

Section D

Social Mapping

In this section you will learn how to:

- Visit watershed communities and learn what to look for
- Create and use a social map
- Design a water body usage survey

If surveys and interviews provide a glimpse of the demographics, attitudes and practices of a community, social mapping gives us a portrait of where people spend their time, get information, and which institutions and services they use most. A social map is a visual, geographic representation of important, noticeable places within a community and is a highly valuable resource in understanding the social landscape of a watershed.

Social maps can also be an excellent point of departure for in-depth interviews with community members. Social mapping gives a tangible representation of an abstract area that can then be “narrated” by community members.

Social mapping is best conducted by a small group of people who walk, ride and/or drive around the watershed, identifying people, places and things that are valuable. These people conduct casual conversations with people who live, work and play in the watershed. Social mapping will help you discern what places, spaces and things the citizens of the watershed determine as valuable and where you have the best potential for reaching people. If possible, ask an “outsider” of your watershed to conduct the social mapping. This will enable you to see your watershed with new eyes.



Social mapping helps identify areas within a community or watershed where outreach will be most effective and information can be disseminated to reach the most stakeholders. Publicizing a project's goals and procedures are important for gathering support, improving transparency and guaranteeing the overall success of the project.



Visiting the Watershed

Social mapping will reveal people's different perspectives within the watershed. These watershed visits are about how people are interacting with their local spaces and places. See Appendix 5 for directions on how to create a physical map of marked locations. Print out the map you completed so that you can make notes as you tour the watershed. Take advantage of all the ways of traveling within a watershed: walking, bicycling, boating and driving. Each means of locomotion will introduce you to different perspectives in the watershed.

It is important that you assess all the locations you have placed on the map by visiting them in person and evaluating whether or not they are truly high trafficked areas and places where community members congregate. You will also want to talk to local community members about the hot spots on the map, allowing them to comment on whether these places should count as hot spots and giving them the opportunity to suggest other ones. Visit the places suggested by community members, too, and, if appropriate, add these places to the social map.

Depending on the size of the community, drive or walk around and observe other areas for potential hot spots not identified by Google or by residents. Keep an eye out for other means of communica-

tion in a community, such as street artwork, signs or billboards along a bike trail, farmer's markets and brochure racks. Keep a record of the places you visit and their addresses to add to the map upon returning.

Designing a Waterbody Usage Survey

A final part of watershed social mapping is usage surveys to help gain a better understanding of the ways visitors use the body of water (lake, river or stream) in your watershed. While it might be easier to find visitors at a lake, rivers and streams are used for fishing, boating and water sports throughout the state. These recreational areas bring numerous people to the watershed and also make up the fabric of the human landscape for an area. For the purposes of this toolkit, we are using a Lake Usage Survey as an example (Appendix 1).

Lake usage surveys allow you to make observations about how a lake is used at any given time as well as talk to people who are utilizing the lake. This is important because lakes (as well as major rivers) are highly visible locations in a watershed used by a wide variety of people. Lakes can be a great point of entry for educating people about water quality issues as well as organizing action. Because of the economic and social importance of lake use in Iowa, having good water quality is a salient issue for many communities.

Unlike community surveys that tend to have a well-defined universe, it is impossible to get a random sampling of possible lake users. Instead, focus sampling on time of day, the day of the week and month. In order to conduct the survey most efficiently in cost and time and to offset any chance

of sampling periodicity (always conducting the survey at the same time of day, same weekday or even within the same month runs the risk of only surveying the same group of people or types of people), you should conduct the survey at random times.

Let's assume that peak usage for Iowa lakes is between March and October. You should do site usage observations at the lake during the week and weekends and in the morning, afternoon and early evening for each month. One way to assure that you gain ample variation in site visits would be to use dice to generate when you should conduct your visits.

If possible, obtain a 30-sided die from a hobby store and two six-sided dice. The 30-sided die represents the day of the month you will do the observation and the two six-sided dice represent the hour you will do the observation, as per Table 1.

Table 1: Coordinating dice numbers with observation times.

Sum of Numbers on Dice	Observation Time
2	10:00 am
3	11:00 am
4	12:00 pm
5	1:00 pm
6	2:00 pm
7	3:00 pm
8	4:00 pm
9	5:00 pm
10	6:00 pm
11	7:00 pm
12	8:00 pm

Hence, rolling two sixes would represent the 8:00 p.m. time slot; rolling a two and a four would represent the 2:00 p.m. time slot. You will want to make at least seven observations for a single month, allowing for the possibility that every day of the week could be sampled. If no weekend day is chosen, keep rolling until both a Saturday and a Sunday have been selected, since these are by far the heaviest trafficked days.

If time and money are short and you and your team will not be able to make multiple trips to the lake, you can do the following:

- Go at least once during the week in the late morning and once during the week in the late afternoon (different days).
- Go on a Saturday late morning one week, and a Saturday late afternoon the following weekend.
- Go on a Sunday late afternoon one week and a Sunday late morning the following weekend.

These steps will provide some variance, although conducting a random selection as described above is recommended for greatest variance.

Once at the lake, start on one side and work your way around the lake, asking each group of people you meet if they would take the time to answer a few questions concerning their use and experience of the lake. Identify yourself as part of the watershed action team and have a clipboard and extra pens on hand. If you have multiple people to conduct the survey, split up into groups, each working in the opposite direction around the lake until the groups meet up with one another.

The sample survey in Appendix 6 can be modified to meet your watershed action team's needs. In general, however, this survey should take no more than ten minutes per group. It is recommended that the investigator ask the questions and fill out the survey based on the participants' responses. If it is a high lake usage period (like a weekend in July), you might want to survey 1/3 of the groups present. If it is a low lake usage period, survey everyone in your target areas.

After all the surveys have been collected, you can code the responses in an Excel spreadsheet as described in Appendix 3.

