



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Engaging the Business Community in NPS Pollution Prevention](#)

Business and institutional property managers are an often overlooked audience for urban non-point source pollution prevention education. In the Engelsby Brook watershed, VT, business properties comprise 23% of the watershed area. Started in 2004, this education project promoted adoption of lower input landscape maintenance practices among business and institutional property managers. We first identified 46 non-residential properties as high priority for NPS pollution prevention, based on total landscaped area and intensity of landscape maintenance. We were able to contact the property managers of 35 of the 46 properties. Of these, 18 (43% response rate) participated in a survey to define commonly used business landscape maintenance practices. Of these, 10 agreed to implement a low input landscape maintenance program, an adoption rate of 29%. These 10 owners/managers, including two contracted lawn care companies, were responsible for landscape maintenance on 16 of the identified priority properties in the watershed. Together, these parcels accounted for more than 50% of the area of targeted priority business properties in the watershed. This year we are surveying adopting businesses to document reductions in fertilizer and pesticide inputs. Using data from a long term USGS water quality monitoring and research activity on the Brook, we will determine if reduction in inputs is correlated with reductions in PO₄ concentrations as an indicator of improved water quality in the Brook. Because of the apparent success of the education effort we are expanding the project to additional urbanized watersheds.

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