



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Assessing Conservation Partnerships: Finding opportunities for collaboration](#)

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service ("CSREES") Committee for Shared Leadership for Water Quality initiated a survey of state water quality coordinators intended to document existing water-quality partnerships between water quality coordinators and federal conservation agencies, as well as identify what barriers exist to strengthening and expanding those partnerships. The University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension Environmental Resources Center carried out the study. Sixty-seven of the sampled 118 water quality coordinators from throughout the United States completed the survey, including responses from 80% of the 1862 land grant institutions.

Overall survey findings indicate that the status and future of water-quality partnerships between the CSREES water quality program and federal conservation partners is on fairly solid ground. Most state water quality coordinators work in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and/or Environmental Protection Agency on specific water-quality issues and report positively on their experiences. However, many respondents – despite their general satisfaction with the water-quality partnerships – indicate that their work with federal agencies does not take full advantage of their talents and expertise as Extension professionals or educators. In addition, numerous water quality coordinators express a concern that their regional water quality programs fail to define adequately the roles and duties of the various partnership participants, leaving many state water quality coordinators – at least – confused about the responsibilities of participating federal agencies.

This poster will summarize survey results and discuss additional opportunities and barriers related to water quality partnerships.

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