



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA NIFA
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Spring 2007
PNWWATER 107

Water Quality and Quantity:

National Water Conference Grows — Again!!!

Over 500 water professionals attended the National Water Resource Conference, January 28th through February 1st in Savannah, Georgia this year. This annual conference, which is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture – Cooperative States Research, Education and Extension Service (USDA-CSREES), brings together scientists working on research, Extension, and educational issues associated with water management. Over 340 papers were presented at this meeting in both poster (160) and oral paper (180) formats. During most of the meeting there were five concurrent meetings taking place – so attendees had a lot to choose from.

The Pacific Northwest was well represented as over 20 water professionals from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington registered for this meeting. Attendance at this meeting has grown at an annual rate of at least 20 percent over the last five years. Back in 2002 only 85 professionals attended this national meeting when the University of Idaho hosted it in Boise, Idaho. The increasing popularity of this conference has made it one of



View of the posters at the National Water Conference (courtesy of Greg Jennings, NCSU).

the most important conferences for scientists and educators interested in water resource issues held on an annual basis in the USA. All scientists that have water and watershed grants from the NRI program of USDA also attended this meeting.

Four major symposia were held at this conference. The symposia targeted new emerging, important issues and emphasized the solving of water resources problems through the integration of research, Extension, and public education. The four major symposia were: (1) Availability, Transport, and Fate of Land-Applied Waste/Biosolid Constituents, (2) Water Quality Trading, (3) Detecting Microbial Contamination in Water and Soil, and (4) Water Quantity Issues in the Eastern USA. Even though water quantity has been a major issue in the western USA for decades, fast population growth and rapid development in the South and the East have brought about the recognition that water conservation and management is an issue for all Americans.

Five concurrent track sessions were used to organize paper sessions at the national conference. The general tracks for oral presentations were: (1) agricultural best management practices, (2) conservation and resource management, (3) the human dimension, (4) rural environmental protection, and (5) watershed assessment and restoration. From an agricultural perspective several papers were presented on enhancing BMP adoption, watershed BMPs, nitrogen and phosphorus management, and animal waste management.



Under Secretary Dr. Gayle Buchanan delivering the current administration's proposed Farm Bill at the National Water Conference (courtesy of Tom Simpson, University of Maryland).



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.htm>

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 Charlotte Clausing:
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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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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 National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

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.

Papers presented as posters were especially highlighted (see picture). The poster session was during a specific prime time when no other competing events were held. Also, refreshments were served in the vicinity of the posters to encourage viewing and one-on-one conversations with the poster presenters. The posters were as well received as the oral papers. Awards were presented to graduate students for the three best posters – hopefully next year these awards will go to students from the Pacific Northwest.

From a regional perspective, several papers were presented from the Pacific Northwest. Robert Simmons (the water quality coordinator at Washington State University) presented a well-received paper on “The Power of Watershed Education Networks.” Barbara Andersen, a graduate student at the University of Idaho, talked about factors that are important in saving water. Joe Harrison, a WSU animal scientist, talked about the implementation of a national feed management education program and assessment tools. Daniel White from the Water Research Center in Alaska presented a paper on protecting family drinking water in rural Alaska. A presentation on the evaluation of conservation practices in the Paradise Creek Watershed of Idaho was made jointly by Jan Boll and Larry Van Tassell. Both oral and poster presentations are available on-line at: <http://www.usawaterquality.org/conferences/2007/default.html>.

At an evening session Dr. Gayle Buchanan, USDA Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, unveiled the current administration's (Bush) Farm Bill proposal. From a research perspective the proposed farm bill will add programs in plant breeding and biotechnology and biofuels. He fielded several questions from the more than 100 attendees at this special session.

America's Farm Bill

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 National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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

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