



USDA-CSREES 2005 National Water Quality Conference

Training Environmental Stewards: Integrating Water Quality and Quantity Education from Mountains to Ocean

Abstract:

Situation:

King County, Washington is a model for the difficulties posed by managing water resources in a rapidly urbanizing area that encompasses diverse land-use activities including forestry, agriculture, rural lifestyles, and urban living. In order to bring education on these issues to the public, Washington State University King County Extension (WSU-KCE) utilizes a "teach the teacher" model. Volunteers are trained and are then able to reach a larger segment of the public than Extension Educators alone can reach.

Objectives:

The main objective is to develop a core water quality and quantity volunteer training curriculum and associated modules to address the many land-use practices in the Pacific Northwest.

Methods:

Extension Faculty members are developing this curriculum in cooperation with local and regional experts. It was piloted during volunteer training courses in 2004, and is now being revised.

Partnerships:

Both volunteer trainings and curriculum technical review draw on a wide array of instructors and experts representing many local organizations, public offices, and private citizens.

Resources:

This project expands the reach of several programs currently funded through the local extension office. Additionally, local professionals provide over 250 hours of volunteer and public education, and the volunteers themselves provide their many hours of service.

Integration of Research, Teaching, & Extension:

Overall, this project uses research-based information to develop curriculum used to train and educate environmental stewards. These stewards then provide outreach to their communities on ways to reduce individual impacts to water quality and foster an environmental stewardship ethic in the public they reach.

Results:

Curriculum modules were developed and piloted during Watershed Stewardship, Livestock Advisor, Forest Advisor, and both King and Pierce Counties Master Gardener volunteer training courses, reaching 191 volunteers in 2004. Modules are now being revised and polished; the curriculum will be completed and implemented in 2005.

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