

# Watertalk

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

February 2008

# HAPPY 2008!

## Make a Smaller Splash in 2008

It's time to put a fresh spin on the classic New Year's resolution. Rather than just pledging to shed a few pounds this year, resolve to cut down on daily water usage. EPA's **WaterSense** program can help you keep this New Year's resolution: use our simple tips to save water in the kitchen, bathroom, laundry room, and yard, and save some green for yourself and for the environment.

### In the kitchen...Resolution:



If you wash your dishes in the sink, fill the basin with wash water, wash dishes in it, put dishes aside, and rinse them all together at the end. **Savings:** If every home in the United States that washes dishes in the sink would do so

in this manner, more than 100 billion gallons of water could be saved annually.

### In the bathroom...Resolution:



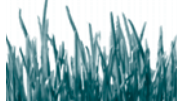
Install WaterSense labeled toilets throughout your home. **Savings:** A household could save \$90 per year in reduced water costs, and \$2,000 over the lifetime of the toilets.

### In the laundry room...Resolution:



Make sure to wash only full loads. **Savings:** Eliminate one load a week and save 2,130 gallons of water annually.







### In the yard...Resolution:



Hire a WaterSense irrigation partner to perform regular maintenance on your sprinkler system, and grow your lawn "greener" than ever. **Savings:** If you have a sprinkler system, this could reduce the irrigation water you use by 15 percent or about 9,000 gallons annually—that's the amount of water that would flow from a garden hose nonstop for nearly a whole day.

Explore the WaterSense Web site to learn how you can save even more water in your home at [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense). Check out the Winter issue of the **WaterSense Current** at [www.epa.gov/watersense/news/current/winter2008.htm#1](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/news/current/winter2008.htm#1).  
Article adapted from the EPA Winter 2008 **WaterSense**.

### In This Issue...

-  **EPA NEWS** EPA News to update you on agency activities, pages 2-3.
-  **TOOLS** Tools to clue you in on resources, publications, opportunities, and services, pages 4-6.
-  **WaterWords** Waterwords covering water related issues, page 7.
-  **SPOTLIGHT** Spotlight to showcase success stories and environmental stars, page 7-8.
-  **ECOSYSTEM** Ecosystem to provide news that goes beyond water topics, pages 9-10.
-  **CALENDAR** Calendar to highlight environmental events, page 11.

## EPA Enforcement Helps Reduce Northwest Pollution





EPA enforcement and compliance actions in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska helped reduce or treat 9.1 million pounds of pollution in 2007. Data for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 also reveals that 203 completed enforcement actions resulted in facilities investing \$31 million to comply with federal environmental rules.

According to Elin D. Miller, EPA's Region 10 Administrator, the Agency's enforcement and compliance program helps protect communities and inspires responsibility in the regulated community.

"Tough enforcement means cleaner neighborhoods," said Miller. "When people and businesses pollute illegally, we all pay the price where we live, work, and play. At EPA, we try to make it easy for companies and individuals to see the benefits of playing by the rules and obeying the law. Part of being a sustainable business in today's economy means realizing that pollution never pays."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is a federal agency whose mission it is to protect human health and the environment. Since 1970, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people. EPA is divided into ten regions. Region 10 includes the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

### Total Penalties Assessed in Region 10 States

<b>Alaska:</b>		\$1,492,849
<b>Idaho:</b>		\$330,299
<b>Oregon:</b>		\$163,450
<b>Washington:</b>		\$2,137,801

### EPA Regional Enforcement Record for the Past Three Years

	FY05	FY06	FY07
<b>Total Inspections</b>	1,221	1,299	976
<b>Pounds of Pollution Reduced/Treated</b>	13,954,601	26,429,316	9,100,000
<b>Total Penalties Assessed</b>	\$1,778,908	\$3,567,324	\$4,115,000
<b>Enforcement Actions Concluded</b>	196	345	203

Contact: **Marianne Deppman, 206-553-1237, [deppman.marianne@epa.gov](mailto:deppman.marianne@epa.gov)**  
 More Region 10 results: <http://epa.gov/region10/offices/oec/Region10Results.htm>  
 National results: [http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq\\_2007-11-15\\_oeca](http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2007-11-15_oeca)



### Get on Watertalk's E-List

Here's a chance to save trees and limit mailbox clutter! Sign up now for the Watertalk List-Serv. You'll get your Watertalk electronically every quarter. It's quick and easy to sign up. Just go to [www.epa.gov/region10](http://www.epa.gov/region10). Click on **Index**, then **W** for **Watertalk**. There you will find an option to get on the Region 10 **Water Issues List-Serv**. Each quarter, an e-mail will tell you when the new Watertalk is ready, and link you to its website. Once in awhile, you will get other water-related news from EPA.

## How Are Local Residents Responding to Water Issues?

Guess what? Over 80 percent of citizens reported that they have taken individual actions to conserve water resources. In addition, almost three-quarters of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington residents have adjusted the way they live to protect water quality. And, did you know that Pacific Northwest residents consider the top three water resource priorities to be clean drinking water, clean rivers, and clean groundwater?

Several notable findings like these about Northwest community and water issues are available, thanks to a partnership among land grant universities, water research institutes, and EPA Region 10. The partnership works to do research and community education on the quality of Pacific Northwest waters. The effort is supported in part by a grant from the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System (USDA-CSREES).

Their website—<http://www.pnwwaterweb.com/flyers.htm>—offers a series of water quality update publications. These documents give summaries of findings from recent surveys and projects in the



Northwest. Many topics are available throughout the website. (The folder labeled *Water Policy, Economics, Surveys* might be a good place to start when you visit.)

To learn more, contact **Jan Seago**, CSREES water quality coordinator located at EPA, at **206-553-0038** or **800-424-4372** or [seago.jan@epa.gov](mailto:seago.jan@epa.gov).

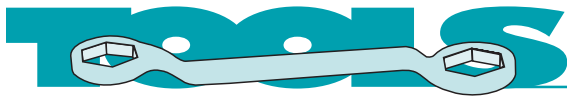
## Making Beach Visits Safe



While it is still a cold day at the beach around the Northwest, EPA is taking action to help ensure beach visits are safe for everyone. By providing states an additional \$9.75 million in beach grants in 2008, EPA is helping states continue to monitor water quality at beaches and notify the public of any beach warnings and closings when bacteria levels rise too high.

This is the eighth year these grants are being made to states since passage of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act in 2000. EPA estimates Americans make 910 million trips to coastal areas each year, spending about \$44 billion.

A decade ago, state and local monitoring and notification programs differed across the country. These grants are designed to consistently protect and inform the public before swimming at beach waters. In addition to supporting stronger beach programs nationwide, EPA is also focusing on developing new technologies to more quickly identify possible bacteria contamination at beaches. The science is evolving, and EPA's research program involves epidemiological studies at a variety of beaches to assess new analytical approaches. More information about BEACH grants awards can be found at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches).



## CARE Funding: Request for Proposals Announced

EPA is soliciting project proposals to receive financial assistance through the **Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)** program. Applications are due **March 17, 2008**. CARE is a community-based, community-driven, multi-media demonstration program. The program helps communities form collaborative partnerships, develop a comprehensive understanding of the many sources of risk from toxics and environmental pollutants, set priorities, and carry out projects to reduce risks through collaborative action at the local level. CARE's long-term goal is to help communities build self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that will continue to improve human health and local environments into the future.

EPA will award CARE cooperative agreements in two levels. Level I cooperative agreements range from \$75,000 to \$100,000 and will help establish community-based partnerships to develop local environmental priorities. Level II awards, ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000 each, will support communities which have

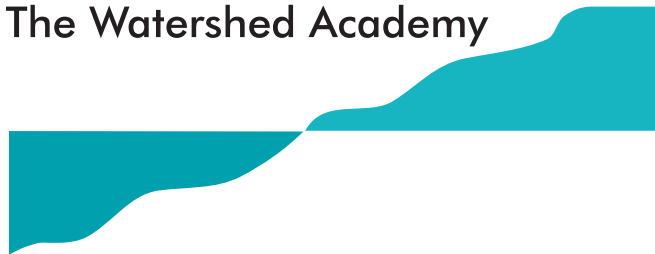


established broad-based partnerships, have identified the priority toxic risks in the community, and are prepared to measure results, implement risk reduction activities, and become self-sustaining. Eligible applicants include county and local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations and universities.

The request for proposals is on-line at [www.epa.gov/air/grants/08-02.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/air/grants/08-02.pdf). For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/CARE/](http://www.epa.gov/CARE/). Or, participate in an information session by Internet, called a **Webcast**, on February 27, 2008, from 7-9 a.m. Pacific Time. For details about the Webcast, visit [www.epa.gov/CARE/agreements.htm#apply](http://www.epa.gov/CARE/agreements.htm#apply).

## Webcasts Give Free Watershed Training

### The Watershed Academy



EPA's **Watershed Academy** sponsors free monthly **Webcasts** for watershed practitioners from around the globe. The seminars, featuring expert instructors, help train local watershed organizations, municipal leaders, and others about watershed topics. Participants log on to the web or join by phone. You must register in advance to participate. Dozens of past Webcasts are also available. They cover topics such as social marketing, effective outreach, low impact development, pollutant trading, water quality monitoring, stormwater management, and watershed planning. For details, past session archives, and current offerings, go to [www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts](http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts).

## Ask EPA:

### Talk with EPA Experts



**Ask EPA** is an online interactive forum where you can discuss a wide range of environmental and human health issues with EPA's senior officials. To learn about upcoming sessions, and how to submit your questions, visit [www.epa.gov/askepa](http://www.epa.gov/askepa). Past topics have included

enforcement and compliance, recycling, measuring environmental results, and more. Transcripts from the many past sessions are also posted at the webpage.

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



## *Low Impact Development Practices Reduce Costs*

EPA has released a new report called **Reducing Stormwater Costs through Low Impact Development (LID) Strategies and Practices**. The report contains 17 case studies from across North America. The cases show the economic viability of LID practices. Using these practices in construction projects can lower costs while improving environmental results.

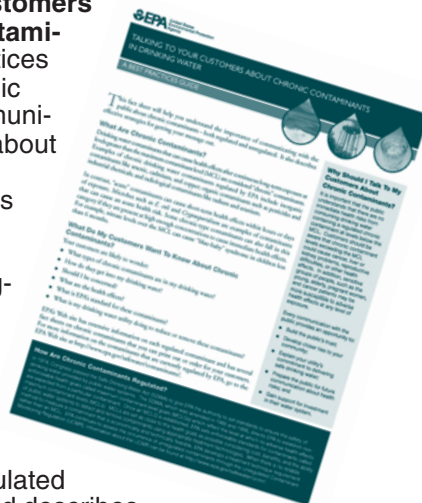
LID practices are innovative stormwater practices to manage urban stormwater runoff at its source. The goal is to mimic the way water moved through an area before it was developed by using design techniques that infiltrate, evapotranspire, and reuse runoff close to its source. Some common LID practices include rain gardens, grassed swales, cisterns, rain barrels, permeable pavements, and green roofs. LID practices increasingly are used by communities across the country to help protect and restore water quality. The report includes examples that reduce project costs while improving environmental performance. For a copy of the report, go to [www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/costs07/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/costs07/).



## **Guide Helps Public Water Systems Communicate with Public**

### **Talking to your Customers about Chronic Contaminants**

is a best practices guide that helps public water systems communicate with the public about drinking water risks. Chronic contaminants are those that can cause health effects after continuous long-term exposure. This fact sheet discusses the importance of communicating with the public about chronic contaminants - both regulated and unregulated - and describes effective strategies for getting the message out. For more information visit [www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/pdfs/fs\\_contaminants\\_chronic\\_talkingtocustomers.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/contaminants/pdfs/fs_contaminants_chronic_talkingtocustomers.pdf).



## *Final EPA Release of Water Quality Standards Database*

In December 2007, EPA posted the ninth and last release of the **Water Quality Standards Database** at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqshome/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqshome/). The database organizes and displays standards information in tables and maps, waterbody by waterbody.

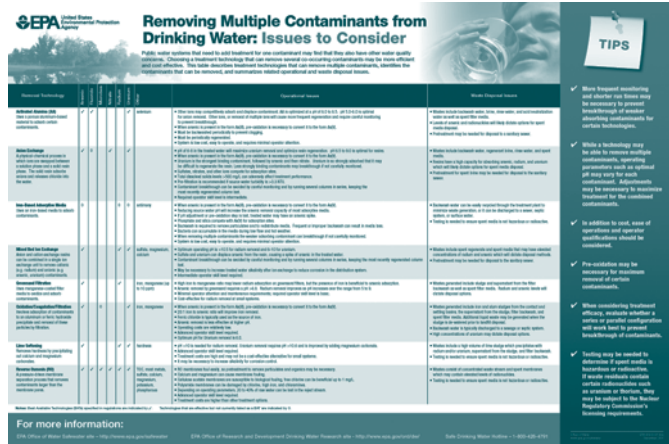
To help enhance access to water quality standards information, EPA is helping states to establish state-level databases on their own websites, so that the information can be kept current as states revise their standards.

This final version of the database will be removed from the EPA website this month, February 2008. After that, members of the public can access their state's water quality standards webpage at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqslibrary/links.html/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqslibrary/links.html/). The documents upon which the database information is based can be viewed at [www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqslibrary/](http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/wqslibrary/).



## Poster Helps Small Drinking Water Systems

EPA recently released a poster called **Removing Multiple Contaminants from Drinking Water: Issues to Consider**. The poster can help regulators and water organizations better assist small water systems with drinking water treatment. Public water systems that need to add treatment for one contaminant, such as arsenic, may find that they need to consider other water quality issues. Choosing a treatment technology that can remove several co-occurring contaminants may be more efficient and cost effective. This poster describes treatment technologies that can remove multiple contaminants. It identifies the contaminants that can be removed, and summarizes related operational and waste disposal issues. The poster is available at [www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/smallsys/ssinfo.htm).



## Outreach Resources Now Available on CD/DVD

**Nonpoint Source Outreach Toolbox** is now out as a CD edition (publication # 841-C-05-003). The popular online resource released last year is now available to you even when you are untethered from the information superhighway. With nearly 700 MB of multimedia files, this is a slightly scaled-down version of all the resources available at [www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox](http://www.epa.gov/nps/toolbox).



**Getting in Step: A DVD Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns** (publication # 841-C-07-001) is now available. This 2003 classic includes chapter menus and closed captioning and runs 35 minutes.

Both resources are available for free through the **National Service Center for Environmental Publications** (NSCEP). Call toll-free **1-800-490-9198** or e-mail [nscep@bps-lmit.com](mailto:nscep@bps-lmit.com).

### Caregivers and Older Adults

The **EPA Aging Initiative** has developed fact sheets on environmental hazards that can worsen common chronic conditions. These brief fact sheets are available at no cost and can be downloaded at [www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/index.htm#fs](http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/index.htm#fs).

## Underground Injection Control Webpage Updated

EPA has revised its webpage for the **Underground Injection Control (UIC) program**. This program regulates injection activities to prevent contamination of underground drinking water resources. The new website has basic information about each type of regulated well. The site offers videos, posters, and other publications that show how the wells are constructed and managed, and compliance assistance information for well-owners. The site also has background on EPA's current effort to develop a proposed regulation for the underground injection of carbon dioxide to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations. The website is [www.epa.gov/safewater/uic](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/uic).

## Green Scene Podcasts

Whether you're watching online or listening on your MP3 player, **Green Scene Podcasts** are a way to explore environmental issues with EPA's top experts. Through EPA's latest downloadable tool, Agency officials discuss how EPA is helping protect our nation's environment while providing useful tips and information on how to make a difference in local communities. Discussions will take place biweekly and run about five minutes. The Green Scene Podcast box is located on EPA's home page at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). All discussions are archived and posted at [www.epa.gov/newsroom/greenscene](http://www.epa.gov/newsroom/greenscene).



## Every Drop Counts: Water Efficiency Leaders Recognized

EPA recently announced the six winners of the **2007 Water Efficiency Leader Awards** for their efforts in reducing, reusing, and recycling water. One of those winners—**Allan Dietemann**—came from Region 10. Winners were chosen based on three criteria: leadership, innovation, and water saved.

Due to demographic shifts, increased demand, and aging water infrastructure, there is a national need for more efficient use of our water resources. These awards are designed to help foster a nationwide ethic of water efficiency.

In Region 10, an award went to Allan Dietemann of Seattle Public Utilities. Mr. Dietemann has promoted water conservation for 20 years. He is specifically recognized for the Seattle Water Supply System Regional 1% Program. This ten-year effort reduces water consumption for businesses, government, and homeowners. Mr. Dietemann is also honored for his central role in promoting consumer product water efficiency, such as product labeling and inclusion of water efficiency standards in the Department of Energy's appliance efficiency standards. Congratulations, Mr. Dietemann! Learn more about all the winners at [www.epa.gov/water/wel](http://www.epa.gov/water/wel).

## Oregon Drinking Water Loan Fund Gets EPA Award



Oregon's Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund has received EPA's Award for Sustainable Public Health Protection. The award recognizes the unique, successful partnership that carried out the state's program: Department of Human Services, Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, and Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

The loan fund has provided more than \$131 million to Oregon communities since 1997, helping them to meet safe drinking water standards. The loans have funded water distribution system upgrades, treatment upgrades and installations, and water supply protection. The partnership offers a special assistance program for disadvantaged communities. The program also allows communities to conduct their own income surveys. For details, contact **Rick Green**, EPA, at 206-553-8504 or [green.richard@epa.gov](mailto:green.richard@epa.gov).

## SPOTLIGHT

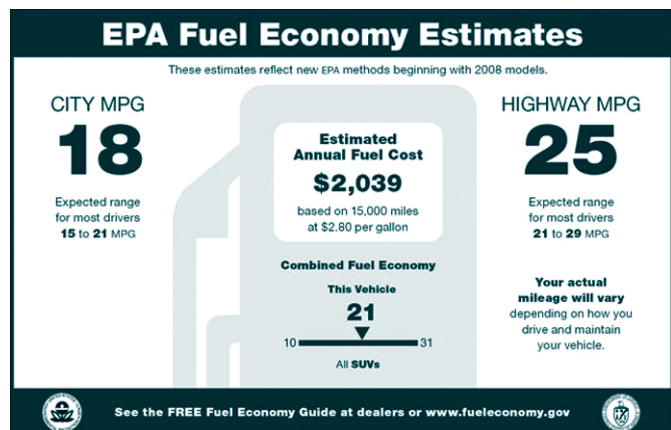
## New Fuel Economy Stickers

To more clearly and fully convey fuel economy information to consumers, all new cars, light trucks, and SUVs feature a newly re-designed window sticker. The new label will allow consumers to make more informed decisions. The label includes the estimated annual cost for fueling the vehicle, how the vehicle's fuel economy compares to others within its class, and a website to go to for more information.

The changes coincide with the adoption of new methods to determine the miles per gallon (MPG) estimates that appear on the stickers. The new methods, which took effect for model year 2008 vehicles, will bring MPG estimates closer to a vehicle's actual fuel use. Estimates consider factors such as driving at high speeds, accelerating aggressively, air conditioning use, and driving in cold temperatures.

Taking EPA's fuel economy information into account when shopping for a vehicle can help consumers save

money, as well as cut down on air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. For details on the new label, visit [www.epa.gov/fueleconomy/label.htm](http://www.epa.gov/fueleconomy/label.htm).

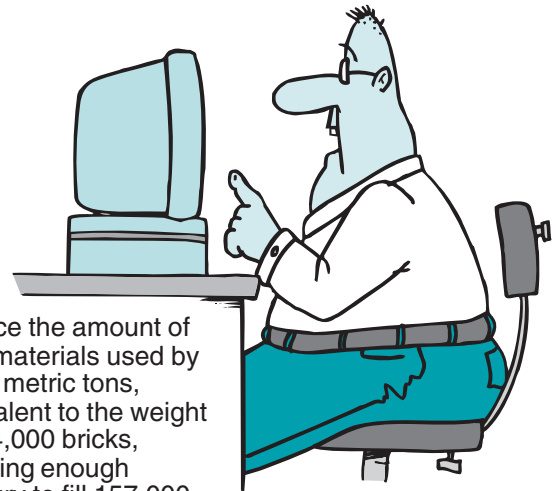


## Green Computers Bring Benefits

The environmental benefits of buying high-performance, environmentally friendly computer equipment are notable. The first annual report issued by the Green Electronics Council highlights these benefits. It is called **The Environmental Benefits of the Purchase or Sale of EPEAT Registered Products in 2006**.

The report states that the purchase of more than 36 million EPA-approved computer desktops, laptops, and monitors has led to a big reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The report shows that the computer equipment has helped to:

- Save 13.7 billion kWh of electricity, enough to power 1.2 million U.S. homes for a year
- Save 24.4 million metric tons of primary materials, equivalent to the weight of 189 million refrigerators
- Prevent 56.5 million metric tons of air emissions (including greenhouse gas emissions)
- Prevent 1.07 million metric tons of carbon equivalent greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to removing 852,000 cars from the road for a year
- Prevent 118,000 metric tons of water pollutant emissions



- Reduce the amount of toxic materials used by 1,070 metric tons, equivalent to the weight of 534,000 bricks, including enough mercury to fill 157,000 household fever thermometers; and
- Avoid the disposal of 41,100 metric tons of hazardous waste, equivalent to the weight of 20.5 million bricks.

EPEAT (Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool) -registered computer products have reduced levels of cadmium, lead, and mercury to better protect human health. They are also easier to upgrade and recycle and meet the government's Energy Star guidelines for energy efficiency. For details visit [www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/products/epeat.htm](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/products/epeat.htm).

## Cell Phone Recycling: An Easy Call



The nation's leading cell phone makers, service providers, and retailers have teamed up with EPA to answer America's call for easy cell phone recycling. It's all part of EPA's **Plug-In to eCycling** program. Partners supporting the cell phone recycling campaign include AT&T Wireless, Best Buy, LG Electronics, Motorola, Nokia, Office Depot, Samsung, Sony

Ericsson, Sprint, Staples, and T-Mobile.

EPA started the campaign because many consumers still do not know where or how they can recycle their unwanted cell phones. Consequently, less than 20 percent of unwanted cell phones are recycled each year.

Recycling a cell phone helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, and conserve natural resources. An estimated 100 to 130 million cell phones are no longer being used, many languishing in storage. If Americans recycled 100 million phones, we could save enough upstream energy to power more than

194,000 U.S. households for a year. If consumers were able to reuse those 100 million cell phones, the environmental savings would be even greater, saving enough energy to power more than 370,000 U.S. homes each year.

Plug-In To eCycling is a voluntary partnership between EPA and electronics manufacturers, retailers, and service providers to offer consumers more opportunities to donate or recycle their used electronics. In 2007, as part of their commitment to the program, retailers and electronics manufacturers voluntarily recycled more than 47 million pounds of electronics, mostly computers and televisions. The Plug-In program has recycled more than 142 million pounds of electronics since 2003.

EPA has released a series of print public service announcements, "**Recycle Your Cell Phone. It's An Easy Call.**" The ads highlight the convenience and environmental and social benefits of recycling a cell phone. EPA also introduced a podcast addressing many common questions on cell phone recycling. Learn more at [www.epa.gov/cellphone](http://www.epa.gov/cellphone) and [www.epa.gov/plug-in/](http://www.epa.gov/plug-in/).



## Invasive Species:

# Protecting from Unwanted Invaders

This edition of Watertalk continues the spotlight on the important topic of invasive species. Many activities are going on across the country to manage this serious environmental threat. This issue highlights a few of those efforts. For details, contact **Joan Cabreza**, EPA, at **206-553-7369** or **800-424-4372**, or [cabreza.joan@epa.gov](mailto:cabreza.joan@epa.gov).

**National Invasives Management Plan Revised:** The first National Invasive Species Management Plan, published in 2001, has been revised. The National Invasive Species Council recently accepted public comments on the revised plan. The Plan is intended to address invasive species in the areas of prevention, early detection and rapid response, control, restoration, and collaboration. Text of the plan is available in .pdf format at [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov).

**Western Rivers Study:** Results of an Environmental Monitoring and Assessment study by researchers from Oregon State University and EPA are in. The study found that more than half of the stream and river miles surveyed in 12 western states contained non-native fish and amphibians. Over 1300 sites were sampled in three large-scale ecoregions. From 30-33 non-native species were found in each ecoregion. The largest number of non-native species was found in CA (26) and the fewest in ID (4). The entire paper "**Distribution of Nonnative Aquatic Vertebrates in Western U.S. Streams and Rivers**" is online at <http://afs.allenpress.com/perlserv/?request=get-toc&issn=1548-8675>.

**Global Climate Change Research Report:** The new *Summary of NHEERL Ecological Research on Global Climate Change* reports on 14 years of research conducted by EPA at its National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory (NHEERL). This research compendium presents findings on how global climate change may affect terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems, as well as agriculture. The research has added to the understanding of potential ecosystem effects of global warming and rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Find the report at



*Invasive species like this chinese Mitten Crab can displace native species, upsetting an ecological balance*

[www.epa.gov/wed/pages/publications/authored/GCC\\_report\\_web.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/wed/pages/publications/authored/GCC_report_web.pdf).

**OR "Most Dangerous Invaders" List:** The Oregon Invasive Species Council has released the 2007 list of the **100 Most Dangerous Invaders**. Find the list at [www.oregon.gov/OISC/most\\_dangerous.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OISC/most_dangerous.shtml).

The Washington Aquatic Nuisance Species committee also has a 2007 "Watch List" of invasive species. Call Joan as noted above for information.

*The National Invasive Species Management Plan notes that: "Invasive Species introduced from around the globe are having a major impact on our plant and animal communities in our farms, parks, waters, forests, ranches, coasts and backyards. As global climate patterns shift, the distribution of species will change, and particular habitats may become more or less susceptible to the impacts of new species introductions. Human activity such as trade, travel and tourism have all increased substantially, increasing the speed and volume of species movement to unprecedented levels. Invasive species are often unintended hitchhikers on cargo and other trade conveyances. Still more species are deliberately introduced as pets, ornamental plants, crops, food, recreation, pest control or other purposes. Most non-native species, including most of our sources of food and fiber, are not harmful; and many are highly beneficial. A small percentage of non-native species cause great harm the environment, economy or harm to animal or human health. Non-native species that cause harm are collectively known as invasive species."*

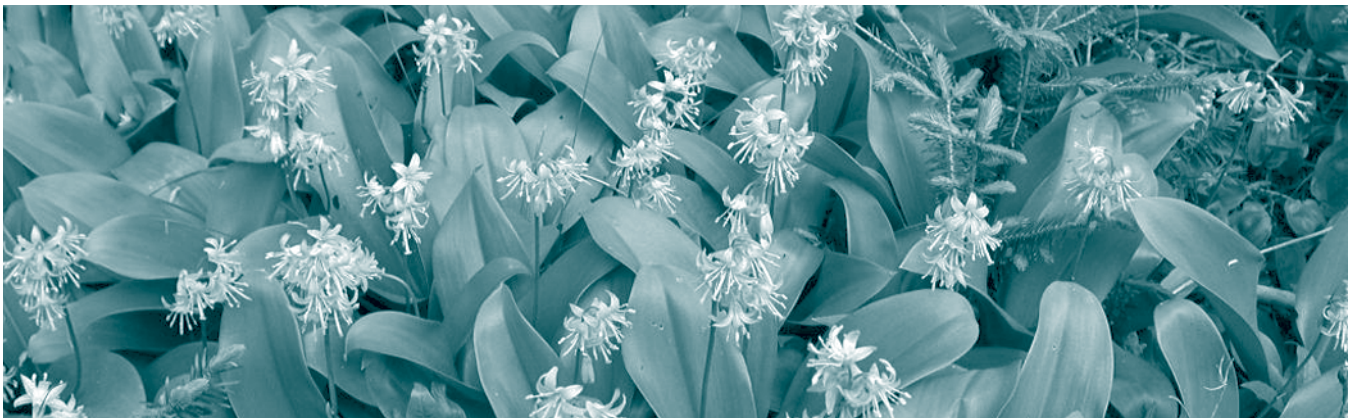
## Beneficial Landscaping

# The Virtues of Snowberry



Winter seems the best time to appreciate the charms and benefits of snowberry, an unassuming but delightful deciduous low native shrub. Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* spp.) is in the honeysuckle family, and there are four species native to the Northwest. On the Pacific slope, *Symphoricarpus albus*, common snowberry, grows from Oregon to southeast Alaska in thickets, woodlands, and open slopes from low to middle elevations. *S. mollis*, a trailing species, grows from west of the Cascades eastward to northern Idaho. Erect species east of the Cascades include *S. oreophilus* and *S. occidentalis*.

Snowberry has opposite, mostly simple to lobed leaves, which offer quiet, attractive foliage. Its small, pink to white flowers are inconspicuous. However, it's easy to spot snowberry in winter when all that remains on the twiggy shrubs are the snow white, waxy berries, which seem to hang like baubles in mid air. They are especially striking when seen in thickets with bright red wild rose hips, a common sight along coastal bluffs.



Snowberry is hardy, versatile, fast growing, easy to propagate, an excellent choice for erosion control, and provides food for butterflies and birds. It spreads vegetatively by rhizomes, yet is not considered invasive. Snowberry grows happily in moist or dry conditions, in well drained or heavier soils, in full sun, full shade, or a mixture thereof. For beginning native landscapers, it is a confidence booster! What more could we ask?

Soon local native plant sales will begin. Those sponsored by local Conservation Districts usually offer bare root stock at very low cost. Why not give this sweet, spunky native a try?

For more information about this and other topics in beneficial landscaping, contact **Elaine Somers** at **206-553-2966, 800-424-4372 x 2966**, or **somers.elaine@epa.gov**. Or, visit our website at **[www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm)**.

### References:

- Hitchcock and Cronquist. *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*, University of Washington Press, 1973.
- Link, Russell. *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*, University of Washington Press, 1999.
- Pojar and Mackinnon. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia & Alaska*, Lone Pine Publishing, 1994.
- Kruckeberg, Arthur R. *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, University of Washington Press, 1982.
- Menashe, Elliott. *Vegetation Management: A Guide for Puget Sound Bluff Property Owners*. Coastal Zone Management Program, Washington Department of Ecology, 1993.



# CALENDAR



## February

### February 11-15:

Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, AK, [www.akforum.com](http://www.akforum.com), 888-301-0185

### February 20-21:

Alaska Collaborative Problem Solving, Anchorage, AK, <http://resourcesolutions.uaa.alaska.edu>, or Jane Oakley, [anjeo@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:anjeo@uaa.alaska.edu), 907-786-6374

### February 27:

Federal Storm Water and Wetland Regulation Workshop, Idaho Falls, ID, [www.idahosbdc.org](http://www.idahosbdc.org), or Joan Meitl, 208-426-1839, [joanmeitl@boisestate.edu](mailto:joanmeitl@boisestate.edu)

### February 28:

Federal Storm Water and Wetland Regulation Workshop, Pocatello, ID, [www.idahosbdc.org](http://www.idahosbdc.org), or Joan Meitl, 208-426-1839, [joanmeitl@boisestate.edu](mailto:joanmeitl@boisestate.edu)

## March

### March 9-15:

Ground Water Awareness Week, [www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/](http://www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/)

### March 12-14:

GLOBE 2008 Trade Fair and Conference, Vancouver, BC, Canada, [www.globe2008.ca/](http://www.globe2008.ca/)

### March 22:

World Water Day, [www.water.org/worldwaterday](http://www.water.org/worldwaterday)

### March 26:

South Sound Science Symposium, Making Connections across the Ecosystem, Lacey, WA, [www.psp.wa.gov/about\\_us/action\\_areas/aa\\_south\\_sound.htm](http://www.psp.wa.gov/about_us/action_areas/aa_south_sound.htm)

### March 27:

Managing Stormwater in Washington, Tukwila, WA, [www.nebc.org/content.aspx?pageid=27](http://www.nebc.org/content.aspx?pageid=27)

## April

### April 13-19:

National Environmental Education Week, [www.eeweek.org](http://www.eeweek.org)

### April 14:

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

### April 12-13:

Seattle Green Festival, WA, [www.greenfestivals.org/content/view/767/390/](http://www.greenfestivals.org/content/view/767/390/)

### April 22:

Earth Day, [www.epa.gov/earthday](http://www.epa.gov/earthday)

### April 24:

Making Renewable Energy Projects Happen, Portland, OR, [www.nebc.org/enews/2007\\_November.pdf](http://www.nebc.org/enews/2007_November.pdf)

## May

**American Wetlands Month,**  
[www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/awm/)

### May 4-10:

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

### May 8-9:

Practical Sustainability 2008 Spring Mini-Conference, Coeur d'Alene, ID, [www.pncwa.org/Calendar/internal/view\\_entry.php?id=177&date=20080508](http://www.pncwa.org/Calendar/internal/view_entry.php?id=177&date=20080508)

### May 17-18:

Idaho Green Expo, Boise, ID, [www.idahogreenexpo.org](http://www.idahogreenexpo.org)



**Watertalk**

U.S. EPA  
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900, ETPA-081  
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

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

For Official Business Use  
Penalty for Private Use  
\$300

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Watertalk**  
February 2008



*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 . . .***

**A Different Kind of New Year's Resolution**

**Computers, Phones, Cars**

**Protecting from Unwanted Invaders**

**The Spunky Snowberry**

**Days to Celebrate**

***And More . . .***