



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

Efficient, Effective Education for Rural Pond Owners

Abstract: Rural Landowners often construct or maintain ponds on their property for various reasons such as livestock watering, fire protection, fishing or swimming. The improper management of these open bodies of water can have serious consequences for the watersheds in which they reside. There are hundreds of thousands of private ponds in Pennsylvania. Surveys show that over 70% of Pennsylvania pond owners need assistance with pond management. Penn State Cooperative Extension completed a series of eight regional pond owner workshops during the 2004-2005 program year to more than 300 pond owners. An evaluation of attendees found that 91% were planning to use information from the workshop to better manage their pond. Among the most common planned actions were proper management of a nuisance plant or algae (59%), testing pond water (52%) and reducing nutrients entering pond (23%).

In addition, an extensive Extension Pond Management Website is maintained at Penn State University. This site is a collaborative effort between Penn State Cooperative Extension and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. The goal is to provide educational resources on proper management of ponds in the areas of aquatic plants and algae, fisheries, pond structure and water quality. The topic areas include pond publications, aquatic plants and algae identification and control, pond resource links, etc. The pond management web site received over 8,000 visits this year. An online survey of pond owners that visited the site found that 85% found the site helpful and 91% planned to take some action to better manage their pond.

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