

Training Environmental Stewards from Mountains to Ocean: A Water Quality Training Curriculum

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Situation: King County in Washington State is a model for the difficulties posed by managing water resources in a rapidly urbanizing area that encompasses diverse land-use activities including forestry, agriculture, rural lifestyles, and urban living. In order to bring education on these issues to the public, Washington State University King County Extension (WSU-KCE) utilizes a "train-the-trainer" model. In exchange for training, volunteers agree to provide an equivalent amount of volunteer service in their local communities, reaching a larger segment of the public than Extension Educators alone could reach. WSU-KCE has replicated this model in several subject areas, currently including Master Gardeners, Watershed Stewards, Forest Advisors, and Livestock Advisors.

These programs cover a diverse range of land-use options: natural areas, home gardening, forestry, and livestock ownership. Each of these train-the-trainer programs concentrates its educational message on proper resource stewardship for its intended audience, including water quality issues. However, volunteers in one training program may not be exposed to the issues in other training programs. For example, Master Gardeners are not always aware of the issues livestock owners face, nor are they aware of what efforts livestock owners are making to protect water resources. With a more integrated approach, it would be easier for volunteers to provide a complete watershed picture to the individuals they work with.

Methods: Extension Educators, staff and volunteers, assisted by local experts, drafted specific curriculum modules to cover a diverse array of land use impacts to watersheds and ways impacts can be lessened. The introductory module, *Watersheds, the Water Cycle, and You*, was designed to serve both as an introduction to the larger curriculum (the first session of a multi-session course), and as a stand-alone summary of the larger curriculum (to be used when a multi-session course is not possible). Each of the six remaining modules include the following components:

- ▶ learning objectives
- ▶ presentation outline
- ▶ print copy of PowerPoint presentation slides and speaker notes (and CD-ROM)
- ▶ suggested activities
- ▶ related assignments
- ▶ resource list
- ▶ module evaluation
- ▶ optional enrichment lessons

Results: The completed draft curriculum modules address the major land-use impacts to water quality. The modules are:

Watersheds, the Water Cycle, and You
Forests and Water Resources
Agriculture and the Health of Your Watershed
Caring for Livestock with Water Quality in Mind
Protecting Water One Neighborhood at a Time
Recreation and Water Quality
Watershed Law

The modules were piloted during Watershed Stewardship, Livestock Advisor, Forest Advisor, and both King and Pierce Counties' Master Gardener volunteer training courses, reaching 191 volunteers in 2004. In 2005, Beachwatcher program coordinators from several counties in western Washington reviewed and tested the modules in their training courses. Modules are now undergoing the final stages of review and revision, with completion and distribution anticipated in Spring 2006. For more information or to reserve a copy of the curriculum, please contact Tara Zimmerman at tara.zimmerman@metrokc.gov.



Objective: Our goal is to train all volunteers as "natural resource stewards". To foster this integrated training, we have developed a curriculum entitled, *Training Environmental Stewards: Integrating Water Quality and Quantity Education from Mountains to Ocean*. The objective of this project was to develop a core water quality volunteer training curriculum to teach sustainable land-use practices that reduce human impacts in the Pacific Northwest. Extension Faculty members have developed this curriculum in cooperation with local and regional experts, and with funding from the CSREES 406-Water Quality Program. It has been piloted in several WSU Extension programs throughout the region and will soon be available for use throughout the Pacific Northwest.