WaterTalk

Alaska Idaho Oregon Washington

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 Bulletin - EPA 910/9-92-043 January 2005

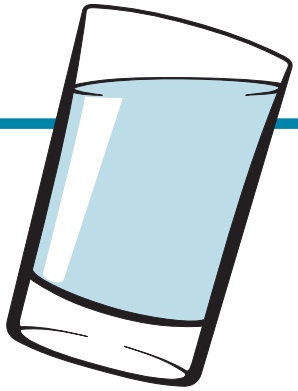
EPA NEWS

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act

December 16, 2004, marked the 30th anniversary of the national Safe Drinking Water Act. The Act was signed into law 30 years ago to protect public health by regulating the nation's drinking water supply.

The law requires many actions that protect public health and drinking water sources. Those sources can include rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, groundwater wells, and other sources. Today, millions of Americans receive high quality drinking water from their public water systems.

Drinking Water Facts:



- A person can live more than a month without food, but only about a week without water.
- 66% of the human body is water; 75% of the human brain is water.
- It is possible for people today to drink water that was part of the dinosaur era.
- The average cost for water supplied to a home in the U.S. is about $2.00 for 1,000 gallons, which equals about 5 gallons for a penny.
- It costs over $3.5 billion to operate water systems throughout the U.S. each year.

EPA's regional Public Environmental Resource Center offers many free resources to help you learn more about drinking water and take action to protect it. They can be reached at **206-553-1200 or 800-424-4372**.

In This Issue...

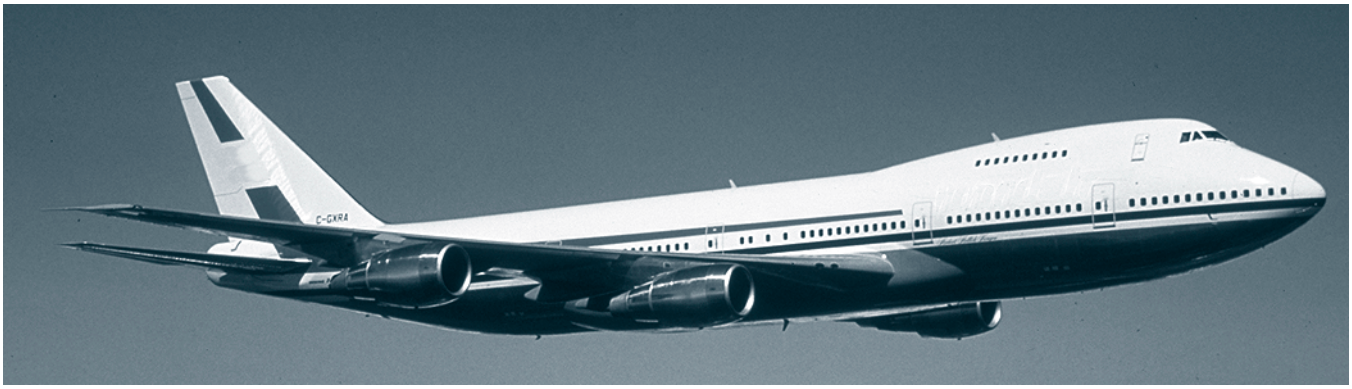
Idaho Underground Storage Tank Inspections Reveal Problems

For just over a year, EPA has increased the number of inspections at gas stations and convenience stores in Idaho as part of an initiative to protect the state's groundwater. Most of the underground storage tanks at these facilities were inspected by EPA for the first time. Nearly 70 percent were not complying with federal leak-prevention rules.

"The bottom line is we found only one-in-three facilities complying with key operational requirements," said Jim Werntz, EPA's Idaho Office Director. "While some in the industry are doing everything right, there are a large number of facilities in Idaho that are not making leak detection and prevention a priority. This should be a concern not just to EPA, but to every Idaho resident who drinks water or irrigates from a well. UST requirements are critical to protecting groundwater from petroleum leaks and preventing costly cleanups for taxpayers."

Each facility was notified by mail before the inspection. EPA conducted 76 inspections, identifying 93 violations for a total of $14,550 in penalties.

Since Idaho is the only state in America without an underground storage tank program, the responsibility to inspect 1,350 facilities statewide falls to EPA. For more information, contact Erik Sirs, EPA, Idaho, at 208-378-5762, or sirs.erik@epamail.epa.gov.



EPA Announces Agreements on Airline Drinking Water

EPA recently announced commitments from 12 major U.S. passenger airlines to implement new aircraft water testing and disinfection protocols. These protocols will further protect the traveling public. Existing guidance on drinking water aboard passenger aircraft continues to be reviewed by EPA. Agreements have been signed with Alaska Airlines, Aloha Airlines, American Airlines, America West, ATA Airlines, Continental Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue, Midwest Airlines, Northwest Airlines, United Airlines and US Airways. Two additional airlines, Delta and Southwest, are negotiating separate agreements with EPA. Collectively, these 14 carriers represent the majority of U.S. flag-carrying aircraft transporting the flying public. EPA will continue to work with smaller, regional and charter aircraft carriers to address drinking water quality with similar agreements. For more information and to view testing data, go to: www.epa.gov/airlinewater.

EPA Acts to Make Beaches Cleaner and Safer

In November, EPA signed a final regulation to further protect beach goers. The rules put in place improved standards for pathogens in water to protect the public, particularly children, who are often more vulnerable to illness-causing bacteria in beach water.

The BEACH Act of 2000 required coastal states to adopt bacteria standards by April 2004 to better protect beach bathers from harmful pathogens. For states that have not yet adopted more protective standards, the Act required EPA to establish standards. Although this rule sets federal standards, any state that adopts its own standards that are as protective as EPA's and receives approval will be removed from these federal requirements.

EPA will continue to grant funding to all BEACH Act states regardless of their status under this action. The Agency is committed to ensuring continued monitoring of the nation's beaches and to notifying the public of beach closures and advisories. EPA estimates that Americans take 910 million trips to coastal areas each year and spend about $44 billion at those beach locations. EPA has provided about $32 million in grants to help states implement this monitoring program.

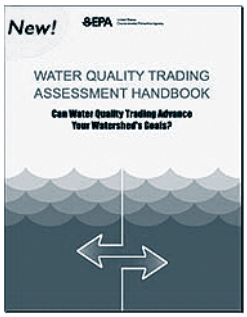
For more information on the rule see: www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches/bacteria-rule-final-fs.htm. For general information about beaches and EPA's activities to protect them, see: http://www.epa.gov/beaches.

EPA Issues Updated Guidelines for Water Reuse

EPA, in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) and others, is distributing a new **Guidelines for Water Reuse Manual** (EPA625-R-04/018). The 2004 manual recommends water reuse guidelines, along with supporting information, to help water and wastewater utilities and regulatory agencies, particularly in the U.S. The document updates the 1992 Guidelines document by incorporating new information, including expanded coverage of water reuse issues and practices in other countries. Copies can be ordered on the Web at www.epa.gov/ttbnrmrl. It also is posted on the Web at www.epa.gov/ORD/NRMRL/pubs/625r04108/625r04108.pdf.

TOOLS

Water Quality Trading Handbook Helps Watershed Managers



Water quality trading has gained attention as an effective market-based approach for state and local governments to achieve cleaner water. The concept of water trading is new and not commonly practiced. Water quality managers may want to know if trading will work in their local watershed. EPA's **Water Quality Trading Assessment Handbook** is designed to help determine if trading can be used to make cost-effective pollutant reductions. Using a hypothetical river basin, the handbook presents a framework for any watershed to evaluate problems and determine if trading could effectively address local conditions. The handbook shows how to assess the costs of controlling key pollutants and helps the user decide if trading would be financially attractive to watershed participants. General information about water quality trading and the handbook are available at: www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading.htm. You may order free paper copies of the handbook from the National Service Center for Environmental Publications at 800-490-9198 or via email at ncepimal@one.net (refer to document number EPA 841-B-04-001).

Find NPDES Wastewater Permits on Web

EPA is now scanning copies of major National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits to make them easily available to the public on the Web. You can now find over 2000 NPDES individual and general permits at www.epa.gov/npdes/permitsearch.

Five Star Grant Proposals Due in March

The Five Star Challenge Grants Program develops knowledge and skills in young people through restoration projects that involve multiple and diverse partners. Partners can include local government agencies, elected officials, community groups, businesses, schools, youth organizations, and environmental organizations. Consideration for funding is based upon the project's educational and training opportunities for students and at-risk youth, the ecological benefits to be derived, and the project's social and economic benefits to the community. Proposals are due in early March each year. For details, visit www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/.

Animal Feeding Operations Information Center On-line

EPA now offers a comprehensive Internet guide to give quick access to livestock agricultural information in the U.S. This site is intended to be a single point of reference to obtain links to state regulations, permits and policies, nutrient management information, livestock and trade associations, websites, best management practices and controls, cooperative extension and land grant universities, research, funding, and information on environmental issues. You can search the website at www.epa.gov/npdes/afovirtualcenter.

TOOLS

Guide Helps Wastewater Utilities Manage Critical Issues

EPA has issued a new tool to help wastewater utilities develop environmental management systems for their operations. The handbook is called **Achieving Environmental Excellence: An Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Handbook for Wastewater Utilities**. EMSs are a powerful and proven tool that can help utilities realize a number of benefits and address many challenges—including the need to ensure sustainable infrastructure. The handbook was developed in cooperation with the Global Environment and Technology Foundation. It takes utilities through a step-by-step process for developing an EMS, using examples and tips from utilities that have successful EMSs. The handbook is on the Web at www.epa.gov/ems.

WATERWORDS

To view WaterTalk on the Internet, go to www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm.

Pooled Resources Making Water Quality Info Flow

This edition of WaterTalk features some of the important work being done by a partnership of agencies to bring you water quality information. Read on for lots of great resources.

Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Coordination Project:

With the goal of increasing water quality information for the public, businesses, and others, several agencies are pooling their resources. The agencies include the Extension Services, Water Resource Research Institutes of the Pacific Northwest, EPA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A grant from the Cooperative States Research, Education and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, makes it possible for the four states (WA, OR, ID and AK) and EPA to work in cooperation. Together, the agencies are now thinking and acting regionally and leveraging their resources on water quality issues for the good of all four states. Here are some of their projects:

Water Quality Efforts in the Pacific Northwest—Applying Knowledge to Improve Water Quality:
This new publication provides an overview of PNW Regional Water Quality Coordination Project programs. For a copy, send your name and address to Sharon J. Collman, Extension Liaison to EPA, EPA Region 10, EPTA-086, 1200 Sixth Ave, Seattle, WA 98101, or e-mail collman.sharon@epa.gov.

Pacific Northwest Water Website:
This website gives information on the project, local contacts, project partners, events and training opportunities, archived resources and much more. It also offers biweekly water quality updates. These updates feature results of research studies, educational programs, resources, and more. Visit www.pnwwaterweb.com/.

Water Quality Monitoring and Volunteer Conference 2004:
Presentations, handouts, photos and other materials from this hands-on workshop are now on the Web. Visit: www.pnwwaterweb.com/monitoring04.htm.

Water IQ, the Survey:

How do residents of the Pacific Northwest view water and water quality issues? University of Idaho Cooperative Extension's Dr. Robert Mahler decided to find out. He sent out a survey to a random sample of residents. One finding was that people want MORE information on water quality but NOT more meetings and workshops. Eventually, it will

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WATERWORDS

Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Coordination Project: (cont.)

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Water IQ, the Survey:

be possible for anyone to develop specific reports by querying the data (for example: How did residents of Astoria view water issues?). Several breakout reports on specific topics have been published with more to come. See:

- Water Quality Issues are a High Priority http://www.pnwwaterweb.com/Initiatives/pub_survey.htm
- "Citizens Grade Surface Water Quality" http://www.pnwwaterweb.com/Initiatives/swq_surv.htm

Got Poop?

Alaska's Scoop the Poop Program is addressing the issue of the 22 tons of dog waste deposited every day by 59,000 dogs. The problem is compounded when the pet waste is frozen during winter and then hits the streams during the spring thaw. The Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage, in partnership with others, has embarked on a public education program with catchy posters. Pet waste stations are sponsored by Extension, civic groups, and individuals. For details visit: www.pnwwaterweb.com/Initiatives/pnw_041.htm.

Did you miss the Watershed Satellite Conference?

"Improving Community Involvement in Watershed Restoration" was the third Satellite Conference focusing on watershed groups and people who make restoration happen. This interactive conference aired in November 2004 at 38 sites in Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Idaho. If you missed it, you can view the video-stream at http://caheinfo.wsu.edu/video/stream.html.

Video-Stream Discussions on Water Quality to Air in January:

This series of video-streamed panel discussions on issues related to urban water quality is scheduled to air in mid January. It can be viewed in your office or later from the archive site. Details of this and other programs are on the Web at http://wawater.wsu.edu/.

SPOTLIGHT

EPA Honors Northwest Green Power Buyers

EPA recently praised Northwest companies that are switching to green power at a ceremony in Seattle, Washington.

"Conventional electricity generation is the nation's single largest industrial source of air pollution," said EPA's Julie Hagensen. "Installing or buying green power is one way businesses can help keep the Pacific Northwest beautiful."

Green power is electricity generated by renewable energy sources. Sources can include solar, wind, water, geothermal, biomass (combustion of organic materials) and biogas (combustion of naturally-produced methane). EPA encourages organizations to buy green power through a voluntary program, the Green Power Partnership. This partnership is working to standardize green power procurement as part of best-practice environmental management. Partners in the Green Power Partnership pledge to switch to green power for a portion of their electricity needs in return for EPA technical assistance and public recognition.

EPA recognizes these Northwest organizations: Bainbridge Graduate Institute, Cascadia Green Building Council, Choice Organic Teas, Climate Solutions, David Evans and Associates, Inc., Energy Trust of Oregon, Epson, Hewlett-Packard's Boise, ID facility, Hewlett-Packard's Vancouver, WA facility, Office Depot, Port of Portland, Renewable Northwest Project, Samish Tribal Council, Shuksan Energy Consulting, Starbucks Corporation, Stoel Rives, U.S. Air Force Fairchild Base, U.S. Dept. of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and Xantrex Technology.

More information about the Green Power Partnership is at www.epa.gov/greenpower/. For details, contact Carolyn Gangmark, EPA, at 206-553-4072, or e-mail: Gangmark.Carolyn@epa.gov.

SPOTLIGHT

EPA Awards Grants for Environmental Learning

Children settling into the first half of the new school year are benefiting from over $180,000 in federal funds to support their study of the environment. EPA's Regional Office awarded 16 Environmental Education Grants in 2004, distributed throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska.

The grants were awarded to local organizations, government agencies, schools and universities whose projects strive to increase people's knowledge and awareness of the environment and its associated challenges.

This annual EPA grants program gives financial support to projects that increase the public's awareness and knowledge about the environment, and provide skills to make informed decisions and take responsible action. Application information is available on the EPA website: www.epa.gov/region10 or by calling 800-424-4372. To be added to the notification list for the next grant cycle, contact Sally Hanft, EPA, at 206-553-1207 or 800-424-4372, or hanft.sally@epa.gov.

Grant recipients are as follows:

Alaska

Alaska Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Assn. ---------- $10,530
Calypso Farm & Ecology Center ---------- $20,000

Idaho

Friends of Teton River ---------- $6,200

Oregon

Polk Soil and Water Conservation District - $4,110
Portland State University ---------- $6,284
Willamette Resources & Educational Network ---------- $24,992

Washington

Bryant Elementary School PTA ---------- $5,000
Dayton School District #2 ---------- $3,200
East Valley School District #361 ---------- $4,453
Franklin Conservation District ---------- $22,645
National Wildlife Federation ---------- $23,485
Olympic Park Institute ---------- $5,000
Port Townsend Marine Science Society -- $13,735
Rainshadow Natural Science Foundation - $4,900
Wenatchee School District #246 ---------- $10,146
Center for Agricultural Partnerships -------- $23,500

ECOSYSTEM

Is Something Being Done about those Invasive Species? Yes!

The May 2004 issue of WaterTalk introduced the topic of invasive species—harmful plants or animals that are not native to the ecosystem. Invasive species have been called one of the main environmental threats of the 21st century. This edition highlights some new activities in the region designed to tackle the issue of invasive species. For details, contact Joan Cabreza, EPA, at 206-553-7369 or 800-424-4372, or cabreza.joan@epa.gov.

WA Invasive Species Council. Movement is underway to establish a Washington Invasive Species Council. There is already an Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee, and the Department of Agriculture and various Noxious Weed Boards deal with terrestrial weeds and many plant diseases. But some organisms do not fit under either system. The Council would deal with all invasive species, and be better able to consolidate state invasive species control and response. Idaho, Oregon, and several other states already have developed councils.

WA Rapid Response Plan: The Aquatic Nuisance Species Committee has contracted for development of an Early Detection and Rapid Response Plan to deal with new aquatic invaders. A draft will be available for public review in spring.

ID Invasive Species Plan. The first public draft of the new Idaho Invasive Species Plan has been completed. An outgrowth of the last February Governor's Invasive Species Summit, it includes 22 separate actions for meeting the growing threat of invasive species in Idaho. (View the draft at www.agri.idaho.gov.)

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Is Something Being Done about those Invasive Species?

AK Forum. Alaska's annual *Forum on the Environment* will be held February 7-11 in Anchorage. This year's forum will include invasive species sessions, with particular focus on marine organisms, fresh-water fishes, rats, and noxious weeds. (See www.akforum.com.)

Regional Invasion Pathways Project. EPA is beginning a research project to prove two hypotheses: (1) that San Francisco Bay (the nation's most invaded location) is the source of most Pacific Northwest invasive organisms, and (2) that these species are being transported via ballast water offloaded from coastal shipping. A genetic screening tool will also be developed that allows inspectors to easily identify the organisms in ballast water. This will help them determine if boats have exchanged their ballast water (a regulatory requirement) before entering coastal waters. The project could affect coastal ballast water regulation development and enforcement.

Estuary Exotic Species Detection Programs. Exotic species monitoring programs have now been developed for Puget Sound, Tillamook Bay, and the Lower Columbia River Estuary. The plans discuss suggested criteria for determining the presence and status of exotic organisms; species and environments to monitor; sampling methods, frequency, and timing; sampling station locations and numbers; a system to facilitate recognition of new organisms; and an estimate of monitoring plan costs. Download the Puget Sound report from www.psat.wa.gov/Publications/esdp_oth04-02.pdf.

Lower Columbia River Study. Scientists recently completed a three-year invasive species study of the Lower Columbia River. They added eight new species to the existing list, bringing the number of identified exotic species in this river reach to 81. A new species is being found nearly every five months. The eight species that have never been scientifically documented in the river include an aquatic worm that is new to the West Coast. The study will expand into the Lower Snake and mid reaches of the Columbia soon.

New Colonial Tunicate in Puget Sound. In October, a small patch of a new invasive colonial tunicate was discovered growing on an underwater wreck in Edmonds Marine Park in Washington. This species has caused extensive damage to shellfish on the East Coast. It was quickly removed, but it has now been sighted in other areas. A Tunicate Response Advisory Group has formed, and divers are conducting surveys to determine the extent of the invasion. A website designed to help report sightings of this organism is at www.pnwscuba.com/critterwatchers/invasive.htm.

Field Guide for Gardeners. National Wildlife Federation and eNature have launched a new field guide to native and invasive plants. Unlike other guides, this one focuses on plants commonly found at garden centers or in plant catalogs, so it's relevant to the home gardener. The plant guides are searchable by state. The native plant list can be sub-divided by plant type (for example, evergreen shrubs, wildflowers, vines or aquatic plants). Each plant has a color photo and a full field guide description as well. Check it out at http://enature.com/native_invasive/natives.asp.

ECOSYSTEM

Beneficial Landscaping
Bringing New Life to Graveyards

Although Halloween has passed on, and fall has deepened into winter, we asked Ralph Thomas Rogers to shine his light on graveyards. Read on! . . . if you dare.

A Proposal for Naturescaping Cemeteries

by Ralph Thomas Rogers, EPA

Cemetery – an area set apart for or containing graves or tombs; burial ground; graveyard. Aside from Halloween, cemeteries are seldom a topic of conversation or a place most people would consider for a casual stroll or wildlife watching. While cemeteries are more often thought of as somber places, they are not only a respite from the city din but also provide habitat for a surprising variety of wildlife.

Cemeteries represent a considerable amount of open space in urban and suburban areas. For instance, at least 98 cemeteries are scattered throughout the four counties of the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan region. As open space becomes increasingly rare in many urban areas, cemeteries afford an ideal opportunity to provide for wildlife habitat diversity within the urban fabric, without compromising their integrity and purpose.

Cemeteries as Habitat. A large cemetery that is near or adjacent to other green has the greatest potential to offer wildlife habitat. However, whether a cemetery is large and connected to existing habitat or small and isolated within an urban matrix, it can be transformed into a successful wildlife haven simply by providing the right kind of habitat. For example, strategic planting of native trees and shrubs that provide escape and nesting cover and year-round food sources, and providing patches of groundcover that are mowed infrequently and that are enhanced as butterfly gardens, can vastly improve habitat values for both resident and migratory species.

Many cemeteries lack adequate buffers around their edges to screen out traffic or other urban/suburban activities. Providing small tree and/or shrub hedgerows can provide additional cover and improve the use of the cemetery interior by wildlife. Finally, a source of water for wildlife is lacking at most cemeteries. Providing a water feature such as an artificial pond or a scattering of birdbaths would help to meet this basic need and serve as a focal point for watching wildlife.

Encouraging the Living to Appreciate Cemeteries. As a metropolitan region's population increases, less open space is available for wildlife. All remaining open spaces, including cemeteries, will increase in value to local neighborhoods and to the region. It is possible that cemeteries, especially those that are publicly owned, could easily and more economically be managed to provide

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New Life from Graveyards

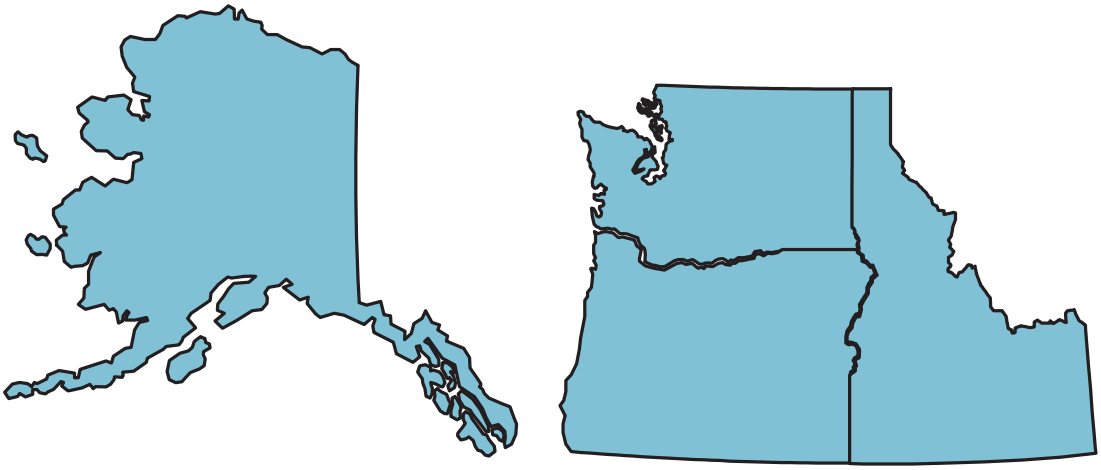
multiple values, including wildlife habitat, to the surrounding community. For instance, it might be feasible for a local school to "adopt-a-cemetery" and help establish and maintain the naturescaping, then study all of its values—historic, cultural, and natural.

There are tangible economic and environmental benefits from improving the habitat values of cemeteries. Once the native plants are established, the costs of landscape maintenance are reduced due to less mowing, less need for irrigation, and less need for chemicals that are commonly applied to the vast areas of lawn that characterize many cemeteries.

The next time you take an evening or weekend walk, check out your local cemetery. Cemeteries are interesting places to explore, and imagine how much more pleasant they could be, to mourners and hikers alike, when landscaped for the benefit of our cherished human and wildlife companions.

For more information about beneficial landscaping, contact Elaine Somers at 206/553-2966 or 800-424-4372, somers.elaine@epa.gov, or visit our website at www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm.

Region 10 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency covers the states of: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington



EPA *Region 10*
1-800-424-4372
206-553-1200

WaterTalk is now on the Internet:
www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm

CALENDAR

January 20-21:
Endangered Species Act Seminar, Seattle, WA. The Seminar Group, 800-574-4852, www.theseminargroup.net/04esawa/agenda.htm.

January 26:
SEPA/NEPA Workshop, Seattle, WA. Law Seminars International, 800-854-8009, www.lawseminars.com/seminars/05SEPAWA.php.

January 26-27:
Creating a Future for Both People and Salmon: Shared Strategy Summit, Tacoma, WA. Kelly Carson, 360-357-8044, www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org/summit/index.htm.

January 27:
Stormwater: Turning a Potential Problem into an Asset, Seattle, WA. University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture, 206-685-8033.

February 5:
Sound Waters: A One Day University, Whidbey Island, WA. WSU Island County Beach Watchers, 360-679-7327, http://beachwatchers.wsu.edu/events.

February 7-11:
Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, AK, 888-301-0185, www.akforum.com.

February 11:
Climate Change, Energy, and the Future of Washington State, Olympia, WA. Bonnie Phillips, 360-456-8793, www.evergreen.edu/events/climatechange.

February 25:
Deadline for applications for Watershed Stewardship Training Series, King County, WA. Paul Racette, 206-205-3171, paul.racette@metrokc.gov, www.metrokc.gov/WSU-CE/Land&Water/.

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

March 29-31:
Puget Sound-Georgia Basin Research Conference, Seattle, WA. Sarah Brace, Puget Sound Action Team, 360-725-5464, www.psat.wa.gov.

April 4-8:
Sustainability and Restoration: A Practical Partnership for the 21st Century Conference, Seattle, WA. Society for Ecological Restoration, 206-543-5539, www.engr.washington.edu/epp/ser/.

April 22:

Earth Day

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WaterTalk
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WaterTalk

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*.

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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