

Introduction - EPA Region 10's Priorities for Environmental Protection

Protecting the environment in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska – geographically speaking, the largest EPA region in the United States – is a job with many facets. More than six hundred EPA employees work in over a dozen locations in our four states, and their jobs are highly varied. On any day, if you could take a look at EPA employees at work, here is just some of what you would see:

- Permit writers are setting operating conditions and limits for pulp mills, mines, injection wells on the North Slope of Alaska, and hazardous waste landfills.
- On Scene coordinators are on duty, ready to respond to oil spills, hazardous waste accidents, and terrorist incidents.
- Inspectors are checking for compliance in settings as diverse as dairy farms, military bases, construction sites, electrical substations, and sewage treatment plants.
- Laboratory chemists are analyzing samples for microbes and toxic chemicals.

- Scientists are developing complex computer models of ecosystems, such as temperature and dissolved gas in the Columbia River.
- Staff are consulting with tribal governments about their environmental priorities and issues.
- Grants project officers are administering a system that delivers over \$300 million annually to states, tribes, local governments, and non-profit organizations to assist them in delivering environmental protection.
- EPA staff are providing environmental information to citizens, especially through an Internet system that gives people data about their environment and information about EPA programs at work in their communities.

The individual efforts of these staff make up the critical foundation of EPA's work. Together, they add up to a tremendous investment in helping protect the public health and the environment in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. In a very important sense, a top priority of EPA Region 10 is to keep up our efforts to protect the environment in these many and varied ways throughout our region. These individual staff efforts may not be highly visible, but they are very important to the communities, the companies, and the other agencies that depend on EPA to carry out the "nuts and bolts" tasks of environmental protection.

Within this wide world of environmental protection work, EPA Region 10 is focusing extra attention on a few special environmental problems that require increased resources and management attention. The purpose of this document is to share with you our top six priorities for 2002-2003.

