August 11, 2014
Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors &
City of Decorah

Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities
April 22, 2008: “Sustainability must and will become a central priority of all aspects of our university enterprise—our operations, our academic mission, and our responsibilities to the greater society. “

- University of Iowa President Sally Mason
Challenges to Sustainability in Iowa

- Reduced economic stability, workforce retention challenges, and a competitive global market
- Increased susceptibility to flooding and other extreme weather conditions
- Challenges to protecting natural resources
- Increased obesity rates and other health problems associated with poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle
What is the IISC?

The School of Urban and Regional Planning launched the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) in 2009.

- Field Problems course
  - Address sustainability challenges in Iowa’s communities.
  - Apply faculty and student expertise to real-world issues
The IISC Today

- Big questions (sustainability) require multi-disciplinary answers
- IISC expanded to a campus-wide civic engagement initiative in the Fall 2012
- New IISC staff support
- Supported/funded by Office of Provost – Outreach and Engagement
How does it work?

- IISC pairs UI students/faculty with Iowa communities to develop projects
- Most projects occur as part of a UI course
- Campus-wide → 10+ colleges and departments
Competitive community selection process – RFP

Multiple applications for 2014-2015 AY

Winneshiek County/Decorah joint application

Projects proposed as part of application
Winneshiek County/Decorah selected as 1 of 3 IISC partner communities in March 2014

Timeline
- Project development March – August
- Fall projects kick off week of August 25th
- Spring projects begin January 2015
  - Urban planning projects → year-long

- 10 – 15 projects, 50-100 students and faculty, 10,000-15,000 + hours of work
Example Projects

- Frac sand mining research and analysis
  - Economic Impact Assessment – School of Urban and Regional Planning (fall & spring)
  - 3D mapping and modeling of potential sand mine sites – School of Geographic and Sustainability Sciences, GEEMaP Program (fall)
  - Transportation infrastructure impacts – College of Engineering (spring)
  - Legal/regulatory analysis and recommendations – College of Law (fall)
Storm water utility planning and management
  - School of Urban and Regional Planning (fall and spring)
  - 2009-2010 Decorah We Can Report
  - Collaboration with Luther College?
Example Projects

- Neste Valley Recreation Area Development
  - College of Engineering (spring)
  - Nature center design, parking and trails design
- Collaboration with Luther College
  - Campground/park sustainability best practices
Example Projects

- **Turkey River watershed analysis**
  - College of Engineering (spring)
  - Runoff/flooding analysis, design recommendations, watershed management BMPs
Example Projects

- **Interactive Art on Trout Run Trail**
  - School of Art and Art History, ArtsShare (fall and spring)
  - Creation/installation of 2-3 foot gnome statues along Trout Run Trail by MFA students
Example Projects

- **Marketing Winneshiek County natural resources**
  - College of Business, Marketing Department (fall)
  - Raise awareness of importance of natural resources, need to preserve
- Additional projects still in development
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