



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Winter 2005
PNWWATER 075

November 2005 Conference:

Groundwater Under the Pacific Northwest



The evaluations are in and the Groundwater Under the Pacific Northwest Conference in Stevenson, Washington sponsored by the PNW Water Quality Team in November was a huge success! A total of 220 attendees participated in the two-day event that was designed to: (1) provide participants with a holistic understanding of the current science, policy, and management of PNW groundwater resources; (2) strengthen connections between research, extension, regulatory, and technical assistance groups; and (3) identify critical research and information needs required for successful groundwater management. From research to outreach, the conference had ten technical sessions covering various groundwater quantity and quality topics including: groundwater-surface water interaction, groundwater quality, hydrogeology, and groundwater policy. Regional sessions on Walla Walla groundwater, Umatilla groundwater, South Willamette

valley groundwater, and Hydrogeology of the Cascade Mountains helped insure that materials were relevant to regional water resource managers.

In addition to the impressive slate of speakers, each day of the conference began with a key note presentation. Two nationally-recognized speakers, Dr. Robert Glennon and Dr. Thomas Winter, gave key note presentations. Dr. Glennon is the Morris K. Udall Professor of Law and Public Policy in the Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona and author of *Water Follies*. Dr. Winter is a Senior Research Hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver, Colorado. By sharing their national perspectives and years of experience with us, the audience was able to see how the region's challenges are being faced throughout the country.

The conference included two expert panel discussions; the first focusing on the challenges to addressing groundwater-surface water interaction and the second focusing on the challenges to achieving groundwater sustainability. After hearing the opinions voiced by the expert panels, the audience was asked to help prioritize the range of concerns. In response to the groundwater-surface water challenges the audience identified a need for policy makers to better understand the ramifications of their decisions by improving their knowledge of technical issues and a need for improved data-collection infrastructure to aid scientists and engineers. The audience identified the need for creative leadership rather than postponement of hard choices and the need for more persons to act for the greater good instead of acting in pure self-interest as the two areas that should be addressed to help achieve groundwater sustainability.

A poster competition was held on the first evening of the conference to provide further opportunities for small group discussions of regional issues. The judges had a difficult time selecting a winner due to the large number of exceptional posters but ultimately Ms. Shanna Olson and Ms. Kate Ely took first prize with their poster titled "Drinking Water Area Protection Plan on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation



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/index.html>

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: Michael Cochrane:
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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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– Pendleton, Oregon.” Second place went to Mr. Jeremiah Kobor and honorable mentions went out to Mr. Richard Dinicola, Mr. Gerald Grondin, and Mr. Derek Holom.

Pre-conference activities included a field trip of groundwater related issues in Clark County and a half-day workshop on the essentials of groundwater management. Attendance was excellent at both functions with 34 people participating in the field trip and 56 people attending the workshop. The bus tour through Clark County enabled participants to see firsthand some of the challenges and solutions associated with developing drinking water supplies from groundwater in urbanizing area. The workshop covered basic groundwater hydrology, regional groundwater quantity issues, state policies on surface water-groundwater interactions, public drinking water issues, and source water protection planning with presenters from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington discussing similarities and differences in approaches and policies in the Pacific Northwest.

Evaluations were extremely positive and indicated that we were successful in our goal of integrating research, policy, and science. Summaries of the conference activities will soon be posted on the web at <http://www.swwrc.wsu.edu/>. The PNW Water Quality Team is already discussing the topic of our next conference scheduled for November of 2007. If anyone has suggestions regarding a regional water quality or quantity issues that they feel should be addressed, please feel free to contact your local Project Partner.



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.