



# CSREES Southwest States & Pacific Islands Regional Water Quality Program

*Applying knowledge to improve water quality*

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RWQ001

## Water Issues are a High Priority



Clean drinking water is the most important water issue in the Southwest States and Pacific Islands Region according to a recently conducted survey. Several questions in a 37-question survey asked respondents to rate the importance of clean drinking water, either on its own or in relation to other issues. Clean drinking water consistently rose to the top as the most important issue.

### The Southwest States & Pacific Islands Water Survey

A 37-question survey was conducted by the Southwest States and Pacific Islands water quality team with the support of the Pacific Northwest water quality program. The survey was used to document public awareness, aptitudes, attitudes, and actions toward water quality in Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The survey was completed by 1766 residents in the four states and 303 residents in the Pacific Islands from August of 2003 to July 2004. The collected data were analyzed using the SAS procedure at the University of Idaho, and have a sampling error of +/- 5 percent.

**Table 1. The percent of survey respondents living in Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands ranking the following issues as very or extremely important.**

Issue	Very or Extremely Important %
Clean drinking water	99
Household water supply	94
Clean groundwater	92
Clean rivers, streams, lakes	89
Water for agriculture	84
Watershed restoration	73
Aquatic organism protection	71
Water for power generation	70
Water for industry	67
Wetlands/riparian areas	67
Water for recreation	56

University of Guam • American Samoa Community College • College of the Marshall Islands



College of Micronesia • Northern Marianas College • Palau Community College

## Southwest States & Pacific Islands Water Quality Coordination Project

### Southwest States

#### The University of Arizona

Cooperative Extension

Dr. Kitt Farrell-Poe

[kittfp@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:kittfp@ag.arizona.edu)

#### University of California

#### Center for Water Resources

Dr. Laosheng Wu

[laowu@mail.ucr.edu](mailto:laowu@mail.ucr.edu)

#### University of Nevada Reno

Cooperative Extension

Dr. Mark Walker

[mwalker@equinox.unr.edu](mailto:mwalker@equinox.unr.edu)

### Pacific Islands

#### University of Hawaii

Dr. Carl Evensen

[evensen@hawaii.edu](mailto:evensen@hawaii.edu)

#### University of Guam

Ted Iyechad

[tiyechad@uog9.uog.edu](mailto:tiyechad@uog9.uog.edu)

#### American Samoa Community College

Kristel van Houte-Howes

[k.vanhoute-howes@ASCC.as](mailto:k.vanhoute-howes@ASCC.as)

#### College of Marshall Islands

Amelet Kaleman

[akaleman20002000@yahoo.com](mailto:akaleman20002000@yahoo.com)

#### College of Micronesia

Jackson Phillip

[jphillip@comfsm.fm](mailto:jphillip@comfsm.fm)

#### Northern Marianas College

Lawrence Duponcheel

[lawontinian@vz.pacifica.net](mailto:lawontinian@vz.pacifica.net)

#### Palau Community College

Portia Franz

[pkfranz@yahoo.com](mailto:pkfranz@yahoo.com)

### Regional Agency Liaison

Christine French

(951) 827-4327

[christine.french@ucr.edu](mailto:christine.french@ucr.edu)

## We are not as different as you may think!

In a region characterized by its environmental, ethnic, and cultural diversity; there exists strong agreement in the public's attitude towards water issues. Generally high ranking are issues of water quality: clean drinking water, clean groundwater, and clean rivers. Highly rated water availability and preservation issues across the region include water for agriculture and watershed restoration.

**Table 2. Public response to water issues prioritized on a scale of 1 (most important) to 11 (least important) based on issues ranked as either very or extremely important.**

Issue	Arizona	California	Nevada	Hawaii	Pacific Islands
Clean drinking water	1	1	1	1	1
Household water supply	2	4	3	3	2
Clean groundwater	3	2	4	2	3
Clean rivers, streams, lakes	4	3	3	4	8
Water for agriculture	5	5	5	5	4
Watershed restoration	7	6	7	7	9
Aquatic organism protection	10	7	10	6	5
Water for power generation	6	8	6	10	N/A
Water for industry	8	10	8	9	6
Wetlands/riparian areas	9	9	9	8	10
Water for recreation	11	11	11	11	7

## How can we use the findings?

- ▶ Extension program planners can identify new program areas or redefine goals for existing water programs.
- ▶ Extension educators can target topic areas where outreach education would be advantageous.
- ▶ Results from the survey help state and Island water quality coordinators gain a better understanding of public perceptions regarding water quality issues.

## About Our Program

The Regional Water Quality Coordination Program, one component of the USDA - CSREES, National Water Quality Program, seeks to ensure the integration of water quality efforts within the jurisdiction of each of the ten regions established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Program is designed to make research, education, and extension resources of the university system more accessible to Federal, State, and local water quality improvement efforts, thus enhancing opportunities for agricultural producers, and rural communities to adopt voluntary approaches for the improvement of water quality.

### Southwest States & Pacific Islands (Region 9)

<http://ag.arizona.edu/region9wq/>

### National program website

<http://www.usawaterquality.org/>

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