

Instructor

Patience Caso

Patience works with Hennepin county Environmental Services to support community groups to engage and educate community members in reducing household hazardous waste, conserving energy, protecting our water, recycling and reducing waste.

She has coordinated public engagement and policy campaigns for a variety of environmental groups, and has a background in strategic planning, community organizing and environmental policy and election campaigns. Patience graduated with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management and Environmental Studies from the University of Minnesota in 2000 with an emphasis in environmental education

A statement from Patience: "I believe in building political power through grassroots action and focusing on leadership development to build a strong and sustainable movement. I believe supporting local leaders to help connect regular people to their policymakers will ensure fair and transparent decisions are made for our environment, our health and our future generations."

Patience.Caso@hennepin.us

Course Dates:

The course will open on March 31, 2015. The instructor will monitor and participate in discussions, answer questions, and be available to participants on a regular basis **for two weeks after the course begins**. Assignments are expected to be completed within that two week period. Course materials will remain open to participants indefinitely, for review and reference.

Please note- The assignment at the end of this course will take you some time. DON'T wait until the last day to try and complete these learning activities. Give yourself plenty of time for the final learning activity.

Course Goals:

Participants will:

1. Recognize community engagement efforts that are effective in influencing changes in behavior.
2. Demonstrate their ability to network and build relationships by initiating, participating in and reflecting on a one-on-one meeting and developing a list of contacts for their outreach project.
3. Prioritize outreach and engagement efforts by exploring and observing community members' spheres of influence and interest in engaging on the issue.
4. Identify specific, end-state behaviors for participants to act on to protect water.
5. Identify barriers to taking action and changing behavior.
6. Select and promote appropriate strategies to help people overcome barriers to action and influence changes in their behavior to protect water.
7. Examine past Master Water Steward projects to identify worthwhile behaviors and barriers to address to protect water.

Learning Objectives

The objectives in this course are to help you answer the following questions:

- What is effective community engagement?
- Why do people get involved in protecting water?
- Who can you talk to about water protection in your community?
- How will you prioritize your outreach efforts?
- How will you reach the people you don't know but are important to the success of the project?
- What can you do if people aren't engaging in your water protection project?
- What specific actions can people take to protect water?
- What prevents people from taking action to protect water?
- How can you engage people in overcoming barriers to action during your outreach and education project?
- What lessons can be learned from past Master Water Stewards projects about influencing changes in how people act to protect water?

Assessment

- All participants will be expected to complete all Learning Activities listed for each course within two weeks of the opening of the course dates
- All participants are expected to participate in the Discussion forums for each course.
 - Contribute at least one original posting that responds to the discussion prompts in the course.
 - Respond to the postings of at least two colleagues in the course with a thoughtful, substantive response.
- All participants will be expected to successfully pass an online quiz, with a score of at least 90%.

Course Description:

Engaging neighbors and community members in protecting our water with limited time, resources and experience is a challenge. Yet we all know that slowing the flow of water and preventing water pollution is something that must be done on a community-wide scale. Individual actions add up, and empowering community members to take action in their "own backyard" and front yard is critical to making real progress to protect and clean up our lakes, rivers and streams. This unit will explore community engagement strategies and share practical steps you can take to engage community members so you can use your limited time and resources wisely.

How to begin:

All Master Water Stewards courses have a very similar course navigation scheme. You will notice the following documents:

Welcome and Introduction- This is where you will find the syllabus, the learning goals, objectives and course description, and any other materials that provide information on the course and its structure.

Make sure to read this document carefully- it will help you get started, and keep you from getting lost as you go through the course.

Modules- All the learning activities are here for each course. Each set of modules will have learning activities you will need to complete in order to complete the course. Many of these will ask you to post information on the Discussion Forums.

Discussions- All the discussion forums are in this area. Each of the courses in the Master Water Stewards program will make use of discussion forums. All students and instructors are expected to participate in discussions, and we think you will find these to be a rewarding part of the program. Our goal is to provide plenty of opportunities to learn from each other through discussions.