



Regional Water Quality Coordination Program – A Proposal for Regional Coordination within Region 2

The Regional Water Quality Coordination Program

The Regional Water Quality Coordination Program was initiated in 2001 to coordinate the water quality expertise of the Land Grant Universities (LGUs) within USEPA Region 2 (i.e., Cornell University, Rutgers University, University of Puerto Rico and the University of the Virgin Islands). A unique forum has emerged for the exchange of information on research and policy between faculty and agency professionals, which has enabled creative partnerships to form that are aimed at solving water quality issues affecting the Region.



Focus Areas

The Regional Water Quality Coordination Program has formed four working groups around regional initiatives with each state coordinator taking the lead of a working group. These working groups have been assembled to not only identify the needs within the Region but also to identify on-going research, education and extension activities for each particular topic. These groups then work in collaboration to implement research, education and extension projects that address the needs of the Region, as well as enhance on-going efforts. In many cases, existing projects could benefit from being augmented with additional research, education or extension components that were not included in the original scope of work. By building upon existing projects, the Regional Program can expand the impact of the projects and benefit a larger number of stakeholders.

The Four Regional Working Groups

• **Watershed Management / Agricultural Water Management / Water Reuse and Conservation** – Throughout the Region there are competing interests for the available water. This Working Group is focusing on securing clean and plentiful water for agricultural uses as well as for the urbanizing environment.

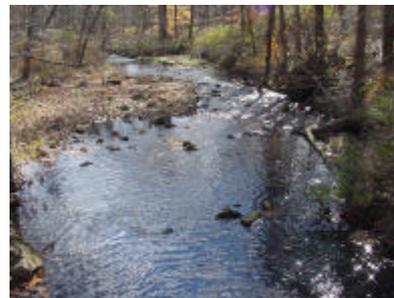
• **Animal Waste Management for Small Farms** – Small farms are scattered throughout the Region. Individually, their farms may not appear to have a significant impact on water quality, but as a group there could be a significant water quality impact from these farms. This Working Group is focusing on developing cost-effective solutions to the environmental issues facing these farmers as well as education and extension programming to help them implement these solutions.

• **On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)** – Many rural communities throughout the Region use OWTS as their means of wastewater treatment and disposal. This Working Group is examining various options for management of these systems and alternative technologies that can enhance the treatment and disposal processes of OWTS.

• **Nutrient Management** - Many impaired water bodies in the Region are receiving nutrient loadings from a complex mix of both point and nonpoint sources. This Working Group is addressing the broad array of nutrient management practices and their effect on water quality issues facing our Region. Research and extension tools are being constructed based upon on-going research. Additionally, water quality trading is being examined as a cost-effective means of improving water quality.



The Regional Water Quality Coordination Program - <http://rwwp.rutgers.edu>



Overall Goals

- 1) Enhancing the communication among the LGUs to better support local, state and regional initiatives for improving water quality,
- 2) Developing and implementing a regionally coordinated and integrated education, extension, and research program that takes advantage of the expertise at the LGUs, minimizes the duplication of effort, and leverages multiple funding sources to effectively address water quality issues, and
- 3) Expanding our working relationship with federal, state and local partners to better share resources and compound expertise to develop sound scientific solutions to our water resources problems

Expected Outcomes

- 1) Demonstration projects and workshops to provide farmers with the necessary information to address environmental issues on their farms, thereby bringing them into compliance with new regulations;
- 2) Demonstration projects and workshops to help municipal officials and contractors address onsite wastewater treatment system problems in the region;
- 3) Nutrient management tools and demonstrations to facilitate farm operations and long-term sustainability while remaining in compliance with environmental regulations; and
- 4) Workshops for stakeholders, as well as the development of a comprehensive curriculum that can be used to educate the next generation of Agricultural Engineers, Civil Engineers, Environmental Scientists, and Soil Scientists.

Partner Land Grant Universities

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