

# Attachment A (Part I & Part II)

## REAP Conservation Education Program

### Part I—Final Report Form

*Please submit this completed form via e-mail to [Salterberg@uni.edu](mailto:Salterberg@uni.edu).*

*If you include other documents, if possible please paste them at the end of this report rather than as a separate attachment.*

**Grant Recipient (organization name): Pottawattamie CCB**

**Project Title: Trailcasts: Enhanced Nature Podcasts**

**Report Prepared by: Tina Popson, Program Manager**

**Project Number: 07-14**

**Date Submitted: 10/30/07**

**Check one:**

**Note: Because your project has a short timeline and the award was less than \$3,000, REAP CEP Board is requiring you submit only one report.**

Final report (covering Jan. 2007-June 07 activities) **DUE: October 30, 2007**

Note: Your Final Project Billing Form and documentation will be due to Susan Salterberg (CEP contract monitor) on **Oct 30, 2007**. See Grant Agreement, Attachment B. ***Changes in the proposed budget that deviate from any line item by 10% or more must be approved before the expenditure occurs.*** Contact CEP Contract Monitor, Susan Salterberg, at [Salterberg@uni.edu](mailto:Salterberg@uni.edu) or 319-337-4816 to request changes.

**1) Objectives and activities**

The REAP CEP Board expects all work outlined in your original proposal to be completed. At a minimum, briefly explain activities completed to date for the following, as well as the percent of total work completed to date. Include what is going well, and explain. Also include challenges, and explain. Add other objectives as you deem appropriate.

- 1) Develop Trailcasts
- 2) Information Technology Integration
- 3) Create and Place Trail Blazes (signage, etc.)
- 4) Test trailcasts, obtain feedback, modify as needed
- 5) Publicize project activities and REAP CEP's role
- 6) Implement trailcasts
- 7) Evaluate project

<p><b>#1: Develop Trailcasts</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) species research by trail</li> <li>2) product creation with podcast software</li> <li>3) using audio and visual components as well as technologies.</li> </ol> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b> This part involved a HUGE learning curve on my part to familiarize myself with the Pinnacle Studio Software</p>	100%
<p><b>#2: Information Technology Integration</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) partnering with Pottawattamie County IT dept. to format and manage the web components of the Trailcast for visitor use.</li> <li>2) PCCB staff download of Trailcasts to portable players for use at HNC as well as uploading to</li> </ol>	100%

<p>online service sites, such as iTunes and Urge All Access To Go, under the podcast network for maximum exposure.</p> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b> Our IT department was helpful at times, but overwhelmed at others and I had to rely on my own abilities to navigate software. Still trying to upload to online service sites due to enhanced podcast format.</p>	
<p><b>#3: Create and Place Trail Blazes (signage, etc.)</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b> 1) Partnering with the natural resources manager at HNC, Chad Graeve, to design and produce portable metal posts with markers to use as blazes to guide visitors along the Trailcast trails: Badger Ridge, Fox Run Ridge and the Equal Access Boardwalk.</p> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b> Due to illness, another county park ranger, Jon Fenner, took over this project at the “eleventh” hour. He created an outstanding product that will be utilized for many years to come. They are both durable and visually attractive.</p>	100%
<p><b>#4: Test trailcasts, obtain feedback, modify as needed</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b> 1) Selected users to first test Trailcasts and players on site and then give their feedback regarding ease of use, blaze placement, etc. Users would include PCCB staff to familiarize with product.</p> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b> This was a great method to obtain feedback. We had first-time video player users in various age groups. Very good testing.</p>	100%
<p><b>#5: Publicize project activities and REAP CEP’s role</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b> 1) Partnered with communications manager at HNC, Kelly Herek, and sent press releases to local, regional and statewide media via newspapers, radio and websites. 2) Presenting at annual Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN) conference as workshop session “Technology Has Left the Building: How To Produce Trailcasts For Your Nature Center.” – scheduled for November 2007</p> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b></p>	100%
<p><b>#6: Implement trailcasts</b></p> <p><b>Activities:</b> 1) Including on website by partnering with Pott County IT for download use by visitors from own personal computers before arrival, on desktop at reception area for on-site visitor download capabilities to select players and on portable players that may be rented by the visitor on site.</p> <p><b>Additional explanation, if needed:</b> We are still working to get it on our website and other host sites due to the enhanced format. We do have it available on players that visitors can access at the front reception desk.</p>	100%

2A) Are there changes in the direction of your project (i.e., something different than outlined in your grant proposal)?

Yes       No

3A) Is the project on schedule?     Yes     No

**5) Final report only: Please describe the contributions of third parties and of your organization to this project. List the contributors and their estimated financial contribution. Explain each contribution, if a non-cash contribution.**

<b>Name of organization</b>	<b>Cash contribution</b>	<b>Matching contribution (non-cash)</b>	<b>Explanation, if non-cash</b>
Iowa Association of Naturalists	\$440.00		Provided grant funds for microphone, earphones and cases for players
Pottawattamie County Conservation Board	\$780.00		Provided cash funds for players
Pottawattamie County Conservation Board		\$5916.40	In Kind - salaries
<b>TOTALS:</b>	\$1220.00	\$5916.40	

**6A) Final report only. Please provide at least one concrete example of how your project met one or more of the environmental education goals listed below.**

- Understand environmental processes and systems (such as the earth as a physical system, the living environment, humans and their societies, and/or environment and society)
- Develop skills for understanding and addressing environmental issues
- Understand personal and civic responsibility
- Develop lifelong learning skills such as critical thinking, questioning and analysis skills
- Understand that human well-being is tied to environmental quality
- Understand and forge connections with their immediate surroundings
- Conserve and protect Iowa’s resources

The “Trailcasts: Enhanced Nature Podcasts” project helped visitors to Hitchcock Nature Center understand environmental processes and systems, such as the creation of updrafts and thermals in the Loess Hills that affect migrating raptors as well as how the Loess Hills were formed via glacial activity and windblown deposits.

Moreover, the “Trailcasts: Enhanced Nature Podcasts” project helped visitors to Hitchcock Nature Center understand and forge connections with their immediate surroundings by detailing the importance of the Loess Hills and the properties of the soil itself as well as many of the plants found along the trailside, for example Virginia creeper, poison ivy or wild rhubarb. One of the Hitchcock neighbors sent an e-mail afterwards that said “This (the Trailcast) also provided extra encouragement to participate in the upcoming seed harvesting program.” Participating in a seed harvesting program will further this visitor’s connection to the land.

**6B) Final report only. Testimonials from people influenced through your project help the CEP Board substantiate the need for this program.**

Testimonial from an e-mail sent from Randy Berry (neighbor to Hithcock Nature Center and Loess Hills landowner) to Tina Popson, October 2007:

I really enjoyed the opportunity to experience your Trailcast program and wanted to take a minute to express that. The use of the narrative at the various points along the walk really got me in tune with my surroundings. While I've been down that trail many times, the pace of the narrative and it's pointing out specific items on the trail as well as the Hitchcock conservation program in general truly made me appreciate the park, it's programs and gain a better understanding of the native and non-native plants. This also provided extra encouragement to participate in the upcoming seed harvesting program. I look forward to future programs. - Randy Berry

**7A) Final report only. (Please read Questions 7A, 7B and 7C before responding.)**

**Please summarize your project in three or fewer pages. This summary should include the following (including the headers), in the order shown below.**

- **Project title and Project number:**

Project Title: Trailcasts: Enhanced Nature Podcasts  
Project Number: 07-14

- **Organization's name, contact person, website, phone and e-mail:**

Pottawattamie County Conservation  
Tina Popson  
[www.pottcoconservation.com](http://www.pottcoconservation.com)  
712-545-3283  
[tina.popson@pottcounty.com](mailto:tina.popson@pottcounty.com)

- **Project's purpose and targeted audience:**

The goals of this Trailcast project are to encourage outdoor experiences, to provide useful interpretation, and to promote environmental literacy for a new target audience that includes generation Y.

- **Reflect on your project, providing a self-assessment. At a minimum, answer the following questions: Did your project go as planned? Explain what went well and why. Explain what you would do differently if you did the project again, and why.**

For the most part, the project went as planned. We followed each of the stages to the best of our ability, and the project fell into a logical sequential order. To begin, I needed to narrow down the software choice that would be the most user-friendly. As I said earlier, there was a huge learning curve on my part re: the technological aspects. Even though our county IT department was slated to assist with the technological end, often times our schedules conflicted, and I was left to figure things out to the best of my limited abilities. Luckily for me, my husband is quite adept at technology and made time in his busy schedule to assist me at crucial moments in the project (e.g. figuring out the transfer from the desktop computer to the video player so trail evaluations could be implemented).

One thing I was not prepared for was the sheer amount of time it took to create the Trailcast. For a ten minute guided hike, it took nearly an hour to develop one minute, including recording and formatting. That doesn't include the time spent writing a script and locating supplemental pictures. I would definitely suggest a longer timeline if I had it to do over (but luckily the REAP CEP board gave me an extension beyond my original six month goal).

If I had to do it over again, I would consider hiring a different outside source to assist with the technological portion of development, etc. However, since I was forced to explore and learn on my own due to timing issues, I am much more familiar with the product and process of creating the Trailcast from start to finish. I think this serves to the organization's benefit as well as my own when it comes to creating future Trailcast topics. It enables us to be self-reliant and produce in-house.

As for equipment, I would definitely pursue purchasing iPods if I had to do it over. I use one personally and everything, from the players to the software to the web-based site (i-Tunes) is MUCH easier to understand, especially for first-time users. I didn't go that route this time because I was afraid they would have a higher rate of theft (potentially) due to their popularity. That risk might be worth taking in the future to save headaches on the programming end.

- Please list the most relevant outputs,<sup>1</sup> and explain, if necessary.

The most relevant outputs of the Trailcast project would include:

- % visitor increased familiarity with players: 91%
  - 1 → 4 = 300% increase in familiarity (3 people)
  - 1 → 5 = 400% increase in familiarity (3 people)
  - 2 → 7 = 250% increase in familiarity (1 person)
  - 4 → 6 = 50% increase in familiarity (1 person)
  - 5 → 6 = 20% increase in familiarity (1 person)
  - 7 → 8 = 14.28% increase in familiarity (1 person)
  - 7 → 9 = 28.5% increase in familiarity (1 person)
  - 8 → 9 = 12.5% increase in familiarity (2 people)
  - 9 → 9 = 0% change in familiarity (1 person)
  - 9 → 10 = 11% increase in familiarity (1 person)
- % visitor increased understanding of HNC as a whole: 100%
  - 2 → 8 = 300% increase in HNC understanding (2 people)
  - 3 → 5 = 66.6% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
  - 3 → 9 = 200% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
  - 3 → 10 = 233% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
  - 7 → 8 = 14.28% increase in HNC understanding (3 people)
  - 7 → 9 = 28.5% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
  - 7 → 10 = 42.9% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
  - 8 → 9 = 12.5% increase in HNC understanding (2 people)
  - 9 → 10 = 11% increase in HNC understanding (1 person)
- % visitor increased understanding of FRR as a whole: 100%
  - 1 → 9 = 800% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 1 → 5 = 400% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 1 → 6 = 500% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 2 → 5 = 150% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 3 → 4 = 33% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 3 → 10 = 233% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 4 → 6 = 50% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 4 → 9 = 125% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 6 → 10 = 66.6% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 7 → 10 = 42.9% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)
  - 8 → 9 = 12.5% increase in FRR understanding (2 people)
  - 9 → 10 = 11% increase in FRR understanding (1 person)

- Please list the outcomes,<sup>2</sup> and explain, if necessary. Be sure to include the outcomes outlined in your grant proposal.

The most relevant outcomes of the Trailcast project include

- Visitors increased their general understanding of Fox Run Ridge Trail because of the Trailcast
  - Visitors increased their general understanding of Hitchcock Nature Center because of the Trailcast
  - Visitors are more open to using technology-based interpretive tools at the nature center.
  - Visitors would enjoy experiencing another Trailcast (e.g. during a different season or on a different trail)
- **Were there any negative outputs or outcomes, and/or concerns about the accuracy of your evaluation data, which you did not list above? If so, please identify the most relevant ones and explain.** No.
  - **Identify your one to three most effective marketing tools (i.e., conferences, e-mails, flyers, news releases in local papers), describe your use of them, and why they were effective.**
    1. IAN – After hearing about my project, I was asked by the IAN board to present on it at the annual fall conference in November. Through word of mouth in the organization, I have already received numerous phone calls re: the REAP CEP “Perpetuate A Good Idea” grants from Polk County, Clayton County, and O’Brien County.
    2. News Releases – I e-mailed press releases to local papers, television and radio stations. This exposure increases awareness of our site and the innovative interpretive tool were able to implement. Because of its flexibility and programmability by season, the Trailcast gives visitors a reason to return. I was also invited to appear on the television show “Omaha Living” to discuss the Trailcasts. This appearance is scheduled for the week of November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
  - **At least one but no more than three photo(s) of activities in jpeg format.**



Trailcasts and Trailblaze in use on Fox Run Ridge



Close up of custom trailblaze for Trailcast



Recording the audio track for the Trailcast

**7B) The REAP CEP Board wants to share your successes and lessons learned with other environmental educators. However, they respect your wishes to not share on the web potentially sensitive information that you may not want readily accessible to others. With this in mind, may the summary you have written (as well as the photos submitted) for 7A be published on the REAP CEP website?**

Yes     No (If no, please see 7C.)

**8) Final report: Please include attachments, including a copy of your evaluation form(s), your complete evaluation results, and a minimum of one photo in jpeg format. Some of this information may be published on the web, along with your project summary. Please clearly mark any attachments you do NOT want included on the website.**

**9) Other comments?**