



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA NIFA
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

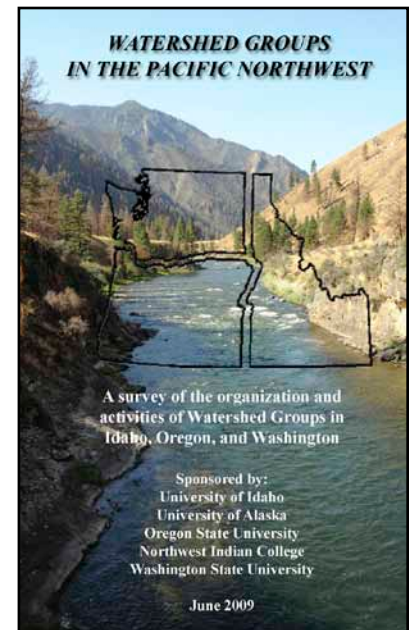
Winter 2010
PNWATER 172

A Survey Snapshot:

Pacific Northwest Watershed Groups

Watershed groups have gained a strong presence in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington through a mixture of state legislation, agency support, and citizen involvement. Each group serves a unique geographic space and is bound by unique financial and logistical circumstances. However, all Pacific Northwest (PNW) watershed groups are similar in their overall purpose to successfully plan for and protect the future of a specific watershed.

As part of his M.S. thesis project in Environmental Science, University of Idaho graduate student Brian Chaffin developed a survey instrument to assess the status of watershed groups in the Pacific Northwest. Potential survey respondents were identified using lists of active watershed planning groups. These lists generally identified a main contact or agency lead for each watershed group. This person was contacted via phone or email (depending on preference and availability) and asked of his/her willingness to respond to a mail-based survey concerning the watershed group. Additional survey respondents were identified through a mixed method of references, recommendations, and public records of watershed group participants. The initial survey framework was set up to sample three individuals per PNW watershed group using the following criteria: (1) a government contact or agency lead representing the watershed group (state, federal, or local); (2) an individual serving in a leadership role within the watershed group (president, secretary, treasurer, executive director, coordinator, etc.); and (3) any other member-at-large of the watershed group.



The survey instrument consisted of a booklet with fifty-seven questions. Surveys were mailed to three hundred four members of watershed groups in the PNW in the summer of 2009. Two hundred eleven surveys were completed and returned, yielding a 69 percent response rate across the region. Idaho watershed group members responded at a rate of 83 percent, Oregon 58 percent, and Washington 71 percent. Below are some of the survey highlights.

When asked to describe the overall level of satisfaction in working with a watershed group respondents chose “very satisfied” or “satisfied” far more than other choices (Table 1). Almost 80 percent of surveyed participants were at least satisfied with working on a watershed group. Satisfaction level was highest in Oregon (88 percent).

Table 1. Satisfaction level with working in a watershed group based on the 2009 survey.

Satisfaction Level	PNW	ID	OR	WA
Very satisfied	34%	21%	51%	30%
Satisfied	45%	55%	37%	44%
Neutral	13%	17%	6%	15%
Dissatisfied	4%	4%	2%	6%
Very dissatisfied	1%	0%	2%	0%



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 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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Pacific Northwest respondents indicated that groups have mostly been “very successful” or “somewhat successful” in accomplishing intended missions and objectives (Table 2). Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that watershed groups have been at least successful in accomplishing group goals. Success level was highest in Washington (92 percent).

Table 2. Success level of watershed groups based on accomplishing their goals.

Success level	PNW	ID	OR	WA
Very successful or somewhat successful	85%	83%	82%	92%
Neither successful or unsuccessful	6%	9%	6%	2%
Somewhat unsuccessful or very unsuccessful	6%	6%	10%	2%

Respondents were asked to grade the accomplishments of their watershed group using a familiar “A-F” letter grade or “incomplete” to signify that accomplishments are pending or cannot be graded (Table 3). Overall, 72 percent of survey respondents would give their watershed group an A or a B for their accomplishments. Oregon survey respondents gave their watersheds the highest grades.

Table 3. Grades rating the accomplishments of watershed groups in the Pacific Northwest based on the 2009 survey.

Accomplishment grades	PNW	ID	OR	WA
A or B	72%	60%	87%	69%
C or D	19%	24%	6%	25%
F	1%	0%	2%	0%
Incomplete	6%	13%	3%	4%

Conclusions based on the watershed group survey include the following:

- ◆ Over 80 percent of PNW watershed group members view their groups as “successful” in accomplishing group missions and objectives.
- ◆ Watershed group members in Oregon are the most satisfied with the work of their groups.
- ◆ Throughout the PNW, state governments are the most supportive of watershed group programming.
- ◆ The role of local universities and Extension in regional watershed group programming needs to be further evaluated and defined.
- ◆ Watershed groups in the Pacific Northwest are not a dying entity. A review of self-reported attitudes depicts a successful, satisfied volunteer and professional force working toward watershed planning goals and objectives.

The results of this watershed survey will be published and made available to the general public.

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.

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| 1. Animal Waste Management | 5. Pollution Assessment and Prevention |
| 2. Drinking Water and Human Health | 6. Watershed Management |
| 3. Environmental Restoration | 7. Water Conservation and Management |
| 4. Nutrient and Pesticide Management | 8. Water Policy and Economics |

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. 2008-51130-04734.