



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

# Pacific Northwest

## Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES  
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Spring 2009  
PNWWATER 155

### Watershed Management:

## Washington State University's Shore Stewards Program



The WSU Shore Stewards Program is a voluntary citizen education and stewardship program that engages individual shoreline residents and homeowner associations in Puget Sound-friendly property management practices and activities. Since its 2003 start, the program has expanded to eight counties and includes over 1,000 Shore Stewards who have voluntarily agreed to ten simple habitat-friendly guidelines in their homes and on their properties. The program recognizes that most of the Puget Sound shoreline is privately owned, and private landowners hold one of the keys to protecting and preserving the Sound. The Shore Stewards strategy is to conserve and restore Puget Sound's marine resources on the private waterfronts where they are most readily impacted by human activity.

WSU Shore Stewards receive scientific shoreline research and technical information on toxics reduction, shoreline protection, nearshore vegetation, and other relevant issues. Increasing the sophistication and knowledge of Puget Sound residents calls for linkages to state of the art research from credible sources such as WSU. University experts use accurate science to replace misinformation or complacency, engage landowners with real-world Puget Sound environmental problems, and promote local solutions. The Shore Stewards program partners with the WSU Beach Watcher programs, Northwest Straits Foundation, Marine Resources Committees, tribes, non-profits, and local governments.

Based upon innovative social marketing principles, this program is unique as it relies on providing participants incentives, including Shore Steward yard signs, newsletters, and workshops for committing to best home and property practices. By using the marketing and educational tools provided to each new Shore Steward and adding specific educational workshops in each county, the program emphasizes non-point pollution prevention as one of the cores of stewardship. The Shore Stewards' tools/materials include the book *Guide For Shoreline Living*, DVD *Shoreline Living: Protecting Our Shorelines and Puget Sound*, newsletters, and web site information.

Workshops cover topics such as: 1) gardening and yard risk factors - reducing chemical use and using compost, integrated pest management, native plants, 2) reducing household chemical products use and proper disposal of toxics, 3) vegetated buffer areas along shoreline properties, 4) values of healthy trees and plants along bluff areas, 5) stormwater issues, 6) watershed systems, 7) maintenance of on-site septic systems, 8) marine life, and 9) clean boating practices.

County coordinators direct their individual programs and coordinate regionally through quarterly meetings, e-mail, and phone communication. Coordinators develop and share education tools, approaches, and resources in a comprehensive Puget Sound initiative. Performance measures are tracked and evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. Coordinators track and summarize program



Shore Steward (SS) Gabe Ornelas, Discovery Bay resident and SS coordinators Pat Pearson and Cammy Mills.



## 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](mailto: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/>

For more information contact  
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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.

components such as the number of Shore Stewards, outreach materials, attendees at workshops, and workshop evaluations. They also compile anecdotal evidence of homeowner experiences and changes in knowledge and behaviors.



*Shore Steward workshop and guided field trip with residents at Bywater Bay.*

The results of the 2007 regional survey of Shore Stewards demonstrated 90 percent of the participants changed behavior and improved individual stewardship. This is a tremendous shift, showing significant change in landowner attitudes and behaviors after receiving potent information about why and how to do things differently. Even for those who were already conservation-

oriented, the program clearly gave them new tools to act upon their beliefs. This program has demonstrated that direct outreach and education to homeowners and communities results in owners changing behaviors, taking on stewardship responsibilities, and requesting presentations and technical assistance. Individuals within homeowner associations become active in shoreline and water quality protection. The value of the program is also reflected in Shore Stewards being written into city shoreline plans and being mentioned in one as a program that property owners could follow for a tax incentive from the city.

### 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.*