

# Watertalk

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 Bulletin - EPA 910/9-92-043

February 2011

## 40 Years of Environmental Progress

It's **EPA's 40th Anniversary!** Since EPA's founding on December 2, 1970, America has made great strides in reducing pollution that threatens the air we breathe, the water we use, and the communities we live in.

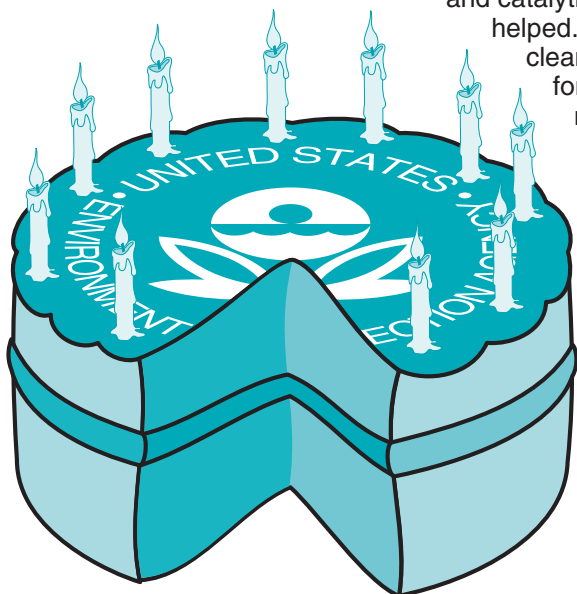
From 1970 to the present, America's environmental history has stood witness to both dramatic events and remarkable progress. In 1969, just before the agency was established, the Cuyahoga River in Ohio became so polluted that it caught fire – a situation that provided impetus for Congress to pass the federal Clean Water Act. By 2009, concern about climate change and sea-level rise led EPA to make the first official finding that greenhouse gases threaten human health and our environment.

Although much work remains, progress is clear.

**Cleaning up communities:** EPA has cleaned 67 percent of contaminated Superfund sites nationwide, and has helped create jobs for more than 3,300 Americans – with average starting hourly wage at \$14.26 – to help clean and transform contaminated Brownfield sites into bustling neighborhoods and business centers.

**Improving air quality:** The average American breathes more than 11,000 liters of air – enough to fill a tanker truck – every day! That's why air pollution puts us at risk for serious health problems like heart disease, asthma, cancer and other illnesses. In the 40 years since the Clean Air Act went into effect, we've reduced 60% of the dangerous air pollutants that cause smog, acid rain, lead poisoning and more.

Clean air innovations like smokestack scrubbers and catalytic converters in automobiles have helped. Today, new cars are 98 percent cleaner than in 1970 in terms of smog-forming pollutants. This change has made Americans healthier.



**More pollution is being treated:** Sixty-percent more Americans were served by publicly-owned wastewater treatment facilities from 1968 to 2008.

**Waterways are clearer:** In a study of lakes from the 1970's to 2007, water quality improved. Half the lakes saw less nutrient concentrations (forming green sludge) and a

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EPA News to update you on agency activities, **pages 1-2.**

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## Protecting the Environment: EPA Enforcement Yields Results

EPA enforcement work in the Pacific Northwest during 2010 resulted in companies performing over \$107 million worth of pollution control and cleanup work.

**Pollution Reduced:** Combined actions caused the amount of pollution either treated, reduced or eliminated to almost double, from 124,268,115 pounds 2009 to 220,961,050 pounds in 2010.

**Penalties Assessed:** A combined total of \$4,929,721 in administrative and judicial penalties were assessed, up from \$3,009,725 in 2009.

**Inspections/Investigations Conducted:** EPA inspectors visited facilities across the Region to perform 1,059 inspections, off slightly from the 1,183 total in 2009.

*"Enforcing environmental laws is one of EPA's fundamental responsibilities. Our laws help us keep our water safe, our land clean and our air clear. By running a fair and consistent enforcement program, we provide the protection our communities expect and the certainty sought by business and industry."*

- Dennis McLerran, Regional Administrator

For state-by-state statistics, case highlights, and regional numbers at a glance, visit [www.epa.gov/region10/enforcement/2010results.html](http://www.epa.gov/region10/enforcement/2010results.html). The web page also offers an interactive mapping tool to locate enforcement activities at facilities and sites near you.

## Toxic Chemical Releases: Highlights for Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

EPA recently released the 2009 **Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Data Analysis**. The 2009 data reports how TRI chemicals were managed, where they ended up, and how 2009 releases compare to 2008. Below are highlights for EPA Region 10, which covers the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington:



- Nationally TRI releases decreased by 12 percent between 2008 and 2009.
- TRI releases decreased in three of the four EPA Region 10 states.
- Idaho reduced releases by 31 percent or 22 million pounds.
- Washington reduced releases by 43 percent or 12 million pounds.
- Oregon reduced releases by 4 percent or 651,000 pounds.
- In Alaska releases were up by 23 percent or 128 million pounds from 2008. The increases were due primarily to Metal Mining Industry waste rock and surface impoundments and increased metals production and higher metals concentrations in waste rock.
- Industries outside of Alaska with the largest releases were Primary Metals Manufacturing in Oregon; Federal Facilities and the Paper Industry in Idaho; and the Paper and Electric Utility industries in Washington.

The 2009 TRI National Data Analysis also includes data relevant on a local scale for each EPA Region. The additions include large aquatic ecosystems; metropolitan areas; and Indian Country and Alaska Native Villages. Region 10 has two of the nation's 10 large aquatic ecosystems – the Columbia River Basin and Puget Sound-Georgia Strait. It also contains eight of the 21 areas in Indian country including Alaska Native Villages. The analysis also contains information on large urban communities including the Seattle metropolitan area including King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

For state and regional facility data tables, maps, and graphs, visit: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/owcm.nsf/tri/tri>. For more, contact Brook Madrone, EPA TRI Program Manager, at 206-553-4016, 800-424-4372, or [madrone.brook@epa.gov](mailto:madrone.brook@epa.gov). Or, visit EPA's National TRI website (with links to National Data Analysis and TRI tools) at [www.epa.gov/tri](http://www.epa.gov/tri).



## Funding Opportunity: Environmental Community Grants

EPA is making \$2 million available in 2011 to reduce pollution at the local level through the **Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE)** program. CARE is a community-based program that works with county and local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations and universities to help the public understand and reduce toxic risks from numerous sources.

EPA will award CARE cooperative agreements in two levels. Level I awards range from \$75,000 to \$100,000 each and will help establish community-based partnerships to develop local environmental priorities. Level II awards, ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000 each, will support communities that have established broad-based partnerships, have identified the priority toxic risks in the community, and are prepared to measure results, implement risk-reduction activities and become self-sustaining. EPA will award CARE Level II cooperative agreements only to applicants that have already received CARE Level I agreements.

Applications are due **March 22, 2011**. For more information visit: [www.epa.gov/care](http://www.epa.gov/care)

For the 2011 CARE Request for Proposals (RFP) visit: [www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=vBDhNvSFC1tJvGM27mnGqt91tD9ZcjJP2TL2C6ZQ6P95LrQWdDHQ!1499805812?oppld=64453&mode=VIEW](http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do;jsessionid=vBDhNvSFC1tJvGM27mnGqt91tD9ZcjJP2TL2C6ZQ6P95LrQWdDHQ!1499805812?oppld=64453&mode=VIEW)

To learn about an ongoing CARE project in Region 10, see Alaska Tribal article page 8.)

## Environmental Ed Grants: Coming Soon

The request for proposals for EPA's **2011 Environmental Education Grants** is expected soon. Check for details at [www.epa.gov/education/grants.html](http://www.epa.gov/education/grants.html). This EPA grant program supports environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge, and skills to help people make informed decisions that affect environmental quality. EPA awards grants each year based on funding appropriated by Congress. At the website, you can click a button (EE Grant Updates) to be electronically notified when the grant solicitation is available. Contact: Sally Hanft, EPA, at 206-553-1207, 800-424-4372, or [hanft.sally@epa.gov](mailto:hanft.sally@epa.gov).

## Mark Your Calendars, Propose a Session

**Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference,  
Oct 25-27**

Mark your calendars now for the October 25 – 27 **Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference**.

Set to take place in Vancouver, BC, Canada, this event is the largest, most comprehensive scientific

research and policy conference in the region.



The 2011 conference is co-hosted by Environment Canada and the Puget Sound Partnership. It presents the latest scientific research on the state of the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin ecosystem. The conference also shares information on recent management actions and best practices to protect and restore the ecosystem. Through these dialogues, the conference emphasizes collaboration among scientists and policymakers to solve complex environmental issues that cross political borders.

Participants will explore the state of the science, build management capability, and reinforce the strong foundation of research and policy. The program creates opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions, cultural celebrations, knowledge transfer, and practical collaborations. Workshops, special sessions, field trips, keynote speakers, and other events will be featured throughout the conference.

For details, or to pre-register at a reduced rate, visit [www.salishseaconference.org](http://www.salishseaconference.org). To learn more about proposing a panel presentation, interactive session, or other activity, visit [www.salishseaconference.org/sessions.php](http://www.salishseaconference.org/sessions.php). Proposals are due **March 1, 2011**.



## Watershed Funding Tools Online

Committed watershed organizations and state and local governments need adequate resources to achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act and improve our nation's water quality. To support these efforts, the EPA has created a website to provide tools, databases, and information about sources of funding to practitioners and funders that serve to protect watersheds. Search through sustainable finance tools, requests for proposals, and training opportunities. Visit EPA's **Sustainable Finance Tools** website at <http://water.epa.gov/aboutow/owow/funding.cfm>. For even more resources, visit the **Financially Sustainable Water Infrastructure** website at [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/shedfund/governments.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/shedfund/governments.cfm).

## Online Toolbox: Nonpoint Source Education

Check out the online **Nonpoint Source (NPS) Outreach Toolbox**. This resource is intended for use by state and local agencies and other organizations interested in educating the public on nonpoint source pollution or stormwater runoff. The Toolbox contains resources to help develop an effective and targeted outreach campaign. Features of the Toolbox include EPA's *Getting in Step Outreach Series*, a searchable catalog of outreach materials on the state and local level, and surveys and evaluations of effective outreach campaigns. Access it at [www.epa.gov/owow/keep/NPS/toolbox/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/owow/keep/NPS/toolbox/index.htm).

## Shop Online for Free Community Water Resources

Facing issues related to small community water and wastewater challenges? The **National Environmental Services Center (NESC)** has developed an online shopping cart allowing users to download free PDFs of selected products. More than 300 products are currently available, including case studies, design manuals, and NESC's popular Tech Briefs.

View the shopping cart at [www.nesc.wvu.edu/ecommerce](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/ecommerce). NESC currently maintains more than 1,000 free and low-cost products related to small community water and wastewater issues.

## Small Flows Magazine Online



Check out the current online issue of **Small Flows Magazine**. The issue features a variety of articles including a story about "honey buckets" in Alaska, an overview of services provided by university-based extension services, a report about meth labs and their impact on environmental health, information about water-efficient plumbing and how these

fixtures can prolong the life of a septic system, and a humorous look at so-called "luxury toilets." The cover story examines the hot topic of wastewater reuse. *Small Flows* is published by the National Environmental Services Center, with support from EPA. Find it online at [www.nesc.wvu.edu/smallflows.cfm](http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/smallflows.cfm).

## Research Informs New Recreational Water Criteria

EPA has completed studies that serve as a scientific foundation for developing water quality criteria for recreational waters, such as lakes, rivers and oceans, by October 2012. EPA's research focused on predictive modeling, method development and validation, and epidemiological studies. The criteria will replace the current criteria recommendations EPA issued in 1986. They are to be used by states and tribes in their adoption of new water quality standards. These standards are to protect people who engage in recreational water activities from potential illness from fecal contamination. See the study results and learn more at <http://water.epa.gov/scitech/swguidance/waterquality/standards/criteria/health/recreation/index.cfm>.

## Bright Ideas...

**Keep the Heat Indoors** - Energy Star offers five easy energy saving tips that can help families stay warm while saving money, reducing energy use, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions: Seal air leaks, use a programmable thermostat, and more! [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es\\_at\\_home](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es_at_home)

**New Website for Regulatory Transparency** - "Reg Stat" is designed to help you learn about and understand EPA's regulatory process and the number, type, and range of regulatory documents developed each year by the agency. [http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq\\_2010-12-3\\_Reg\\_Stat](http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2010-12-3_Reg_Stat)

**Check Toxic Releases Near You** - EPA has released the annual analysis of toxic chemical disposals and releases into the air, land and water, as well as information on waste management and pollution prevention activities in neighborhoods across the country. [http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq\\_2010-12-16\\_tri](http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2010-12-16_tri)  
*Out and about?* Try the TRI mobile site, which is easy to remember as "my right to know" <http://m.epa.gov/myrtk>

**EPA on Social Media** - Blogging, Twitter, Youtube -- we're using social media tools in the firm belief that by sharing information we greatly increase the potential for better understanding for all about environmental conditions and solutions. Find out more and join us online! [www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/socialmedia.html)

**Clean Up CFLs Safely** - Compact fluorescent bulbs contain a small amount of mercury which is toxic. If you have a broken CFL, be sure you know what - and what NOT - to do to properly clean up and dispose of broken parts, and keep yourself and your family and pets safe. EPA's new website: [www.epa.gov/cfl/cflcleanup.html](http://www.epa.gov/cfl/cflcleanup.html)



**2011 Fuel Economy Guide** - If you're looking for a new car, the annual Fuel Economy Guide will help you choose an efficient vehicle to save money at the pump, help to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and pollute less. [http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq\\_2010-11-3\\_2011fuelguide](http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2010-11-3_2011fuelguide)

**Enter the Rachel Carson "Sense of Wonder" contest** - Show how the beauty of nature inspires you through poetry, essays, photos or dance. Entries must be from a team of two or more persons, a young person and an older person. The deadline for team entries is June 10, 2011. <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm>

**Join the Greenversation** - Share your thoughts as EPA employees share their unique perspective on environmentalism and personal experiences in protecting and improving our nation's water, land, and air. <http://blog.epa.gov/blog>

**Run generators outdoors** - Generator exhaust is toxic. Always put generators outside well away from doors, windows, and vents. Carbon monoxide (CO) is deadly, can build up quickly, and linger for hours. Find out more about safety and environmentally friendly options during severe winter weather. <http://www.epa.gov/naturalevents/snow-ice.html>

**eCycle!** Recycle your old cell phone, computer, or TV. [www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin](http://www.epa.gov/osw/partnerships/plugin)

**Kid's Page!** - Young students, high schoolers, and teachers will find lots of helpful resources in the online Environmental Kids Club. [www.epa.gov/kids](http://www.epa.gov/kids)

Visit Watertalk online at [www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm)

## *Local Drinking Water Projects Honored*

Congratulations to **Bend, Oregon**, and **Bremerton, Washington**! These Region 10 communities -- which both received funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act -- have been honored with **2010 DWSRF Awards for Sustainable Public Health Protection**. DWSRF stands for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (see side box).

Nationally 32 projects were nominated, and winners were announced at the national meeting of the Council for Infrastructure Financing Authorities in November 2010. In order to qualify for the awards, the projects had to meet these criteria: Safe Drinking Water Act compliance, Financial Integrity, Public Health Benefits, ARRA Compliance (if applicable), and demonstrated leadership in one or more of the following: asset sustainability, full-cost pricing/affordability, efficient water use, source water approach, innovation in financing, creative use of partnerships, and use of Green Project Reserve funds.

The \$5.6 million DWSRF project undertaken by the City of Bend had the overall goal of modernizing the distribution system for more efficient water management. For example, the installation of an advanced metering infrastructure system made it possible to obtain system flow information remotely, eliminating trips to individual meters and ensuring leaks are detected more quickly. This effort was coordinated with other updates to the system, demonstrating ways to maximize benefits with good planning.

The City of Bremerton utilized \$6.2 million in DWSRF funds with 100% principal forgiveness under ARRA to construct an Ultraviolet Treatment Facility. The project included disinfection upgrades to create multi-barrier disinfection of their unfiltered surface water. This facility will provide safe drinking water to the 50,000 water customers in Bremerton. This project is exceptional in that it was very well-planned, enabling it to become one of the first projects in the country to have a site inspection completed by the EPA Office of Inspector General as part of the ARRA requirements. The timely fashion in which the project was completed also meant that the benefits of the project could be felt by the city's residents as soon as possible.

To learn more about the project or the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, contact Rick Green, EPA, 206-553-8504, 800-424-4372, or email [green.richard@epa.gov](mailto:green.richard@epa.gov).

### **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund:**

The Safe Drinking Water Act established the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund to make funds available to drinking water systems to finance infrastructure improvements. The program also emphasizes providing funds to small and disadvantaged communities and to programs that encourage pollution prevention as a tool for ensuring safe drinking water. To learn more about the fund, go to [http://water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/dwsrf/index.cfm](http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/dwsrf/index.cfm).

## *Idaho City Gets Award for Drinking Water Project*

Congratulations to the **City of Ammon, Idaho**. The city recently won an engineering award for a drinking water project financed with a \$15 million Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan. The project includes designing and constructing new wells, a new storage system, and transmission lines; abandoning existing wells; upsizing distribution lines; constructing booster stations; and installing backup power generators. The project was needed due to insufficient system storage, low system pressure, and problems transporting water to and from all parts of the city. The award came from the American Council of Engineering Companies.

Congratulations, City of Ammon! More information on Ammon's project can be found at <http://kellerassociates.com/News/mid/448/articleId/5/ctl/ReadKellerArticleList.aspx>

## *Oregon's Environmental Justice Task Force Honored*



EPA has recognized five partnerships for their contributions to advancing environmental justice in communities. In Region 10, EPA is pleased to recognize the **Oregon Environmental Justice Task Force** for effective implementation of the State's

environmental justice legislation and its ability to incorporate environmental justice considerations into State agencies' programs.

The Task Force's role is to advise the Governor about environmental justice issues, and to help the Governor's office and state natural resource agencies identify and address environmental justice throughout the State.

Partners include:

- The Commission on Asian Affairs
- The Commission on Black Affairs
- The Commission on Hispanic Affairs
- The Commission on Indian Services
- Multnomah County Health Department
- Oregon Environmental Council
- Oregonians for Food and Shelter
- Oregon Law Center Farmworker Program
- Organizing People-Activating Leaders
- Willamette University

The goal of the agency's **National Achievements in Environmental Justice Awards** is to encourage communities to form partnerships, work together to solve problems, and identify and take actions that directly benefit the community residents.

For details on the awards, visit [www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/awards/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/awards/index.html). Or, contact Sheryl Stohs, EPA Environmental Justice Program, 206-553-0250, 800-424-4372, or email [stohs.sheryl@epa.gov](mailto:stohs.sheryl@epa.gov).

## *EPA Praises Portland for Green Growth Leadership*

**Portland, Oregon's** commitment to environmentally-friendly urban growth has garnered the city an esteemed **Smart Growth Award** from EPA. The city's "Making the Greatest Place" effort is one of only five initiatives across the nation receiving this award.

The award recognizes Portland Metro's preparation for green urban growth in the coming decades under its 2040 Growth Concept. The effort focuses on compact communities, employment areas and transportation around the city, which anticipates a 600,000 leap in its population by 2030.

In addition, the initiative places great importance on responsible land use to protect farms and forests from urban growth.

Currently, over 90 percent of the Portland-area residents live within a half mile of transit. The average Portland resident drives four fewer miles per day than residents of other comparable U.S. cities. Together, the programs and policies created by "Making the Greatest Place" help Portland's compact neighborhoods thrive and reduce the need to expand the region's urban growth boundary.

The agency also recognized New York City, Baltimore, San Francisco and Maine for their smart growth plans.

The award winners embody the principles behind EPA's work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Transportation under the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The agencies are improving access to affordable housing and providing more transportation options at lower costs while protecting the environment. By investing in existing communities and assets found in rural, suburban and urban settings, they are also finding ways to spur new economic development and opportunity. Learn more at [www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards/sg\\_awards\\_publication\\_2010.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards/sg_awards_publication_2010.htm).

Visit Watertalk online at [www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm)

## *Alaska Tribal Village Awarded \$95,000 to Reduce Toxic Exposures*

The **Native Village of Eyak** tribal members will have greater protection from toxic chemicals thanks to a nearly \$95,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The tribe is located in the eastern Gulf of Alaska.

Eyak was awarded the **Community Action for a Renewed Environment** grant to help reduce exposure to environmental contamination. This grant will help create a healthier environment and a healthier population for the entire community of Cordova, Alaska, where most Eyak tribal members reside.

Some of the known environmental concerns include lingering oil contamination from the Exxon Valdez, stormwater pollution contamination, solid waste and open burning concerns.

Eyak is a unified group made up of many Alaska Native backgrounds. It is the largest tribe on the Copper River with about 525 members. The City of Cordova has an estimated population of 2,126 with Alaska Natives comprising about 15 percent.

“The CARE Program is intended to empower communities to protect themselves against environmental dangers,” said Marcia Combes, EPA’s Director of Alaska Operations in Anchorage. “Eyak has already begun identifying risks from toxic chemicals and this grant will help them take their work to the next level.”

The CARE project will help the tribe:

- Build relationships among community organizations and formalize partnerships
- Identify pollution sources
- Prioritize risks
- Map hazardous sites
- Educate the community about the contamination and pollution prevention measures
- Create a sustainable community

With the grant, Eyak will devise methods to prevent additional contamination and decrease hazardous material usage through educating the community. The Eyak partnership is building on a 2008 partnership with the Cordova Electric Co-operative. The village has already begun forming partnerships with the City of Cordova, Cordova School District, Cordova Electric Co-operative, Copper River Watershed Project, and the Prince William Sound Science Center.

For more information about EPA’s CARE program, visit: [www.epa.gov/care/](http://www.epa.gov/care/)

For more information about the Eyak Tribe, visit: [www.nveyak.com/](http://www.nveyak.com/)

Contact: Sally Hanft, EPA’s Region 10 CARE Program, 206-553-1207, 800-424-4372, or email [hanft.sally@epa.gov](mailto:hanft.sally@epa.gov)

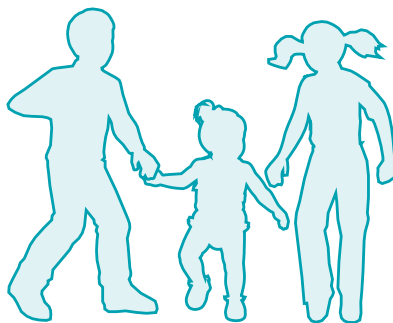
## *SunWise Poster Contest for Kids!*

The annual **SunWise with SHADE Poster Contest** is back! Students in grades K-8 can help raise awareness about sun safety and win prizes by entering the 2011 poster contest. The contest is a joint effort by the SHADE Foundation of America, WeatherBug Schools and EPA, to teach children ways to protect their skin and eyes from excessive sun exposure.

Entries are due **April 1, 2011**. There are two age categories for poster entries: kindergarten through third grade, and fourth through eighth grade. Poster winners will receive state and national prizes from the SHADE Foundation and WeatherBug. The overall national winner in the

4th-8th grade category receives a family trip to Disney World and a WeatherBug Tracking Station for his/her school.

Students can submit hand-drawn posters on an 8.5 x 11 inch piece of paper. Entries should be original, creative, show ways to prevent skin cancer and raise sun safety awareness and be attached to an official entry form found at <http://www.shadefoundation.org>. Once the state-winning posters are announced, the public will be able to take part in online voting to decide the national winner. Learn more at [www.epa.gov/sunwise/postercontest.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/postercontest.html).



## Oregon's Bear Creek Cleaner Thanks to Watershed-Wide Projects

### *Local groups, armed with a protection plan and \$5.4 million in funding, dramatically improve water quality in Bear Creek*

After years of hard work by local groups and \$5.4 million in state and federal investment, areas of Bear Creek watershed are showing dramatic water quality improvement. And environmental officials are crediting a recently-adopted "watershed approach" to problem solving as the key to success.

The Bear Creek watershed, covering 361 square miles, is just the second watershed after the Tillamook watershed in Oregon to see major water quality improvements by following a plan focused on reducing pollution across the watershed. According to participants, watershed-wide solutions often prescribe several small projects to help achieve a larger overall goal of improving water quality.

"These are impressive results," said Mike Bussell, director of EPA's Office of Water & Watersheds in Seattle. "Phosphorous pollution entering the Bear Creek watershed has dropped by more than 90 percent. This is a stellar federal, state and local partnership that is helping Oregon improve water quality and protect public health."

Excessive phosphorus in rivers, lakes and streams acts as fertilizer and can cause explosive plant and algae growth. When aquatic plants and algae die, they rob oxygen that fish and other aquatic organisms need to survive.

Since the early 1990s, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments and the Bear Creek Watershed Council have made protecting and improving Bear Creek water quality a priority by:

- Conducting regional water quality monitoring
- Assisting with regional stormwater management planning
- Implementing demonstration projects
- Promoting education and outreach programs
- Serving as a point of contact for water quality questions

"Energized and dedicated citizens, matched with state and federal funding have worked miracles in the Bear Creek watershed," said Bill Meyers, DEQ's Rogue River Basin Coordinator. "A shared vision, tenacity and sharp tools have combined to make this area a model for other watershed-wide partnerships."

Water quality improvement projects in the Bear Creek Watershed include:

- Upgrades to City of Ashland's wastewater treatment plant;
- Implementation of storm water control practices in urbanized areas;
- Improvements in Irrigation District water delivery and transport;
- Outreach and education in the agricultural community about best management practices to reduce sediment to Bear Creek.

For details on the watershed, visit: [www.bearcreek-watershed.org/](http://www.bearcreek-watershed.org/)

For more information about Watersheds, visit: <http://go.usa.gov/aPx>

For more information on Oregon DEQ's role in water quality improvements in the watershed, visit: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/WQ/TMDLs/rogue.htm>

Contact: Jennifer Wu, 206-553-6328, 800-424-4372, or [wu.jennifer@epa.gov](mailto:wu.jennifer@epa.gov)



Visit Watertalk online at [www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/watertalk.htm)



# CALENDAR



## *February*

**28-Mar 4:** National Invasive Species Awareness Week, [www.nisaw.org](http://www.nisaw.org)

## *March*

**6-12:** Ground Water Awareness Week, [www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx](http://www.ngwa.org/public/awarenessweek/index.aspx)

**13-20:** National Wildlife Week, [www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Events/National-Wildlife-Week.aspx](http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Events/National-Wildlife-Week.aspx)

**14-20:** Fix a Leak Week: Check, fix, replace, [www.epa.gov/fixaleak](http://www.epa.gov/fixaleak)

**17-18:** Water Law in the Inland Northwest, Spokane, WA, Law Seminars International, 800-854-8009, [www.lawseminars.com/detail.php?SeminarCode=11TMDLWA](http://www.lawseminars.com/detail.php?SeminarCode=11TMDLWA)

**22:** World Water Day, [www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/index.html](http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/index.html)

**22:** Due date for applications for CARE grants. See article on page 3.

## *April*

**11-12:** Tribal Water in the Pacific Northwest, Seattle, WA, Law Seminars International, 800-854-8009, [www.lawseminars.com/detail.php?SeminarCode=11TRIBWWA](http://www.lawseminars.com/detail.php?SeminarCode=11TRIBWWA)

**16-24:** National Park Week, [www.nps.gov/npweek/](http://www.nps.gov/npweek/)

**22:** EARTH DAY, [www.epa.gov/earthday](http://www.epa.gov/earthday)

## *May*

**American Wetlands Month**, [www.epa.gov/owow\\_keep/wetlands/awm/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/owow_keep/wetlands/awm/index.html)

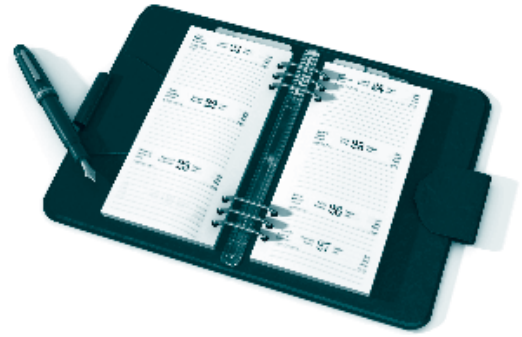
**12-13:** Brownfields and Land Revitalization Conference, Spokane, WA, <http://conferences.wsu.edu/conferences/brownfields/>

**15-21:** Oregon Invasive Weed Awareness Week, [www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/)

**17-18:** Exempt Wells: Problems and Approaches in the Pacific Northwest, Pacific Northwest Water Team and other Sponsors, Walla Walla, WA, <http://conferences.wsu.edu/conferences/exemptwells/>

## *HOLD THE DATE*

**October 25-27:** Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference: Many Voices, One Sea, Vancouver, BC, Canada, [www.salishseaconference.org](http://www.salishseaconference.org). Session proposals are due **March 1**.



**Dear Watertalk Readers:** Watertalk likely will be on hiatus for the rest of 2011. We hope to resume publication in 2012. If you have thoughts about the Newsletter or ways it could be improved, send an email to Editor Andrea Lindsay at [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).

## 40 Years of Environmental Progress

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quarter saw improved trophic status. Plus, today, more than 2,000 water bodies identified as impaired in 2002 now meet water quality standards.

**Public drinking water is cleaner:** The number of Americans receiving water that met health standards went from 79 percent, in 1993, to 92 percent, in 2008.

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- Read the Aspen Institute List: The Top 10 Ways EPA Has Strengthened America Over the Past 40 Years. [http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq\\_2010-11-29\\_Aspen](http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/names/hq_2010-11-29_Aspen)

Forty years is just the beginning for environmental protection. Let's see what we can do together in the next forty!

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**Watertalk**  
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You are invited to contribute items for publication. Submittal deadline is the 15th day of the month before publication.  
*Watertalk* articles can be used in other publications.  
Please give credit to *Watertalk*.

For mailing list changes, or to contact the editor, call Andrea Lindsay at (206) 553-1896 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1896, or e-mail [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).

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