

Dear Students, Colleagues and Friends,

For those of you who have worked with me on watershed health for rivers and lakes or those of you who have had me in class, you may recall me referring to a term I first used as an Executive Director for the Cumberland River Compact while working with developers – “Continuum of Care”. Simply put, we wanted home builders, architects and related professionals to start thinking and working in more water and energy-friendly ways; whether they just installed EnergyStar and WaterSense equipment as a tip-toe into the shallows of sustainability – or strategically built everything to eliminate run-off and reduce energy usage throughout a community.

Minimal (but important) practices all the way to full-scale sustainable planning and building were our everyday shrimp and grits. We discussed optimization of landscaping with natives, growing food within ornamental landscaping, insulating with green roofs and a variety of even more creative methodologies up to and including biomimicry for storm water mitigation. We solidly worked to incorporate profit and return on investment into our solutions and strove diligently to ensure that our builders, landscape architects and other partners were the most successful and recognized in their field.

What we did less often was pay attention to the feed stock – the ecosystems, which at the most basic levels allow us to even have a “civilization”. Certainly, we spoke of, protected and even replanted riparian habitat; but at a larger scale I fear I at least, did not endeavor enough to impart the critical nature of . . . nature and full ecosystems. We sometimes underscored those requisite forests in the Amazon or coral reefs far from home, but seldom in the absolute terms necessary for a thriving and holistic society.

Today, I send you a TEDx which should start to rectify that situation. Carol Davit, Executive Director of the Missouri Prairie Foundation will illustrate to you in clear terms, the vital nature of Midwestern prairies – an ecosystem quite literally at our back doorsteps. The multiplicity of tools and services this ecosystem offers for water, energy and most basically – food - are critical to both recognize and protect. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwahO9mQZfM> Without conservation for ecosystems such as prairie, our Continuum of Care is woefully incomplete.

Here's to you and our prairies too,

Margo

Margo Farnsworth

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Give good people good information and they'll do good things.

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)