

Program Summary



The goal of this project is to expand the existing partnerships and distribute water quality and monitoring information to a broad group of water users, educators, and leaders in Pacific Northwest communities. This model can be used as a springboard to action in local communities by service organizations, commodity groups, and other organizations with existing local, state, regional, or national water quality assessment and monitoring programs.

We believe this will improve public understanding about environmental issues and impact new or unreached segments of our northwest population involved in natural resource management. The short-course may also increase public involvement in the potential range of solutions to those water quality issues identified in this curriculum. One major objective of this effort is to foster critical thinking, problem solving, and effective decision making skills with individuals, community groups, citizen leaders, and teachers that has practical application in the water resources managed in the region.

This short-course consists of 15 hours of structured training plus follow-up provided by the local extension educator. This short-course is designed to meet at each location four consecutive days. During the pilot it was conducted Wednesday through Friday in the evenings (3 hours each) and all day Saturday (8 hours). It can also be conducted during the day, in the evening over successive weeks, or over successive weekends. Prior to starting the short-course attendees will complete registration as well as a water primer pre-test.

The short-course is designed to be targeted to specific segments of the natural resource, conservation, education, and environmental community. The local community will have significant input on the emphasis areas of each program.

Short-course topics include: the Watershed Concept, Surface Water (beneficial uses, TMDL's), a Survey of Local Water Resources, Ground Water/Drinking Water, Why We Monitor, Voluntary Monitoring, How We Monitor/ Practical Reporting, Local Water Concerns, Water Chemistry, Water Chemistry Test Kits, Physical Habitat Assessment, Biological Habitat Assessment, a Stream Assessment Exercise, a Lake/Pond Assessment Exercise, and a debrief.

Partners in the development of this short-course include the Cooperative Extension Systems in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute. Cooperators include Pacific Northwest counties; Pacific Northwest tribes and tribal agencies, Irrigation and Conservation Districts, the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service; state environmental agencies in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington; Environmental Protection Agency Region 10; U.S. Geological Survey; and the Idaho Geological Survey.