



Communicating to Gain and Maintain Buy-In

The Logan Todd Regional Water Commission

This presentation was originally presented in 2012 as part of a four-part webinar series to promote system partnerships. The webinars were provided by the U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Agriculture to jointly promote sustainable rural water and wastewater systems.



Presentation Topics

- What are water system partnerships?
- The Logan Todd Regional Partnership
 - Background on the Partnership
 - Communicating to gain and maintain buy-in
 - Lessons learned



What are Water System Partnerships?

A **tool** for building technical, managerial and financial capacity.



What are Water System Partnerships?

- Do you know a system that faces any of these challenges?
 - Technical
 - Inadequate or aging infrastructure
 - Limited/poor source quality/quantity
 - Lack certified operator
 - Financial
 - Diseconomies of scale (few households = high costs)
 - History of water rates that are too low
 - Limited knowledge of financing options
 - Managerial
 - Limited part time management attention
 - Lack of expertise in long-term water system planning or operations

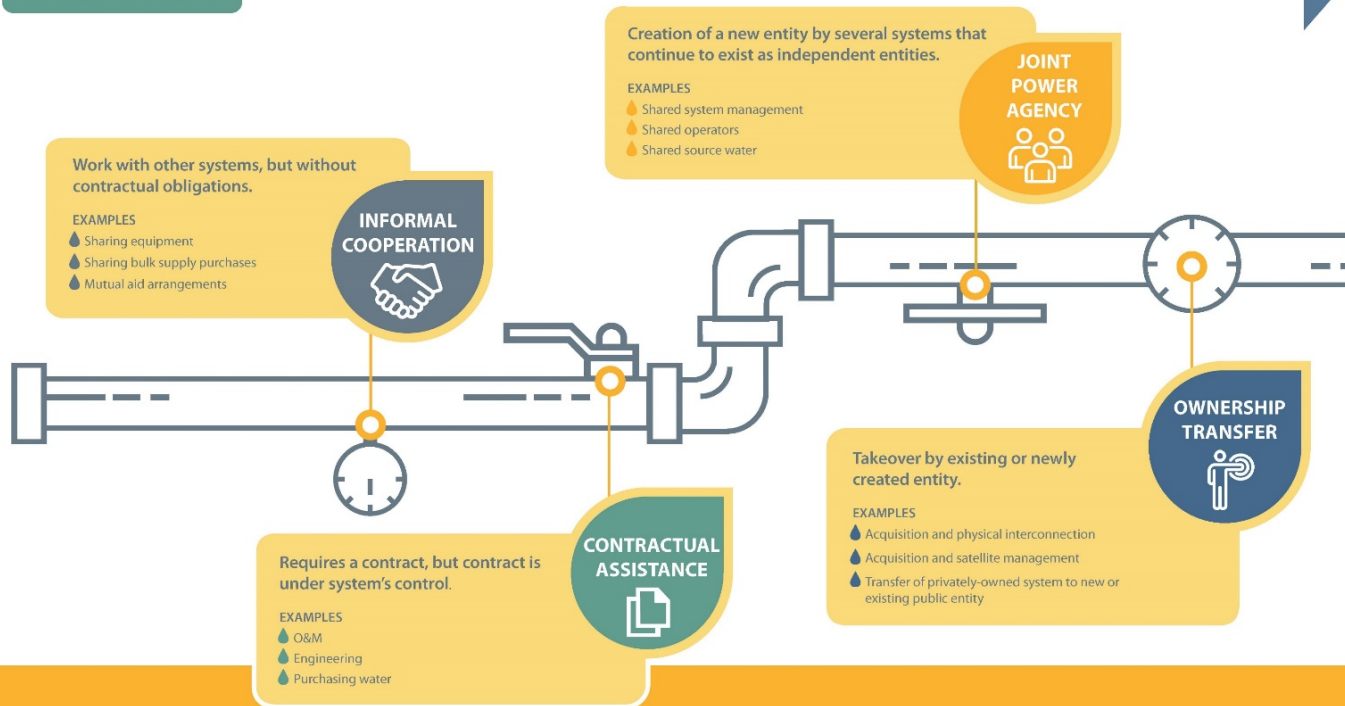


Different Types of Partnerships



Water system partnerships encompass a range of opportunities for systems to work together in order to sustainably provide drinking water services.

Increasing Transfer of Responsibility



Presentations

- **John Walton**, Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission / Former Mayor of Elkton
- **Roger Recktenwald**, Former Director of Kentucky Infrastructure Authority / Current Director of Research and Planning for Kentucky Association of Counties
- **Julie Roney**, Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, Division of Water
- **Vernon Brown**, Communities Program Director for USDA-RD-RUS Kentucky State Office





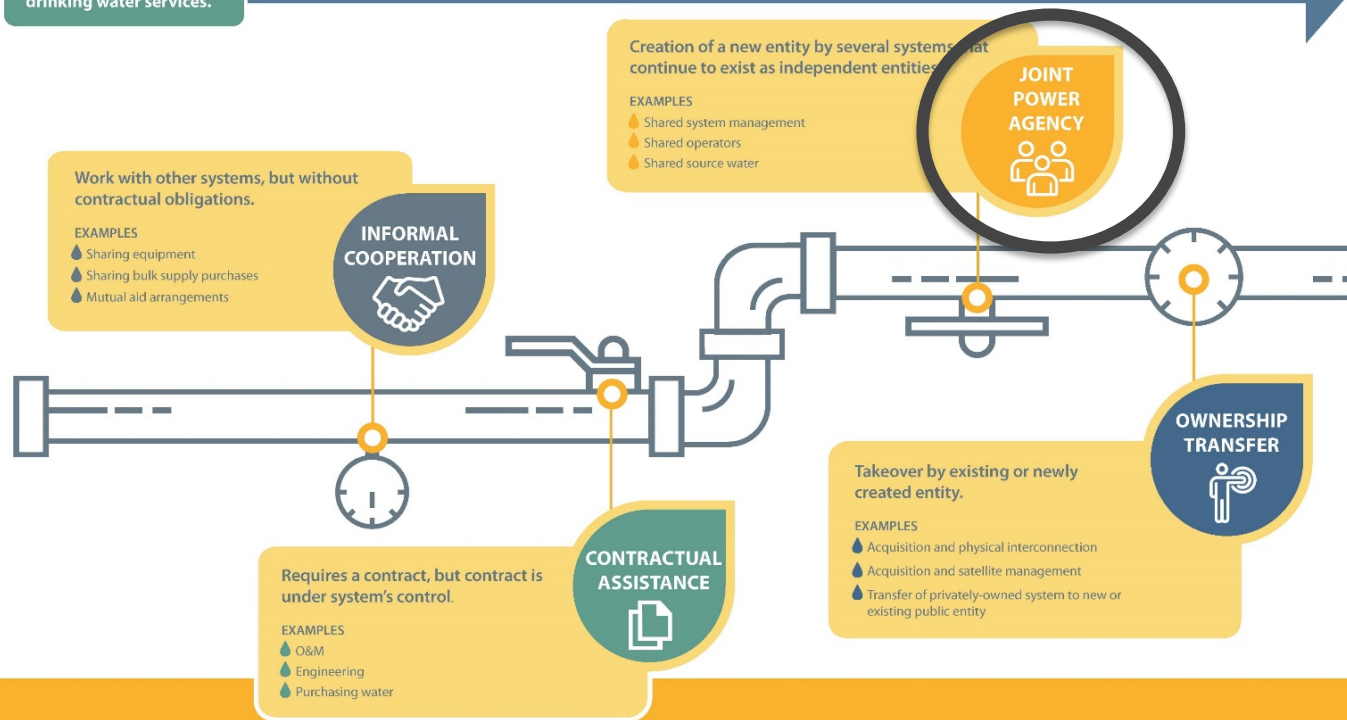
Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission

Different Types of Partnerships

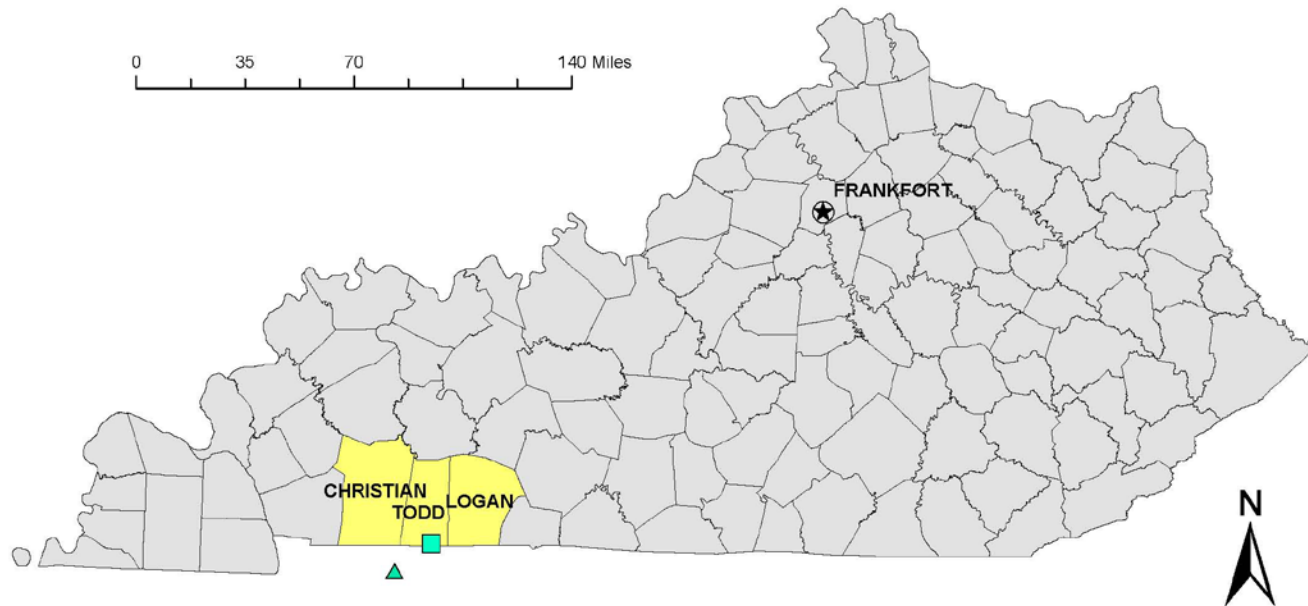


Water system partnerships encompass a range of opportunities for systems to work together in order to sustainably provide drinking water services.

Increasing Transfer of Responsibility



Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission



Map created by Anne G. Powell
on December 21, 2011
utilizing data from
the EEC GIS Portal.



Legend

Surface and Spring Sources

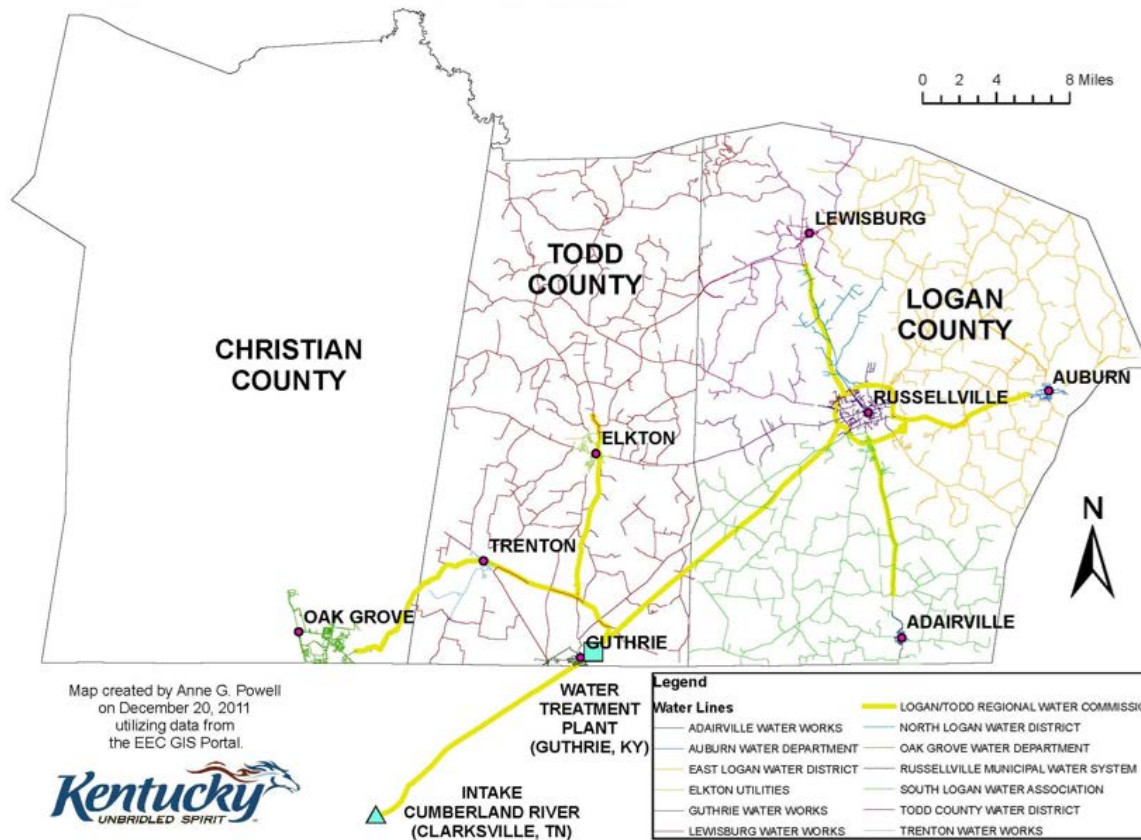
- ▲ LOGAN/TODD REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION

Water Treatment Plants

- LOGAN/TODD REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION



Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission



The Twelve Partners

- Customers Served:
 - About 300-3,300 customers
 - 7 systems served <1,000
- System Ownership:
 - 8 municipally-owned systems – with their own treatment plants
 - 3 water districts – purchased finished water; 1 treated water
 - 1 privately-owned water association –purchased finished water
- System Sources:
 - Several flashy springs, some lakes and rivers



Why the Systems Came Together



Why the Systems Came Together

- Russellville was a key plant – it served 3 other systems
- Drought
- Not enough water for industry



Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission



Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission

- Management determined by Kentucky Statutes
 - Regional Water Commission by-laws, positions
- Board has 12 members, one from each member system
- Each member has one vote on the board



Major Milestones in the Partnership

Logan-Todd Regional Water Commission (LTRWC)

1988 – Drought prompts systems to consider alternative sources

1995 – LTRWC was formed by the Logan County fiscal court; and the first meeting took place in Russellville

1998 – LTRWC was denied funding for intermediate solutions by several funding agencies. They would have to build the entire project.

1999 – Oak Grove joins and the governor provides a \$ 2 million grant to get the LTRWC started.

2003 – Formal grand opening with all water systems online.

1991 - Logan County Water Advisory Group formed

1996 - Engineering study was completed that identified the need to develop a raw water source

1998 – 11 systems in Logan and Todd Counties agree to purchase water from the LTRWC

2001 – Design work finished; construction contracts were awarded.



Funding

- Total project cost of regional project was about \$77 million. Water Plant currently serves 40,000 people.

Funding sources:

USDA Loan Amount	\$49.8 M
DWSRF	\$10.4 M
KIA 20/20 Grant	\$5 M
Appropriation – Earmarks	\$3.3 M
State Funds	\$3.5 M
CDBG	\$1 M
Area Development Grant Fund	\$5 K
Systems' Contributions	\$19 K
Other Funding	\$4 M



Success

- Good **quality** water and **consistent** service
- Ability to attract **industry**
- **Resilience**
- Good **neighbors**
- **Recognition**





Communicating to Gain and Maintain Buy in

Communication

- Bringing in **new members**
- Working on the **future** of the system
- Working out **sticky** issues
- **Continuing** communication



Historic Rivalries

- Rooted in school traditions and local identity
- Need to address this directly by talking about it with other potential partners
- Hold meetings in communities other than the county seat



Sense of Unfairness

- Everyone brings different assets or different challenges to the table
- Not all partners will benefit equally
- Some communities may just have a greater need



Loss of Control

- Instead of focusing on loss of control, focus on the ability to gain control over other aspects of the system
- Customers don't care about water loss as long as there is quality service and reasonable rates
- Bring decisions about a partnership to the broader community



Focus on Commonalities

- What do you the systems have in common?
 - Need a new source?
 - Need funding for new infrastructure?
- Remember the long-term goal: potable water
- Focus on the numbers



Focus on the Wins

- System wins:
 - Resiliency and redundancy
 - Focus on distribution
- Political wins:
 - Have a unified voice
 - Funding agencies recognize and applaud partnerships



Communicating with the Community

- Explain the need
- Communicate about the partnership process at the beginning
- Go door-to-door
- Regulatory agencies are partners
- Remember that, while no one likes higher water bills, not having water is worse.



What have we learned?

Regulatory Partners

- Regulatory partners can help with messaging and can provide technical information to the communities
 - Can play a “white hat role” in communicating about public health problems, violations
 - Can encourage partnerships by talking to commissioners and governors
- KY DEP attended public meetings and board meetings to explain regulations, diseases, and non-compliance



What have we learned?

Funders

- Funding Coordination
 - Frequent communication
 - Bring funders in early

“Maybe. . . But let’s talk about it. . .”



What have we learned?

Enabling Legislation

Kentucky Statutes that Authorize Regionalization & Consolidation

- Drinking Water
 - KRS 74.420-520 (source r&f)
 - KRS 65.210-300 (all dw +)
 - KRS 74.361 (PSC-merger)
- Wastewater
 - KRS 65.8901-8925 (treatment)
 - KRS 76.231-233 (all ww)
 - MSD - 'normal' KRS 220 & 67.715 (all ww)

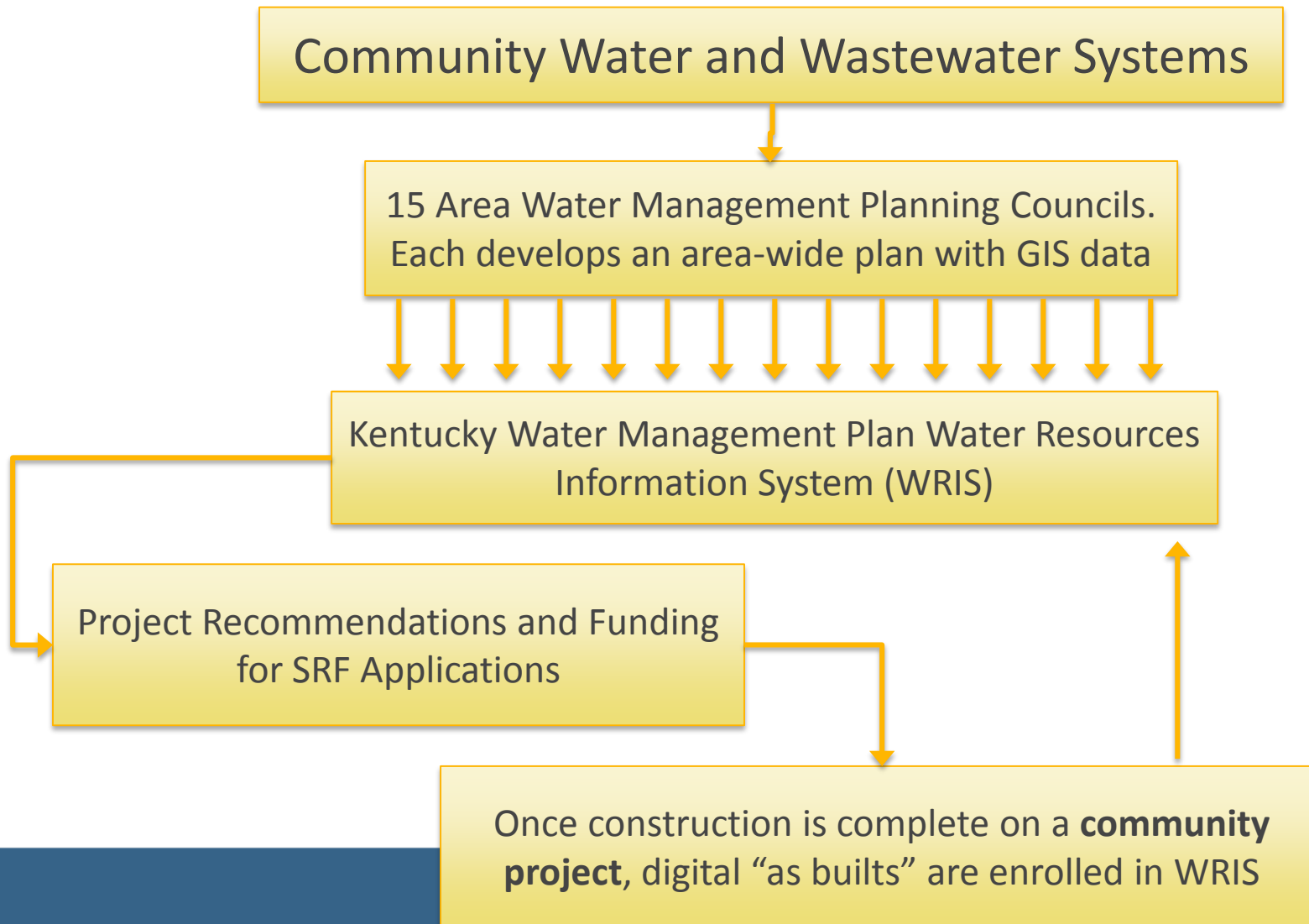
<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/krs/titles.htm>





Kentucky's Community-based Water and Wastewater Planning & Project Development Process

Kentucky's Process of Community-Based Water and Wastewater Planning & Project Funding



Water Resource Information System: GIS Map Layers and Attributes for All Systems

- Water: 17 layers with over 300 attributes in addition to financial and management information.
- Wastewater: 11 layers with over 175 attributes in addition to financial and management information.
- Contributors/users:
 - Over 400 water and wastewater systems
 - 15 Area Development Districts
 - State and Federal Water and Wastewater Agencies
 - State and Federal Emergency Management Agencies
 - Utility Support Associations
 - Engineering Firms

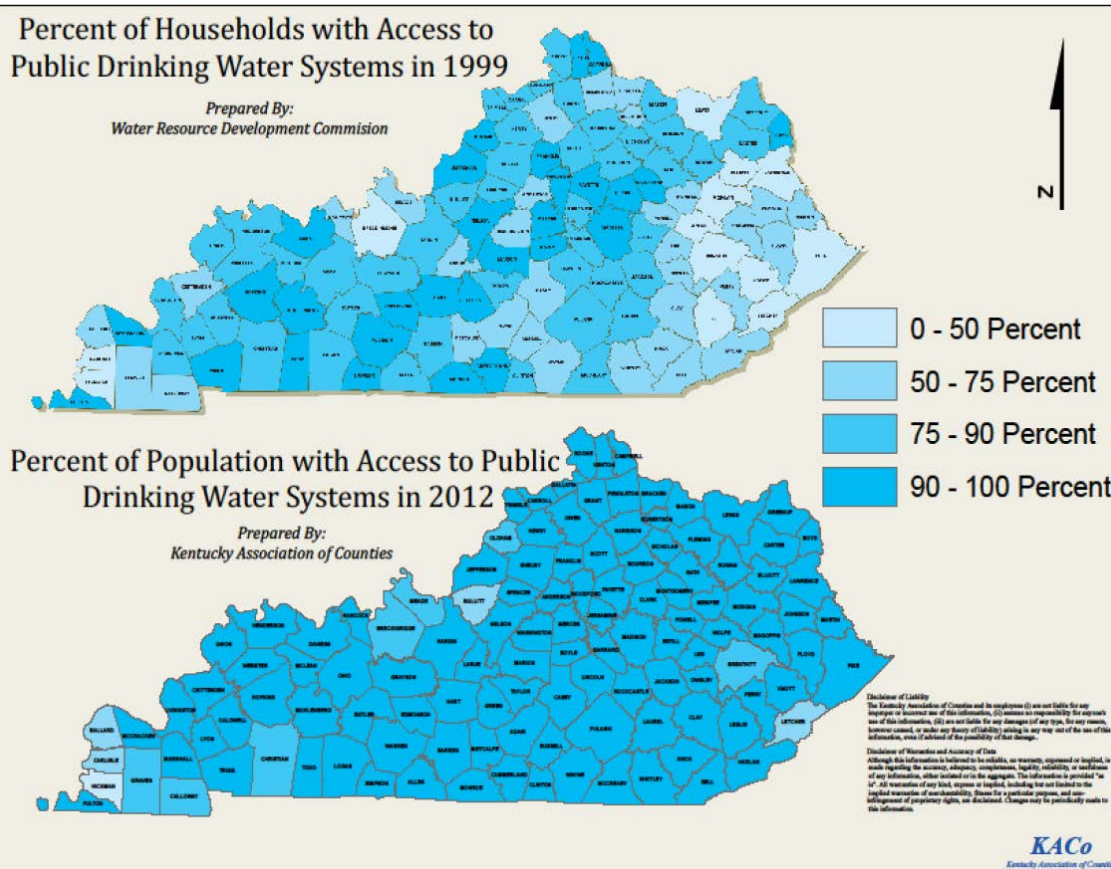


Water Resource Information System: GIS Map Layers and Attributes for All Systems

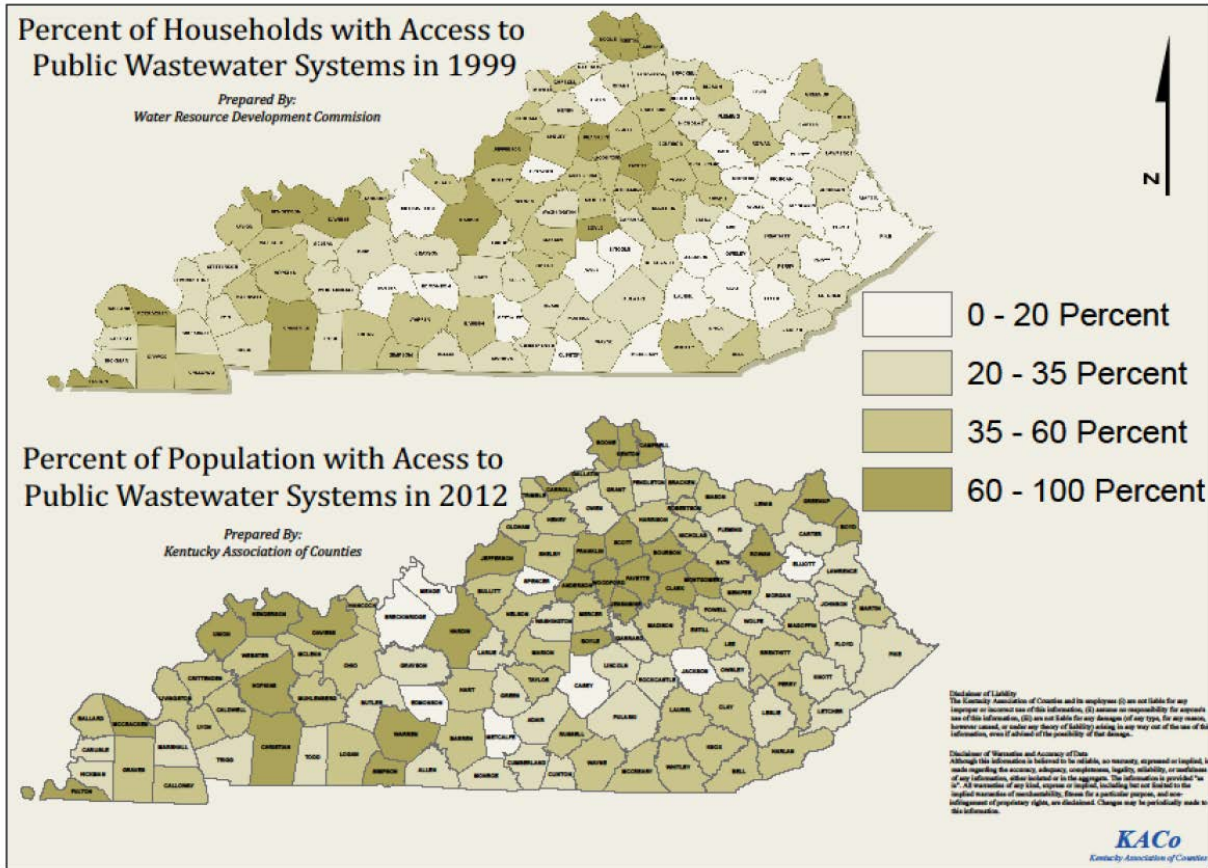
- Principal Uses:
 - Local Community Planning
 - Decision Support – Regulatory and Funding Agencies
 - Advocacy: Legislators are provided wall maps annually, illustrating existing water and waste water facilities and proposed projects in their districts.
 - Emergency Planning & Response
 - State Economic Development, Highway & Public Facilities Planning
- For additional information, visit <http://kia.ky.gov/wris/>



Increased Access to Drinking Water Systems



Increased Access to Waste Water Systems



Closing Remarks

- Remember, communities have rivalries that cannot be ignored
- Find common ground
- Focus on the numbers
- Be aware and accommodating of different systems' limitations
- Remember the bottom line – supplying potable water into the future



Additional Information

For more information on the benefits of Water System Partnerships, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/water-system-partnerships-meeting>

