



Water Talk

Alaska Idaho Oregon Washington

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

February 2002



Celebrating Our Natural Resources

EPA, Walking The Talk

At the Regional U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office in Seattle, personal commitment to the environment is part of the culture. But, even with recycling, waste reduction efforts, and many other environmentally friendly systems already in place, some individuals wanted to do even more.

For example, 12th floor employees are striving to reduce paper consumption by an additional 15 percent. On a more formal level, Region 10 is working to craft an *Environmental Management System*, a structured plan to minimize our direct impact on the environment.

If you have ideas about ways EPA can reduce its environmental footprint, call Clark Gaulding, EPA, at 206/553-1849 or email gaulding.clark@epa.gov.

Even people whose job is environmental protection can find ways of making a change for Earth Day.

Ways to celebrate our natural resources abound all year long. And Spring presents some particular opportunities to get involved. Here are just a few "days, weeks, and months." Learn. Take action. Celebrate!

Earth Day: Anniversaries are celebrated with reflection on years gone by and expectation for what is yet to come. Thirty-two years ago the growing concern for our environment brought thousands of people together for a "teach-in" called Earth Day. Each year, on **April 22**, we celebrate the anniversary of that first Earth Day.

Individual action was the cornerstone of change at that first Earth Day, and it continues to make a difference toward a healthy environment. Whether you choose to attend a festival and learn about water pollution or change your buying habits and select products made from recycled materials, your efforts can make an impact

Groundwater Awareness Week: About half the nation's population relies on groundwater for its drinking water supply, from public or private wells. To celebrate the importance of groundwater, National Groundwater Awareness Week takes place this year from **March 17-23**. This week might be a great time to learn about your own water supply, read up on groundwater issues, and take action to protect groundwater resources. To learn more, contact the National Ground Water Association at 800-551-7379 or www.ngwa.org/education/aware.html. This web site offers resources for teachers, well owners, water professionals and others.



In This Issue...



EPA News to update you on agency activities



Tools to clue you in on resources, publications, opportunities, and services



WaterWords to share stories from communities around the Greater Northwest



Spotlight to showcase success stories and environmental stars



Ecosystem to provide news that goes beyond water topics

National Drinking Water Week:

Is conservation your "cup of tea"? Celebrate Drinking Water Week from **May 5-11**. Celebration ideas and lots of resources for children, adults, communities, and utilities can be obtained from the American Water Works Association at 303/794-7711 or www.awwa.org/dww/. For example, you'll find action checklists, school activities, water facts, conservation tips, support for events, and much more.

Wetlands Month in May:

Join thousands of Americans each May in celebrating the uniqueness, beauty, and importance of wetlands. The Izaak Walton League offers **American Wetlands Month** kits on the Internet to help local groups initiate on-the-ground projects. The kits include fact sheets on wetlands, project ideas, contact information, case studies of projects from across the country, and links to many informative wetland sites. For more information, contact the Izaak Walton League Save Our Streams Program at 800-284-4952 or www.iwla.org/sos.awm.

EPA Staff Now On Location in Pocatello

A new EPA staffer is now on location in the Pocatello area of southeastern Idaho. **Sue Skinner**, formerly with the Bureau of Land Management, started her EPA work in January. EPA created this new "place-based position" in response to community request. Local governments and the local community have been looking to EPA to work with them to help solve environmental problems. Sue has a strong track record of building effective working relationships with tribes and local, state, and federal agencies. She also has experience working on groundwater and mining issues and familiarity with many federal environmental statutes. Born and raised in Idaho Falls, Sue went to Idaho State University in Pocatello where she majored in geology. She will be housed in the IDEQ offices in Pocatello, serving as a liaison to the local community and government agencies. At press time, Sue had not yet been assigned a permanent phone number. Call 1-800-424-4EPA to find out how to reach her.

In addition to our state field offices, EPA has other place-based liaisons in Eugene and LaGrande, Oregon; Spokane and Yakima, Washington; Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; and Soldotna, Alaska. Learn more at www.epa.gov/r10earth.

EPA To Inspect Construction Operations in Idaho

As part of our effort to restore and maintain the quality of Idaho's lakes, rivers, and streams, EPA will soon be inspecting construction operations in Idaho that disturb five acres or more. The purpose of the inspections is to determine if these operations are complying with the Clean Water Act. Operators of construction activities disturbing five acres or more must apply for storm water permits.

EPA is focusing on construction sites because of the potential for serious water quality problems. In a short time, construction sites can dump more sediment into streams than can be deposited naturally over several decades.

Runoff also can carry pesticides, chemicals, and other harmful pollutants. A two-part brochure

outlining the inspection program and summarizing permit requirements for construction operations is available from EPA. Call 1-800-424-4EPA or 206/553-1200 for a free copy. Or, visit EPA's regional stormwater web site at www.epa.gov/r10earth/stormwater.htm.



Pollution from construction sites can harm water quality.

Taku River - A Shared Resource at Risk



The Taku is North America's largest roadless watershed.

With its headwaters high in northwestern British Columbia's Boundary Range, the **Taku River** tumbles down over 100 miles through magnificent snow and glacier capped mountains to the inland marine waters south of Juneau, Alaska. In most years it boasts the highest production of salmon of all the rivers that flow into southeast Alaska. According to the State of Alaska, the value of the commercial catch of salmon from the Taku River has averaged over \$3 million over the last 10 years, and sport anglers fishing Taku chinook and coho in the Juneau area contribute an estimated \$7.1 million to the Juneau economy. The 7,000 square mile Taku watershed is also reported to be the largest intact watershed (e.g., no roads) on the west coast of North America. However, all that could change if British Columbia and Canadian agencies give the go ahead to the proposed re-opening of the **Tulsequah Chief mine**.

Located beside the Tulsequah River, a relatively short, glacier-fed river whose confluence with the Taku is just five miles upstream from the U.S.- Canada border,

the Tulsequah Chief is one of three mines that operated in this area periodically from the 1930's to the late 1950's. Copper ore was milled at the Polaris-Taku mine and tailings were dumped directly into the river for disposal. And acid mine drainage from the old Tulsequah Chief mine adit still contaminates the Tulsequah River to this day. In the past, access to the area was by river barge. The new plan, however, calls for building a 100-mile access road through the Taku watershed to Atlin, B.C. Potentially reactive tailings would be backfilled into the underground mine and the less reactive tailings, about half, would be stored in an impoundment that would be constructed in the flood plain of Shazah Creek, a tributary to the Tulsequah River.

The proposal, put forward by Redcorps (formerly Redfern Resources) several years ago, has been through a long review process. A Project Committee comprised of representatives of both Canadian and U.S. agencies, including the State of Alaska, Department of Interior and the EPA, as well as the Taku River Tlingit First Nations, has been

reviewing numerous studies to determine if the project is conceptually sound environmentally and should be 'certified' under B.C. and Canadian law. Project certification would allow the mining proposal to proceed to the permitting stage.

The Taku River Tlingit, who claim the Taku watershed as part of their traditional use area, are concerned with sustainability and the potential cumulative impacts of opening the Taku watershed, for which there is no land use plan, to development. The State of Alaska has insisted that a bi-national watershed and land use plan for the area must be in place prior to any development.

Water quality monitoring at the U.S.- Canada border for the past few years, conducted by the Douglas Indian Association, a downstream clan of the Taku River Tlingit, has shown that Alaska water quality standards for several metals are generally exceeded during high flow events. These events are triggered by glacial outburst floods, called *jökulhlaups*, that occur at least once a year when ice-dammed meltwater from the Tulsequah glacier breaks loose. Are these exceedances natural given the mineralized nature of the terrain or are they part of the signature of past mining practices? How do they affect migrating salmon, if at all?

These are some of the questions EPA, Douglas Indian Association, British Columbia and the State of Alaska hope to answer. A decision on the Tulsequah Chief project is expected sometime this spring.

To learn more, call Bill Riley, EPA, at 206/553-1412 or 1-800-424-4372, or email riley.william@epa.gov.

EPA Sets Arsenic Standard for Drinking Water

In October 2001, EPA announced that the arsenic standard in drinking water will be 10 parts per billion. This standard will improve the safety of drinking water for millions of Americans, and better protect against the risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. EPA will maintain the compliance date

of 2006. Nearly 97 percent of the water systems affected by this standard are small systems that serve less than 10,000 people each. Some of these systems will face significant challenges in complying with the standard. EPA plans to help these systems by providing \$20 million over the

next two years for research and development of more cost-effective technologies and providing technical assistance and training to operators. For more information, visit the safe drinking water web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/arsenic.html.



Funding Available for Energy Related Initiatives

The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) is now accepting proposals for community-based projects seeking funds to support grass-roots environmental work. This year, grants will be awarded to projects related to renewable energy, energy conservation, or energy efficiency. Preference will be given to projects that build on energy-related initiatives to develop other components of a sustainable economy. Ideally, grantees will also contribute to CEC's effort to answer the question: "What policies are needed to ensure that the transformation of the electricity market promotes sustainable

development; that it generates both environmental and economic benefits?"

The 2002 grants will provide projects up to US\$25,000. Grant proposals are due by April 1. Information on applying may be found on the CEC web site at www.cec.org, under the heading **Grants for Environmental Cooperation**, or call 514/350-4300 in Quebec.

The CEC was established by the NAFTA environmental side accord to build cooperation among Canada, Mexico, and the United States in protecting their shared environments.

Grants for Community Collaboration

Resources for Community Collaboration (RCC) is an organization which supports community-based collaborations working to resolve conflicts over use of natural resources in the rural West. RCC now offers **Opportunity Grants** (up to \$5K) as seed money for organizations involved in, or planning to start, community-based collaboration.

They also offer Sustaining Grants (up to \$10K) for organizations which have previously

been funded. Grants are made to groups that collaborate to develop solutions for long-term protection, sustainable use, or significant ecological restoration.

The groups must use viable, healthy processes with key stakeholders, and be sustained and led by community leaders. Applications are due February 19, 2002. Learn more at www.rccproject.org or call 415/332-1230.

Magic Apple Teacher Grants: Time to Apply

Washington teachers who promote knowledge and stewardship of clean water can compete for \$750 **Magic Apple Grants** from the Department of Ecology. The program uses funds from an EPA "Section 319" grant.

Magic Apple grants recognize past achievements while supporting new or continuing activities. Any elementary, middle/junior high, or high school full-time educator at a public, private, or vocational school in Washington can apply. Teachers must demonstrate they will use this money most effectively for water quality education in next year's classes. Teachers must show specifically how they intend to use the money, e.g., equipment, supplies, books, videos, field trips, etc.

Completed applications are due March 1, 2002. For information or an application, contact Annie Phillips, Ecology, at 360/407-6408, e-mail: aphi461@ecy.wa.gov. Or, visit the web site at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/magicapple.html.





Become a King County Land/Water Steward!

Whether you'd like to join citizen efforts to restore urban creeks in Seattle or help preserve the rural watersheds of King County, WA, you can learn the latest on protecting land and water resources by becoming a Land/Water Steward. The Spring 2002 Land/Water Stewardship training program will explore how stewards can better understand the connections between urban, rural, and wild landscapes of King County. Participants agree to volunteer time to share what they learn with others. The free nine-week training begins in April. Space is limited. Applications are due February 22, 2002. For details call 206/205-3171 or visit the web site <http://www.metrokc.gov/WSU-CE/land&water.htm>

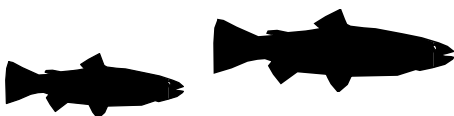
Lots of News On-Line

Several EPA publications are available electronically. Here is a list of some of them.

WaterTalk: Yes, your very own WaterTalk is available on the web. Want to save paper? Cancel your paper subscription and check it out every quarter on the web: www.epa.gov/r10earth (Click on index, click on W for WaterTalk). For a notification each quarter that a new edition of WaterTalk has been posted on the web, send your e-mail address to pang.woody@epa.gov.

Nonpoint Source News-Notes: This periodic national report on the condition of the water-related environment, the control of nonpoint sources of water pollution, and the ecological management and restoration of watersheds can be found at www.epa.gov/owow/info/NewsNotes/.

Community-Based Environmental Protection News On-Line: CBEP News On-Line is a periodic electronic information bulletin from EPA's national Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation. Each issue contains environmental news stories, links, resources, and event listings. To check it out, visit the website: <http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/news.htm>.



Environmental Assistance for Communities

Communities seeking help to deal with hazardous waste sites may want to check out this resource. In November, EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman awarded a \$4.5 million grant to Oregon State University and Stanford University to operate the **Western Region Hazardous Substance Research Center**. The Center develops treatment methods and provides technical assistance for cleanup of contaminated sites in EPA Regions 9 and 10. The Center's research goal is to create low cost methods for cleanup of groundwater contaminated with volatile organic compounds such as trichloroethylene.

The Center also operates two programs that provide no cost, non-advocacy advice to communities affected by hazardous waste sites. Technical Outreach Services for Communities (TOSC) provides information about cleanup technologies, potential health effects, and regulatory concerns. Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) assists groups interested in redeveloping sites abandoned because of real or perceived environmental contamination. For more information visit the Center's website at: <http://wrhsrc.orst.edu/> or call 541/737-2751.

EPA Water Permitting Site

Water pollution degrades surface waters, sometimes making them unsafe for drinking, fishing, swimming, and other activities. As authorized by the Clean Water Act, the **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)** permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches. Individual homes that are connected to a municipal system, use a septic system, or do not have a surface discharge do not need an NPDES permit; however, industrial, municipal and other facilities must obtain permits if their discharges go directly to surface waters. Since its introduction in 1972, the NPDES permit program is responsible for significant improvements to our Nation's water quality.

Easy access to information about this permitting program is now available on the Internet. An interactive web site gives both general interest and detailed information. The site allows users to create and sort specialized lists of publications, guidance, and regulations. Access the site with the following url: http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/?program_id=6



Search Wastewater Databases

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse maintains six databases about all aspects of sewage treatment. Two of these databases can now be searched online at http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/nsfc/nsfc_databases.htm.

The **Bibliographic Database** stores thousands of articles related to onsite and small community wastewater topics. Customers can search for a particular technology and receive the latest literature. For example, a homeowner with questions about a clogged drainfield can obtain articles about successful techniques.

The **Manufacturers and Consultants Database** houses a list of industry contacts for products and consulting services. This database serves both as a reference for engineers, citizens, and small community officials and a referral database for wastewater products and trade items. Searches can be conducted based upon one or more product or service categories. For instance, a homeowner interested in purchasing a composting toilet can obtain a list of product manufacturers.

The Clearinghouse, funded by EPA, provides free and low-cost information about wastewater treatment options for small communities and individual homeowners. Visit the Web site at www.nsf.wvu.edu or call 800-624-8301.

Learn About Wastewater Treatment Basics

A brochure titled **How Wastewater Treatment Works...The Basics** is available from the National Small Flows Clearinghouse. This EPA brochure describes the two basic stages in wastewater treatment: primary and secondary. The primary treatment section details bar screens, a grit chamber, a sedimentation tank, and raw primary biosolids. The secondary treatment section describes the trickling filter, activated sludge process, aeration tank, and disinfection. It also discusses other treatment options.

This two-page brochure may be helpful to the general public. It is free, but shipping charges apply. To order, call (800) 624-8301 and request Item #WWBRPE53. You also may e-mail nsfc_orders@mail.nesc.wvu.edu. For more information, visit the Web site at <http://www.nsf.wvu.edu>.

Water Security Information on Web

Every American needs to be confident that their water and wastewater treatment facilities are safe. Adequate protection of water supplies and treatment works is an important goal of EPA. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, EPA established a Water Protection Task Force. The members of this group have proven expertise in different areas of water protection, and they will send alerts, as needed, about issues related to protecting water infrastructure nationwide.

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse, funded by EPA, recently posted information about safety precautions for wastewater treatment plants on the Web at <http://www.nsf.wvu.edu>. In addition, the National Drinking Water Clearinghouse—a partner organization to the NSFC—has compiled information about safety precautions for drinking water systems. Visit their web site at www.ndwc.wvu.edu.

Funds For Water Security



State Revolving Funds (state administered programs that are capitalized with grants from EPA) can help fund security upgrades at water and wastewater utilities. The Clean Water State Revolving Fund can be used to finance security improvements at publicly owned wastewater treatment works. The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund can finance improvements at drinking water treatment and storage facilities for public water systems.

Each of the revolving funds is designed to provide financial assistance in the form of low cost loans for the construction of wastewater and drinking water facilities. EPA has developed two brief fact sheets that describe the types of projects that might be eligible for such financial assistance. These fact sheets also provide links to additional information on the Internet concerning security at both wastewater and drinking water facilities.

For copies, call EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center at 1-800-424-4EPA or (206) 553-1200. The fact sheets are also on the Internet at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/homepage.nsf/webpage/index?opendocument>. Look for "Security and the Revolving Funds" in this index.

Enter A Wetland Photo Contest

Get your camera! EPA is sponsoring a **Wetland Photo Contest** focusing on images that show the functions and values of wetlands. EPA is seeking high quality photographs of wetlands in different regions of the United States and at different seasons of the year. The winning photographs will be displayed at the National Wetland Awards ceremony in Washington, DC in May 2002 and will be used in an EPA wetland poster and publication. Photos are due March 1. For more information on the contest, visit www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/photocontest.html on the Internet.

Report Shows Watershed Trends, Initiatives

Protecting and Restoring America's Watersheds is a new report on the status, trends, and initiatives in watershed management. It describes recent successes and ongoing barriers to effectively using the watershed approach to manage the quality of the nation's waters.

This 55-page report brings together the ideas of local stakeholders, government employees, and academic evaluators who assess the current state of watershed management and suggest recommendations for improvement in areas such as awareness, monitoring and research, funding, and technical assistance. The report is colorful, readable, and interspersed with children's art. For a copy, visit <http://www.epa.gov/owow/protecting/> on the Internet. Or, call EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center at 206/553-1200 or 1-800-424-4372.

The National Watershed Forum Recommends...

Recommendations from the **National Watershed Forum** are now available. Nearly 500 delegates attended the June 2001 National Watershed Forum, including many from the Northwest. The forum was designed to give voice to geographically, politically, and culturally diverse organizations interested in protecting and restoring aquatic resources through local partnerships. Many recommendations emerged. Here are a few:

- Develop a flexible, integrated and diversified national watershed strategy/delivery system.
- Implement a national media campaign to highlight the importance of and foster general awareness of watershed issues.
- Establish a "clearinghouse" to provide one-stop shopping that would enhance the flow of information.
- Undertake a concerted effort to address the issue of defining "a healthy watershed."
- Provide federal coordinators to assist local watershed partnerships.

To learn more, or for a copy of the report, visit www.epa.gov/owow/forum on the Internet.



Watershed: *the land area that drains to a body of water such as a stream, lake, wetland, or estuary.*

February

12: Watershed Funding Workshop, Yakima, Washington. Environmental Finance Center, 208/426-1567.

14: Watershed Funding Workshop, Moses Lake, Washington. Environmental Finance Center, 208/426-1567.

20-21: Stormwater Treatment, Seattle, Washington. UW Engineering Professional Programs, www.engr.washington.edu/epp, 206/543-5539.

20-21: Research and Extension Regional Water Quality Conference, Vancouver, WA. Washington Water Resource Center, www.wsu.edu/swwrc/conference/index.html, 800/942-4978.

22-23: NW Wildlife Conference, Corvallis, Oregon. Ursula Bechert, 541/737-6386, www.nwwildlife.org.

28-March 1: Fall Soil Nitrate Workshop, Puyallup, WA. Washington State University, 253/445-4638.

March

12-13: Storm and Surface Water Monitoring, Seattle, Washington. UW Engineering Professional Programs, www.engr.washington.edu/epp, 206/543-5539.

17-23: Groundwater Awareness Week, National Ground Water Association, 800-551-7379, www.ngwa.org/education/aware.html

MORE.....

25-28: Washington Water/Wastewater Operations Workshop, Pasco, Washington. Washington Environmental Training Center, 253/833-9111 x3369 or 1-800-562-0858.

April

2-5: Blazing the Trail to Sustainability Conference, Portland, Oregon. National Pollution Prevention Roundtable, 202/466-7272, www.p2.org/events.

10-11: Achieving Cleaner Water By Reducing Nonpoint Pollution, Spokane, Washington, 253/843-4949, www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/conference/cleanerwater/index.html

15: Deadline for contributions to the May 2002 issue of WaterTalk. Andrea Lindsay, Editor, 206/553-1896 or 1-800-424-4372, lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

16-18: Basic Water Works (operating water systems), Yakima, WA. Washington Environmental Training Center, www.ivygreen.ctc.edu/wetrcm, 1-800-562-0858.

16-18: Basic Water Works (operating water systems), Everett, WA. Washington Environmental Training Center, www.ivygreen.ctc.edu/wetrcm, 1-800-562-0858.

22: Earth Day

May

American Wetlands Month, Save Our Streams Program, 800-284-4952, www.iwla.org/sos.awm.

5-11: National Drinking Water Week, American Water Works Association, 303/794-7711, www.awwa.org.

Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Watershed Effort Wins National Award

The Tri-State Water Quality Council has won the 2001 **Conservation Fund (CF) Industries National Watershed Award**. The Council, one of four national winners, is being recognized for its effective, non-regulatory approaches to improve water quality. The Council's efforts span the boundaries of Idaho, Montana, and Washington. A diverse group of stakeholders—citizens, tribes, companies, environmental groups, and public agencies including EPA—have successfully united to protect the 26,000 square-mile Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Watershed.

"Members of the Council, its subcommittees and volunteers typify the leadership, commitment and innovative ideas necessary to improve our communities, farmland and watersheds," said CF Industries President Robert C. Liuzzi. "We hope that by showcasing resourceful solutions, other watershed organizations can benefit from the success of similar groups."

The Tri-State Water Quality Council formed in 1993, following a study funded and led by EPA Region 10, that identified excessive nutrients as the primary water quality issue affecting the water basin. Communities involved in the effort include the Idaho city of Sandpoint and the Montana cities of Butte, Deer Lodge and Missoula.

Highlights of the Tri-State Water Quality Council efforts include:

- A plan to voluntarily reduce "nutrient loading" by 80 percent from municipal and industrial sources and by 20 percent from non-point sources along the Clark Fork River in Montana.

- A precedent-setting agreement between Montana and Idaho to protect the water quality in Idaho's Lake Pend Oreille.

- A watershed-wide monitoring program on long-term water quality trends.

- Water quality education and outreach programs throughout the watershed.

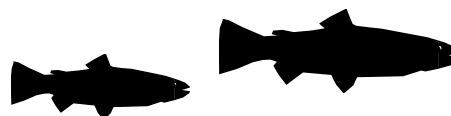
- Assistance for communities to develop wastewater treatment and discharge alternatives.

- Leveraging more than \$100,000 worth of in-kind goods and services annually for water quality programs.

The goal of the CF Industries Watershed Award is to recognize model programs that protect the nation's watersheds. The award is administered by The Conservation Fund, a nonprofit organization that acts to protect the nation's land and water resources.

Chuck Rice, EPA's representative in Spokane, serves as a non-voting member of the Council, providing active technical and policy assistance and support. For more information, contact Chuck Rice at 509/353-2700 or rice.charles@epa.gov.

EPA congratulates the Council!





Beneficial Landscaping: Crane Flies, Healthy Lawns, and Water Quality

To water quality folks, crane fly larvae are indicators of good stream health because they are sensitive to degraded water quality.

However, to the homeowner, crane flies are often considered pests. These homeowners are most familiar with the European crane fly, which caused significant lawn damage when it was first introduced into the U.S. in 1969. Homeowners with a lawn problem might quickly blame crane flies and, often without thinking, apply pesticides to control them. The single pest crane fly should not be confused with the many native crane flies that are valuable as part of the food chain, indicators of water quality, or that work as decomposers of organic matter on land.

Because the European crane fly was new, and because homeowners put high value on their lawns, crane flies received lots of media attention. However, thirty years later, the natural enemies such as soil microorganisms and birds have found crane flies and are important in reducing their numbers. Now we have only normal ups and downs in crane flies numbers. Even so, many homeowners have not forgotten, and continue to spray for crane flies, even when none are there.

We also know more about the pest crane flies, now. Research has shown that healthy turf on good soil can withstand high populations of crane fly larvae. At the Washington State University and Oregon State University Research and Extension Centers, turf scientists (Drs. Gwen Stahnke and Tom Cook respectively) have found populations as high as 60 to 80 larvae per square foot in their plots with NO significant damage. (Note that turf researchers are very fussy about turf quality.) They recommend that homeowners should spend their efforts on improving lawn health. In most cases, proper fertilization will help the lawn outgrow any damage. If homeowners check their lawns during late winter and early spring, they will have plenty of time to intervene if the crane fly starts to get out of hand.

But, a far more serious problem has developed due to careless application of pesticides for controlling crane fly and other pests. With the high media profile, much of the public has come to know, and to blame, crane fly for ANY lawn problem. Consequently, excessive and unnecessary pesticides are being applied. The common pesticides used on crane flies have been diazinon (which has caused several bird kills) and dursban, and both have been found in urban streams.

A new website on crane flies is now available, produced by EPA, Washington State University and Oregon State University researchers and Cooperative Extension agents, Washington and Oregon Departments of Agriculture, and other area specialists. The website covers crane fly identification and management, current research reports, technical references, photos, and information on how to join a discussion list on pest crane flies. This information is available at <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/cranefly>.

Where lawn damage is observed, check carefully. It is possible the lawn is suffering from lack of water, heat or drought intolerant grasses, poor drainage (evident if you squish your way across the lawn) or from lawn diseases - many of which also can be controlled by good lawn care. The turf specialists state firmly that good lawn care is the best control of crane flies. To review good turf care, see the WSU Home Lawns Bulletin at <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb0842>. It is easy to read and understand.

With a little thought, we can have good lawn quality without environmental damage if we will "Target the pest, and protect the rest." For more information, contact Sharon Collman, EPA, 206/553-2876 or 1-800-424-4372, collman.sharon@epa.gov.

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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.

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

You are invited to contribute items for publication. Submittal deadline is the 15th day of the month preceding publication.

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To contact the **Editor**,
call **Andrea Lindsay** at **206/553-1896**,
1-800-424-4EPA x1896, or email: lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

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