



GRAND Learning Network – Phase II Implementation Grants

Mid-Point Progress Report – October 15, 2010

A. Progress

1. Please summarize your progress to date, referring specifically to the activities listed in the Chart of Work for your implementation plan.

Total Participants in GRAND Learning Network Activities, January 1 – Sept 30, 2010

Teacher Leadership PD = 22 Teacher Leaders in Phase II (up from 12 in Phase I)

Foundational Great Lakes Watersheds PD = 75 teacher participants to date (not counting the Community partner resource people described below and not counting outside-of-hub participants in Fishing for the Future workshop in March) – NOTE: At least 50 of these 75 teachers have committed to completion of stewardship partnership projects

Summer Institute = 21 participants

Across all PD, 13 different community partners attended and participated, most of whom were new to GRAND Learning Network.

Activities Conducted: Foundational Professional Development Workshops

March 19, 2010 – Great Lakes in My World and Glacial Landforms of Michigan

Hosted by: Potter Park Zoo; featured Zoo partnership request in conjunction with new Zoo Master Plan featuring Great Lakes ecosystems, and instruction by 5 community partners from Sierra Club mid-Michigan chapter, Woldumar Nature Center, and Bath geology volunteer, and featuring stewardship work of Lyons Avenue (Lansing district). 17 teacher participants, 5 community partner participants

March 9-10 and June 15-16, 2010 – Fishing for the Future of the Great Lakes

March – hosted as part of MSU's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week

Two participants from our GRAND Learning Network service area –

One from Williamston Schools (2009 Summer Institute participant), one from DeVries Nature Center which then partnered with Laingsburg Schools stewardship PBE (19 additional participants – representing parks, police, teachers, outdoor education centers – not subsidized in any way by GRAND monies)

June – requested and hosted by community partner RSVP of Lansing, based at Gardner Middle School -- 18 participants, all from GRAND Learning Network
8 volunteers/partners from RSVP; 3 teachers from Kendon Elementary (Lansing Public Schools), 1 teacher from Wexford Elementary (Lansing), 1 Teacher Leader from Haslett/Murphy, a representative from the Annis Water Research Institute (GLSI hub), 1 partner from DNRE, 1 partner from Learnthelakes.org, 1 partner from MSU Extension 4-H mentoring programs, 1 partner from Pure Fishing (national partner and funding prospect) – and one partnering instructor from Mid-Michigan Salmon & Steelhead Fishermen’s Association

September 22 and 28, 2010 – GRAND Learning Network – Great Lakes Watersheds

Hosted by Woldumar Nature Center –

Featured Expert Lessons by 5 GRAND Teacher Leaders

Sept 22, 2010 – 19 teacher participants from Lansing District (Gier Park, Averill, Bingham, Elmhurst, Lewton, Willow, Woodcreek Elementaries), 2 from Bath Elementary, and 4 from Holt; total of 25 attendees including Resource partners: Woldumar Nature Center

Sept 28, 2010 – 29 teacher participants from Lansing District (Fairview, Bingham, Lewton, Pleasant View, Willow and Beekman elementaries), Ovid-Elsie, Haslett, Holt, Bath, Montessori (Lansing); total of 36 attendees including Resource partners: Harris Nature Center, Leslie Science Center, Woldumar Nature Center.

Activities Conducted and Scheduled: Teacher Leader Professional Development Workshops

April 28, 2010 – Teacher Leadership – Mobilizing the Village, with Debbie McFalone, Leadership for Learning; Stewardship feature – walkabout at Tollgate wetlands
14 Teacher Leaders attended and participated

October 28, 2010 – Teacher Leadership fall kick-off PD – Host = Holt Dimondale School
Featured community stewardship partner = Ingham Drain Commissioner’s Office

Activities Conducted: 2010 Summer Institute

21 total participants – new schools represented: Schavey Road Elementary in DeWitt, Haslett Middle School, Elmhurst Elementary in Lansing, and Wilkshire Elementary in Haslett
Teacher Leaders hosted the Summer Institute at these locations: Laingsburg, Bath, and Haslett, featuring community-partnered stewardship project work from past school year (2009-2010). Teacher Leaders served in leadership roles, planning and organizing the Summer Institute sessions, inviting community partners and gathering materials to share from partners, organizing materials and PBE lessons, and delivering instruction.

New community partners included in Summer Institute 2010 included: Michigan Department of Agriculture (invasive insects and plants of the Great Lakes region), City of Lansing planning department, Green Planet Extreme Adventures, Eaton County Parks, and Michigan Department of Community Health (retired ecotoxicologist and fisheries biologist).

Additional Activities

Website updates – at the recommendation of Whitmore and based upon preliminary recommendations of Rossman, Stephens has spent considerable time updating www.grandlearningnetwork.org to offer more specific highlighting of stewardship projects and other hub-related activities.

Coaching of school-community stewardship partnership projects – Stephens and Holtschlag have worked through one-to-one and small group (whole school) coaching meetings to guide planning of stewardship projects and curriculum/community connections for the 2010-11 school year. Stewardship project applications are due Oct 18; intensive coaching will continue throughout implementation of these projects.

Digital media collection, editing and media contacts – Stephens has made numerous connections with local media, according to our communications plan, with some media coverage resulting. According to our plan, Stephens has worked with MSU College of Agriculture and Natural Resources communicator Michelle Lavra to initiate specific media products and contacts. In addition, Stephens coordinates the collection of digital video, while Holtschlag continues as our main digital still-photographer. Stephens has coached Teacher Leaders on how to use social media based on our website for posting of their own images and information. We plan to engage older youth at each school site to assist Teacher Leaders with the posting in a more timely manner of their school-community stewardship projects in this coming academic year.

Administrative leadership – Dann continues to provide leadership for additional grant-seeking, and for establishing internal and external support for Phase III match requirements.

2. Up to this point, have you done what you proposed to do? If not, please explain any discrepancies between the activities you proposed in your Chart of Work and the activities you have undertaken.

Yes, we have done what we proposed to do, with some items deferred for 1-2 months during Fall 2010, while we re-assess our plans for more concrete engagement of advisors.

<u>Original scheduled activity</u>	<u>New schedule – (and rationale for discrepancy)</u>
Teacher Leader PD August	October 28 (Teacher Leaders were already scheduled for planning and presenting at Aug Summer Institute, so we re-scheduled this Teacher-Leader only session for October after MEAP testing completed)
General/Foundational PD Oct	November (to avoid overlap with TL session)
Blue Flag School Criteria (summer)	Develop and announce by Dec TL session (in order to include advice gleaned at All-Hub meeting and other insights from TLs from fall)
Community Council (June/Dec/June) and Distinguished Advisory Group	Postponed to Nov for Distinguished Advisors Community Council will still be convened in Dec, June (upon advice of Whitmore to clarify and streamline the functions and membership of these groups, and after we have gathered diverse insights from other hubs at the All-Hub meeting, we are ready to move forward to re-formulate these two groups)

3. Have you made any significant changes to your timeline, approach, or project partners? If so, what are the changes and the reasons for those changes?

See #2 above for changes to timeline.

The most significant change to our approach at this time is to drastically reconsider how we engage our advisors. Although we are still working out the details from what we learned from other hubs at last week's All-Hub meeting, our general plans are these:

- Keep the Community Council as a broadly-defined group of all stakeholders – make their function primarily celebratory, and have them provide reaction and inputs to school-community partners to strengthen the stewardship outcomes of project work. Convene this group as we did in December 2009, again in December 2010 and at the end of Phase II (June 2011).

- Identify a MUCH smaller cadre of Distinguished Advisors (6-8 people), and focus their responsibilities on 1) review of our strategic plan and preparation of Phase III proposal, 2) identification and “door-opening” for Phase III matching and long-term sustainability funding/organizational support for the Network and its activities. We are in the process of identifying these individuals now, and will convene them in early November. We will likely need to convene them again in early 2011, in order to be ready for the proposal-writing for Phase III.

4. An update to the contents of the GLSI database for your hub is due with this report. Please contact Lisa Marckini-Polk, GLSI evaluator, if you need assistance with this task.

Stephens and Holtschlag are working on this task; only one computer system in our group can handle Access database software. We will complete data entry ASAP.

5. If your expectations for the scope of student participation in place-based education efforts have changed since your proposal was submitted, please provide an updated estimate of the number of student participants in your implementation grant and describe the reasons for the change.

The number of student participants should remain the same. However, due to the early-out retirement announced this summer and due to teacher reassignment (since the continuation proposal was written), schools participating with commitments from Teacher Leaders have changed in Lansing and DeWitt School systems as follows:

From proposal:		
<u>2009-10 participation</u>	<u>Anticipated 2010-11</u>	<u>Actual 2010-11</u>
Holt – Dimondale	Holt- Dimondale	Holt- Dimondale
	Holt – Hope M.S.	
Bath	Bath	Bat
Laingsburg	Laingsburg	Laingsburg
Haslett – Murphy El.	Haslett – Murphy El.	Haslett – Murphy El.
Haslett – Ralya El.	Haslett – Ralya El.	Haslett – Ralya El.
	Haslett Middle	Haslett Middle
Lansing – Gier Park El	Lansing Gier Park El.	Lansing Gier Park El.
Lansing -- Lyons Ave. El	Lansing -- Lyons Ave El.	Lansing -- Lyons Ave El.
	Lansing -- Sheridan Rd. El.	Lansing -- Elmhurst El.
	Lansing – Gardner Middle	
	DeWitt – Scott El.	DeWitt – Scott El.
		DeWitt -- Schavey Rd. El.

Dropped: Hope Middle School (Holt Schools) and two schools from Lansing District: Gardner Middle School, Sheridan Rd. Elementary (due to teacher early retirements that were unanticipated as we wrote the grant, and due to teacher reassignments in this current school

year). Note: Gardner Middle School served as a host for a foundational PD and teachers there are still interesting in being involved, but not at the level of Teacher Leader in this academic year due to reassignment.

Added: One Lansing Elementary, one additional DeWitt Elementary (teachers from these schools attended and actively participated in the Summer Institute and expressed interest in serving as Teacher Leaders).

Total = 22 Teacher Leaders for 2010-11

12 potential school-community partnership stewardship projects (same as estimated in proposal). Due date for proposals is Oct 18, 2010.

B. Communications

1. Please describe your progress to date in achieving the goals in your annual communications plan.

- Plan completed and submitted March 31, 2010.
- Received feedback comments from Mike Nowlin on 5/12/10
- Suspended direct activity on communications plan while change from Pace & Partners to Rossman Group was implemented by GLSI (summer)
- Met with, was interviewed by and received feedback from Phil Lewis et al. of Rossman Group in Sept, 2010

In spite of the hiatus in GLSI-appointed communications staff, we were able to accomplish the following:

- Media coverage of the Celebration Cinemas fundraising event (spring 2010)
- Media coverage of the school-community stewardship projects (spring 2010)
- Continued documentation by hub staff via digital video (and subsequent editing by Haslett student on a voluntary basis) for posting of video clips to website
- Updates to website to address modifications requested by Whitmore and Rossman Group
- TV coverage of Summer Institute (August 2010)
- Work with Michelle Lavra (communications coordinator for MSU College of Ag & Natural Resources) to develop media coverage for internal and external audiences.

We greatly appreciated seeing the communications tools used by all the other hubs, during our Fall 2010 all-hub meeting last week. We look forward to our training meeting with Rossman Group to use new templates and materials from GLSI (we anticipate this meeting to occur the first week of November).

2. List any additional resources or assistance in communications that you need.
Please be as specific as possible so that we can respond to your requests and ideas.

Newsletter templates, and fact sheet templates would be helpful. (We recognize that these are forthcoming!)

Please be sure that all requests for communications tasks are copied to all three hub leaders (Dann, Holtschlag and Stephens). In addition, please coordinate requests for communications tasks with GLSI requests for other administrative tasks (i.e. evaluations, etc.), such that requests do not coincide during particularly busy times when we are most active in supporting the work of our Teacher Leaders and teachers. Finally, evaluation information requests (i.e. database requests) should likewise be copied to ALL three hub leaders, and should be coordinated with requests made by Rossman communications staff.

C. Financial Information

1. Do you anticipate a need to modify your budget? (Note: The Great Lakes Fishery Trust grant policy requires you to submit a budget modification form if there is a change in **any** of the approved budget amounts in **any** of the expense categories. If you answer “yes,” a budget modification form will be sent to you.)

We have just completed budget modification in order to bring the current budget up to date with the total amount awarded by GLFT. The only budget request we anticipate at this time is the following: as we near the end of the grant period, we will likely request a no-cost extension in order to carry out our Summer 2011 Summer Institute in late June.

D. Reflections

1. Describe unanticipated benefits or challenges you have experienced.

Benefits

We continue to be inspired by the unbridled enthusiasm and positive response of teachers and Teacher Leaders who perpetually stay involved in our PD system. We were pleased by the benefits of the GRAND Learning Network highlighted by our hub evaluators’ investigations – teachers and Teacher Leaders reported high satisfaction and utility of the PD sessions, the coaching, the reflective exercises/processes we employ in PD, and the administrative support provided by hub staff. We have capitalized on this benefit of participant enthusiasm & engagement to be able to differentiate the Phase II learning of established teacher leaders from new TLs and new teachers. This was a recommendation that was very important from Jan Eberhardt on our Network team. The greatest benefit is that we now have Teacher Leaders confident, willing and able to serve as presenters at our PD sessions, where we can highlight their content learning and their PBE pedagogical best-practices to new and emerging TLs and teachers. This TL involvement, in turn, will lead to greater sustainability of the initiative in the future.

Challenges

One major challenge about which we need to think more deeply is the challenge of engaging principals and school administrators. This has been problematic for some hubs, particularly in rural and urban districts. Administrators have turned over in at least half of our school buildings, just since initiation of our work! Turnover is more pronounced in rural and in urban (Lansing) schools. We will need to devise our Blue Flag program to catch the authentic support and to recognize (through public media) school-wide commitment (including the commitment of administration) to PBE for Great Lakes Stewardship. This is one reason why we have “slowed down” implementation of the Blue Flag system of recognition, in order to be sure it allows us to reach school-wide reform goals of embracing PBE, rather than just to recognize the individual accomplishments of a teacher or two within a district.

2. Please describe at least two lessons you have learned during this first phase of implementation.

Lesson #1

We continuously learn from Teacher Leaders and teachers about the need for teachers to have multiple points of contact through foundational PD in order to feel they have “mastered” deep content as well as “the basics” regarding watersheds and the Great Lakes. This is needed, they report, before they extend their learning to the rest of their teaching staff, before they will initiate school-community partnerships for stewardship work, and before they engage in school change overall.

Consider this example: Jill Tribell has been with us for a year as a Teacher Leader, participating in numerous PD sessions. She has developed the content knowledge and the confidence to serve as a presenter in our foundational PD sessions this fall, yet she is also a continuous learner for deep content knowledge before implementing pedagogical changes herself or with peers. She learned about the importance of ecological monitoring data collection from fellow Teacher Leader Sandy Moore, and she learned about insects (native and non-native invasives) and what Michael Martin (MDA) calls the “web of life” during Summer Institute 2010. After this very rich content-oriented PD, Jill Tribell as a Teacher Leader then felt ready to engage her peer Karen Davis in designing a “Bug Count” process for their classrooms’ stewardship work with Woldumar Nature Center in October 2010. With their students, they conducted a count there, to do baseline ecological monitoring related to a new garden. Then, and only after this experience with her peer, Jill was able to share this activity with a broader audience of teachers/students – and 60 students will now repeat this data collection/ecological monitoring project as *their* stewardship project with Woldumar. One upshot lesson we have learned from this story and other similar stories is this – Teacher Leadership and deep change for PBE in schools does not happen overnight!

Lesson #2

PBE work engaging Teacher Leaders is highly contextual. We learned from the hub evaluation conducted by Doberneck that how easy or challenging PBE work is will depend on the school/community context (urban/suburban/rural, administrator-supported or not, well-resourced community or not). We were confirmed that our decision to involve an intentional array of schools (headwaters/rural/under-resourced, middle stream reaches/suburban and well-resourced, to highly urbanized and under-resourced main watershed region) was a wise one; we have learned from our Teacher Leaders and from our own reflections that deliberate work in areas with many contextual barriers to PBE is important. We are beginning to implement the recommendations from this evaluation, and we look forward to learning more during the evaluation of Phase II to be conducted by Marckini.

3. Using the narrative and Chart of Work from your implementation proposal as reference documents, describe your vision of the work that you will be doing during the remainder of your implementation grant. What are the most important issues, challenges, and opportunities you will address?

Our most important foci now are:

- 1) That we continue to offer learning experiences for new, emerging and established Teacher Leaders (as well as novice teachers) that deepens their knowledge about Great Lakes, watersheds, community and stewardship;
 - 2) That we help Teacher Leaders identify strategies for expanding their work beyond what they are doing now by helping them to make more connections with other teachers and with school change initiatives at their schools and throughout the district & with conservation community organizations, and
 - 3) That we help both Teacher Leaders and teachers connect with diverse and relevant community partners from conservation, business, and community service organizations.
 - 4) That we strategize on the long-term institutional support for this initiative (funding, sustainability), especially as state government, school funding and leadership, and higher education within MSU and our College will all be changing **dramatically** in this FY.
4. At this time, do you plan to apply for a Continuation Grant through the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative? **YES.**
 5. Have you sought or secured any additional funding to support this effort? If so, please describe.

Yes, we have (again) secured \$8,000 in direct cash support for student- and community-partner driven stewardship project work from the Youth Education Aquatic Stewardship Legacy Endowment within MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. In addition, the fundraising campaign with Celebration Cinemas netted \$1,690 for our hub, which will go directly to schools for their school-community stewardship work.

6. What resources or opportunities (e.g., people, materials, opportunities for professional development and networking) can the initiative make available that would be of particular value to your work?

We tremendously appreciated the facilitative discussion format of the All-Hub meeting in October 2010. This allowed for in-depth exchange among participants. Please keep elements of this format for networking in our future All-Hub gatherings! We came away from that meeting understanding more about the commonalities and the subtle differences among our PBE work for Great Lakes Stewardship, and more importantly, we came away armed with very diverse tools and techniques regarding communications, funding strategies, PD and many other topics.

We appreciated the opportunity to learn about national-level work on assessment and PBE from Doris Williams. She is an outstanding listener, a reflective scholar, and a knowledgeable resource on PBE. Please continue to bring her to our meetings, if at all possible given her new role.

One thought that a few of us had, informally, after the All-Hub meeting is this – if we value PBE, then we should take a small amount of time each time we meet to learn about the place where we are meeting and its importance in the Great Lakes watershed. We wished that we had a chance to do a guided walk at the Pellston station with you, Mary, to learn more! But, those of us who were able to stay for MAEOE accomplished this learning in the various sessions (thank you for GLSI's work with MAEOE for an outstanding conference!) When the meetings occur in Lansing, we would be happy to share some of our hub-related resource people, such as Rick Libbey with city of Lansing, to help us learn together about the places we inhabit during our meetings!

Finally, we look forward to the new resources and strategies from Rossman group – these should help us tremendously.

7. Is there anything else that you want to note about your work that would help us better understand and support it?

Contexts for Sharing of GLSI Work with EE Audiences and Scholarly Outlets

We presented GRAND Learning Network and GLSI at:

- North American Association for Environmental Education – Annual Conference in Buffalo, Sept 2010 – 45 minute session
- Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education Annual Conference, Pellston, October 2010 – two sessions: 90-minute session, Share-A-Thon; and a poster Both presentations were well-received. Additional presentations would likely be welcome in future meetings of these international/national and state organizations, as well as in other venues (i.e. NMEA, MSTA, etc.)

Administrative Activities Requested of GRAND Learning Network Team by GLSI staff

Preparation of Communications Plan, working with Nowlin (Pace & Partners) and Lewis et al. (Rossman Group) – estimated total person-days = 6 person-days

Hub evaluation:

- 1/2 day of training on GLSI database (1.5 person-days total)

- Data entry for GLSI database (4 person-days, at least)

- Dann meeting with Marckini-Polk (.5 person-days)

- Dann work with hub evaluator to arrange access to teachers/schools (2 person-days)

NOTE: this will take substantial time on the part of hub staff in future months, especially given there is no longer a hub-level evaluation contact person from UOE, MSU.

All-hub GLSI meetings:

- April (2 person-days)

- October (6 person-days)

Check-in meetings with Whitmore (approx. every 8 weeks) – these take minimal hub staff time and are VERY beneficial; thanks for this opportunity.