



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[The Power of Watershed Education Networks](#)

In many communities in the Puget Sound region, as well as across the nation, there are often numerous organizations providing environmental education to meet their own specific objectives. In two subregions of the Puget Sound Basin, environmental education networks were established and have proven to be successful in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental education efforts. In a 2006 survey of environmental educators conducted by the Puget Sound Action Team, it was found that increased coordination and collaboration between organizations is strongly desired in areas where networks do not currently exist. WSU Extension in Mason and Thurston Counties has established environmental education networks with participation from non-profit organizations, government agencies, school teachers and businesses. These formalized networks have provided collaboration and organization amongst the diverse groups providing outreach. Network goals include: – Prevent duplication – Provide consistent messages to the public – Foster collaborative efforts – Ensure that key audiences are reached – Provide meaningful evaluation of programs – Increase responsiveness to emerging issues In the role of organizing and facilitating these networks, WSU Extension has demonstrated its ability to effectively communicate and build partnerships to get to solutions on a range of environmental issues. This role has also enabled WSU Extension to more effectively integrate it's many other community-based education programs with other efforts. In the many examples that will be provided, much more was accomplished than likely would have been if programs were developed without using the networks.

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