



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Charting a Course for Better Land Use - Impacts from the National NEMO Network](#)

This presentation will highlight a wide range of specific actions local officials have taken to integrate natural resource protection into land use planning as a result of the efforts of the National NEMO Network. These examples will demonstrate that targeted, focused educational efforts can and do empower local land use commissioners and others to better protect natural resources, and more specifically water quality. The National NEMO Network is an autonomous collective of programs focused on providing education and support to local land use decision makers. The original Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) program was created in 1991 at the University of Connecticut as a partnership between the Cooperative Extension System, the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program and the Natural Resources Management and Engineering Department. The program was tremendously successful in educating local land use officials in CT about the impacts of their decisions on the natural environment and, as a result, received a good deal of national attention. By 2000, fifteen states had developed similar programs and founded the Network as a means (1) to facilitate the open exchange of ideas, educational materials and resources between programs; and (2) act as a resource for program development and sustainability. Today there are 31 programs operating in 30 states, many of which have matured to a point where they are beginning to see a wide variety of impacts at the local level. From changes to community plans to natural resource inventories to open space preservation to improved zoning regulations to low impact developments, communities catalyzed by NEMO education are changing the way they plan, regulate and build their landscape. The experience and success of the programs in the NEMO Network provides insight into what makes an effective educational program and the value of a network of like-minded programs.

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