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The CSREES National Integrated Water Program

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Abstract:

The CSREES National Integrated Water Program (NIWP) develops research, education, and extension projects aimed at improving water resources in agricultural watersheds. Through a network of regional coordination projects, the NIWP advances and disseminates to agriculture and rural communities information developed at universities to enhance the management and protection of the Nation's surface water and groundwater resources. The program seeks to solve critical agricultural issues through an integration of research, education, and extension activities and through enhanced coordination within regions and across the Nation. AREERA Section 406 established three major project categories: Watershed Scale, National Water Resource, and Regional Coordination Projects. The eight Regional Water Coordination Projects serve as the foundation of the National Water Program. State Water Quality Coordinators promote regional collaboration, enhance delivery of successful programs and encourage multi-state and multi-region efforts to protect and restore water resources. Integrated Projects implement a focused research effort along with outreach education to address a watershed concern. Extension Education projects provide outreach programs into target watersheds. National Facilitation Projects coordinate comprehensive efforts and high value programs relevant across the country. A national website (<http://www.usawaterquality.org/>) links water resource coordination databases for the regions. Development of the NIWP is fostered by the Committee for Shared Leadership, an internal working group with members including two CSREES National Program Leaders, 10 representatives from the regional projects, and two representatives from 1890 and 1994 institutions. Partner organizations include federal agencies, state environmental and agricultural agencies, local governments, citizen watershed organizations and private consultants. The NIWP coordinates regional programs and enhances linkages among university systems and other federal and state water resource management agencies. Through these efforts, programs and resources from multiple agencies and organizations are being better linked and organized to address critical water resource issues regionally and nationally.

Impact Statement:

The goal of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) National Integrated Water Program (NIWP) is to protect or improve water resources throughout the United States, particularly in agricultural, rural and urbanizing watersheds. The CSREES NIWP brings university scientists, instructors, and extension educators into more effective and efficient partnerships with Federal interagency programs to address priority water quality issues in U.S. agriculture. A key emphasis of the program is integration of extension, research and education resources to solve water quality problems at the local level. The CSREES NIWP contributed to the improvement of the quality of the Nation's surface water and groundwater resources through research, education, and extension activities. Projects funded through the program facilitated the advancement and dissemination of the knowledge base available to agricultural, rural, and urbanizing communities.

Funded projects led to science-based decision making and management practices that improved water quality. Key examples of water resource professionals at universities and colleges, in cooperation with CSREES, working with citizens, communities and partner agencies to address water resource problems are documented in the National Water Program Impact Report, 2006-2007, available at http://www.usawaterquality.org/about/natl_pubs/national_impact_report08.pdf.

Category: Committee for Shared Leadership

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