury mitigation
- Rebuilding after a flood
- School bus retrofits
- Creosote dilemma

▶ A Bias for Action: Retrofitting a School Bus



- ▶ 100 Buses Retrofitted
- ▶ Tested buses for “before and after” in-cabin emissions
- ▶ Reduced in-cabin particulate emissions by more than 50%
- ▶ Reduced idling and saved 25,000 gallons of fuel per year

Celebrating Success!



© THE PL

A Bias for Action: Peppersauce Bottoms



Flooding in the Bottoms



Creosote and the Community



Playing with Fire

Leveraging Resources

- ▶ A State of Colorado Radon Grant (\$25,000)
- ▶ A Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) grant for \$100,000 to mitigate exposure to mercury
- ▶ Helped to raise funds (about \$10,000) to rebuild houses in Peppersauce Bottoms

The Result: Risk Ranking

Considerations	Radon	Indoor Mold	Mobile Source Pollutants	Pathogens in Fountain Creek
Likelihood of Exposure	3	1	2	1
Frequency of Violations	3	3	3	3
Extent of Exposure	3	3	2	1
Exposure Subtotal	9	7	7	5
Severity of Likely Human Health Effects	3	1	2	2
Impact on Sensitive Populations	2	3	2	2
Impact on the Environment	1	1	2	1
Effects Subtotal	6	5	6	5
Total Risk Score	15	12	13	10

A Sign of Success



Why is CARE Successful?

- ▶ Clear Objectives and Processes
- ▶ Puts Community First
- ▶ Builds Partnerships
- ▶ Technical Support from EPA
- ▶ Encourages consensus
- ▶ Deals with real problems/real solutions
- ▶ Focuses on Sustainability

Contact:

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Healthy Air for Northeast Denver (HAND)

Action • Air • Community

HAND

- ▶ The original vision for HAND was an open collaboration of interested stakeholders in NE Denver. The group developed asset mapping and criteria-based decision-making processes to determine feasible projects and directions.
- ▶ 31 initial partners for all sectors
- ▶ Choose projects collaboratively.

HAND area



The Criteria for selecting projects can be summarized into four questions:

- ▶
- ▶ · *Does the project help fulfill the mission of HAND?*
- ▶
- ▶ · *Is the project feasible?*
- ▶
- ▶ · *Can the project achieve results in the short term (within 2 years)?*
- ▶
- ▶ · *Is there broad support for the Project?*

CARE Grant:

- ▶ Selection of projects from the original asset-mapping and criteria-based process.
 - a. Indoor Air- schools and promotora outreach to mono-lingual Spanish speaking homes
 - b. Youth outreach- Earth Force and Tools for Schools
 - c. Diesel Outreach to small business and fleets
 - d. Small area plan-City of Denver

Project Officer and EPA support

- ▶ EPA played many roles before, during and after the CARE grant.

Before

- ▶ Helped convene community groups and facilitate collaborative efforts to develop HAND and the CARE grant



During

- ▶ Constantly providing access to resources, data sources and experts related to projects and issues for HAND.
- ▶ Critical to providing outside facilitation to resolve significant conflicts within HAND.
- ▶ Support through the maze of Federal Grants Process.
- ▶ Provided moral support through the entire process.

After

- ▶ Support through resources and data sources
- ▶ Direct individual partners to further grant and support opportunities
- ▶ Maintain connections for the group membership “CARE FAMILY”
- ▶ Use the experience from this project to instruct and support future CARE projects.

Superfund Site to Natural Area



Students
respond to
questions
about their
work at
Heron Pond

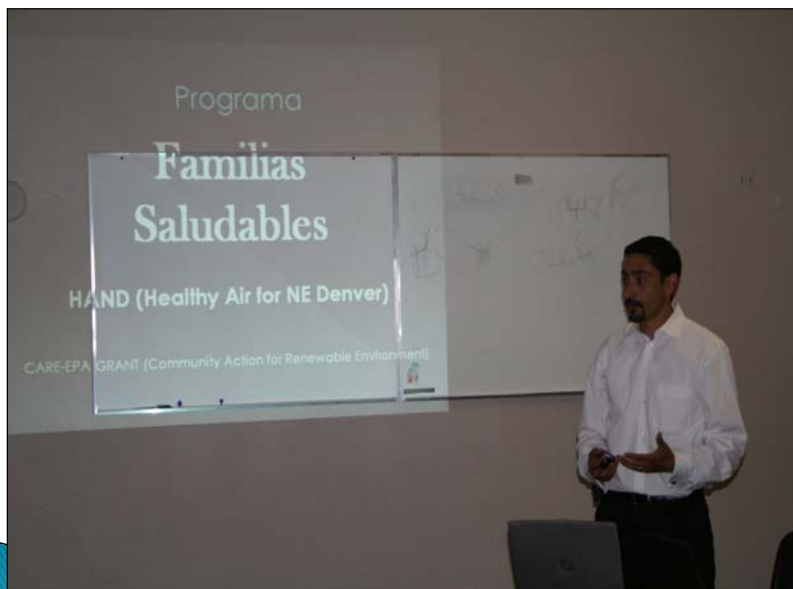
HERON POND

- ▶ Former wastewater treatment site and retention pond
- ▶ Student involvement for last 3 years through partnership with Denver Public Schools, Denver Natural Areas program and FrontRange Earth Force.
- ▶ Receives Natural Area Designation



Promotora Outreach Goals

- ▶ *Promotora Outreach*
 - *Visit 300 homes*
 - Hogares Sanos, Ninos Sanos"
 - Hanson Saludable
- ▶ *Health Trainings and Outreach 1500 individuals*
 - Visit Churches and Schools
 - Breathe Better Bus
 - Nutrition Class
 - Media
- ▶ *Leadership Development and Support*
 - 4 leadership groups
 - One project for each group



Short Session



Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools



