



# WaterTalk

Alaska

Idaho

Oregon

Washington

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 Bulletin - EPA 910/9-92-043

April 2006

## EPA, Washington State Provide Nearly \$4 Million to Protect Puget Sound

Last month, EPA awarded nearly \$2 million to the Washington Department of Ecology. The money will help address the health of **Puget Sound**. Puget Sound is the second largest marine estuary in the United States. Washington plans to secure about \$2 million to match the federal grant.

One of Washington Governor Gregoire's priorities this year is to ensure a sustainable Puget Sound. In December, she unveiled a \$42 million initiative to begin restoring the Sound by 2020 and formed the **Puget Sound Partnership**. The partnership, of which EPA is a member, is a public-private effort to help solve environmental challenges.

EPA is focused on Puget Sound as a national priority. The agency is demonstrating its commitment to Puget Sound by adopting the state's cleanup goals for 2006. These include improving water quality to lift harvest restrictions on 1,000 acres of shellfish beds, cleaning up 200 acres of contaminated sediments, restoring and protecting



*L. Michael Bogert, EPA Regional Administrator and Christine Gregoire, Washington State Governor*

3,500 acres of estuarine wetlands, and cutting diesel emissions by 8 percent.

The 15-year goals of the Puget Sound Partnership include finding the best ways to improve water quality, keep region streams flowing, protect and restore critical shoreline habitat, and help recover species such as orca whales, salmon, and groundfish.

The new federal and state money will support the Partnership's 2020 agenda to integrate the state's Chinook salmon recovery plan with Puget Sound restoration. The partnership will work with top scientists to identify conservation priorities.

Ecology and EPA are part of the state's **Puget Sound Action Team** and help manage the **Puget Sound National Estuary Program**, charged with protecting the Sound's environmental health.

The State Department of Fish & Wildlife will match \$700,000 of the EPA funds to support local efforts to recover endangered salmon.

Some of the funding will support efforts to engage citizens in Puget Sound conservation.

For more information about the Puget Sound Partnership visit [www.pugetsoundpartnership.org/index.htm](http://www.pugetsoundpartnership.org/index.htm). Or, contact Michael Rylko, EPA, at 206-553-4014, or [rylko.michael@epa.gov](mailto:rylko.michael@epa.gov).

### In This Issue...



*EPA News* to update you on agency activities, pages 1-4.



*Tools* to clue you in on resources, publications, opportunities, and services, pages 4-7.



*Spotlight* to showcase success stories and environmental stars, pages 7-8.



*WaterWords* to share stories from communities around the Greater Northwest, page 8.



*Ecosystem* to provide news that goes beyond water topics, pages 9-10.

## Celebrate Earth Day April 22nd and Every Day



Saturday, April 22, 2006 is **Earth Day!** It all began to take shape in 1962 when former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-WI) started to develop and garner support for the Earth Day concept. He announced in Seattle in 1969 that a grassroots environmental campaign had begun. The first Earth Day event was carried out under the national coordination of Denis Hayes in 1970, the same year President Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency. Over 20 million Americans around the country rallied to get involved in the largest grassroots mobilization in United States history.

Here at EPA we work daily to improve and celebrate Planet Earth. And every spring, we join people across the world in efforts to foster education, action, and change through activities that carry us a small step forward in our goal of protecting human health and the environment. Earth Day activities offer important points of entry to address worldwide environmental concerns, as well as opportunities to focus more locally.

Ways to get involved for Earth Day are available world wide. In the Northwest, Earth Day events will be held in most major cities in all Region 10 states. Local activities may include cleanups, restoration projects, parades, fairs, and concerts. For example, in Seattle, EPA Region 10, along with Seattle's Federal Executive Board, is excited to host AmeriCorps volunteers at a booth. The booth is designed to raise environmental awareness at Westlake Center as part of King County's Earth Day Event. EPA staff will also join People for Puget

Sound to do restoration work as part of the Duwamish Alive! project. The public is invited ([www.pugetsound.org](http://www.pugetsound.org) or 206-367-7007). To learn about more activities where you live, visit [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net).

If April 22<sup>nd</sup> is already booked on your calendar, there are still ways to be involved. Environmentally smart things to do in your home, at school, or at work range from turning off the lights when not in use, to commuting smart, to purchasing recycled products. More ideas, including ideas on volunteering, can be found at <http://www.earthday.gov/>.

### WaterTalk List-Serv: Signed Up Yet?

If you haven't already signed up to get WaterTalk electronically, there is still time. The list-serv is a great way to save trees and reduce clutter. Just go to [www.epa.gov/region10](http://www.epa.gov/region10) and sign up for the **Region 10 Water News List-Serv**. Then, send an e-mail asking to be removed from the hard-copy mailing list to [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov). Easy! Each quarter, you'll get an e-mail when the new WaterTalk issue is ready, linking you to its website. Once in awhile, you will get other water-related news from EPA. If you already get e-mail notification of WaterTalk, you're already on the list-serv.

## May is American Wetlands Month *It Pays to Save Wetlands*



May is the month we recognize and celebrate the wonderful ways wetlands enrich the environment and people. Wetlands are the vital link between land and water – where the flow of water, the cycling of nutrients, and the energy of the sun meet to produce highly productive ecosystems. Wetlands may not be wet year-round. In fact, some of the most important wetlands are seasonally dry transition zones. EPA is proud to partner with other agencies and private organizations celebrating **American Wetlands Month** each May. This year’s theme is “It Pays to Save Wetlands.”

Why celebrate wetlands? Wetlands are among the most valuable but least understood of all natural resources. They provide rich habitat for wildlife. They are places in which many animals and birds build nests and raise their young. Migrating birds stop over in wetlands to rest and to breed on abundant plant life that flourishes there. We cel-

brate wetlands each May when they are teeming with new animal and plant life.

Wetlands benefit our communities as well. They are valuable because they replenish and clean water supplies and reduce flood risks. In addition, wetlands provide recreational opportunities and aesthetic benefits. They serve as sites for research and education and benefit commercial fishing. EPA’s goal is to increase the quantity and quality of our nation’s wetlands. However, many challenges remain. Wetlands are stressed by pollution, invasive species, and over-development. It is important that we continue to stop the loss of wetlands and begin to achieve a net gain through better management and restoration. Learn how you can help by discovering more about wetlands and participating in events celebrating American Wetlands Month. For information on what you can do, visit [www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm).

## *Drinking Water Rules To Reduce Health Risks*

EPA recently finalized two drinking water protection rules. One rule reduces the risk of disease-causing microorganisms entering water supplies. The other rule requires water systems to limit the amount of potentially harmful “disinfection byproducts” that end up in our drinking water. The rules were proposed in August 2003. They were developed from consensus recommendations from a federal advisory committee made up of state and local governments, tribes, environmental, public health and water industry groups. The rules can be found at: [www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/disinfection/).



### **National Drinking Water Week: May 7-13**



Mark your calendar for **May 7-13**. For more than 30 years, **Drinking Water Week** has highlighted the vital role water plays in our daily lives. Led by the American Water Works Association, the week is a unique opportunity for water professionals and the consumers they serve to celebrate this important resource. During the first week in May, utilities, their communities, and other groups around the

country celebrate with fairs, programs, contests and other events. AWWA offers celebration ideas, materials, and other tools to help spread the word about **The Wonder of Water™**. They offer a mix of information to serve youth education, water utilities, and communities. For details, visit the website at [www.awwa.org/advocacy/dww](http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/dww), or call 303-347-6140.



In January, EPA made another \$10 million in beach grants available to states and tribes, bringing the total to nearly \$52 million. The funding is part of an effort to help ensure the safety of the nation's favorite recreational spots. This grant money is

available for beach monitoring and notification programs, to improve water quality at beaches and notify the public of beach warnings or closings if bacteria levels are too high. Information about the beach program is at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/).



## Tools To Help Small Water Utilities Control Arsenic

EPA has released a set of user-friendly multimedia products to help small drinking water utilities meet new regulations to control arsenic. The tools will provide owners and operators with information to guide them in making treatment decisions. One tool of particular note is the Arsenic Virtual Trade Show, a learning portal for arsenic-treatment technology. The website features a database of vendors, a treatment decision tree, and tips for selecting treatment providers. To launch the Arsenic Virtual Trade Show, go to [www.arsenictradeshows.org](http://www.arsenictradeshows.org). Information about arsenic and drinking water is available at [www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic).

### Check Out EPA's Video Library

EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center offers Region 10 citizens a loan library of **videos, CD-ROMs, and DVDs**. These resources cover a variety of environmental topics. Many of them are suitable for the classroom. For the list of titles, visit the website at [www.epa.gov/region10](http://www.epa.gov/region10), under the Information Resources link. This loan program is free of charge. You can check out up to 4 titles for two weeks. Orders can be placed online or by calling 800-424-4EPA.

## Drinking Water Security for Small Systems

A new guide is available for very small community water systems. Called **Drinking Water Security for Small Systems Serving 3,300 or Fewer Persons**, the guide is part of the Simple Tools for Effective Performance (STEP) Guide series. This guide will help owners and operators improve system security through vulnerability assessments and emergency response plans. These small water systems typically include small town systems, rural water districts, tribal systems, manufactured home communities, homeowners associations, small private systems, and Public Service Districts. The straightforward, easy-to-read workbook also can be used as training material for basic courses on drinking water security.



For a hard copy, call the Water Resource Center (800-832-7828) or the National Service Center for Environmental Publications (800-490-9198). Reference document number EPA 817-R-05-001. Or, for an online PDF version, visit EPA's Water Security website at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/smallsystems.cfm>.

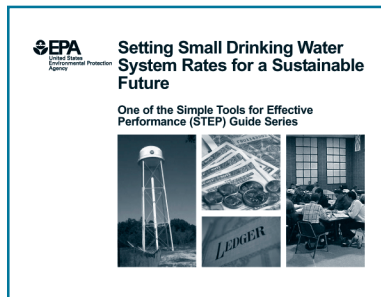


## More Tools For Small Drinking Water Systems, and Chance to Comment

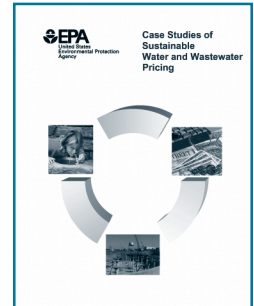
EPA has released two tools and a suggested affordability approach for small water utilities trying to balance the demands for quality water with their financial ability to deliver. The approach is part of an overall program to protect public health, support small systems, and keep costs of water manageable. The targeted systems serve 3,300 customers or fewer.

### Setting Small Drinking Water System Rates for a Sustainable Future

helps owners and operators understand the full costs of providing a quality and adequate supply of drinking water. This document can help in setting water rates that will support these costs.



**Case Studies of Sustainable Water and Wastewater Pricing**, provides real-world examples of eight drinking water systems and their approaches to setting rates.



In another action, EPA is proposing revised methods to determine when variances can be granted by states to small systems that cannot afford to comply with future drinking water standards. A small-system variance allows a drinking water system to use a treatment technology that is both affordable and protects public health. EPA requests comments by **May 1**.

The proposal and details on small-system variances can be found at [www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/affordability.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/affordability.html). The documents and more information on EPA's sustainable infrastructure efforts are posted at [www.epa.gov/water/infrastructure](http://www.epa.gov/water/infrastructure).

## EPA Helps Schools, Child Care Facilities Reduce Lead in Water

EPA now offers a toolkit to encourage school officials and child care facilities to reduce lead in their drinking water. The **3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water at Schools and Child Care Facilities Toolkit** contains materials for a voluntary Training, Testing, and Telling strategy.

Testing water in schools and child care centers is important because some children spend a big part of their days there. The "3Ts Toolkit" explains how to test for lead in drinking water; report results to parents, students, staff, and other interested parties; and take action to correct problems. The toolkit also includes guidance to help schools design testing programs. Printed copies of the toolkit are available through the Water Resource Center at 800-832-7828 and through the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791. To view the toolkit online visit [www.epa.gov/safewater/schools/guidance.html](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/schools/guidance.html).

More information on drinking water and children's health is available at [www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/kidshealth](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/kidshealth).

## Guidance Helps Control Urban Runoff Pollution

EPA has released **National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Urban Areas**. This document will help local governments and others protect water resources from polluted runoff that can result from everyday activities and urban development. The guidance will also help municipalities and other regulated entities carry out stormwater programs.

This publication includes voluntary guidance on 12 management measures designed to prevent and control runoff from urban and suburban lands. The management measures cover topics including watershed assessment and protection, runoff from new and existing development, pollution prevention, operation and maintenance, and others. The new guidance can be found at [www.epa.gov/nps/urbanmm](http://www.epa.gov/nps/urbanmm).



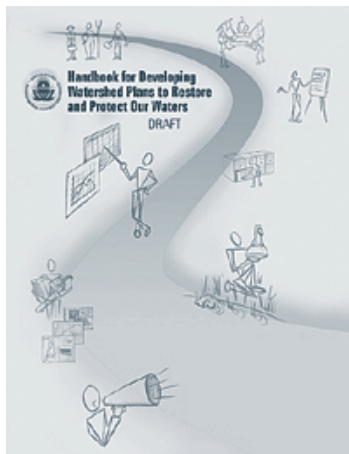
## EPA Releases Four New Smart Growth Publications

US populations are expected to grow by 50 million people, or about 18%, between 2000 and 2020. These increases could strain existing infrastructure, lead to more paved surfaces, and cause sprawl, among other things. EPA recently released four new Smart Growth publications to help communities manage their growth wisely. For free hard copies of any of these publications, e-mail [ncepimal@one.net](mailto:ncepimal@one.net) or call 800-490-9198. Electronic versions of these publications are posted at: [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth). The publications include:

- **Protecting Water Resources with Higher-Density Development** (EPA No. 231-R-06-001)
- **Using Smart Growth Techniques as Stormwater Best Management Practices** (EPA No. 231-B-05-00)
- **Growing Toward More Efficient Water Use: Linking Development, Infrastructure, and Drinking Water Policies** (EPA No. 230-R-06-001)
- **Parking Spaces / Community Places: Finding the Balance through Smart Growth Solutions** (EPA No. 231-K-06-001).

## New Draft Watershed Planning Handbook Available

A draft guide to help organizations develop and carry out watershed plans is now available. The **Draft Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters** may be useful for communities, watershed groups, and local, state, tribal, and federal environmental agencies. This handbook contains in-depth guidance on quantifying existing pollutant loads, developing estimates of the load reductions required to meet water quality standards, developing management measures, and tracking progress. EPA will accept suggestions on the document in the coming year to incorporate in the final version. The handbook is posted at [www.epa.gov/owow/nps/watershed\\_handbook/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/watershed_handbook/).



## Watershed Academy Sponsors Webcasts

EPA's Watershed Academy sponsors monthly webcasts to offer free training and information for watershed practitioners from around the globe. These two-hour audio Web broadcasts help watershed organizations, agencies, municipalities, and private industry create more sustainable communities using a watershed approach. Registration is available on a first-come/first-served basis and will open about a week before each seminar. Each webcast includes a Web-based slide presentation with a companion audio portion that can be accessed either by phone or by streaming audio broadcast. On the **April 19** webcast, the River Network will discuss opportunities for citizen involvement in the Clean Water Act. Past webcasts also are available. For details, visit [www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts](http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts).

## LGEAN Offers Online Land Use Decision-Making Tool

In partnership with EPA and Purdue University, the Local Government Environmental Assistance Network (LGEAN) has launched a new online tool. The tool can help local government planners measure the water quality impacts of possible land use changes. Based on community-specific climate data, the tool estimates changes in recharge, runoff, and nonpoint source pollution resulting from proposed development. For more information, visit the website at [www.ecn.purdue.edu/runoff/lthianew/](http://www.ecn.purdue.edu/runoff/lthianew/).

## Stormwater Webcasts Coming Up

EPA has launched a new series of webcast training sessions for municipal stormwater managers. Designed for those unable to attend out-of-town or multi-day workshops, this series provides a mix of basic and advanced topics in two-hour blocks. These webcasts allow participants to listen to lectures and see presentations through their computers. Webcasts will be scheduled about every other month from now until September. Future topics are expected to include Construction 101, Stormwater Utilities 201, Illicit Discharge Elimination and Detection 101, and Program Development. To sign up or learn more, visit [www.epa.gov/npdes/training](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/training).



## Small Community Resources Offered

The National Environmental Services Center helps small communities by providing wastewater, drinking water, and solid waste information and referral services. NESC offers the following free materials. Shipping charges apply.

### **Section 319 Nonpoint Source National Monitoring Program: Successes and Recommendations**

(#WWBLPE103). This report may be of use to watershed professionals, the agricultural community, policy makers and staff, and citizens. It discusses lessons from 23 projects, including recommendations to help enhance future watershed projects and state nonpoint source programs.

### **Expanding Communication in Communities Addressing Wastewater Needs**

(#WWCDMG48). Green Mountain Institute for Environmental Democracy did a one-year project to improve information and tools for communities working to solve wastewater needs. The goals were to help individu-

als motivate others to participate in the project and to help identify the public process components to move from planning to action. This document discusses project materials, case studies, outcomes, and recommendations.

### **Ten Steps to Maintain Critical Wastewater Services and Protect Public Health in an Emergency**

is a poster to help small communities prepare for emergencies and ensure wastewater security. The poster is designed for use by local officials and wastewater treatment operators to improve their community's security and emergency preparedness for man-made and natural disasters. The poster includes ten pocket cards for use as an emergency contact list.

To order, call 800-624-8301. To learn more, visit [www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc). The wastewater division of NESC is an EPA grant-funded, nonprofit organization (formerly known as the National Small Flows Clearinghouse).



## EPA Requests Applications for the 2006 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement



EPA is now accepting applications for the fifth annual **National Award for Smart Growth Achievement**. This award program recognizes communities that use the principles of smart growth to create better places.

This competition is open to local or state governments and other public sector entities. Non-profit or private organizations or individuals are not eligible for the award. However, if a superior project is developed through a public-private or a public-non-profit partnership, EPA will make the award to the public sector entity while noting the other participants in the activity.

Applications are due **May 1, 2006**. Up to five winners will be recognized at a ceremony in Washington, DC in November 2006.

This year, applications will be accepted in five categories:

- Built Projects
- Policies and Regulations
- Small Communities
- Equitable Development
- Overall Excellence in Smart Growth

Interested parties are encouraged to submit applications for smart growth activities that have shown significant activity between May 1, 2001 and May 1, 2006. Successful applicants will have incorporated the principles of smart growth to create places that respect community culture and the environment, foster economic development, and enhance quality of life and public health.

For details about the National Award for Smart Growth Achievement, including an application packet, visit [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm).

## ExpectMore.gov Assesses Federal Programs

A new government website called **ExpectMore.gov** offers candid, easy-to-understand assessments of federal programs. The website allows the public to see what government agencies are doing to improve program performance.

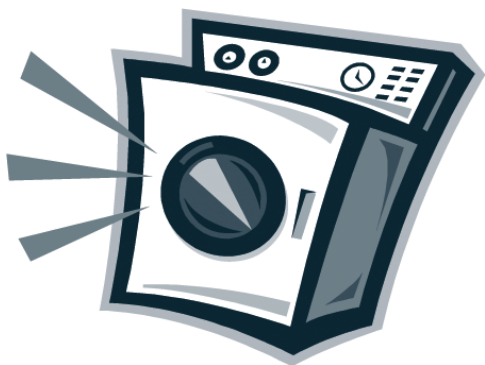
The assessments are based on formal program evaluations designed to identify weaknesses and programs that do or don't show results. A program's efficiency is determined by the cost to achieve its results. These assessments help ensure efficiency overall by checking whether a program duplicates other, better run programs or whether the program has already fulfilled its purpose.

The tool used for the assessments is called the Program Assessment Rating Tool, or PART. PART was developed by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2003. By year-end 2006, all federal government programs will have been reviewed and rated.

**ExpectMore.gov** offers assessments of nearly 800 federal programs so far, including about 43 EPA programs. Summaries provide a program overview, key findings, and the actions agencies are taking to improve performance. Each summary links to the full program assessment details, the program's website, and the search results for similar federal programs. Visit the website at [www.expectmore.gov](http://www.expectmore.gov).

## WATERWORDS

### Water Conservation Droplets . . .



*Did you know that water-efficient clothes washers use about one-third to one-half the amount of water of older models? Water-efficient models use up to about 25 gallons per cycle, while some inefficient models use over 40 gallons per cycle. The most water-efficient models can use as little as 12 gallons per cycle.*

*Did you know that each average household that fully adopts water-efficient products and practices saves 30,000 gallons per year? That's enough to supply a year of drinking water for 150 neighbors.*



To sign up for WaterTalk electronically by list-serv, go to [www.epa.gov/region 10](http://www.epa.gov/region10).

Visit WaterTalk online at [www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm)



# Tackling Those Invasive Species

*This edition of WaterTalk continues our regular feature on the important topic of invasive species. Invasive species are harmful plants or animals that are not native to the ecosystem, and which cause economic harm to human health or the environment. Invasive species have been called one of the main environmental threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This issue, we give you a snapshot of some important bits of news from our region. For more information, call Joan Cabreza, EPA, at 206-553-7369 or 800-424-4372 x7369.*

**Washington Gets Invasive Species Council:** Legislation establishing an Invasive Species Council for Washington was signed in March. The council will provide policy level direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others. It is a joint effort among local, tribal, state, and federal governments, as well as the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

**Oregon WeedMapper Website Launched:** The WeedMapper website is now up and running. It contains a wealth of information on Oregon state-listed weeds and their distribution. It encourages others to input information on weed locations collected during survey or management activities. Check out the site at [www.weedmapper.org](http://www.weedmapper.org).

**Workshop Proceedings Available:** Proceedings of EPA's "Economic Impacts of Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop" held in 2005 are now posted at [www.epa.gov/economics](http://www.epa.gov/economics) (see link on right side under "workshop proceedings available").

**Ecological Society of America Advises Governments:** "Biological Invasions: Recommendations for U.S. Policy and Management," was released in March. The paper provides insight into the ecology of invasions, and contains six science-based recommendations for government agencies:

- (1) use new information and practices to better manage commercial and other pathways to reduce the transport and release of potentially harmful species;
- (2) adopt new, more quantitative procedures for risk analysis and apply them to every species proposed for importation in the country;
- (3) use new, more cost-effective diagnostic techniques to increase active surveillance and sharing of information about invasive species;
- (4) create new legal authority and provide emergency funding to support rapid responses to emerging invasions;
- (5) provide funding and incentives for cost-effective programs to slow the spread of existing invasive species; and
- (6) establish a National Center for Invasive Species Management (under the National Invasive Species Council) to coordinate and lead improvements in federal, state, and international policies.

To download a copy of the ESA paper, go to [www.esa.org/pao/esaPositions/](http://www.esa.org/pao/esaPositions/).

**Washington Tackles Puget Sound Tunicate:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Governor's budget are now funding an important eradication effort. The solitary club tunicate *Styela clava*, which has caused huge problems for east coast shellfish growers, has now been found growing on boats and docks at three Washington marinas. Because warm weather stimulates spawning, and the tunicates infest hundreds of boats, once boating season starts they could spread throughout the sound.

**Wildflower Seed Mix Study Finds Invasives:** Wildflower seed packets are often advertised as an easy way to establish native groundcovers. But UW researchers growing 19 packets of wildflower mixes found that each contained from three to 13 invasive species. Eight had seeds for plants considered noxious weeds in at least one US state or Canadian province. A third of the packets listed no contents, and a little more than another third had inaccurate lists. Only five of the 19 correctly itemized everything.

**Websites Updated:** The Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force websites have been updated. Check them out at [www.fws.gov/answest/](http://www.fws.gov/answest/) and [www.anstaskforce.gov/default.php](http://www.anstaskforce.gov/default.php). The National Invasive Species Information Center also made it easier to find information on their website at [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/). These websites all feature links to images, fact sheets, management plans, and an extensive list of agencies and organizations.

**Invasive Species Forecast System in the Works:** NASA and US Geological Survey are developing a system for the early detection, remediation, and control of invasive species on Department of Interior and nearby lands. The forecasting system will provide a framework for processing data and creating on-demand, regional-scale assessments of invasive species patterns and vulnerable habitats. The system will provide a flexible way to map hot spots for potential exotic species invasions. Visit the website at <http://bp.gsfc.nasa.gov/index.html>.

## Beneficial Landscaping:

# Beneficial Insects – Wanted Alive

Hold your insecticides! We've asked Sharon Collman, entomologist and WSU Snohomish County Extension agent, to write a series of WaterTalk articles about beneficial insects in our gardens. Here's the first installment...

## Good Bugs at Work

**Sharon J. Collman,  
WSU Snohomish County Extension**

Bugs are good for the garden. Perhaps your awareness of insects came from a painful incident with yellowjackets as a kid, or from the focus on pests as garden writers provide helpful advice. Horror movies capitalize on our fears of the unknown and instill images that foster more fear. Certainly, there have been pests that have plagued humans and those that require control. Fleas, mosquitoes, lice can be vectors of disease at their worst and just plain annoying at their best. Then there are carpenter ants, food pests, and caterpillars that may require our intervention.

But take heart! Only a few insects are actually harmful, as we define it; 90-95% of the insects are working for us in our gardens by pollinating our crops and preying upon the harmful insects. Yes, harmful insects do get out of control when the number of beneficial insects drops. When the beneficials are too successful, the pests become scarce so the beneficials can't find them. As the pest population builds back they are easier to find, so the beneficials are more successful. But during this shift in populations, there is usually a lag time. Humans get impatient and often apply pesticides

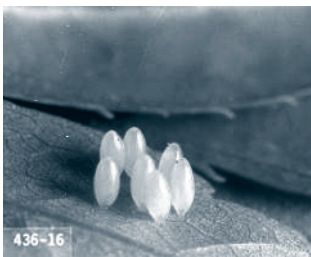
just when the beneficials have found the pests. Knowing when to intervene and when to let things alone takes a bit of careful attention, and it helps to know who's who out there. So let's take a look at the who's who of beneficial insects that keep pests pretty much under control.

Ladybugs are pretty well known, but not always their larvae or eggs. They are only one of the enemies of aphids and other sucking insects. All that honeydew, the excess sugars excreted by the aphids, has a nice odor on a sunny day and tells all the downwind predators that there are aphids aplenty here. You've seen orange and red and black ladybugs, but watch for tiny black or medium pink ones, and the eggs or larvae.

Take a favorite beverage, sit comfortably in the garden by your roses and watch beneficial insects (pollinators, predators, and parasitoids) working for you to keep pest numbers low.

For more information about Beneficial Landscaping, contact **Elaine Somers** at **206-553-2966**, **somers.elaine@epa.gov**, or visit the website at **www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm**.

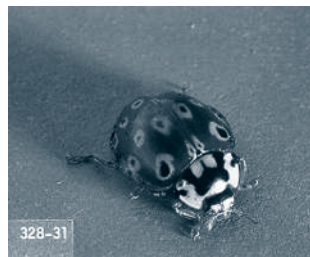
## Ladybugs



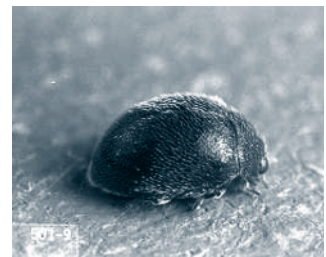
*ladybug eggs*



*ladybug larva*

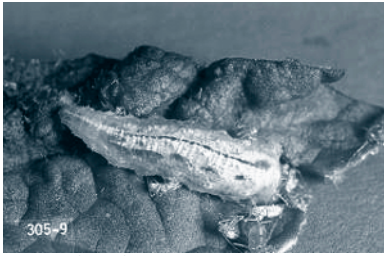


*Spotted adult ladybug*



*little black ladybug*

## Syrphid flies



**Syrphid flies:** adults are pollinators and the larvae feed on aphids. Watch for the pointy ended "caterpillar," actually a maggot, or the white egg among the aphids.

Syrphid adult fly on flower



# CALENDAR



### April 19

Watershed Webcast, Citizen Involvement in the Clean Water Act, [www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts](http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts).

### April 20-21

Land Use in Washington, Seattle, WA. Law Seminars International, 800-854-8009, [www.lawseminars.com](http://www.lawseminars.com).

### April 22 Earth Day!

### April 24-27

National Mitigation & Conservation Banking Conference, Portland, OR, [www.mitigationbankingconference.com](http://www.mitigationbankingconference.com), 703/548-5473.

### April 29

South Puget Sound Forum: Environmental Quality, Economic Vitality, Olympia, WA. Puget Sound Council, 360-725-5454.

### May is American Wetlands Month,

[www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm).

### May 1-8

Native Plant Appreciation Week, Washington. [www.wnps.org](http://www.wnps.org).

### May 3-4

Restoring Greenspace: Ecological Reuse of Contaminated Properties, Seattle, WA. Wildlife Habitat Council, 301-588-8994, [www.wildlifehc.org/events/restoringgreenspace.cfm](http://www.wildlifehc.org/events/restoringgreenspace.cfm).

### May 3

Selling Social Change: Creative Solutions to Reducing Pollution, Redmond, OR, [www.oconline.org/business/bforum](http://www.oconline.org/business/bforum).

### May 4

Selling Social Change: Creative Solutions to Reducing Pollution, Portland, OR, [www.oconline.org/business/bforum](http://www.oconline.org/business/bforum).

### May 6

Spring Environmental Stewardship Symposium, Poulsbo, WA. Stillwaters Environmental Center, 360-297-2876, [www.stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org](http://www.stillwatersenvironmentalcenter.org).

### May 7-13

National Drinking Water Week, [www.awwa.org/advocacy/dww](http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/dww).

### May 9-11

Alaska Water Wastewater Management Association Annual Conference, Anchorage, AK. Angie Monteleone, 907-561-9777, <http://awwma.org>.

### May 23-25

National Water Quality Trading Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. EPA, USDA, [www.epa.gov/npdes/training](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/training), Virginia Kibler, 202-564-0596.

### June 9-12

American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers Annual Meeting, Portland, OR. 269-428-6333, [www.asabe.org](http://www.asabe.org).

### June 14

Deadline for contributions to the July issue of WaterTalk. Andrea Lindsay, Editor, 206-553-1896, 800-424-4372, [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).



**WaterTalk**  
 U.S. EPA, ECO-081  
 1200 Sixth Avenue  
 Seattle, Washington 98101

Pre-Sorted Standard  
 Postage and Fees Paid  
 U.S. EPA  
 Permit No. G-35

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**WaterTalk**  
 April 2006



# WaterTalk

Alaska Idaho Oregon Washington

**WaterTalk** is published quarterly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10. *WaterTalk* seeks to be a useful tool for those who protect water resources and ecosystems in communities of the Greater Pacific Northwest, by providing practical resources and relevant agency news.

You are invited to contribute items for publication. Submittal deadline is the 15th day of the month before publication. *WaterTalk* articles can be used in other publications. Please give credit to *WaterTalk*.

For mailing list changes, or to contact the editor, call Andrea Lindsay at (206) 553-1896 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1896, or e-mail [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).

Mention of trade names, products or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying, official EPA approval, endorsement or recommendation.



Alternative formats available upon request. Please call Andrea Lindsay to request reasonable accommodation. TTY: 1-800-877-8339.

**Please recycle or share with a friend.**

## ***In This Issue . . .***

**Help for Puget Sound**

**Days of Celebration**

**Drinking Water Resources**

**Insects, Wanted Alive**

**Environmental Events**

***And More . . .***