



USDA-CSREES 2005 National Water Quality Conference

Thinking Regionally: PNW Water Quality Coordination Team

Abstract: Situation:

Budget reductions plus increased demands from traditional ag and emerging new audiences (watershed councils, volunteer monitoring programs) required new approaches. Volunteers need scientific training, while traditional audiences need to understand new regulations and change traditional practices to address water quality issues. Though each state has specific needs, all must conform to national laws. Water quality issues cross state boundaries. A regional approach was needed to leverage the knowledge, research and educational talent and resources of the Pacific Northwest land-grant system to meet increased clientele needs.

Objectives:

To increase the coordination, collaboration and communication among land-grant extension and research programs in the Pacific Northwest states and EPA, USDA and state and tribal agencies.

To develop and implement regional educational strategies to address priority water quality issues.

Methods:

The Water Quality Coordination Team was formed to bring land grant extension, research and other faculty together to work on common issues and coordinate those efforts with agencies (EPA, state and tribal agencies). Video, satellite and video-streaming are used to increase participation and create regional, extended-life, and educational events.

Partnerships:

The team includes extension faculty from Universities of Alaska, and Idaho, Oregon State University, Washington State University and Northwest Indian College, representatives of the Water Research Institutes, EPA, NRCS and USDA. Tribes, agencies and organizations become involved on topic-specific issues.

Resources:

The USDA 406 grant provides base funds; EPA provides local office support and universities and partners provide in-kind contributions.

Integration of Research, Teaching, and Extension:

See Partnerships.

Results:

The team has shifted from working on together on state projects to planning truly regional programs. A baseline survey of citizens of the region sets priorities and methodology. Results are shared with diverse groups, agencies, decision makers, educators and scientists. The website makes information (updates, paperless conference presentations) more accessible to wider audiences.

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