



Sara Cottingham

Impact WV Fellow

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Profile

Ms. Cottingham concentrates on community and environmental planning and nonprofit organizational development. She earned a Master's in Community & Regional Planning and has worked with many nonprofits, ranging from small grassroots groups to regional and national organizations. She specializes in watershed management, grant writing, organizational assessment, capacity building, fundraising, and volunteer management. Ms. Cottingham brings expertise in place-based educational programming and has helped facilitate planning and visioning sessions for numerous organizations in varying capacities—as a consultant, an employee, and a nonprofit board member.

Skills and Experience

Directed planning efforts and authored the Lower Coal River Watershed Based Plan.

Wrote a successful EPA Section 319 proposal to carry out a watershed improvement project.

Experienced in leading working teams, including municipal, state, and federal agencies; health departments; universities; nonprofits; and local stakeholders.

Experienced in developing regional development plans, watershed management plans, organizational strategic plans, and operational plans.

Performed comprehensive plan analysis and review for the cities of Jonestown and Kerrville, Texas.

Managed projects related to community development, watershed remediation, water- and land-based trails, outdoor recreation, place-based education, communications, and the arts.

Performed geospatial analysis for state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Organized and conducted training workshops and conference sessions in nonprofit capacity building and volunteer management.

Performed business opportunity assessments and tourism development analyses for four West Virginia towns.

Conducted an organizational assessment for a national river management nonprofit.

Skilled in fundraising, grant writing, prospect research, and report preparation for private foundations, government agencies, and corporate giving programs.

Provided assistance, training, and nonprofit management coaching to community-based nonprofit organizations nationwide.

Experienced with state and regional survey data collection and analysis.

Developed visual communications, fundraising campaigns, and public outreach strategies, including event planning and coordination, video preparation, and website design.

Education

M.S., Community & Regional Planning, the University of Texas at Austin, 2010. Focus in Environmental and Watershed Planning.

B.A., Geography, the University of Texas at Austin, 2008. Emphasis on the relationships between economics and governmental policies and impact on culturally distinct communities.

Publications

Cottingham, S. 2014. Lower Coal River Watershed Based Plan.

Cottingham, S, Currey, B. 2014. Coal River Group Strategic Plan: A Vision for the Future.

Cottingham, S. 2010. Evaluating Success in Watershed Restoration Projects in Central Idaho.