



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[A Watershed-Scale Education Program: A Mobile Classroom in Aquatic Ecology](#)

Sugar Creek in northeast Ohio is the second most degraded watershed in the state, and agriculture is the major source of impairment to stream water quality. During the past six years, a multidisciplinary team of scientists has been working with local farming communities to develop a framework, methodology, and supporting data to improve water quality in the watershed. Our CSREES (2005) project builds upon existing work in the watershed and expands in new directions in research, education, and extension. Our education objective for the project was to use headwaters restoration as a focal point to increase collaborative interactions among resource professional, farm community members, and teachers and students living in the Sugar Creek watershed. To accomplish this goal, we are developing mobile classroom units in areas related to watershed ecology for K-12 classes in public, private, and Amish parochial schools. All activities will be designed to meet benchmarks and standards developed by the state of Ohio for specific target grades. Planning of the mobile classroom units began summer 2006. Development of specific educational modules will be teacher-driven, with OSU researchers assisting with activity development, technology, and equipment. Teachers have organized themselves into a working group (WETT – Watershed Education Teaching Team) and will implement programs in their classes during the 2006-2007 academic year. Students in participating classes will have the opportunity to participate in field and laboratory experiments. In addition, project results will be linked via GIS environment and a website so students can compare their data to those collected by other districts throughout the watershed.

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