



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA NIFA
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Winter 2010
PNWWATER 174

2009 Regional Conference:

Water and Land Use in the PNW Conference

By all accounts, our 5th biennial regional water conference titled “Water and Land Use in the Pacific Northwest: Integrating Communities and Watersheds” held on November 4-6, 2009 at the Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Washington was regarded as a huge success by the participants! This year’s event was again hosted by the State of Washington Water Research Center in cooperation with the other PNW land grant partners in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and a tremendous regional steering committee. Conference themes focused on the need for multidisciplinary integration of water and land use planning. By focusing on regional challenges and opportunities for sustainable growth and ecosystem protection, the 3-day event was able to draw over 200 scientists, decision makers, and planners from the Pacific Northwest region. The conference involved workshops, field trips, oral and poster presentations, awards, and ample opportunities for networking.



Winners of the student conference poster competition (from l to r) are Yarrow Murphy (t-3rd), Jonathan Thomle (t-3rd), Muhammad Barik (1st), Travis Lopez (t-3rd), and Brian Chaffin (2nd).

The steering committee, comprised of representatives from the Oregon Water Resources Department, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Central Washington University, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Washington Department of Ecology, Umatilla County Department of Resources and Development, OSU Sea Grant Extension, the Center for Distance and Professional Education at WSU, and our PNW Water Quality Team, worked diligently for over a year to put together an exciting program relevant to the needs of the PNW region. Our audience included representatives from federal and state government, conservation districts, universities, private consulting firms, tribal organizations, non-profit organizations, and interested citizens.

The conference began with pre-event activities including both a workshop and a field trip. The “Managing Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure” workshop was intended primarily for municipal governments with wet weather management responsibilities, i.e., stormwater, combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows, and nonpoint source runoff. The workshop focused on how these programs can be effectively managed using green infrastructure technologies and approaches, while also providing benefits related to climate change, urban heating, energy savings, and community livability.

A field trip tour examined local Low Impact Development installations along the Columbia River including stops to see a successful urban green roof, redevelopment of apartment complexes for stormwater reduction and mitigation, and wetland enhancement projects at an airport facility and an integrated park, wetland, and stormwater control facility. Engineers, designers, and representatives from the Port of Portland and the City of Vancouver joined the tour to illustrate incentives, barriers, and lessons learned at each stop.



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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<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/>

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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.

A new and engaging film titled "Water Before Anything" was shown in an evening event. The film looks at the possibilities of water conflict as a force to bring people together rather than pushing them apart. As the world faces a future of water scarcity and diminished water quality, this film is a compelling story of one area in the United States and how it is dealing with the issues of water conflict.

The technical portion of the conference included keynote presentations from renowned USGS scientist Dr. Robert Hirsch and Ms. Gail Achterman from the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University. Feedback on the evaluation forms overwhelmingly praised the insightfulness and value of these two speakers. These thought-proving talks set the framework for sessions involving the science of carrying capacity, the intersection of economics and land use, planning for change, stormwater mitigation, building consensus among stakeholders, modeling impact of land use decisions, local leadership in action, co-management of land and water, economics of water and land resources, and stormwater management. Abstracts and presentation links can be found by visiting the SWWRC website at www.swwrc.wsu.edu and clicking on conferences.

We would like to thank our conference sponsors, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10, Institute for Water and Watersheds at Oregon State University, Washington State Department of Transportation, and State of Washington Water Research Center for helping keep the conference affordable by providing financial assistance, scholarships, and valuable expertise.

If you missed the event, don't despair. We are already planning our next event and look forward to seeing everyone again in 2011!

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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