



USDA-CSREES 2006 National Water Quality Conference

[Water Resource Education for Real Estate Professionals](#)

Increased development in the Puget Sound region of Washington state, caused by a rapidly growing population, greatly influences the long-term health of the region's water resources. Individual land-use practices, in particular, can critically affect these resources.

Real estate professionals influence these land-use practices, yet tend to have poor knowledge of environmental issues. In 1998, a needs assessment of local environmental educators identified this audience as underserved yet a high priority for water resource education. As a result, Washington State University Thurston County Extension developed and implemented a Water Resource Education Program for Real Estate Professionals.

The program's objective is to educate real estate professionals so they can make environmentally suitable decisions regarding development and land-use practices, as well as educate their clientele about land stewardship, water quality, and aquatic habitat. Courses cover the science, policy and regulations of water resource related issues such as onsite sewage systems, wetlands, shorelines, salmon & streams, and low-impact development. Experts give up-to-date objective presentations in a classroom setting and most courses have a field trip component for hands-on learning. Real estate professional attendees receive continuing education credit toward their biennial professional license recertification.

Attendance in 59 courses over seven years totals more than 1560. Course evaluations demonstrate that information provided is relevant and useful for participants' work. Follow-up evaluations show that over 90% of program participants regularly share information they learn with clientele and colleagues. Further research is needed to quantify the impact that this program has on local and regional water resources.

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