



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Summer 2003
PNWWATER 021

The Land Grant–EPA Partnership

A community's quality of life, which depends directly on the health and quality of its local environment, is a common concern among its people. Yet communities often find themselves facing the consequences of poor environmental decisions, both their own and those of others. When agencies work together to help communities solve environmental problems, better decisions result. EPA and Cooperative Extension share the objective of linking resources and people, and both believe that:

- ◆ Citizen-based efforts make a difference.
- ◆ Local efforts are successful when aided by the expertise of both natural resource professionals and education professionals.
- ◆ Local, regional and national partnerships are necessary to provide accurate information and ensure it is disseminated effectively and economically to support local action.

These are the main reasons that EPA and the land grant institutions in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington agree to work together in Region 10. The team that publishes the document you are reading (Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Program) is the formal expression of that agreement.

Being a federal agency, the EPA often encounters substantial barriers to connecting and working with communities. In contrast, county-based Cooperative Extension faculty have strong relationships with their communities and can help connect communities with EPA's vitally needed resources. Extension faculty can also help inform EPA staff of local needs, issues and characteristics and tailor information and programs to a community.

Strengths brought to the partnership by Cooperative Extension

- ◆ Access to adult volunteers in the community who, with training, can further extend the educational message, especially to youth.
- ◆ Neutrality as an information source. Extension faculty and staff are not regulators. They are bound by the policies of their universities, not by legal policies and directives.

Examples of partnership activities in Region 10

For the past 14 years, land grant institutions in the Pacific Northwest and EPA Region 10 have had a formal agreement to work together on issues of common concern. This partnership has resulted in several major accomplishments, for example:

Columbia Plateau Agricultural Initiative

The Columbia Plateau Agriculture Initiative (CPAI) represents a new direction for EPA in working with rural communities to protect human health and the environment. The central Washington effort was a 3–5 year project to help local communities address

agriculture-related environmental issues. Extension faculty and staff were instrumental in designing the initiative and making the appropriate local contacts.

Since the Initiative started in April of 1997, EPA has worked with local conservation districts and others to identify and begin looking at some of the locally identified issues. EPA participated in several local farm tours and meetings, made presentations at agriculture meetings and conducted some information gathering sessions in the counties.



Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Coordination Project Partners

Land Grant Universities

Alaska

Cooperative Extension Service
Contact Fred Sorensen:
907-786-6311

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/water/>

University Publications:

<http://www.alaska.edu/uaf/ces/publications/>

Idaho

University of Idaho
Cooperative Extension System
Contact Bob Mahler: 208-885-7025

<http://www.uidaho.edu/wq/wqhome.html>

University Publications:

<http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/Catalog/catalog.html>

Oregon

Oregon State University
Extension Service
Contact Mike Gamroth: 541-737-3316

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/>

University Publications:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/>

Washington

Washington State University
WSU Extension
Contact Bob Simmons:

360-427-9670 ext. 690

<http://wawater.wsu.edu/>

University Publications:

<http://pubs.wsu.edu/>

Northwest Indian College
Contact Dan Burns:

360-392-4328

dburns@nwic.edu or

<http://www.nwic.edu/>

Water Resource Research Institutes

Water and Environmental Research
Center (Alaska)

<http://www.uaf.edu/water/>

Idaho Water Resources
Research Institute

<http://www.boise.uidaho.edu/>

Institute for Water and
Watersheds (Oregon)

<http://water.oregonstate.edu/>

State of Washington
Water Research Center

<http://www.swwrc.wsu.edu/>

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA, Region 10

The Pacific Northwest

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>

Office of Research and Development,
Corvallis Laboratory

<http://www.epa.gov/wed/>

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The Project

Land Grant Universities, Water Research Institutes, and EPA Region 10 have formed a partnership to provide research and education to communities about protecting or restoring the quality of water resources. This partnership is being supported in part by the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension System (CSREES).

Our Goal and Approach

The goal of this Project is to provide leadership for water resources research, education, and outreach to help people, industry, and governments to prevent and solve current and emerging water quality and quantity problems. The approach to achieving this goal is for the Partners to develop a coordinated water quality effort based on, and strengthening, individual state programs.

Our Strengths

The Project promotes regional collaboration by acknowledging existing programs and successful efforts; assisting program gaps; identifying potential issues for cross-agency and private sector collaboration; and developing a clearinghouse of expertise and programs. In addition, the Project establishes or enhances partnerships with federal, state, and local environmental and water resource management agencies, such as by placing a University Liaison within the offices of EPA Region 10.

CPAI was based on the principle of working with local people to address locally identified environmental issues and then, together, implement sensible solutions. The program has helped focus efforts to assist communities in addressing environmental issues before they become more difficult and costly to fix.

Outreach on regulations about Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

In April 2001, the Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Program held a region-wide meeting on CAFOs, inviting state agricultural and environmental agencies, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Extension faculty and local conservation districts. The representatives were encouraged to form networks and begin to work together on solving the problems caused by pollution from animal waste.

In December 2002, EPA revised the Clean Water Act regulation for CAFOs. Extension again stepped up to the plate and gathered the same groups in March 2003. This time, more formal steps were taken to coordinate outreach and implementation for the new rules. As a result, all states were aware of the need for outreach and implementation, and the producer groups are more successfully meeting the requirements in each state.



National Water Quality Program Areas

The four land grant universities in the Pacific Northwest have aligned our water resource extension and research efforts with eight themes of the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System.

1. Animal Waste Management
2. Drinking Water and Human Health
3. Environmental Restoration
4. Nutrient and Pesticide Management
5. Pollution Assessment and Prevention
6. Watershed Management
7. Water Conservation and Management
8. Water Policy and Economics

CSREES is the Cooperative States Research, Education, and Extension Service, a sub-agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, and is the federal partner in this water quality program.