

WaterTalk Newsletter, August 1999

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 Bulletin

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Safe Drinking Water Act Turns 25!

On December 16, 1999, the United States observes the 25th anniversary of the **Safe Drinking**

Water Act. A quarter century since its signing, the Act remains a landmark in 20th Century improvements to public health protection. Over the past 25 years the number of Americans served by public water systems has increased tremendously, and the law has been updated to assure that focus remains on areas which provide the most important health protection for the most people.

Today, many Americans take abundant and safe drinking water for granted. Much of this confidence is well deserved, but more remains to be done to protect drinking water. As new challenges to drinking water safety emerge, including increased population and development, and the discovery of new sources of contamination, new opportunities arise for response.

Before the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed in 1974, the US Public Health Service regulated 22 contaminants in drinking water. The 1974 Act established the basic EPA program, as well as the structure for National Primary Drinking Water Standards. The Act was reauthorized in 1986 to accelerate the pace of setting drinking water standards, and to require that EPA regulate 25 new contaminants every three years. The 1996 amendments again changed the Act, and focus on four major areas:

- promoting public information and involvement,
- providing tools to improve compliance,
- helping small systems provide safe water, and
- focusing safety standards on the most serious health risks.

As the Act's 25th anniversary approaches, public and private partners across the nation are working together to assess progress and look to further improving drinking water quality across the nation. We are maintaining our health gains, looking to improve them, collecting and sharing data, and learning from each other about how to better help the public learn more about their drinking water quality and become active in their communities.

Between now and October, most Americans will receive notices from their drinking water suppliers providing information on the quality of local drinking water supplies, the potential health effects of contaminants exceeding public health standards, where water comes from, and where consumers can get additional information. To learn more about the Safe Drinking Water Act and our country's drinking water supplies, visit the web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwa25. Additional resources are available from EPA Region 10's Public Environmental Resource Center at 206/553-1200 or 1-800-424-4EPA.

WATERWORDS

Clean Water Action Plan Update

Announced by President Clinton and Vice President Gore in February 1998, the Clean Water Action Plan (<http://www.cleanwater.gov/>) will protect public health and restore our nation's waterways by setting strong goals and providing states, communities, farmers, and landowners the tools and resources to meet them. It emphasizes collaborative strategies built around watersheds and the communities they sustain.

Draft Policy Covers Watershed Management on Federal Lands

The US Departments of Agriculture and Interior recently released a draft **Unified Federal Policy for Ensuring a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management** to Congress, tribes, states, and other stakeholders. Later this summer, a revised draft of the policy will be published in the Federal Register for a 90-day public comment period. National listening sessions will also be scheduled, one of which will take place in Portland. The draft policy, a key action of President Clinton's Clean Water Action Plan, has two primary goals: to use a watershed approach to prevent and reduce water pollution resulting from federal land and resource management activities and to accomplish this in a unified, cost-effective manner. For a copy of the draft policy, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/unified> or contact Leslie Watson of the US Forest Service at 406/329-3388.

Watershed Assistance Grants Awarded

River Network, a Portland-based conservation organization, recently announced 22 recipients of watershed assistance grants ranging from \$6,500 to \$30,000. This grant program, a pilot project supported by EPA, helps communities as they work to protect and restore their watersheds. Grant recipients in Region 10 include the Rogue Basin Coordinating Council in Oregon, the Native Village of Kwinhagak in Alaska, and the Cook Inlet Keeper in Alaska. For more information contact Kathy Luscher at 503/241-3506 x16.

Beach Health Survey On Web

Results from EPA's National Health Protection Survey of Beaches revealed that more than 350 U.S. beaches had an advisory or closure in 1998. EPA gathered information on approximately 1,400 beaches nationwide. To learn more, visit the BEACH Watch web site at <http://www.epa.gov/ost/beaches>.

Clean Water Action Plan, Northwest Contacts

Title	Contact	Phone
EPA Region 10		
Lead Project Manager	Bevin Horn	206 553-1566
Restoration Coordinator	Mark Hersh	206 553-2143
Outreach Liaison	Andrea Lindsay	206 553-1896
Non-Point Source (319) Coordinator	Teena Reichgott	206 553-1601
Tribal Coordinator	Alan Moomaw	206 553-1603
Nutrient Criteria Contact	Ralph Vaga	206 553-5171
U.S. Forest Service		
Lead Project Manager	Mike Lohrey	503 808-2902
Implementation Coordinator	Trish Carroll	208 387-0835
Tribal Relations Coordinator	Les McConnell	503 808-2603
States		
Alaska	Jeff Hock	907 465-5185
Idaho	Mike McIntyre	208 373-0570
Oregon	David Powers	503 229-5988
Washington	Dick Wallace	360 407-6489

Water Utilities and Y2K

By now, we've all heard of the "Millennium Bug," the Y2K computer problem. When the year 2000 rolls around, many computers may have difficulty interpreting the date; they may interpret the year to be 1900 or some other year and problems may result. EPA has established a web site designed to help water utilities protect their systems from Y2K failures.

As part of its mission to protect public health and the environment, EPA helps assure safe and clean water for all Americans by setting water quality standards for drinking water and wastewater treatment plants. Many of these plants operate with some level of computerization. Thus, monitoring, operations and maintenance, communications, laboratory analysis and reporting are areas that should be assessed for potential year 2000 computer-related problems that could ultimately lead to public health and environmental problems.

Visit the web site at www.epa.gov/year2000/ow.htm to learn more about what drinking water and wastewater utilities can do to prepare. The site contains regional water program contacts, important Y2K web sites and references, discussion groups, and more.

EPA to Collect West Coast Estuary Data

EPA's **Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program** (EMAP) is a research program to develop tools for assessing the status and trends of national ecological resources. A five-year pilot project is beginning in the western states this year, initially focusing on estuaries and coastal waters, rivers and streams, and landscapes. Sampling begins in several estuaries this summer in Washington and Oregon, while planning for the landscape and stream projects continues.

Washington Department of Ecology and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will conduct sampling, with assistance from National Marine Fisheries Service and EPA Region 10. Water and sediment from each location will be analyzed for organic and inorganic compounds, and organisms living in the sediment will be collected and identified. Fish, collected by trawling where possible, will be identified and tissue samples will be collected. As soon as it's complete and checked for accuracy, project data will be available via the Internet. For more information regarding sample locations, a complete list of the analyses, or other details regarding the project, contact Lorraine Edmond, EPA, at 206/553-7366, 1-800-424-4EPA x7366, or edmond.lorraine@epa.gov.

SPOTLIGHT

Volleyballs, Grapefruit, and Basketballs

The personal experience of one EPA staffer who truly gets her feet wet and her hands dirty, while monitoring for amphibians in local waters...

My husband Carlos and I are wading chest-deep in the cold, tannic acid-stained water of Welcome Lake, Redmond, battling sunken logs, invisible drop-offs, floating pop cans, burger

wrappers, and an amazing number of deflated volleyballs. Then we are rewarded with a salamander egg mass! The fewer we see, the more exciting it is when we actually find one. March was a total bust, but April provided four egg masses: three Northwestern salamanders and one red-legged frog. This is promising, as last year no egg masses were found in this wetland. Probably too many big houses with uncleaned septic tanks and huge perfect lawns routinely layered with pesticides and herbicides.

We are part of an amphibian monitoring program conducted by the King County Department of Natural resources. I'm doing this as one of my duties as a Washington State University Land-Water Steward. Carlos, my not-always-enthusiastic partner, is along to provide another pair of eyes and to keep me from drowning if I fall in a hole and my chest waders fill up with water. But he gets excited if we find something.

Teams of trained volunteers monitor 106 wetland sites in King County from March through June. We map the habitat, identify vegetation, cover and drainage classes, and evaluate the physical and chemical environment. But most importantly, we count amphibian egg masses and individuals. Orange-sized firm mass? A Northwest salamander. Grapefruit-sized loose jelly? A red-legged frog. Stringy masses? A toad. Basketball-sized masses? Bad news: a bullfrog. We destroy these non-native invaders, because if you have many of these, you don't have much else. Bullfrogs will eat nearly anything in sight, and have even been known to eat baby ducks. The tadpoles are enormous: 3-4 inches. And the adults are proportionately large. This is one egg mass we'd rather not find.

We also assess any egg masses found for percentage of live embryos, and look for deformed individuals at any life stage. If deformities are found, we fill out and send in a form and specimen (if we can catch it) to the North American Reporting Center for Amphibian Malformations, that tracks these things. Amphibians are in trouble worldwide, and the causes are unknown. Many species have disappeared or are in rapid decline, and the number of deformities is rising. Principle culprits are thought to include shrinking habitat and chemical contaminants, but that's probably too simple. I suspect food chain disruptions, ozone layer loss and introduction of non-native species that prey on them may also be factors.

We finish our survey for the month and wade sluggishly back to shore, remarking that the number of deflated volleyballs actually outnumbered the egg masses. But considering no eggs were found at this site all last year, we declare victory and head for a latte.

If you are interested in joining the program, or finding out how to start one in your area, call Elissa Ostergard, King County, at 206/296-8008.

To learn more about Joan Cabreza's experience, call her at 206/553-8505 or 1-800-424-4EPA x8505, or email cabreza.joan@epa.gov.

Don't Let Water Quality Go Down the Drain!

Car washing hits prime time during summer months and unfortunately, so does the level of soap, detergents, oil and road grime in our local streams, lakes, and rivers. If you're washing your car at home, wash it on the lawn, where the water will soak into the soil. Or go to a commercial car

wash. Otherwise, chances are that soapy water (and everything you just washed off your car) is headed straight for fish habitat in your neighborhood. And all soaps, even biodegradable ones, are toxic to fish.

Thanks to King County for this enviro-friendly tip!

Transportation Equity Act: On the Road

There are more and more cars on United States highways every year, and more roads being built to carry them. More roads can mean harm to wetlands and wildlife habitat, and polluted runoff which could impact human health. Ever wonder how our nation can successfully balance accelerated highway growth with sustaining and protecting the environment? The **Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)** is a key piece in solving this puzzle.

TEA-21, the largest public works bill in history, was signed in June 1998. This transportation statute, authorizing \$218 billion through 2003, has tremendous environmental implications. These funds can be used to protect and maintain the environment in various ways, including building storm water treatment systems, launching projects to minimize water pollution from highway runoff, and cleaning up environmental damage from past highway projects.

EPA Region 10 thinks it is essential to bring the environmental benefits of TEA-21 to each of its northwestern states. A TEA-21 Cross-Program Team was created last November. This group has reviewed transportation grants for environmental benefits and developed a short-term strategy. It is now working on a long-term strategy and a regional transportation/environmental policy summit that will bring together heads of state and federal transportation, environmental, land management, fish and wildlife, and historic preservation agencies.

A few water-related TEA-21 opportunities are outlined below.

-Under the Surface Transportation Program, up to 20% of transportation facility reconstruction, rehabilitation, or restoration project costs may be used for environmental mitigation, storm water pollution abatement, or construction of storm water treatment systems.

-Transportation Enhancement funds can be spent on existing highways to control water pollution. Projects include constructed wetlands and nonpoint source runoff management practices.

-TEA-21 now allows use of funds to maintain habitat integrity. Federal Highways Administration has committed to increase wetland acreage resulting from federal-aid highway projects by 50 percent in 10 years, and to finance wetland mitigation projects for cleanup of environmentally harmful effects from past federal-aid highway projects.

In order to understand implications of TEA-21 on existing environmental programs, EPA, US Department of Transportation, states, Tribes, and municipal governments making transportation decisions will need to be active partners. Each agency needs to understand how transportation decisions affect their programs and assure that road construction projects have minimal environmental impacts or produce environmental benefits. Once federal and state agencies define how TEA-21 impacts existing programs, they will implement an outreach plan to involve other stakeholders, such as environmental groups and the construction industry.

For more information on the work of the regional TEA-21 Team, contact Ken Brooks at 503/326-3250 or brooks.kenneth@epa.gov. To see EPA Region 10's text for the future brochure **Transportation Planning in the Northwest: Framework for Sustainability**, go to the following URL:
<http://epainotes1.rtpnc.epa.gov:7777/r10/ecocomm.nsf/webpage/Transportation+Planning+for+Sustainability>

For detailed information on TEA-21 opportunities related to water, air quality and congestion mitigation, environmental justice, National Environmental Policy Act, and Brownfields please refer to the US DOT web site at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tea21imp.htm>.

TOOLS

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Better America Bonds: Environmentally-Conscious Growth Planning Tool

Across America, communities are searching for ways to keep growing while preserving quality of life. People want to revitalize older neighborhoods, curb water pollution, and protect farmland and green space close to home. As a result, President Clinton and Vice-President Gore have proposed a "Livability Agenda" to give states and communities tools they can use to create healthy, livable communities and strong economies.

A new financing tool called **Better America Bonds** forms part of this agenda's \$1.6 billion transportation investment. These bonds will generate \$9.5 billion in bond authority to preserve open space, protect water quality, and clean up brownfields. Local communities can work in partnerships with land trust groups, environmentalists, business leaders and others to propose innovative solutions to their development challenges. Under Better America Bonds, the federal government will not purchase land. All local zoning and land use decisions will be made at the state or local level.

Communities will pay zero interest with principal due in 15 years. Bond holders will receive tax credits from the federal government equal to the amount of interest they would have received from the communities. This tax credit bond provides a deep subsidy for communities as compared to a traditional tax exempt bond.

Some Ways Communities Can Use Better America Bonds

- Preserve and Enhance Open Space:*** State, Tribal and local governments can create or enhance parks, preserve green spaces, and protect threatened farmland and wetlands. This can be achieved either by acquiring title or purchasing permanent easements.
- Protect Water Quality:*** Rivers, lakes, coastal waters, wetlands, and drinking water sources can be restored or protected through measures to reduce polluted runoff, the largest remaining threat to the nation's waterways. Eligible projects to curb runoff include purchase of sensitive lands, wetlands restoration, settling ponds, and creating buffer strips along waterways.
- Clean Up Brownfields:*** Pressure to develop green space can be eased through cleaning up and

redeveloping brownfields (abandoned, contaminated industrial sites).

How Will Better America Bonds Be Awarded?

Bonding authority will be distributed directly to communities through a competitive process. To become eligible for a bond allocation, state, local and tribal governments would submit proposals to EPA. Regional proposals that reflect collaborative planning by neighboring communities will be given preference.

If you have questions about Better America Bonds, contact Lauri Hennessey at 206/553-6638, or visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/bonds.

Did You Know . . .

- In one 10-year span, 4.3 million acres of farmland were lost nationwide due to development. That's a loss of nearly 50 acres every hour, every day.
- Last fall, communities cast their votes in response to the nationwide loss of open space. 240 "green" ballot initiatives were considered in communities across the country. More than 70 percent of these measures to protect open space and enhance local livability were adopted, authorizing \$7.5 billion in state and local spending.
- Americans are driving their cars almost 60 percent more than in 1980. EPA estimates that, in 10 to 12 years, all this extra driving will begin to overtake all the gains previously made to reduce air pollution.
- Americans can lose as much as two full work weeks per year stuck in traffic at a cost to the economy in wasted time and fuel of about \$74 billion.

Loan Funds Available for Clean Water Projects

Seeking funding to support an important water quality project? Consider looking into the **Clean Water State Revolving Fund**. This funding program offers eligible communities, individuals, citizen groups, and agricultural and nonprofit organizations access to low-interest loans. Although it's commonly associated with funding for traditional municipal wastewater systems, the Revolving Fund can fund virtually any type of water quality project, including nonpoint source, wetlands, estuary, and other types of watershed projects. The Clean Water Act gives no more preference to one category or type of project than any other.

Each state runs its own Revolving Fund program, and they work like banks. Federal and state contributions are used to capitalize or "set-up" the programs. These assets, in turn, are used to make low-interest loans (as low as 0%) for important water quality projects. Funds are then repaid to the Revolving Fund over the term of the loan - which may be as long as twenty years. Repaid funds are then recycled to fund other water quality projects. The Revolving Funds have more than \$27 billion in assets and have issued more than \$24 billion in loans since 1988.

Loans vs. Grants

Most state and local water quality officials are more familiar with grants and, consequently, many

misconceptions persist. In fact, a loan may be a better deal. Why?

First, No cash up-front. Most grant programs require significant cost shares (as much as 40% or more). A revolving fund loan can cover 100% of project costs with no cash up-front.

Second, Significant Cost Savings. Revolving fund loans provide significant cost savings over the life of the loan. A loan at 0% interest will cost about 50% less than the same project funded by a grant program where the 50% cost share (match) is financed by a commercial loan at the market rate of 7.5%.

Third, Streamlined Federal Requirements. Financing a project with a loan under this program means fewer federal requirements than with a federal grant. Plus, program staff are experienced in helping applicants through the loan application process, and can provide technical assistance. Also, it may be possible to combine a revolving fund loan with grant dollars from other sources.

Currently, most states use their Revolving Fund to finance large municipal wastewater systems. EPA is encouraging states to open their programs to the widest variety of water quality projects and to use their Revolving Funds to finance the highest priority projects based on water quality problems. Since the program is managed largely by the states, project funding may vary according to the priorities within each state. To obtain funding, a project must be in a state's Nonpoint Source Management Plan or Estuary Conservation and Management Plan.

Funds can be used for a variety of projects. Projects might include: cleaning up runoff from dairies and animal feedlots, implementation of agricultural practices to reduce runoff, conservation tillage equipment, structural soil erosion controls, agricultural waste compost facilities, wetlands protection, constructed wetlands, habitat restoration, riparian zone protection, abatement of polluted runoff from brownfields, cleaning up a brownfield site, correction of groundwater contamination, remediation of petroleum contamination, stormwater management facilities, septic system improvements, and more.

For more information, call a state contact listed below or call Michelle Tucker, EPA, 206/553-1414 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1414, or e-mail: tucker.michelle@epa.gov. Or, visit the web site at <http://www.epa.gov/OWM>

Alaska: Mike Burns, mburns@envirocon.state.ak.us, 907/269-7502

Idaho: Bill Jerrel, wjerrel@deq.state.id.us, 208/373-0400

Oregon: Peggy Halferty, halferty.peggy@deq.state.or.us, 503/229-6412

Washington: Brian Howard, brho461@ecy.wa.gov, 360/407-6510

Sustainable Development Grant Proposals Due

September 29 is the deadline for submitting proposals for grant funding under EPA's **Sustainable Development Challenge Grants** (SDCG) program. EPA expects about \$9.4 million will be available for the program in FY 1999/2000. The SDCG program challenges communities to invest in a sustainable future that links environmental protection, economic prosperity, and community well-being. It provides an opportunity to develop place-based approaches to problem solving that can be replicated in other communities. The SDCG program strongly encourages community members, business, and government entities to work cooperatively to develop flexible,

locally-oriented approaches that link place-based environmental management and quality of life activities with sustainable development and revitalization.

EPA will select projects on a competitive basis. Applicants may compete for funding in two ranges: (1) requesting \$30,000 to \$100,000 with a total project budget of \$125,000 or less and (2) requesting between \$100,001 and \$250,000 with no limit on the total project budget amount. Applicants must provide a minimum 20% match from non-federal funding sources. For more information visit the web site at www.epa.gov/ecocommunity. To request an application, contact Tanya Webb, EPA, at 206/553-2634 or 1-800-424-4EPA x2634.

Time for Wetland Development Grants

EPA is pleased to announce the twelfth consecutive year of the **Wetland Development Grant Program**. This program provides financial assistance for wetland protection to state, tribal and local government agencies. The program is a competitive grant program, and requires a 25% match in funds.

Projects must clearly demonstrate a direct link to improving the applicant's ability to protect, restore, and/or manage its wetlands resources. The Clean Water Act requires that these grants be used only for the development or refinement of wetland programs. At this time, operational or ongoing support of wetland programs is specifically disallowed. EPA will give priority to those proposals which help preserve and enhance salmon habitat.

Pre-proposals are due to EPA Region 10 no later than October 15, 1999. Applicants should obtain and carefully read the FY2000 Grant Guidance and use it as a reference when preparing pre-proposals. EPA will notify all applicants by January 2000, whether or not their proposal will be funded. Funds are expected to be available in the late spring or summer of 2000.

More information is available on the EPA Region 10 homepage (www.epa.gov/r10earth) or call Anne Robinson, EPA, at 206/553-6219 or 1-800-424-4EPA x6219, or email robinson.anne@epa.gov.

Watershed Funds Available for OR, CA Projects

US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Bureau of Reclamation announce availability of fiscal year 2000 **funds for watershed restoration projects** in southern Oregon and northern California. Anyone is eligible to apply for the funds.

Proposals may be funded under the following programs:

- 1: Jobs-In-The-Woods Program (~\$670,000)
- 2: Hatfield Restoration Program (~\$850,000 including ~\$65,000 for information and education projects)
- 3: Oregon Resources Conservation Act Program (~\$1,000,000)
- 4: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (~\$80,000)

Each program has its own eligibility requirements. Generally, program goals include restoring fish

and wildlife habitat, improving water quality, recovering endangered species, restoring wetlands and riparian areas, research and monitoring, assessments and planning, information and education, reducing drought impacts, and providing economic development and stability.

Applications are due August 31, 1999. For program information or applications, call 541/885-8481 in Klamath Falls, 707/822-7201 in Arcata, 530/842-5763 in Yreka, or 530/527-3043 in Red Bluff. Or, visit the internet at www.kffwo.org/y2krfp.html

Watch Soon for Enviro Ed Grants

Watch soon for the opportunity to apply for education grants! The call for proposals under EPA's **Environmental Education Grant Program** is expected to come out the end of August. Applications will be due in November. This annual grants program provides financial support for projects which design, demonstrate, or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Schools, universities, not-for-profit organizations, and local, state, and tribal government education agencies are eligible to apply.

Congratulations to grant recipients under last year's program! A great diversity of projects were funded including a hands-on museum-based school tour program in Alaska, a wetlands restoration project for at-risk youth in Oregon, and a Tribal Environmental Day in Washington. In total 13 grants (totaling \$160,000) were awarded to Region 10 projects in the last round.

To receive a copy of the new solicitation when it is issued, call EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center now at 1-800-424-4EPA or 206/553-1200. For program information, contact Sally Hanft at 206/553-1207 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1207, or email hanft.sally@epa.gov.

Grants Book Shares Enviro Ed Success

Great Grants: Environmental Education Success Stories of EPA Region 10 can be a helpful resource for folks considering applying for EPA's ed grants (see previous article). The 200-page book showcases regional projects funded under the National Environmental Education Act from 1992 to 1995. It can assist potential grantees in project design, help reduce duplication of efforts, and give an understanding of the breadth and depth of EPA's regional education grant program. For a free copy, call the Public Environmental Resource Center at 206/553-1200 or 1-800-424-4EPA.

***Another grants tip:** hints on writing an environmental education grant application can be found on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/seahome/grants/src/grant.htm>*

Environmental Youth Projects Can Get Presidential Recognition

If you know a student who has done their part to protect the environment or is interested in doing more, tell them about the **EPA President's Environmental Youth Awards (PEYA)** program. They may just win an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. The PEYA program, in existence

for nearly 30 years, is the granddaddy of kids' environmental programs. Children from kindergarten through high school can enter as individuals or as a group. One outstanding project from each of the ten EPA Regions is honored in a national awards ceremony, subject to the availability of funds. However, all students who complete an environmental project and apply receive a signed certificate from the President of the United States.

Now is the time for students and sponsors to start thinking about what project they might enter in the 2000 PEYA program. Rules are simple: the individual or group must have completed an environmental project while in grades K through 12; the project needs at least one adult sponsor; the project has to be completed by July 31, 2000; and the application must be mailed to EPA's regional office. Regional panels judge projects on environmental need, accomplishment of goals, long-term environmental benefits, and positive impact on local communities. The panels also consider project design, coordination, implementation, innovation and soundness of approach and the students' effectiveness in presenting the projects.

More information is available on EPA's web site at www.epa.gov/enviroed or by contacting Sally Hanft, Region 10 Coordinator, at 206/553-1207 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1207, or email hanft.sally@epa.gov.

Handbook Explains Tribal Salmon Recovery Approach

Protecting and Restoring Watersheds: A Tribal Approach to Salmon Recovery, a handbook produced by the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission with funding support from EPA, is now available. This 100-page handbook explains the Columbia River treaty tribes' strategic approach to watershed restoration, including watershed assessment, watershed protection, restoration, and monitoring. Intended to help watershed councils, landowners, and other natural resource practitioners undertake restoration in ways consistent with tribal philosophy, the book draws on up-to-date science and is presented in easy-to-understand language. The handbook includes an extensive resources section with web site links, bibliographies, and helpful contacts. It is organized around the concept that good science, good sense, and good partnerships produce good results. For a free copy, contact Jill Ory, CRITFC, at 503/238-0667 or oryj@critfc.org. Or, look for the handbook on the web at www.critfc.org.

Drinking Water Protection Insights Shared

A publication entitled **Protecting Sources of Drinking Water: Selected Case Studies in Watershed Management** is now available. In this document, 17 drinking water suppliers share their insights on watershed management. The case studies detail their experience with watershed assessment, public outreach, working with local and state governments, local partnering, and land acquisition. This document is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/swp/cstudy.html>.

**Pollution Prevention Prescription:
Contact P2Rx**

Information is only as useful as the means of getting it into the hands of its intended users. Libraries, databases, filing cabinets, and Rolodexes around the country are filled with high-quality pollution prevention (P2) information resources and contacts that businesses and technical assistance providers could put to good use. Until recently, there was no system to coordinate these resources and provide easy access.

That system is being put in place, thanks to the establishment of the **Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange (P2Rx)**, a coordinated effort of nine regional pollution prevention resource centers funded by EPA. Each center offers a range of services that may include information for specific industry sectors, trainings, library resources, referrals and research. Through P2Rx, the centers are laying the groundwork for a seamless national network of easily accessible, high-quality P2 information. To access this network in Region 10 (AK, ID, OR, WA), contact the Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center at 206/223-1141. Or visit the Internet site at <http://www.epa.gov/p2/p2rxdir.htm> or <http://www.pprc.org/pprc/about/pprc.html>.

ECOSYSTEM

Beneficial Landscaping Conserves Water

Nowadays water conservation is important year round, but especially during our Pacific Northwest summer droughts. The dry season has begun, so it is a good time to focus on steps to conserve water in planning and maintaining our landscapes--be they commercial, public, or private properties.

Planning your landscape for water conservation from the beginning is a great idea. Such a plan will encompass the steps that follow here. Even if you haven't planned, it's not too late to apply many of these "water-wise" steps:

Minimize clearing. Prevention is the best medicine! Minimize the clearing of native vegetation when creating your site plan, since native plants are already adapted to the site where they are growing, and require little or no maintenance, while providing aesthetic, economic, and environmental benefits. Salvage the native plants from cleared areas and use them in your landscape plan.

Prepare the soil. Last issue of Water Talk, we emphasized the importance of adding organic matter to your soil to control surface water runoff, improve plant growth, and ultimately protect salmon streams. That same organic matter helps to conserve water by increasing the soils' capacity to hold water and make it available to plants.

Have sensible lawn areas. If a lawn is needed, plan for only as much as you really need for the activities you plan to carry out in your landscape. Leave the rest to native and/or water-conserving non-native ground covers, shrubs, and trees.

Select appropriate plants. Be sure to seek information from local sources, such as the Cooperative Extension Service, college and university horticulture departments, nurseries, other local experts, and/or library resources. In addition, it is helpful to know some of the features of

water conserving plants. Here are a few clues:

Some plants lose less water from their leaves if they are waxy, shiny/reflective, covered with fine hairs, undulated or curled at the edges, succulent, and/or small. Some plants adapt to dry soil conditions by having shallow spreading roots that can pick up light rains or dew; by spreading by underground rhizomes; or by having deep tap roots that search deeply for and store water during dry periods. Other water conserving strategies are to grow over the soil surface to protect sensitive roots from heat, grow only at night, grow only when water is regularly available such as in the spring, and to go dormant during dry weather.

Analyze your site in order to match sun loving, shade tolerant, moisture loving, and drought tolerant plants with the right locations.

Use mulches. Mulches retain water, lower evaporation from the soil, and even help to contain weeds! By composting over time, organic mulches also enrich your soil and attract helpful organisms such as earth worms and other decomposers.

Appropriate maintenance. If you take the above steps, your need for irrigation could be minimal to nil. If you do irrigate, pay attention to the amount applied to prevent overwatering, and the area of application to avoid “watering the pavement.” Water in the early morning or evening rather than during the middle of the day. Irrigation can be a science in itself, with equipment ranging from drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses to professionally installed, mechanized, and timer operated sprinkler systems. For more advice, consult the Cooperative Extension Service or other local experts.

Conserving water brings us closer to our “roots.” However you approach it, enjoy the challenge! For more information, contact Elaine Somers, EPA Region 10 Beneficial Landscaping Program, at 206/553-2966, 1-800-424-4EPA x2966 or somers.elaine@epamail.epa.gov.

Adapted from information provided by the Water Conservation Coalition of Puget Sound.

Summer Sun Safety

With summer here, it is important to remember sun safety. Protecting against overexposure to the sun can help reduce the risk of developing skin cancer, cataracts, and other health problems. Skin cancer, while largely preventable, is the most common form of cancer in the United States - with over one million cases reported annually. And cataracts, a clouding of the eye's lens that can lead to blindness, are a growing problem among people of all skin types.

It is particularly important to protect young children from sun overexposure. People typically get about 80 percent of their total lifetime exposure to the sun by the age of 18.

EPA's SunWise School Program is working to get the word out about the importance of sun safety. In cooperation with leading public health organizations, SunWise recommends the following steps to improve sun safety this summer - and throughout the year:

-For a forecast of the intensity of the sun's UV rays, check the UV Index daily in your newspaper or on TV and radio broadcasts.

- Limit time in the midday sun, especially between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.
- Remember, there's no such thing as a "healthy tan." Use sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- Wear UV-protective sunglasses.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and clothing to cover exposed skin.

For information about how you and your family can be SunWise, visit the website at www.epa.gov/sunwise.

CALENDAR

August

17-20: Connecting Watersheds, Estuaries, Oceans, and People: 1999 Northwest Aquatic and Marine Educators Conference, University of Oregon, Tom Gaskill, 541-888-5558.

24-25: Tribal Nonpoint Source Pollution Workshop, Grand Ronde, Oregon. Clarence Ortman, EPA, 503/326-7024 or ortman.clarence@epa.gov

26-Sep 6: Alaska State Fair, Watershed Festival, 907/279-6575

September

9-10: Salmon Homecoming Forum, Seattle, Washington, 206/386-4315 or 360/993-1950.

11: Great Northwest SCUBA Festival, Hoodspport, Washington. Rick Stratton, 360/240-1874, www.nwdivenews.com

12-14: Annual Biosolids Management Conference, Chelan, Washington. NW Biosolids Management Association, 206/684-1145.

16-17: Growth Management Act Seminar, Seattle, Washington. Law Seminars International, 206/621-1938 or 800/854-8009.

16-17: Salmon at the Crossroads, Seattle, Washington. Law Seminars International, 206/463-4400 or 800/574-4852.

26-29: International City/County Management Association Annual Conference, Portland, Oregon. Felicia Logan, 202/962-3626.

October

15: Deadline for November WaterTalk. Andrea Lindsay, Editor, 206/553-1896 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1896, lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

November

3: 1999 James A. Vomocil Water Quality Conference, Oregon State University campus. Ron Miner, OSU, 541/737-6295.