



Title: Reaching Communities Across Arizona With Water Education

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Organization: University of Arizona

State: AZ **Region:** Southwest States and Pacific Islands

Year of Funding:

Theme: Watershed Management

Situation: Arizona's increasing population continues to have an enormous impact on vast tracts of public and private land. This has put greater demands on the limited natural resources of these predominantly arid and semi-arid landscapes. In many areas of Arizona, ground water withdrawal is exceeding recharge. Agriculture, suburban development, recreation, grazing, and other activities are all influencing surface and ground water quality. Nonpoint source pollution and sustainability of water supplies are the two primary water issues facing Arizonans.

Objectives: The expanding development often give rise to contentious battles among land managers, ranchers, farmers, miners, developers, environmental activists, and recreational users. Stakeholders need to be involved in decision-making process. The goal of Arizona Cooperative Extension water education programs is to provide knowledge to a target audience so that they can make "better," more informed decisions. It is the assumption that if people are aware of the consequences of their actions, personally and to the wider community, they will change their behavior.

Methods: The basic audiences to be addressed through education programs are: K-12, general adult education, and specific stakeholders groups. Three extension programs have been created and/or enhanced to address the education needs for the three audiences: Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), which addresses teachers of K - 12 education, Master Watershed Steward Program (MWS) for general adult education, and NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) which addresses elected and appointed officials, as well as specific stakeholder groups.

Partnerships: The three education programs receive support from most groups at the University of Arizona involved in water-based research and outreach. Cooperative Extension uses volunteers to further disseminate their outreach and education.

Research: The three education programs provide a mechanism for delivering results generated by the research faculty to several audiences; K-12, general adult education, and specific stakeholder groups. Researchers are also asked to serve as lecturers in the different extension workshops.

Resources: The three education programs have received funding from Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

Results: The goal of the Arizona Cooperative Extension is to deliver research-based, non-advocacy professional education to engage stakeholders and foster better water and land use decisions to improve water use, water quality and community sustainability. It is hoped that the education programs outlined above will serve as an instrument to guide research being conducted at our state universities to serve our stakeholders in local, state, tribal, and federal agencies and to the people of the State of Arizona. Wise decisions are only made when everyone has good and complete information.



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