





# Foundations of Practice

*Community Development  
Core Competencies for  
Extension Professionals in  
the North Central Region*



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## Foundations of Practice

SLIDE 2

The Foundations of Practice: Community Development Core Competencies for Extension Professionals is composed of three major components:

- Understanding Communities and their Dynamics
- Developing Successful Community Initiatives
- Areas of Specialization and Emphasis

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## Component 1

SLIDE 3

The first component, Understanding Communities and their Dynamics, is a series of seven core competencies that focus on:

- The ability to understand community of place.
- The nature of public issues.
- The dynamics and interdependencies of the various segments of the community.
- The basics of community development work.

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# Understanding Communities and their Dynamics

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Basic Understanding of Community

- Community Demographics
- Community Economics
- Community Power Structure

**Natural Resources and Sustainability**

- Community Situational Analysis
- Community Development Process

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## Natural Resources and Sustainability

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# Mary Emery

**SLIDE 6**

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Mary Emery

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**Learning Objectives**

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- Understand the importance of place/ landscape to community and vice versa
- Understand the causes of controversy around natural resource issues
- Understand the meaning of sustainable development
- Understand the interdependency between natural resources and other community resources

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**Learning Objectives**

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- Understand the importance of how natural resource issues are framed
- Understand sustainable community development as a strategy to address natural resource issues
- Understand how natural resource issues are people problems first and foremost

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**Natural Resources & Our Community**

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How do you think about your community? How do you describe your community to others?

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**Community Identity**

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Natural resources and the landscape relate to our identity of the community. The physical setting helps to create the many characteristics that are unique to the community.

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**Community & Environment**

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“The community as a whole interacts with the local environment, molding the landscape within which it rests and in turn molded by it.”

Chris Maser, 1999, p. 28

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**Community & Place**

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“Community is rooted in a sense of place through which people are in a reciprocal relationship with their landscape.”

Chris Maser, 1999, p. 29

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**Natural Resource Issues**

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SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL  
Watersheds  
Water quality  
Water quantity  
LOGGING  
Endangered species  
Air Quality  
floods  
Land uses  
Wildlife habitat  
Land Conservation




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**Natural Resource Issues**

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Many of the natural resource issues are controversial. What makes these issues controversial?




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**Causes of Controversy**

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- Issues are complex, no easy answer.
- Many parties involved.
- Multi-jurisdictional.
- Differing data (too much, not enough) & interpretation.
- Differing values.
- Stakes are high.




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## Dealing with Controversy

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- Outgrow it.
- Reframe it to find common ground.
- Involve the community in research.

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## Outgrowing Controversy

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All the greatest and most important problems in life are fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This outgrowing proves on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some wider or higher interest appeared on the horizon and through the broadening of outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge.

*Carl Jung*

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## Reframing the Issue

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How the issue is presented determines the possibility of finding coming ground.

How the problem is presented helps people see how they can work together.

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## Two Approaches to Look at Natural Resource Issues

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Little Engine that Could

Chicken Little and the Sky is Falling

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## Sustainable Community Development

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## Definition of Sustainable Development

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“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:”

- Needs
- Limitations

Source: International Institute for Sustainable Development.  
[www.iisd.org/sd/](http://www.iisd.org/sd/)

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## Definition of Sustainable Development

**SLIDE 22**

“From the human-centered perspective sustainable can be defined as the indefinite survival of the human species through the maintenance of basic life-support systems (air, water, land, biota), along with the infrastructure and institutions needed to protect the components of these systems. However, the broadest definition goes well beyond the merely biological to include the creation and indefinite maintenance of societies which are nourishing to self-actualizing persons and communities.”

Source: Mendocino Environmental Center, 1999.  
[www.mecgrassroots.org/NEWSL/ISS32/32.02SusDef.html](http://www.mecgrassroots.org/NEWSL/ISS32/32.02SusDef.html)

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## Resources in a Community Are...

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- Interconnected
- Interactive
- Interdependent
- Ultimately Finite

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## Community Capitals Framework

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The Community Capitals Framework developed by Cornelia and Jan Flora with Susan Fey (2004) is a useful tool to better understand the interconnectedness and interdependence of the various resources in a community.

Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial communities, they found the communities that were most successful in supporting healthy, sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital.

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## Community Capitals

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"Capital is a type of asset that exists in any community. Capital assets may be tangible as industrial parks, businesses, and nature trails or intangible as with community norms related to helping one another, pride of heritage, or political influence. Capital assets can be invested, saved, or used up."

Source: "Using Community Capitals to Develop Assets for Positive Community Change." NCRCRD, 2/05, p. 4.



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## Community Capitals Framework

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## Example of Interactions

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A large hog processing facility (built) moves into a rural community (political) providing jobs and adding to the county's tax base (financial). Water and sewer lines (built & political) are run from the nearby town to the facility. Water quality issues arose from the run-off of the facility and overflow of the sewer system (natural). Latino workers and families move into the community with educational needs (human). More money flows into the community (financial). A new restaurant opens (built). A local organization with many volunteers (social) initiates an "Old & New Settlers' program" (cultural).



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**Framing Will Determine How People View the Issues**

SLIDE 28

“Frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world.”

Stephen D. Reese, *Framing Public Life*, 2001.

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**Framing Public Issues**

SLIDE 29

Frameworks Institute  
<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/strategic-analysis/FramingPublicIssuesfinal.pdf>

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**Framing Influences...**

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- What are the important issues – agenda setting.
- Our lens for interpreting issues – finding meaning.
- How we determine what information is relevant for taking action.

Source: Frameworks Institute

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## Ways to Look at Framing Natural Resource Issues

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- Traditional linear approaches versus systems thinking
- Episodic versus thematic approaches
- Framing for action versus proclaiming disaster




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## Traditional Linear Thinking

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- Individual self interest will result in the betterment of society.
- Nature is to be conquered and her secrets expropriated for human use.
- Nature is a system of aggregate parts that function in a linear fashion.
- By breaking down the pieces of nature we can manage them for our use.
- Importance of competition to understanding change.




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## Systems Thinking

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- Non-linear, non-reductionistic, non-mechanical view (sum of the parts is greater than the whole).
- Focus on interdependent and interactive relationships.




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## Episodic vs. Thematic – Framing for Responsibility

SLIDE 34

<p><b>Episodic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents a portrait</li> <li>• Appears as random event</li> <li>• Focuses on the story of a person</li> <li>• Invokes the them of personal responsibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thematic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents a landscape</li> <li>• Details about trends</li> <li>• Looks interaction of events- systems</li> <li>• Invokes social or government responsibility</li> </ul>
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## Strategies to Consider in Framing NR Issues

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- Link to trends versus focusing on specific events.
- Avoid invoking total disaster as a reason for action.
- Link opportunities for action to a community-based vision of the future.

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## The Importance of Community Context

SLIDE 36

- People with shared interests related to sharing the same location.
- Common attachment to locality with a degree of local autonomy.
- Share social interactions with one another with those beyond to satisfy requirements.
- Local community also interacts with larger society.
- Interacts with local environment and is shaped by local landscape.

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## Think Global, Act Local, Collaborate Regionally

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Community development processes that:

- At the local level drive changes connected to sustainable development
- Act as catalysts for change at the state, regional, and national levels,
- Is a mechanism to empower people to act in their own interests and that of their community,
- Enhances potential as it dissolves barriers, and
- Is democratic.



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## Balance Requires...

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- Economic development in harmony with the productive capacity of the community as well as with the integrity of the environment in the long term as it accords community members human dignity and provides a sense of well-being.
- Citizen input and local control.



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## Community Challenge in Managing Natural Resources

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- Find the balance between competition, cooperation and coordination, so as to avoid competing with the very people who can help find sustainable solutions.
- The Triple Bottom Line:
  - Healthy Ecosystem
  - Vital Economy
  - Social Well-being



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**Sustainable Community Development – Key Concepts**

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- Community-directed process of organization, facilitation, and action that allows people to create the community in which they want to live.
- Values based.
- Ability to communicate and foster collaboration both within and outside the community.
- Requires sustained community action.




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**Sustainable Community Development – Key Concepts**

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- Patience to understand fundamental issues rather than episodic events.
- Integrated learning of action and reflection.
- Ability to create a shared vision of the future grounded in long-term sustainability.




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**Participatory Action Research to Overcome Controversy**

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- A tool to manage community conflict,
- A process to build capacity, and
- A strategy to creating and maintaining positive social, economic and environment change.




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## Community Development as Knowledge Work

**SLIDE 43**

Crosses disciplines  
 Brings expert outsider know what  
 Uncovers expert insider know how  
 Creates new wisdom

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## Participatory Action Research: Core Concepts

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ACTION

PARTICIPATION

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## Levels of Involvement: Co-Option

**SLIDE 45**

Research ON people  
 Research FOR people  
 Research FOR/WITH people  
 Research WITH people  
 Research WITH/BY people

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**Questions for Reflection**

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We each change personally as we grow in years and experience. So do our respective communities.

Each community that wishes to create a vision for a sustainable future must therefore ask of itself:

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**Questions for Reflection**


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- Who are we as a community today?
- What do we want our children to have as a legacy from our decisions?

How these questions are answered will determine the nonnegotiable constraints that set the overall direction of a community's vision and thus the legacy inherited by its children.

Chris Maser, 1999, p.61

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**Resources**

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Frameworks Institute. [www.frameworksinstitute.org/strategic-analysis/FramingPublicIssuesfinal.pdf](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/strategic-analysis/FramingPublicIssuesfinal.pdf)

International Institute for Sustainable Development. [www.iisd.org](http://www.iisd.org)

Maser, Chris. 1996. *Resolving Environmental Conflict – Towards Sustainable Community Development*. Delray Beach, FL: St. Lucie Press.

Maser, Chris. 1999. *Vision and Leadership in Sustainable Development*. Boca Raton: Lewis Publishers.

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## Next Session

SLIDE 49

### Community Situational Analysis

October 24 and October 25, 2006 Anne Heinze Silvis  
1:30 to 3 p.m. CST

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The ability to analyze a particular issue or situation in a community from a historical, political, cultural and community context and determine Extension's role in the issue is an important competency of community development.



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