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**Changing Homeowner's Lawn Care Behavior to Reduce Nutrient Losses in
New England's Urbanizing Watersheds**

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Abstract:

Like many regions of the US, New England is experiencing high rates of conversion of formerly agricultural and forested lands to residential development. Land stewardship and land uses are changing and increasing the potential for nonpoint sources of pollution, including excess nutrients, to enter local surface and ground waters. This poster represents a CSREES Integrated Water Quality Program project that combines social science and environmental science to investigate who has the most influence over residential lawn care practices of do-it-yourselfers and what should be done to minimize excess nutrient runoff from lawns. The project then builds educational outreach based on those investigations. The project time period is September 2006 through August 2009. This poster describes the project overall and the second year's progress.

Impact Statement:

Although not yet complete, the project thus far has resulted in 2 research reports - 1 social science and 1 environmental science; a regionally consistent set of residential turf care recommendations for water quality; modifications to existing NPS reduction educational factsheets, websites, presentations, trainings and campaigns; new lawn care educational fact sheets, press releases, book marks, exhibits, television spots and brochures; plans for new outreach products; new partnerships with stormwater groups, conservation districts, state agencies, faculty, pesticide control boards, and planning commissions; spin-off research projects; additional student involvement; and increased knowledge for students, project partners, and lawn care opinion leaders. A master's thesis on the project is underway. The outreach portion of the project is still being designed and delivered so changes in knowledge, attitude and practice in the ultimate target audience have yet to be captured.

Lessons learned include recognizing how challenging it is to create simple, yet meaningful messages from science-based information. We are also learning how challenging it is to actually produce outreach products that will fit both the characteristics of the target audience and the message content.

Category: Human Dimensions

Type of Presentation: Poster Presentation