



Applying knowledge to improve water quality

Pacific Northwest

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA NIFA
& Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Winter 2008
PNWWATER 125

2007 Regional Conference:

Moving Science into Policy and Action

This year's biennial Regional Research and Extension Water Quality Conference was held in early November 2007 at the Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, WA. The conference explored ways of merging water science and policy to promote interactive collaboration on complex water-policy decisions—an important goal for all environmental and water resources professionals in the Pacific Northwest. Our two-day conference included a unique mix of presentations, featured speakers, panel discussions, networking opportunities, and a poster session packed with information relating to a broad array of interesting regional topics presented by water organizations, policy makers, scientists, and researchers with Pacific Northwest experience. Because of the interesting and timely agenda; there were over 240 registrants in attendance. Based on feedback provided on the evaluation forms, the conference was an enormous success!



Attendees at conference banquet.

This event incorporated and highlighted regional solutions to complex environmental and water resources problems faced by federal, state, tribal, and local agencies, as well as practitioners, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders. Moreover, the conference provided a forum for people to form professional networks and begin to understand the multidisciplinary nature of many regional challenges. While focusing on regional issues, the conference began each morning with a thought-provoking keynote presentation. Nationally recognized Dr. P. Patrick Leahy spoke on the first day and his perspective helped set the tone for the conference including comments regarding educational needs in the field, which struck an important chord with our audience. Representative Jackie Dingfelder (Oregon) opened the conference on the second day with a unique perspective as a state representative and environmental consultant. The points made regarding communication,

trust, and scientific integrity gave us all pause for reflection. Each speaker shed new light on the challenges and opportunities for Moving Science into Policy and Action.

The keynote speakers were followed by an impressive list of speakers selected to address the specific conference themes which were: Science and Policy of Flow Allocation, Scientific Uncertainties and Disagreements, Groundwater/Surface Water, Data and Analysis Uncertainty, Modeling Collaboration, Climate Change, What Makes People Act, Allocation Alternatives, Linking



Metal thermos received by conference attendees.



Pacific Northwest Regional Water Quality Coordination Project Partners

Land Grant Universities

Alaska

Cooperative Extension Service
Contact Fred Sorensen:
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<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/water/>

University Publications:

<http://www.alaska.edu/uaf/ces/publications/>

Idaho

University of Idaho
Cooperative Extension System
Contact Bob Mahler: 208-885-7025

<http://www.uidaho.edu/wq/wqhome.html>

University Publications:

<http://info.ag.uidaho.edu/Catalog/catalog.htm>

Oregon

Oregon State University
Extension Service
Contact Mike Gamroth: 541-737-3316

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/>

University Publications:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/>

Washington

Washington State University
WSU Extension
Contact Bob Simmons:

360-427-9670 ext. 690

<http://wawater.wsu.edu/>

University Publications:

<http://pubs.wsu.edu/>

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Water Resource Research Institutes

Water and Environmental Research
Center (Alaska)

<http://www.uaf.edu/water/>

Idaho Water Resources
Research Institute

<http://www.boise.uidaho.edu/>

Institute for Water and
Watersheds (Oregon)

<http://water.oregonstate.edu/>

State of Washington
Water Research Center

<http://www.swwrc.wsu.edu/>

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA, Region 10

The Pacific Northwest

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>

Office of Research and Development,
Corvallis Laboratory

<http://www.epa.gov/wed/>

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The Project

Land Grant Universities, Water Research Institutes, and EPA Region 10 have formed a partnership to provide research and education to communities about protecting or restoring the quality of water resources. This partnership is being supported in part by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Our Goal and Approach

The goal of this Project is to provide leadership for water resources research, education, and outreach to help people, industry, and governments to prevent and solve current and emerging water quality and quantity problems. The approach to achieving this goal is for the Partners to develop a coordinated water quality effort based on, and strengthening, individual state programs.

Our Strengths

The Project promotes regional collaboration by acknowledging existing programs and successful efforts; assisting program gaps; identifying potential issues for cross-agency and private sector collaboration; and developing a clearinghouse of expertise and programs. In addition, the Project establishes or enhances partnerships with federal, state, and local environmental and water resource management agencies, such as by placing a University Liaison within the offices of EPA Region 10.

Land and Water: Analysis and Characterization for Resource Protection, Transboundary Issues, Policy Strategies, and People and Policy.

Other conference-related activities included a poster session/reception where attendees were given the chance to talk one-on-one to the twenty-seven poster presenters and network with colleagues having similar interests. Immediately preceding the conference we held two half-day workshops aimed at educating participants with regard to the complex issues surrounding hydropower and anadromous fish management from both the CRITRC and the policy perspectives and on designing collaborative strategies to integrate science and policy. Paul VanDevelder hosted a screening of his Waterbuster movie; an intriguing documentary of the impacts of dam construction and displacement in the 1940s on Native Americans and how it has contributed to their struggle to find a sense of place and identity.

The regional flavor of this conference was consistently praised as an excellent facet of the conference, because local communities can see how others in the area addressed problems similar to what they are facing. Moreover, this conference has improved and encouraged the interaction, collaboration, and communication between scientists and policy makers. It also engaged scientists on the needs, constraints, and opportunities policy makers face, and engaged policy makers on the contributions and the limitations of science in the policy making process. Finally, the need to develop communication lines and trust, similar to successful Extension programs, was firmly established.

National Water Quality Program Areas

The four land grant universities in the Pacific Northwest have aligned our water resource Extension and research efforts with eight themes of the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

1. Animal Waste Management
2. Drinking Water and Human Health
3. Environmental Restoration
4. Nutrient and Pesticide Management
5. Pollution Assessment and Prevention
6. Watershed Management
7. Water Conservation and Management
8. Water Policy and Economics

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