



WaterTalk

Alaska

Idaho

Oregon

Washington

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

January 2006

An EPA Birthday:

35 Years of Environmental Protection

This year marks the **35th anniversary of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**. Looking back, great progress has been made in reducing pollution and protecting the health of Americans. Since its creation by President Nixon on December 2, 1970, EPA has been helping to achieve a cleaner, healthier environment.

"While at 35, EPA may still be one of the newer kids on the block, the results we have delivered to the American people can stack up next to any of our federal partners in the government," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. "EPA's birthday present is cleaner air, water, and land for all Americans...."

Between 1970 and 2004, total emissions of the six major air pollutants dropped by 54 percent. At the same time, the gross domestic product increased 187 percent, energy consumption increased 47 percent, and U.S. population grew by 40 percent—a sign that economic growth and environmental protection do go hand in hand.

Through restoration efforts, 600,000 acres of once contaminated land now provide ecological, economic, and recreational benefits. Last year alone, EPA and its partners took action to restore, enhance, and protect nearly 830,000 acres of wetlands. In the enforcement area, since 1995, EPA has received commitments from industry to spend more than \$35 billion on environmental improvements, reducing more than 10 billion pounds of pollutants annually.

After 35 years, EPA's work continues. In 2005, for example, new rules for mercury and interstate air pollution will reduce power-plant emissions and launch a campaign to reduce diesel-engine pollution. EPA also announced \$76.7 million in Brownfields grant funding. The funds will be used to assess, clean up, and revitalize blighted sites in 45 states.

For more information on EPA's 35th Anniversary, visit: <http://epa.gov/35thanniversary/>.

In This Issue...



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Tools to clue you in on resources, publications, opportunities, and services, pages 2 - 5.



Spotlight to showcase success stories and environmental stars, pages 5-6.



WaterWords to share stories from communities around the Greater Northwest, page 7.



Ecosystem to provide news that goes beyond water topics, pages 8-10.

Get WaterTalk by List-Serv!

A great way to save trees and reduce clutter! Now you can get WaterTalk Newsletter electronically, by list-serv. Simply go to www.epa.gov/region10 and sign up for the Region 10 Water News Listserv. Then, send an e-mail asking to be removed from the hard-copy mailing list to lindsay.andrea@epa.gov. Easy! Each quarter, you will get an e-mail telling you when the new WaterTalk issue is ready, and linking you to its location on the Web. Once in a while, you will get other water-related news from EPA. If you already receive e-mail notification of WaterTalk, you will be automatically added to the list-serv.

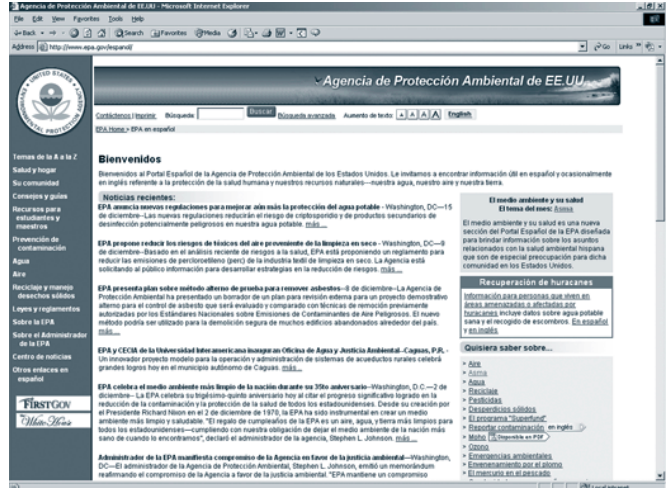


EPA Launches Hispanic Environmental Health Webpage EPA Lanza Página Web Sobre Salud Ambiental Hispana

EPA has launched a new **webpage in Spanish**. It offers information on environmental issues and their effects among Hispanics living in the United States. The new page, "El medio ambiente y su salud" (The Environment and Your Health), focuses on a different issue every month.

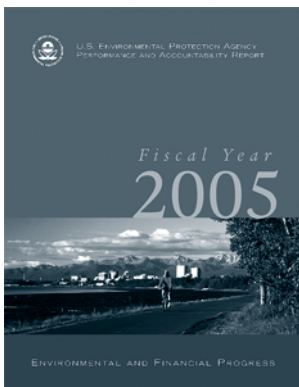
Topics to be covered include environmental health issues of special concern to Hispanics. These issues include asthma, lead-poisoning prevention, radon, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and mold, among others. This new webpage presents information in both Spanish and English. It is part of the agency's overall efforts to educate Hispanics, researchers, and health care providers on how environmental health issues affect Hispanic communities throughout the nation.

To view this page, visit: www.epa.gov/espanol/asma.htm. This new page is part of EPA's Spanish



portal. To view EPA's consolidated Spanish site, visit: www.epa.gov/espanol.

EPA Performance and Accountability Report



EPA's **FY 2005 Performance and Accountability Report** describes to Congress, the President, and the public the Agency's environmental, programmatic, and financial performance over the past fiscal year. The report satisfies a number of legislative reporting requirements. Printed copies are available from EPA's National Service

Center for Environmental Publications at 800-490-9198 or by e-mail via ncepimal@one.net. Ask for publication number EPA-190-R-05-001. EPA welcomes comments on the report. For details, including a PDF version for download, visit <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/finstatement/2005par/>.

Online Directory Helps Find Funding

The Environmental Finance Center at Boise State University maintains a national funding database, called the **Directory of Watershed Resources**. This resource is an online, searchable database for watershed restoration funding. It includes information on federal, state (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska), private, and other sources of funding and assistance. The Web address for this directory recently changed to <http://efc.boisestate.edu/>.

New Watershed Website Gives Funding Info

EPA has launched a new **Watershed Funding** website. The pages contain links to tools, databases, and resources about grants, funding, and fundraising. The website can help nonprofit watershed organizations, state and local governments, and funders (e.g., foundations) more easily find information so that they can effectively obtain and invest resources to improve watershed health. Visit the Watershed Funding homepage at www.epa.gov/owow/funding.html.

New Nonpoint Source Success Stories Online

EPA has added 8 new stories to the **Section 319 Nonpoint Source Success Stories** website. The site features projects receiving grant funds from the Clean Water Act §319 Nonpoint Source Program. The stories focus on projects with documented water quality improvements, including the achievement of water quality standards and removal from state lists of impaired waters. Visit the website at: www.epa.gov/nps/success.



Ocean.US was created by the National Oceanographic Partnership Program. Ocean.US is designed to coordinate the development of an operational and integrated and sustained ocean observing system. EPA is one of nine federal agencies participating in the development of this **Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)**. Information from this system will serve national needs for:

- Detecting and forecasting oceanic components of climate variability
- Facilitating safe and efficient marine operations
- Ensuring national security
- Managing resources for sustainable use
- Preserving and restoring healthy marine ecosystems
- Mitigating natural hazards
- Ensuring public health

For more information, see www.ocean.us.

Should I Have My Home Water Tested?

Should I have my home water tested? The answer to this question depends on several factors. It concerns your health and the health of your family, so you need to know some basic facts. In addition to illness, a variety of less serious problems such as taste, color, odor and staining of clothes or fixtures are signs of possible water quality problems. Other things to think about include the nearness of your water well to septic systems and the composition of your home's plumbing materials.



A fact sheet is available online to help answer the question. It provides information to help you decide whether or not to have your water tested, and if so, suggests tests for your situation. See the fact sheet on the web at: www.epa.gov/safewater/faq/pdfs/fs_homewatertesting.pdf.

Wetlands and Riparian Areas Guidance Out

EPA recently published **National Management Measures to Protect and Restore Wetlands and Riparian Areas for the Abatement of Nonpoint Source Pollution**. The guidance gives background information about nonpoint source pollution, including where it comes from and how it enters the nation's waters. It discusses the broad concept of assessing and addressing water quality problems on a watershed level. It also presents recent technical information about how to reduce certain types of nonpoint source pollution. The guidance is intended to be a reference document for use by state and tribal managers and members of the public working on nonpoint source pollution management programs. For information or to download, visit www.epa.gov/owow/nps/wetmeasures. Or, get a free copy from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications via phone at 800-490-9198 or on the Web at www.epa.gov/ncepihom. Request publication # EPA 841-B-05-003.

Virtual Info Center Covers Animal Feeding Operations

Interested in livestock agricultural issues? The **AFO Virtual Information Center** is a tool for quick access to livestock agricultural information in the United States.

This site is a single point of reference for a range of information. Get links to state regulations, websites, permits and policies, nutrient management information, livestock and trade associations, federal websites, best management practices and controls, cooperative extension and land grant universities, research, funding, and information on environmental issues. Visit the AFO Virtual Information Center at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/virtualcenter.cfm>.



Watershed Academy Webcasts Now Posted, More Coming

The audio versions of a past webcasts by **EPA's Watershed Academy** are now posted on the Internet. "The ABCs of TMDLs," for example, covered the basics of the Clean Water Act section 303(d) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. The online seminar attracted hundreds of participants from 40 states, Ecuador, Italy and Canada. People participated via streaming audio or phone lines, while viewing the PowerPoint presentation on the Internet. The entire presentation, complete with audio, can be viewed at the Clu-In website at: http://www.clu-in.org/conf/tio/abctmdl_092805/.

Other past webcasts now available include Phase II Stormwater, Low Impact Development, Developing Your Message, and Watershed Protection in Developing Areas. EPA plans to host webcasts monthly. Future (and past) offerings will be posted on the Watershed Academy website at: <http://www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts/>. Local watershed organizations, municipal leaders, and others are invited to sign up for these free, online webcast training sessions. Note that there are a limited number of toll-free phone lines available. Register early to hold your spot!

T.V. Anyone?

EPA offers lots of free videos and DVDs on a range of environmental topics. Borrow one today. Call 800-424-4372 or 206-553-1200 to learn what is available and have it mailed to you.



DVD Features Puget Sound Creatures

A DVD called **Return of the Plankton** is now available for free two-week loan from EPA. The DVD features underwater footage of creatures in Puget Sound, tracking their behavior across the four seasons and their relationships within the food web. The



colorful, up-close views of the local marine life in this DVD will help people leap the chasm between considering the water as a mystery, as someone else's responsibility, or see it as an extension of their own neighborhood. Produced by Cameron Snow and published by John F. Williams of Still Hope Productions, the 27-minute movie follows divers through the diverse habitats of Puget Sound.

The movie features music by local musicians, an improvisation on Native American flute and drum, and a composition by Pulitzer Prize winner Charles Wuorinen. Over 150 stills of creatures from the movie are on the DVD, along with their common names, scientific names, and information about their habitat and diet. Other educational features include a map of the marine food web, a quiz, and a bibliography.

To borrow the video, call EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center at 206-553-1200 or 800-424-4372. To purchase your own copy, learn more, or see photos, visit www.StillHopeProductions.com.

Power of Change

Do you work with older Americans on environmental issues? Then you might find EPA's **Power of Change** kit useful. The "Power of Change" campaign teaches older Americans what they can do to help reduce waste and protect the environment for the next generation. This free kit of resources explains how to reduce waste, conserve our natural resources, and save energy. Visit the website at www.epa.gov/epaoswer/aging/.

Clean Water Act Text Online

Searchable full text of the **Clean Water Act** is available online. A summary is offered, as well. Visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/epahome/laws.htm. Scroll down to "The Clean Water Act."

Willamette Partnership and Skagit Delta Projects Receive Watershed Grant Awards

EPA recently announced the third round of **Targeted Watershed Grant** awards, aimed at protecting and restoring America's waterways. Two projects in Region 10 are among 12 projects nationwide to get funding under this program this year.

The **Willamette Partnership** is one of those winners. Their award of \$779,000 supports an innovative water quality trading program to reduce stream temperatures and support salmon recovery.

According to M. Socorro Rodriguez, EPA's Oregon Operations Director, the best watershed protection efforts are those that include everyone in the process. "This grant not only recognizes the importance of the Willamette River Basin to our region, but it also recognizes the innovative efforts of the dedicated people who formed the Willamette Partnership," Rodriguez said. "This diverse group is working together toward a common environmental goal. The Partnership's water quality trading project is an excellent example of how much can be accomplished when all of the stakeholders in a watershed come together and work collaboratively."

The **Skagit Delta Project** in Washington is the second regional project to be awarded. They will receive \$774,000 to help preserve farmland and aid in wild salmon recovery in the Skagit River basin.

The Skagit Delta Project builds on two groundbreaking agreements between the Skagit-area Indian Tribes and farmers. The goal is to prevent development of dwindling farmlands and increase access to farmlands for fish and waterfowl habitat restoration projects. Under the project, The Nature Conservancy will compensate farmers who grow waterfowl friendly crops during fallow seasons. The Nature Conservancy and the Tribes also will work with local diking districts to improve fish habitat and field drainage efficiency. This unique project involves Tribes, farmers, agricultural organizations, researchers, conservation groups, and local civic leaders all working together to protect and restore both agricultural lands and aquatic habitats.

For details about the Targeted Watershed Grant program, contact **Bevin Reid**, EPA, at **800-424-4372, 206-553-1566**, or reid.bevin@epa.gov. Or, see the National Targeted Watershed Grants website at: www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/



Three Northwest Facilities Accepted to EPA Performance Track Program

Fort Lewis Public Works, Louisiana-Pacific Hines Engineered Wood Products, and Georgia-Pacific Resins, Inc., Albany, Oregon, were

members of EPA's National Environment Track program in 2005. They join facilities in their commitment to environmental stewardship. Performance Track requires that:

- voluntarily exceed regulatory requirements
- implement systems for improving environmental management,
- work with their communities, and
- set three-year goals for improving environmental performance.

Only facilities with records of sustained compliance with environmental requirements may participate in this program.

To date, Performance Track members have collectively reduced their water use by 1.3 billion gallons and their generation of solid waste by nearly 970,000 tons. Also, they have increased their use of reused or recycled materials by nearly 77,000 tons, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 67,000 tons of carbon dioxide.

The facilities have committed to specific "beyond compliance" environmental improvements over the next three years. These improvements include the conservation of 750 acres of oak woodlands and preservation of riparian habitat at Fort Lewis; reducing water use by over one million gallons at Louisiana-Pacific, Hines Engineered Wood Products; and decreasing procurement packaging by over 6,000 pounds at Georgia-Pacific Resins, Inc., Albany, Oregon.

As part of Performance Track, these Pacific Northwest facilities are eligible for many program benefits. Benefits include EPA recognition, national



and local networking opportunities, and regulatory and administrative incentives which cut paperwork, increase flexibility, and help facilities focus on environmental improvement.

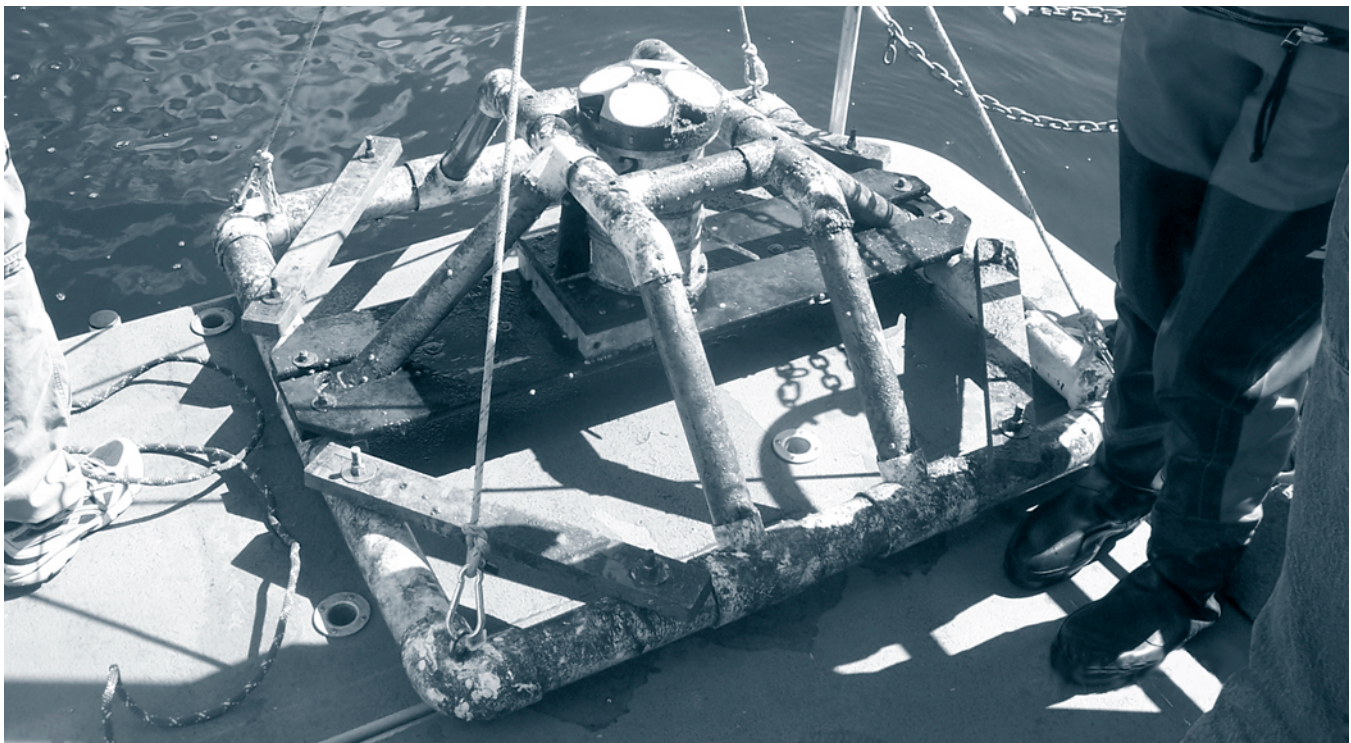
For more information about Performance Track, visit www.epa.gov/performancectrack or call 888-339-PTRK.

EPA Divers Help with Water Quality Research

How many septic tanks does it take to impair a water body? That is the question the EPA Region 10 Dive Team wanted to help answer during last year's dives in Hammersly Inlet/Oakland Bay. The Dive Team helped the Washington Department of Ecology deploy, recover, and maintain current meters, including one acoustic Doppler current profiler (ADCP). The meters are being used to research water quality in this waterway.

The team conducted the dives in April, October, and December 2005. Due to strong currents in the area, the divers were tethered. Once on the bottom, divers hammered in stakes to hold the ADCP and make sure it was properly oriented. Information on currents will be used to develop and

calibrate a "hydrodynamic model" for the inlet. The model will show the amount of bacteria and nutrients that can be released into the water body while still meeting environmental and human health standards. Bacteria coming from many sources, including the growing number of septic tanks in the area, can lead to problems for shellfish and recreation in the Bay. In Washington, the Department of Ecology is in charge of implementing the Clean Water Act. See the Ecology website for more details: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/watershed/oakland_bay/. More information on EPA's regional dive team can be found at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/oea.nsf/webpage/dive+team>. Or, call Rob Pedersen at 206-553-1646 or 800-424-4372.



EPA divers deploy a meter to measure currents

Pretreatment Streamlining Rule Finalized

EPA has finalized the **Pretreatment Streamlining Rule**. This rule revises how industrial and commercial facilities must manage their wastewater before sending it on to publicly owned treatment works for final treatment. Manufacturing dischargers must use treatment techniques and management practices to reduce the discharge of harmful pollutants

that could interfere with municipal treatment plant processes or contaminate waterways. The Pretreatment Streamlining Rule updates the National Pretreatment Program which has been in place for more than thirty years. Details about the rule are at www.epa.gov/npdes/pretreatment.

Beneficial Landscaping:

Prepare Now to Welcome Breeding Birds

Late fall and winter months are the time to clean and prepare homes for our beloved wild birds. What better way to welcome the spring?! We invited Ralph Thomas Rogers to offer us a few pointers on this activity.

Installation and Maintenance of Bird Nest Boxes

By Ralph Thomas Rogers

Attracting cavity-nesting birds by providing home-made nesting sites is an ancient tradition. In Medieval Europe it was common practice to put out specially made clay or wooden flasks for birds to nest in. Native Americans hung hollowed-out gourds to attract Purple Martins.

More than fifty species of North American birds have been reported nesting in or on artificial structures (nest boxes, platforms, etc.). Over thirty-five species do so on a regular basis.

Making and locating a successful birdhouse is neither complicated nor difficult. Specific construction details and placement will depend on the target species (see references below). However, there are some guidelines that will both encourage occupancy and enhance your tenants' welfare.

- (1) Because the young of most cavity nesters are born naked they are particularly sensitive to temperature extremes. Therefore it is important that the design, location and materials used for your nest boxes do not increase the birds' vulnerability to the elements.
- (2) Most birds have strong territorial instincts which will normally deter them from nesting too close to other birds, especially ones of their own species. Studies show that, under natural conditions, 4 to 5 cavity nesters per acre seem to be average for many areas, and this may be a reasonable guideline to follow on your property. Make boxes that provide for a single nest (except for purple martins) and space them widely.
- (3) Nest boxes should be located to allow for a fairly clear flight path to the entrance. Position the box so that the entrance hole is not exposed to the prevailing direction of wind-driven rainstorms. Make sure the box rests vertically or slightly slanted downward; if the entrance is tilted up it is more vulnerable to precipitation.





Beneficial Landscaping:

Installation and Maintenance of Bird Nest Boxes *(continued)* □



- (4) Cavity nests provide easy prey for cats and other predators. If you or neighbors have feline pets, make sure your birdhouse is cat-proof. A metal pole with some type of “predator guard” should discourage cats as well as raccoons, snakes, and other potential egg and nestling molesters. Boxes fixed to trees rather than freestanding posts are generally more vulnerable to predators.
- (5) To reduce nest parasites, some of which winter over in old nests, remove the contents of your nest boxes at the end of the breeding season. This chore can be safely done from November to February in our area.
- (6) Finally, although it is possible to encourage certain species and discourage others by methods of construction and location, it is often difficult to keep house sparrows and/or European starlings from invading your nest boxes. If these species are present in your area, keep the nest box entrance hole blocked until the species you want to encourage has returned in the spring. If the starlings or house sparrows begin to build, simply remove nest material as it is deposited in the nest box. If eggs or young of these alien species are present, it is up to you whether or not to evict them, as they are not legally protected.

References

- Link, Russell. 2004. *Living With Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- Weston, Shann. 2001. *Naturescaping - A Landscape Partnership With Nature*. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland.
- Wyzga, Marilyn C. 1998. *Homes for Wildlife – A Planning Guide for Habitat Enhancement on School Grounds*. New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept., Concord.

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

Invasive Species Notes

This issue of WaterTalk continues our regular feature on invasive species. "Invasive species" are plants or animals that are not native to an ecosystem, and which cause harm to the environment, economy, or human health.

Invasive species are one of the largest threats to our land and water ecosystems. Invasive species are the #2 cause of species extinction and loss of biodiversity in aquatic environments worldwide. They cause economic effects through direct financial losses and control costs. These alien invaders also dramatically alter ecosystems which support commercial and recreational activities.

Invasive species can decrease native populations, modify water tables, change run-off patterns and fire frequency, and so on. These changes in turn impact many recreational and commercial activities which depend on these ecosystems.

Below are some notes about just a few of the many, many activities going on to combat this tough issue. For more information, or details on any of the articles below, contact **Joan Cabreza**, EPA, at **206-553-7369** or **800-424-4372**, or **cabreza.joan@epa.gov**.



EPA Authorities Paper Published:

A new document summarizes EPA authorities that may apply to invasive species. It is called **Overview of EPA Authorities for Natural Resource Managers Developing Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response and Management Plans**. Understanding EPA regulatory considerations could help state and local managers to streamline rapid responses, once the need to eradicate a new organism has been identified. To download the report, go to **www.epa.gov/owow/invasive_species**.

School Curriculum— New Pathway for Invasives:

A popular science curriculum being promoted in Oregon and other states uses live organisms to teach students ecosystem concepts. Unfortunately, the organisms include non-native crayfish and aquatic plants, both of which are invasive. Once classes complete the unit, it is feared they will release the organisms into nearby waters, starting new infestations. Oregon Sea Grant has been working to educate suppliers of the organisms, the schools, and other groups. They have developed a poster called "Schools and Science Curricula as

Potential Pathways for Aquatic Invasive Species." They are also updating a "Do Not Release" brochure. Sea Grant can supply a template of the poster for partners to customize.

EPA Helps Fund AK Invasive Species Council:

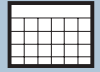
EPA has provided a grant to the University of Alaska (Fairbanks) to develop a state invasive species council.

Habitattitude Gets Going:

Habitattitude™, a new public outreach effort, encourages home aquarium owners to avoid discarding aquatic plants or fish into local ecosystems. The website helps consumers learn about preventing the spread of invasives. The site offers alternatives to releasing plants and animals, provides instructions on how individuals and clubs can get involved, and gives details on species that have created problems in aquatic systems. Habitattitude™ materials will be displayed in aquarium stores, aquatic retail outlets, hobby magazines, and nursery and landscape businesses across the country. See the website at: **www.habitattitude.net/**



CALENDAR



January

January 19-20:

Endangered Species Act Seminar, Seattle, WA. The Seminar Group, 800-574-4852.

January 20:

Storming the Sound: A Regional Gathering of North Sound Environmental Educators, LaConner, WA, www.padillabay.gov/storming/index.html.

January 25:

SEPA/NEPA Workshop, Seattle, WA. Law Seminars International, 800-854-8009, www.lawseminars.com.

January 25:

Salmon 2100 Project: The Future of Wild Pacific Salmon, Portland, OR. Robert Lackey, EPA, 541-754-4607, <http://outreach.forestry.oregonstate.edu/Salmon2100/>.

February

February 7-9:

Northwest Transportation Conference, Corvallis, OR. Toll free 866-808-0886, <http://kiewit.oregonstate.edu/nwtc>.

February 27-28:

Harvesting Clean Energy Conference, Spokane, WA, www.harvestcleanenergy.org/conference

March

March 9:

Climate Change: Is Our Health at Stake? Seattle, WA. The Collaborative on Health and the Environment, www.chenw.org/events.html.

March 15:

Deadline for contributions to the April issue of WaterTalk. **Andrea Lindsay**, Editor, 206-553-1896, 800-424-4372, lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

March 29-31:

Globe 2006, Vancouver, BC. Trade fair and conference on business and the environment, www.globe2006.com.

April

April 5:

Forum on Toxics in Puget Sound: Connecting the Marine Environment with Human Health and the Economy, Seattle, WA. People for Puget Sound, Heather Trim, 206-382-7007 x215, <http://pugetsound.org>.

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



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WaterTalk
January 2006



WaterTalk

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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.

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.

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Good Stuff**

**Welcoming Nesting
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And More