



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

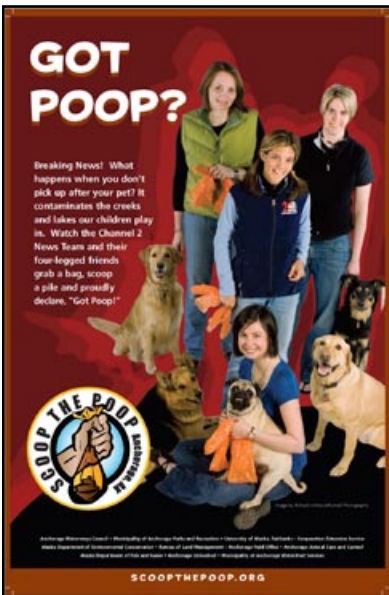
Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Summer 2008
PNWATER 136

Alaska's "Scoop the Poop" Program Update



The Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska has a population of about 300,000 people who in turn own 60,000 dogs. Since 2003 the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska, Fairbanks in partnership with the Anchorage Waterways Council, the Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Municipality of Anchorage has been involved in a public pet waste education program called "Scoop the Poop."

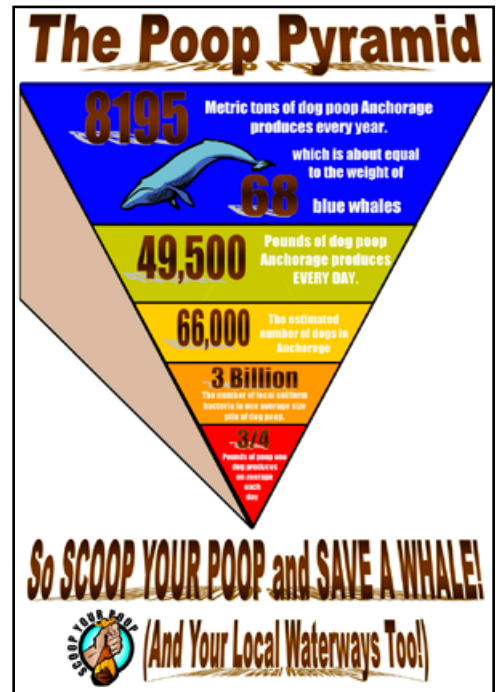
One of the primary media portions of the project has been a series of posters featuring local celebrities with their dogs showing their support for picking up the waste. The celebrities included a dog musher, a TV news team, and an Olympic gold medal winner. These posters were posted at all the veterinarian offices, at local stores, public buildings, and other public venues.

Three Public Service Announcements were produced for the local television stations. A local actor volunteered her time along with a local choir and the humorous videos were also shown at local events at the "Scoop the Poop" booth.

Over 54 "poop stations" have been installed throughout the park system and trail heads in the Municipality of Anchorage. These stations include signage, waste bags, and trash receptacles including numerous bear proof trash containers located where bears often wander.

Initially a public poop clean up along the Bureau of Land Management public use trails was the major yearly event to advertise spring clean up. However, after the first two years there was no longer enough waste to pick up so the venue was relocated. As of this last year (2008) there are now at least three clean up events at local dog parks and a major event entitled "Dog Day Afternoon" held on the Delany Park Strip that is attended by the public and their dogs with various events including a dog fashion show, vendors, and demonstrations from local dog clubs.

A survey on dog ownership, where owners walk their dogs, and waste pick up behavior was undertaken in 2007. The short surveys were distributed with utility bills throughout the Municipality. On back of the survey was a raffle ticket for prizes as incentive to mail in the survey. Also included in the mailing was educational material. Out of 52,000 utility users (with or without dogs) 1,593 returned the survey.



Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Coordination Project Partners

Land Grant Universities

Alaska

Cooperative Extension Service
Contact Fred Sorensen:
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<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:
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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,
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<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.



In 2008 the local Municipality Assembly was considering a bill to eliminate dog use in local ball fields. This regulation would have been costly and impossible to enforce. The committee working with local dog groups convinced the assembly to hold off on the regulations and consider alternatives such as more signage and educational emphasis at the parks. The municipality provided additional funding and the program is under way at this time.

The Anchorage Municipality has a number of local lakes that are listed on the 303d list for coliform bacteria. In 2008 Cheney Lake was de-listed and the "Scoop the Poop" campaign was mentioned as a contributing factor in the decrease in pollution at that site.



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.