



WaterTalk

Alaska

Idaho

Oregon

Washington

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

November 2007

Ten Federal Agencies Join Forces to Spur Puget Sound Recovery

Ten federal agencies, ranging from the Army Corps of Engineers to the National Park Service, signed on to a campaign in August to restore the health of Puget Sound. According to EPA's Elin Miller, the campaign underscores the federal commitment to making the health of Puget Sound both a Regional and National Priority.

"We're pleased to come together as true federal partners to help the State of Washington to bring much-needed help to the Puget Sound," said Miller. "Aided by Congressman Dicks' vision, leadership, and commitment, we're launching a new effort by federal agencies to align people and resources to make the Sound cleaner and healthier."

The aim of this new federal partnership is to unite in a "Federal Caucus" of natural resource, environmental health, and land management agencies. Each partner is committing to work towards a common problem-solving framework for restoring the Sound. This new partnership is seen as a way to:

- Engage federal agency leaders to align resources and programs to help support Puget Sound recovery.
- Strengthen federal coordination of Puget Sound science, resource management, and recovery efforts and policies.
- Provide united leadership and support for Washington State and local governments working to protect and restore Puget Sound.

The ten signing partners are: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Navy, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and U.S. Coast Guard. Fort Lewis is expected to sign on shortly.

For more on the health and recovery of Puget Sound: www.psp.wa.gov

For more about the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin ecosystem: www.epa.gov/Region10/psgb/

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Spotlight to showcase success stories and environmental stars, page 8.



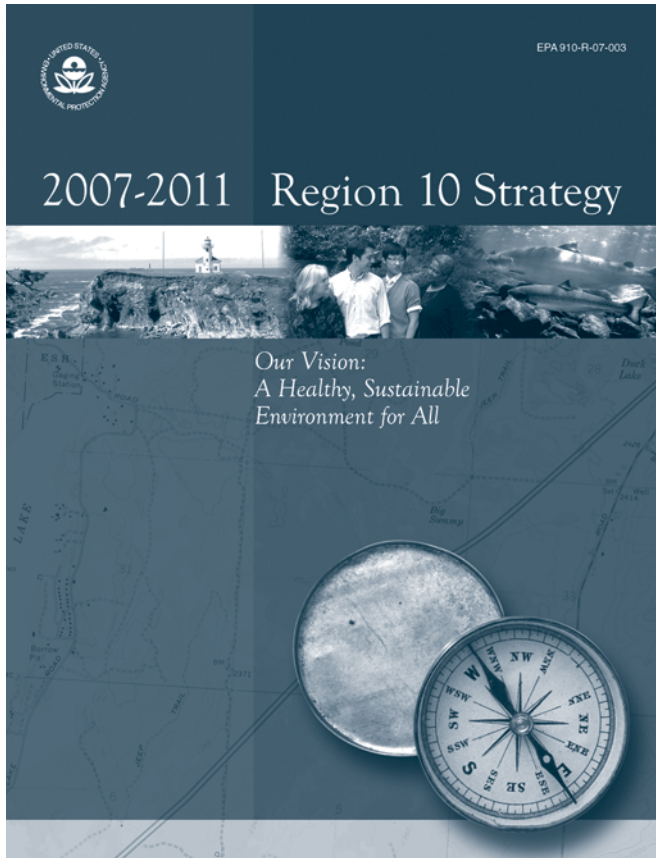
Ecosystem to provide news that goes beyond water topics, pages 9-10.



Calendar to highlight environmental events, page 11.



The Next Five Years: EPA Region 10's Environmental Strategy



A new strategic plan is now in place for EPA Region 10. The **2007-2011 Region 10 Strategy** supports EPA's regional vision of a healthy, sustainable environment for all. This strategy covers EPA's work in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and with about 270 Tribal governments in the Northwest and Alaska. The plan, designed to help EPA Region 10 focus its efforts in the coming years, emphasizes six strategic endeavors:

Support the Core: Work to make and implement resources and programmatic decisions that ensure the integrity of our core programs.

Clean Affordable Energy and Climate Change:

- Develop and implement a regional approach to address climate change,
- Participate in the West Coast Collaborative, a public private partnership to reduce diesel emission, and
- Apply EPA authorities related to oil and gas to maximize environmentally safe exploration, development, and production in Alaska.

Enhancing Tribal Environments: Work with Tribal Governments to protect and restore the natural resources on which tribal communities rely for their physical, cultural, and economic well-being.

Protecting and Restoring Watersheds: Continue to place strong emphasis on our important watershed protection and restoration work. These projects involve a wide cross-section of Region 10 offices and public and private efforts.

Sustainability and Strategic Partnerships: Promote sustainable practices and foster strategic partnerships that allow us to meet our environmental, social, and economic needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

A Stronger EPA: Ensure a diverse, talented, and highly skilled work force in Region 10.

The strategy sets a clear direction for EPA Region 10. It provides a basis for making fair and reasonable decisions to use resources for the most benefit to public health and the environment. The plan also establishes a framework for monitoring progress. In each endeavor, EPA will measure success every six months.

For a copy of the full strategy, contact EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center at 206-553-1200 or 1-800-424-4372. Ask for document number EPA 910-R-07-003.

Or, learn more at EPA Region 10's website at www.epa.gov/r10earth and click on "2007-2011 Region 10 Strategy."

Guidance Issued: Clean Water Act Definition of “Waters of the United States”

EPA and the Corps of Engineers have jointly issued a legal memorandum that interprets the June 2006 Supreme Court decision in the consolidated cases *Rapanos v. U.S.* and *Carabell v. U.S.* (known as the “Rapanos” decision). The guidance will help ensure nationwide predictability, reliability, and consistency in identifying wetlands, streams and rivers subject to the Clean Water Act. The EPA/Corps guidance reflects the agencies’ intent to provide maximum protection for the nation’s aquatic resources under the Act as interpreted by the Supreme Court in *Rapanos*. To ensure such decisions are made in a timely manner, the agencies also prepared a Memorandum of Agreement laying out a process with short timeframes, when necessary, for reaching interagency agreement on jurisdictional calls.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/CWAwaters.html.

Forest Service, EPA Increase Coordination to Improve Water Quality



The U.S. Forest Service and EPA have agreed on new steps designed to improve water quality on National Forests and Grasslands. In September, the agencies signed an agreement that enables both agencies to increase coordinated efforts to manage, protect, and restore the health of the nation’s water resources.

More than 60 million Americans get their water from sources on the National Forests in addition to municipal water supplies. Watersheds play an important role in supporting aquatic species and biodiversity, and provide recreational opportunities to millions of visitors each year. Data shows that about 8% of all water quality impairments nationally are located on National Forest System lands. Leading causes of these impairments include elevated temperatures, excess sediment, and habitat modification.

The agreement identifies areas in which the Forest Service and EPA will increase coordination of activities with states and tribes to address water quality impairments on National Forest System lands and speed up attainment of water quality standards. More information can be found at: www.fs.fed.us/biology/ and www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/

Lead in Drinking Water Rule Strengthened

EPA issued a final rule in September that will strengthen requirements in the areas of monitoring, customer awareness, and lead service line replacement. Specifically, the rule will require water suppliers to give consumers information to help them make decisions about how to limit their exposure to lead in drinking water.



The rule is one outcome of EPA’s 2005 Drinking Water Lead Reduction Plan. That plan arose from EPA’s analysis of the current regulation and state and local implementation. The agency has since released guidance to help public water systems better understand the potential impacts of treatment changes on their ability to control lead. EPA has asked the National Drinking Water Advisory Council to provide recommendations on public education requirements. The agency has also provided new guidance and tools to help schools and child care facilities to monitor for lead in drinking water.

Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around homes. Even at low levels, lead may cause a range of health effects including behavioral problems and learning disabilities. Children six years old and under are most at risk because this is when the brain is developing. The primary source of lead exposure for most children is lead-based paint in older homes. Lead in drinking water can add to that exposure.

For a copy of the rule and more information on lead in drinking water, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/lcrr/index.html.



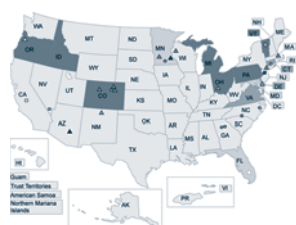
Grant Opportunity: Puget Sound Watershed Protection

On or before November 15, EPA Region 10 will issue a request for grant proposals for **Puget Sound 2007 Targeted Watershed Grants**. When issued, details will be posted at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/water.nsf/Office+of+Water/PS07RFP>.

EPA is soliciting proposals to support the protection and restoration of high valued Puget Sound aquatic resources in areas threatened by growth pressure. The grant program emphasizes local, holistic watershed protection and management approaches. Grant funds will assist local and tribal governments in managing land uses while protecting watershed functions and values. Successful projects will match proposed activities to the appropriate watershed scale to ensure environmental results.

EPA plans to award a total of \$2.5 million dollars. Up to ten awards will be made, ranging from about **\$250,000** to **\$625,000**. Entities of local governments, special purpose districts, and federally recognized Indian tribes in the greater Puget Sound Basin are eligible to apply. State agencies, institutions of higher learning, and non-governmental entities are not eligible to directly receive these grant awards; however, EPA encourages tribes and local governments to solicit their participation as local collaborators. Proposals are due **January 15, 2008**. For details, e-mail **Sally Hanft**, EPA, at hanft.sally@epa.gov.

Water Quality Trading Program Maps on Web



Curious about where water quality trading is happening around the country? Check out EPA's new water quality trading maps—now live on the web! EPA has created two trading maps. The first map shows trading programs that have traded at least once, as well as state level

trading programs. The second map shows trading programs that received EPA funding. Each map is clickable: just click on the state in which you are interested and it will take you to more information on that state's trading programs. The maps are located on EPA's Water Quality Trading website at www.epa.gov/waterqualitytrading/tradingmap.html.

Document Helps with Urban Runoff Management



The North American Lake Management Society recently published a second edition of a popular publication called **Fundamentals of Urban Runoff Management: Technical and Institutional Issues**. This document revises a 1994 edition and was prepared with support from EPA. The update is important because of the tremendous amount of new information available and the shift in stormwater program direction from the historic mitigation-based approach to a more source-based approach. The document is posted in .pdf format at www.nalms.org/.

Get EPA's New Newsletter: Go Green!

America is shifting to a "green culture" in which some 300 million citizens are embracing the idea that environmental responsibility is everyone's responsibility. As a step in that direction, citizen environmental partners can sign up to receive EPA's new consumer newsletter, **Go Green!**

EPA is launching this monthly, e-mail newsletter to provide information about "what you can do." It covers activities and events that everyone can use to make a difference just about anywhere – in homes, workplaces, schools, and communities.

The newsletter will include information on such issues as how to calculate individual energy use, upcoming environmental activities and observances, and recent news reports from EPA. For information or to sign up for the newsletter, visit:

www.epa.gov/newsroom/gogreen.

Wastewater Website Launched for Small Communities

EPA recently launched a new website to help small communities achieve and maintain sustainable wastewater services. This site provides information about grants, funding resources, technical assistance and training. Many tools are available on this website to help small communities plan, design, build, and maintain their wastewater infrastructure. Visit the **Wastewater in Small Communities Website** at www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/index.htm.

Visit WaterTalk online at www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm



The Watershed Academy

Internet Tools for Watershed Management: Computer Course

Key EPA Internet-Based Tools for Watershed Management is a comprehensive, two-part course designed to familiarize you with powerful watershed management tools provided online by EPA. These tools are a resource for novice and master watershed planners alike. Presented in a readable, section-based format, the free course tutorials are now available for self-paced study. The only requirement is a computer with Internet access.

In the overview, you will learn to extract reports from EPA water program databases such as the TMDL

database, take a spin on Enviromapper for Water, EPA's online mapping application based on the National Hydrography Dataset, and query an interactive funding catalog. In the in-depth course, you will get an overview of the Watershed Plan Builder Tool, query water quality standards for a state, generate a watershed-wide data summary on impaired waters from WATERS, and much more. To explore the course, visit www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/epatools.

Agriculture Grant Program to Support Pesticide Use Reduction

Grant proposals under the **Strategic Agricultural Initiative Program** are now being solicited. EPA Region 10 is continuing this small-grant program to help implement the Food Quality Protection Act and support "transition" efforts by growers. The program supports innovative efforts that enable growers to reduce their reliance on pesticides, while maintaining or enhancing their present income. The program's focus is on pesticide risk reduction, including projects which address current-use pesticide contaminants to streams.

The program is run by American Farmland Trust's Center for Agriculture in the Environment through a cooperative agreement with EPA. The program is

seeking projects that focus on results or actual on-the-ground changes, rather than activities. **Each award will be up to \$100,000.**

This grant opportunity is open to non-profit organizations, including commodity groups and farmers' groups, extension and university programs, state and federal government agencies, and tribes. Private enterprises such as pest consultants, food processors, and others may also apply but are encouraged to involve other partners in their projects. The projects must be located within Region 10, which includes the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska. Proposals are due by **November 30, 2007**. For details, go to www.aftresearch.org/grant/.



Maintaining Dirt and Gravel Roads



Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance for Dirt and Gravel Roads, a 300-page manual, is now available. Dirt and gravel roads are increasingly being recognized as having a significant impact on water resources. Pennsylvania State University, with a grant from EPA, helped create this document for people interested in integrating environmental concerns into their unpaved roads programs. Specifically, the manual identifies, documents, and encourages the use of environmentally sensitive maintenance of dirt and gravel roads. The document covers the use of natural systems and innovative technologies to reduce erosion, sediment, and dust pollution. It offers a “tool box” of environmentally sensitive maintenance resources and practices. Access the document at www.epa.gov/owow/nps/sensitive/sensitive.html. For a printed copy, contact **Chris Solloway**, EPA, at solloway.chris@epa.gov.

Kit Helps Protect Local Watersheds, Wetlands



A **Watershed and Wetland Protection Information Kit for County Officials** is now available. The kit offers a collection of resources that can assist county and local officials with efforts to protect and restore the multiple benefits of their community’s water resources. The information kit

was produced by the Center for Watershed Protection and the National Association of Counties with support from EPA. It is available online at www.cwp.org/wetlands/naco.htm.

Bathroom Sink Faucets Get WaterSense Label

Consumers will soon be able to identify high-performance, water-efficient sink faucets for their bathrooms. EPA has released a product specification for ones that use about 30 percent less water than conventional models.



To earn the WaterSense label, faucets must be tested and certified by a licensed certifying body to meet EPA’s water-efficiency and performance criteria. Under the criteria, faucets and accessories such as aerators cannot flow at a rate of more than 1.5 gallons per minute (gpm), or less than 0.8 gpm.

WaterSense-labeled faucets not only save water. They also have the added benefit of saving energy used to treat, pump, and heat water. (See article on page 7.)

Consumers can already find the WaterSense label on more than 60 high-efficiency toilets. WaterSense-labeled toilets use 20 percent less water than standard models. And, they are independently tested and certified to perform as well as or better than their market counterparts. Working with EPA, retailers are starting to feature WaterSense-labeled toilets in their plumbing sections. Bathroom sink faucets should be close behind in 2008.

Bathrooms are, by far, the largest use of water in the home, responsible for about half of total indoor water use. By installing a WaterSense-labeled high-efficiency toilet and faucet or aerator, American homes can save more than 11,000 gallons each year.

WaterSense, an EPA partnership program launched in 2006, seeks to enhance the market for water-efficient products and services by building a national brand for water efficiency. For more information and a list of WaterSense-labeled plumbing products, go to www.epa.gov/watersense/specs/faucet_final.htm.

Saving Water Is Powerful Stuff

Many Americans know about the importance of saving energy and saving water. But few know about the direct connection between saving both. While we know to adjust our thermostats and fix a leaky toilet, too many people don't fully comprehend that both actions have profound impacts on sustaining our energy supplies and water resources.

The hidden energy costs in supplying water

Although often overlooked, vast amounts of energy are needed to operate the nation's water infrastructure. On the supply side, pumping water uses the most energy. This includes pumping to deliver untreated water to treatment plants and to deliver treated water to customers.

And pumping isn't the only energy consumer. Each step in the water service delivery cycle expends kilowatts, including the treatment process. Nationwide, drinking water and wastewater systems use 75 billion kilowatt hours per year—as much as the pulp and paper and petroleum industries combined. Energy costs to run these systems can represent as much as one-third of a municipality's electricity use. So, when we reduce our water use, we save energy because less water needs to be pumped and treated.

On the demand side, even after utilities use energy to deliver water, residential and business customers consume energy to heat, cool, and use water. Consider the fact that running a hot water faucet for five minutes is equivalent to running a 60-watt light bulb for 14

hours! In fact, not only does using water more efficiently decrease energy costs directly, it also decreases or postpones the need to develop both new water and energy infrastructure.

The benefits of saving both water and energy

Given how closely related saving water is to saving energy, strategies that promote both water savings and energy savings are no-brainers. Residential consumers can save both water and energy by installing water-efficient fixtures and appliances—showers, faucets, clothes washers, and dishwashers. (See article on page 6.) If every American home installed water-efficient faucets, for example, the United States could save 60 billion gallons and \$650 million in energy costs.

Utilities are seeing the potential to compound water and energy savings. *For example, Seattle-area water and energy utilities are partnering in a showerhead replacement campaign. Showerheads that run at 2.0 gallons per minute will cut the demand for water, electricity, and natural gas, while reducing wastewater flows. The voluntary campaign expects to distribute up to 120,000 showerheads to single-family households.*

In the commercial sector, energy and water savings go hand-in-hand on a variety of fronts—from the kitchen to the restroom and from the laundry to cooling systems. In the restaurant business, for example, changes in products and behaviors offer great potential to reduce water use.

Join in the savings

EPA's goal is to achieve environmental and economic benefits as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, but we can't do it alone. We need consumers and businesses to reduce their water use and look for the WaterSense label. So the next time you turn on a faucet or a shower, don't think of it as just running water. Remember, you're also using energy. The more wisely we use our water, the better off we'll be.

For more information on the WaterSense program, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.



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EPA Recognizes Homer, Alaska Public Water System for Excellence



The City of Homer, Alaska Public Water System has earned national recognition as an outstanding public water system. The system was recognized as part of

EPA's annual Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Award for Sustainable Public Health Protection.

This program highlights municipal water providers that “achieve results that go beyond the typical project and show exceptional creativity and dedication to public health protection.”

Homer used a DWSRF loan to extend its drinking water distribution system into residential areas that had previously been served by private wells or hauled water. The loan also financed a master plan for drinking water infrastructure. Homeowners added to the distribution system will repay between 50 and 75 percent of the extension cost over 20 years. Revenues from a 0.75% tax on all purchases within the City of Homer will repay the rest of the cost of this project.

For more information, contact **Rick Green**, EPA, at **206-553-8504, 800-424-4372**, or **green.richard@epa.gov**. For more about EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, visit **www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/index.html**.

Alaska, Oregon Projects Receive Environmental Justice Grants

In October, EPA awarded \$1 million in grants across the country for improving the environment in low-income communities. The \$50,000 grants will go to twenty community-based organizations to address environmental and public health issues. Here in Region 10, two organizations will receive grants.

The Alaska Community Action for Toxics (ACAT) will get a grant to help them partner with the community to sample the water of the Suqi River, test for contaminants, identify existing toxics, and plan restoration of the river. For details, visit www.akaction.org/.



Organizing People, Activating Leaders (OPAL) in Portland, OR, has been awarded funding to help them focus on three national environmental justice priorities:

- (1) reducing asthma attacks;
- (2) reducing exposure to air toxics; and
- (3) revitalizing contaminated sites.

OPAL intends to empower the community through outreach and training to stimulate leadership development and involvement around environmental justice issues. For more, visit www.opalpdx.org/.

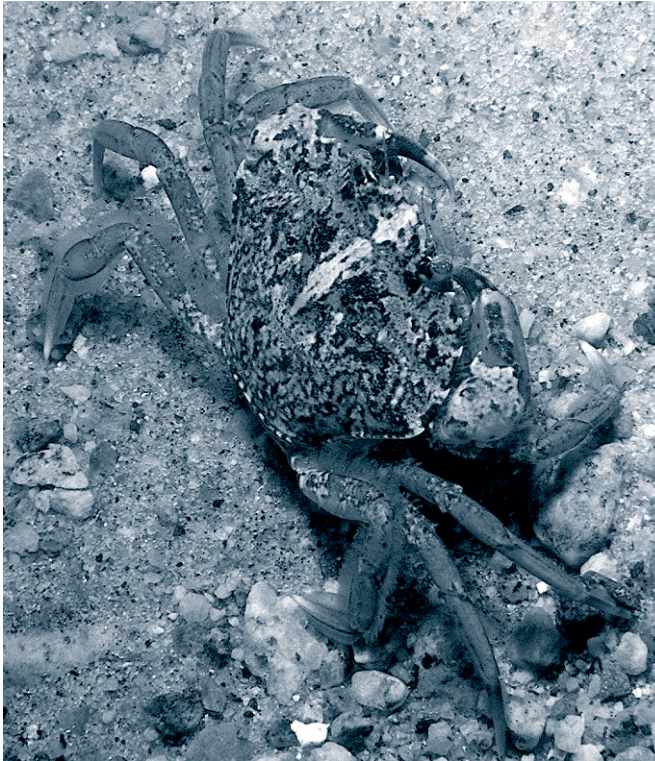


OPAL will use EPA funds to help their community

For more information about EPA's Environmental Justice Program, contact **Melanie Wood** at **206-553-1107** or e-mail **wood.melanie@epa.gov**.

Invasive Species Updates

Aquatic Nuisance Species Watch List for Washington



European Green Crab, a species of concern for the Northwest coast

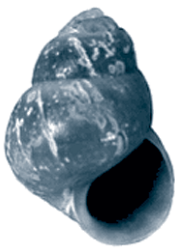
This new list serves as a reference tool for agency and public prevention, monitoring, and management. The list can help focus monitoring efforts and promote awareness of aquatic nuisance species and their



New Zealand Mud Snails are already appearing in Oregon coastal waters

impacts. The list is designed to be a continuously evolving document consisting of species the Washington Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee considers to pose, or potentially pose, a threat to aquatic ecosystems in the state. It includes species which have been previously established and (for now) eradicated; species to prevent from entering Washington; species observed here to eradicate or otherwise manage; and species regulated by the state for recreation, aquaculture, or other management purposes, but which require controlled distribution. It is not meant to be a complete list of non-native species in Washington. View the list at www.weedcenter.org/inv_plant_info/WA_aquatic_watch.pdf.

Estuarine Invasion



In July, a major new snail invasion was detected in Coos Bay, Oregon. Possibly a species of *Assiminea*, it is thought to come from Asia and was likely introduced by shipping. It is a small snail, about 5 mm in height (see photo). It may be widespread in bays and estuaries along the coast. This snail is expected to compete with other snail populations, and perhaps

displace or replace some native and introduced species. It should not be confused with the New Zealand Mud Snail, *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, but may have similar impacts. [Photo: Dr. James H. McLean, LA County Museum of Natural History]

Draft EPA Report on Climate Change, Aquatic Invasive Species

A draft report on the “*Effects of Climate Change on Aquatic Invasive Species and Implications for Management and Research*” is available online. The comment period has closed but it may be of interest. Access it at: <http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncea/cfm/recordisplay.cfm?deid=180043#Download>

Beneficial Landscaping **Fall Planting is Beneficial**

Whether you think that autumn is the end of the growing season or the beginning of a new one, you'd be right. It's a time of putting soil and plants "to bed" for the winter, and a time of planting. As all things in beneficial landscaping, fall planting yields many benefits – environmental, economic, and aesthetic!

The best reason to plant in the fall is to enable root growth. Roots are the plants' foundation. Planting in the fall (and before the soil freezes) gives trees, shrubs, and perennials a chance to focus on below-, rather than above-ground, growth. Healthy new roots give plants a head start in the spring and increase the survival rate of new plantings. This saves money, time, and labor—and you get to enjoy the new plants months sooner.

Plentiful fall rains water the new plants naturally. Rains coupled with shorter, cooler days mean the plants need less water from you. It's even a good time to plant bare root plants, which are a fraction of the cost of potted plants. While a new plant will indeed need a

good wetting when planted, supplemental watering needs will be lessened. This conserves water supplies, saves on water bills, and frees you to do things other than watering the garden.

Finally, why put off until spring what you can do in the fall? Spring gardening tasks are many – from vegetable garden soil preparation and planting, to winter storm clean up – if you've already planted your new shrubs and perennials, you need only watch them flourish while you take care of other tasks. Fall planting is good planning!

Once you've completed your new plantings, you may as well have a piece of that pumpkin pie ... and a chance to give thanks for the fruit of this year's bounty, and for the joy of what is to come.

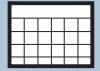
For more information on this and other topics in beneficial landscaping, contact **Elaine Somers** at **206-553-2966** or **somers.elaine@epa.gov**, or visit our website at **www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm**.

*Printed with gratitude for contributions from **Elliott Menashe** of **Greenbelt Consulting***





CALENDAR



November

November 13-16:

Network of Oregon Watershed Councils, Hood River, Oregon, <http://www.oregonwatersheds.org/gath/>.

November 15:

America Recycles Day, www.americarecyclesday.org.

December

December 6-7:

Northwest Environmental Conference & Trade Show: Where Business Meets the Environment, Portland, OR, 503-227-6361, 800-985-6322, www.nbec.org/content.aspx?pageid=16.

January

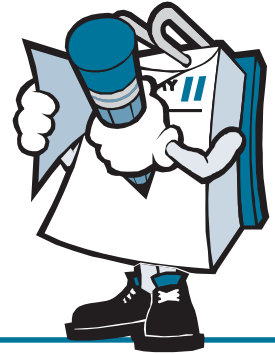
January 14:

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

February

February 5-7:

2008 Stream Restoration Design Symposium, Stevenson, WA, <http://rrnw.org/symposium>.



Find current and past issues of WaterTalk online at www.epa.gov/r10earth/water.htm





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Alaska Idaho Oregon Washington

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*.

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EPA's New Strategy for the Region

National Environmental News

The Water and Energy Savings Link

Autumn Planting

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