



We Want to Hear From You: *WaterTalk Survey*

WaterTalk wants to provide you with useful news and resources. Your opinions, ideas and thoughts are important to us. Please take a few moments to respond to the survey on [page 7](#). Your response allows you to enter a drawing to win one of five special EPA baseball hats that read "Adopt Your Watershed." Your feedback will help us make sure WaterTalk serves you well. Results will be announced in a future issue.

EPA NEWS

EPA, Army Actions Affect Wetlands

EPA and the U.S. Army have announced a pair of actions that will help Americans comply with the Clean Water Act's requirements for protecting wetlands. The actions include issuing guidance for carrying out the federal rules, and a process for public review of the rules. These actions reaffirm federal authority over the vast majority of America's wetlands, and build on the national "no net loss" of wetlands policy.

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In This Issue...



EPA News to update you on agency activities



Tools to clue you in on resources, publications, opportunities, and services



WaterWords to share stories from communities around the Greater Northwest



Spotlight to showcase success stories and environmental stars



Ecosystem to provide news that goes beyond water topics

(continued from page 1)

The actions are in response to the Supreme Court's 2001 decision in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (SWANCC). The Court held that the Corps had exceeded its authority over certain isolated ponds based on the Migratory Bird Rule. That decision limited federal authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate some wetlands.

The two agencies issued guidance for carrying out federal wetlands rules. The guidance addresses several legal issues concerning Clean Water Act jurisdiction that have arisen since SWANCC, involving federal regulation of "navigable waters." The updated guidance replaces prior guidance on this issue.

Also, an Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ANPRM) has been published. The ANPRM solicits from the public data and information to clarify the extent of Clean Water Act coverage in light of SWANCC. *(See next article.)*

The *Federal Register* document and more information are on EPA's web page at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/swanccnav.html>. Or, contact EPA's Wetlands Helpline at 800-832-7828 for copies.

Public Comment Opportunity: *Clean Water Act* *Definition of "Waters"*

EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have issued an **Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**. The agencies would like comment on the scope of waters that are subject to the Clean Water Act, in light of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* (SWANCC) *(See previous article)*.

The ANPRM requests public input on issues associated with the definition of "waters of the United States." It also solicits information or data from the general public, the scientific community, and Federal and State resource agencies on the implications of the SWANCC decision for jurisdictional decisions under the Clean Water Act. The agencies plan to develop regulations that will clarify what waters are subject to the Clean Water Act. Public input will help determine the issues to be addressed and the approach for the future proposed rulemaking.

For more information, visit the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/swanccnav.html>. Mail comments by March 3 to: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode 4101T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460, Attention Docket ID No. OW-2002-0050.

EPA Announces Feedlot Rules

EPA has announced a final rule that will require all large **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations** (CAFOs) to get permits that will ensure they protect America's waters from wastewater and manure.

The rule will control runoff from agricultural feeding operations, preventing billions of pounds of pollutants from entering local waters. This rule will help protect waters from nutrient over-enrichment which causes algal blooms and fish kills. The rule also will reduce pathogens in drinking water and improve coastal water quality.

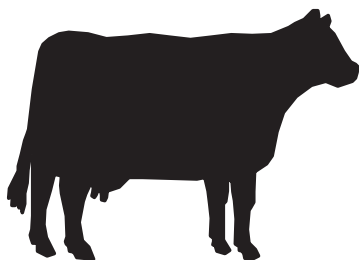
The new rule replaces 25-year-old technology requirements and permitting regulations that did not address today's environmental needs and did not keep pace with industry growth. Manure management practices required by this rule will maximize the use of manure as a resource for agriculture, while reducing harm to the environment.

The new rule applies to about 15,500 livestock operations across the country. Under the rule all large CAFOs will be required to apply for a permit, submit an annual report, and develop a plan for handling manure and wastewater. In addition, the rule places

controls on land application of manure and wastewater. It also covers all major animal agriculture sectors and increases public access to information through CAFO annual reports. Additionally, the rule ends current permitting exemptions.

States are being given flexibility to find geographically appropriate ways to carry out the CAFO rule. For example, states can determine the type of permit – general or individual – to be issued to a given operation. This enables states to develop permits that take into account the size, location and environmental risks that may be posed by an operation. States may also tailor nutrient management plans for CAFOs. Also, they may allow alternative performance standards for CAFOs to help promote the use of innovative technologies.

For more information visit: <http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/afo/cafofinalrule.cfm>.



EPA Seeks Comment on Agency Strategic Plan

EPA wants your input and advice as we develop the Agency's Strategic Plan for 2003 to 2008. Our Strategic Plan sets the Agency's long-term goals for protecting human health and the environment; sets out shorter-term objectives for achieving these results; and describes the means we — working with our federal, state, tribal and local agency partners — will employ to reach our goals.

The draft goals and objectives for our 2003 Strategic Plan target five areas:

- Air
- Water
- Land
- Communities and Ecosystems
- Compliance and Environmental Stewardship.

We are interested in your thoughts about the draft objectives, sub-objectives, and targets we have developed to enable us to achieve results in each of these areas and to gauge our progress.

To learn more about EPA's strategic planning, go to EPA's Strategic Plan page: <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/>.

To comment on the draft goals and objectives go to http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan_comments.htm.

Water Quality Trading Policy Announced

Last month, EPA announced a new **Water Quality Trading Policy** designed to cut industrial, municipal and agricultural discharges into the nation's waterways. This trading policy will encourage states and tribes to develop, and put in place, water quality trading programs that fulfill the requirements of the Clean Water Act and other federal regulations. The policy aims to help increase the pace and success of cleaning up impaired rivers, streams and lakes throughout the country.

Water quality trading uses economic incentives to improve water quality. It allows one source to meet its regulatory obligations by using pollutant reductions created by another source that has lower pollution control costs. The standards remain the same, but efficiency is increased and costs are decreased. Under the new policy, facilities first meet the technology control requirements, and then they can use pollution reduction credits to make further progress towards water quality goals. For example, a landowner or a farmer could create credits by changing their farming practices, and planting shrubs and trees next to a stream. A municipal wastewater treatment plant could then use these credits to meet water quality limits on its permit. For more information log on to <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading.htm>.

Advancing Water Security, Protecting Public Health

Last year, the Public Health Security and Bio-Terrorism Preparedness and Response Act was passed. EPA is now working with water utilities to protect vital infrastructure and public health. In January, EPA issued a set of instructions that will help drinking water utilities submit to EPA (in a secure manner) their self-assessment of vulnerabilities to terrorist attacks. Once a drinking water system certifies completion of its vulnerability assessment to EPA, it is required, within six months, to certify completion of its emergency response plan. For additional information, log on to <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/security>.

EPA Proposes to Withdraw TDML Rule

On December 20, EPA announced a proposal to withdraw the July 2000 rule which revised EPA's Total Maximum Daily Load (TDML) program. The rule was determined to be unworkable based on thousands of public comments and was challenged in court by several parties. The Clean Water Act requires that states identify waters not meeting water quality standards and develop plans for cleanup. The TDML program provides a process for determining pollution budgets for the nation's waters that once implemented, will assure that Clean Water Act goals will be met. Learn more at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf>. Search press releases for December 20, 2002.

Environmental Funding Opportunities: *Act Fast!*



Education Funds Support Innovative Projects

EPA is accepting applications for grants to fund innovative ways to educate the public about the environment. Schools, universities, not-for-profit organizations, tribal education agencies, and state and local governments are eligible to apply.

Applications fall into two categories: nationally significant projects of more than \$25,000, and local efforts under \$25,000. Grants for the larger amounts are issued by EPA headquarters. The smaller grants are issued by EPA's regional offices.

EPA gives special encouragement to local efforts, according to Sally Hanft of EPA Region 10's environmental education program. "Often the catalyst for learning about the environment occurs at the community level," said Hanft. "Teachers, environmental professionals, and even scout leaders often have wonderful ideas to raise awareness about environmental issues. With a little community support and some funding from EPA, they turn those ideas into an educational experience."



Applications for the next round of grants must be postmarked by **February 14**. A tutorial for grant applicants is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/seahome/grants/src/grant.htm>.

Information about the grants program, resource materials, and application forms are on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.htm>. Or, call 800-424-4372 or 206/553-1200.

For program information, contact Sally Hanft at e-mail hanft.sally@epa.gov or 206/553-1207.

Awards are subject to Congressional action to appropriate funds. EPA reserves the right to not make any grant awards.

If funds are allocated, the grant awards will be made after September 2003.

Environmental Funding Opportunities: *Act Fast!*



Chance to Apply for Regional Initiative Funds

Regional Geographic Initiative (RGI) grants are now open to competition in EPA Region 10. The grants fund broad-based, cooperative efforts to address environmental problems at the local level. RGI funding encourages integrated solutions, as well as coordination and cooperation between partners. Problems addressed by RGI often showcase innovative solutions.

Assistance under RGI is generally available to public or private nonprofit institutions including states, Indian Tribes, universities and colleges, other public or private nonprofit institutions such as watershed councils, and in some instances, for-profits, in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Typically, the grants range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Awards are subject to appropriation of funds. The deadline for applications is **March 15**.

Detailed information about RGI grants and an on-line application can be found on the EPA's web page at <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>. Or, contact the Region 10 RGI coordinator, Dan Phalen, at 206/553-8578, or e-mail: phalen.dan@epa.gov.

Time to Apply for Brownfields Job Training Grants



The Proposal Guidelines for **Brownfields Job Training Grants** are now available.

The deadline for proposals has been extended to **February 14**.

To help local residents get jobs created by the assessment and cleanup of properties with real or potential contamination, EPA started the Brownfields Job Training Grants. Colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, states, cities, towns, counties, and federally recognized tribes are eligible to apply for the funds.

These grants provide funding of up to \$200,000 over two years. EPA will select about ten Brownfields Job Training grants by the end of April. Applicants must be located near one of the EPA-funded brownfields grant communities.

Proposal guidelines and program details are online at <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>. To request a copy, call EPA at 800-424-4372 or 206/553-1200. If you have questions after reviewing the guidelines, contact Roopa Karia, Brownfields Project Manager, at the numbers listed above.

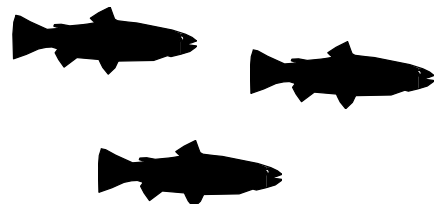
New NPDES Permit Software: Apply Electronically

Industries and municipalities applying for wastewater discharge permits can now do so electronically. A new permit application software, called **PASS**, can make it easier to apply for NPDES permits.

The permits are issued by EPA and states under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. The first phase of this new electronic application system is available and ready for use.

PASS allows users to fill out applications using an electronic question and answer format. In future editions, PASS will allow applications to be sent electronically to the permitting authority for review.

PASS is available for use in ten states, including Alaska, Idaho and Oregon. For more information visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/npdes/PASS.



Software Assesses Water Utilities

CAPFinance, a new software program, can help water and wastewater utilities analyze the true costs of providing water and wastewater to their customers. It organizes financial data, documents the analyses, and presents complex information in an easy-to-understand icon-driven format for the full range of utility assets. CAPFinance was funded by EPA and developed by the Environmental Finance Center in collaboration with BSU's College of Engineering. The software is available for \$49.99, plus \$5 s/h. For more information or to request a copy of the software, visit <http://www.boisestate.edu/efc> or call 208/426-1567.

EPA Compliance Clearinghouse Improved

EPA's **National Environmental Compliance Assistance Clearinghouse** has been updated and expanded. Improved navigation features make it easy to select from over 5,000 public and private compliance web resources.

The interactive Clearinghouse now contains new topics and features. For example, with the "Search the Clearinghouse From Your Site" web service, you can search the Clearinghouse resources without leaving your site. A new topic on measurement links to guidance and success stories that will help measure your program's effectiveness. Visit the web site at www.epa.gov/clearinghouse.

Become a Watershed Steward!

The Washington State University Cooperative Extension, King County invites applicants for their **2003 Watershed Steward Volunteer Training** program. Applications are due **February 21**.

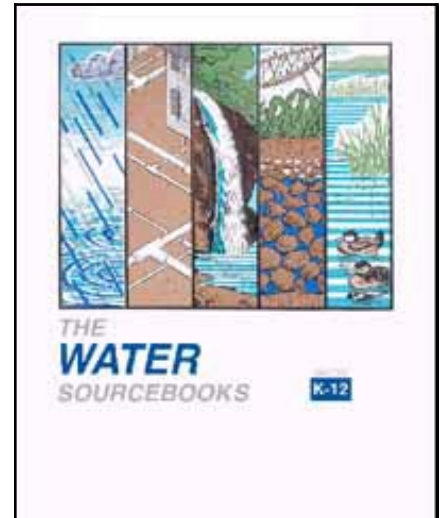
Selected individuals will receive 70 hours of training about watershed resources, with an emphasis on practical stewardship. In return for training, stewards agree to provide a minimum of 70 hours of volunteer outreach.

The training will be held in the Seattle area on Fridays from April 4 through May 30. There are two Saturday field trips. Cost is \$25.

To receive complete information and an application, call Paul Racette, 206/205-3171, 800-325-6165, extension 5-3171, or e-mail paul.racette@metrokc.gov. Or visit www.metrokc.gov/WSU-CE/land&water.



Water Education CDROM Available



Educators may want to get a copy of this comprehensive resource: **The Water Sourcebooks**. Now available free on CDROM, *The Water Sourcebooks* contain 324 activities for grades K-12. The activities are divided into four sections, based on grade level. Each section covers Introduction to Water, Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment, Surface Water Resources, Ground Water Resources, and Wetlands and Coastal Waters.

This environmental education program, developed with EPA support, uses a balanced, flexible approach. It includes hands-on activities, fact sheets, reference materials, a glossary, and more. For a copy of the CDROM, call EPA's Public Environmental Resource Center at 206/553-1200 or 1-800-424-4372. Or, learn more on-line at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids/wsb/index.html>.

Please Tell Us What You Think: WaterTalk Reader Survey

WaterTalk is dedicated to providing you with relevant and useful news. Your opinions, ideas and thoughts are important to us. Your response to the following questions will help us make sure *WaterTalk* is the best it can be and will enter you in a drawing to win one of five special EPA "Adopt Your Watershed" baseball hats. Results will be announced in a future issue of *WaterTalk*.

Which of the following describes your affiliation? (Check all that apply)

- Education, K-12
- College/University
- Environmental Group
- Cooperative Extension
- Tribal
- Industry
- Federal
- State
- City/County
- Other: _____

Overall, how would you rate *WaterTalk* as a source of information?

- Excellent
- Fair
- Good
- Poor

Do you find that most of the information is:

- Information I didn't have before
- Information that I receive from other sources.
- Comment: _____

Have you ever followed up (e.g., requested more information) on a *WaterTalk* article?

- Yes
- No

When you finish *WaterTalk*, do you generally:

- Recycle/toss it
- Pass it on to others.
- Save it for reference

(About how many see one issue? _____)

Which types of information are most useful to you? (Check all that apply)

- Upcoming conferences, seminars
- Volunteer opportunities
- Resource information (publications, videos, services)
- Information on new or revised regulations
- Grant or award programs
- Success stories
- Brief articles about environmental issues
- In-depth articles about environmental issues
- Events calendar
- Other: _____

Is the content in *WaterTalk*:

- Just right
- Not technical enough
- Too technical

Is *WaterTalk*:

- Too many pages
- Just right
- Too few pages

Number of graphic images and photographs?

- Not enough
- Just right
- Too many

What do you like most about *WaterTalk*?

How could *WaterTalk* be improved?

Additional comments and suggestions:

Did you know *WaterTalk* is available electronically? Yes No

If you would like to receive *WaterTalk* electronically, please give us your email address:

Thank you for taking the time to respond. If you would like to have your name entered in a random drawing for an EPA baseball hat, please write your name and address in the lines on the next page.

IMPORTANT: If you output this page on your printer, be sure to deselect any shrink or expand options in the print dialog box.

If you have other concerns or comments related to *WaterTalk*, please add them below:

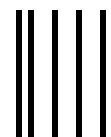
Write your name and address here to enter drawing for an EPA baseball hat:

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. We appreciate it!

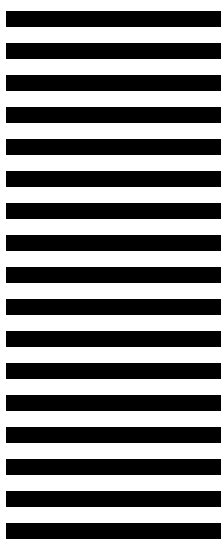
Clip out the full page, fold in half, tape the edge securely and drop in the mail. No postage required if mailed in the U.S.



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WaterTalk Survey – February 2003

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FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 11663 WASHINGTON DC
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ATTN: ANDREA LINDSAY
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
ECO-081
1200 6TH AVE STE 900
Seattle, WA 98101-9626



2003 is Year of Freshwater

The United Nations has declared 2003 the **International Year of Freshwater**. Get more information and learn how you can contribute ideas, news, documents, images and testimonies, or anything that could be shared with others around the world, at <http://www.unesco.org/water/iyfw2/>.

Year of Clean Water Extends into 2003



To celebrate 30 years of progress under the Clean Water Act, 2002 was proclaimed the **Year of Clean Water**. And now the celebration continues into 2003! Congress and many national organizations made the proclamation in order to raise appreciation for our nation's water resources, and to rekindle public stewardship and support for watershed protection.

Each month features a water theme. February is Wastewater Month. March is Non-Point Source Pollution Month. April is Stormwater Month. EPA offers many resources on each of these topics, including magnets, bookmarks, posters, brochures, and so on. Call 1-800-424-4372 or 206/553-1200 to find out what is available as the months go by. Or, for even more information, visit EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/month.html> or the national website at www.yearofcleanwater.org.

Get Ready for Earth Day, April 22

Each year on April 22, we celebrate the anniversary of the first Earth Day. Individual action was the cornerstone of change at the first earth Day "teach in" 33 years ago. It still is today. Whether you choose to attend a festival and learn about water pollution, or



change your buying habits and select products made from recycled materials, your efforts can help support a healthy environment. To learn more, visit Earth Day's web site at www.earthday.org or stay tuned to the EPA web site at www.epa.gov.

SPOTLIGHT

Clean Water Fund Helps City Re-Use Water



Over the last few issues of **WaterTalk**, we've been featuring information about the **Clean Water State Revolving Fund**. This funding program offers low-interest loans for water quality projects. Groups which might be eligible for funding include communities, individuals, citizen groups, and agricultural and nonprofit organizations.

City of Prineville, in Oregon, is one place where the Clean Water State Revolving Fund is at work. Prineville received a low-interest loan of more than \$2 million to upgrade their wastewater treatment and discharge systems.

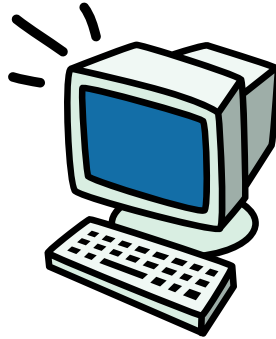
With the loan, the city has been able to re-use treated effluent to seasonally irrigate 123 acres of golf-course. The treated effluent is generally used for irrigation in the dryer months of May through October, when discharges to the Crooked River could be especially harmful to the river's health. Sewer revenues from its 7,750 residents help repay the city's loan.

For more information about the State Revolving Fund, contact Michelle Tucker, EPA, at 206/553-1414 or 1-800-424-4372, or e-mail tucker.michelle@epa.gov.

Recycle Old Computers, Other Electronic Stuff

EPA invites you to Plug-In To Recycling! It's Smart!

Tossing once expensive things like your old computer into the trash doesn't feel smart. But reusing or recycling your computer or TV is smart. By reusing or recycling your unwanted electronics, you can provide your old friends with a new lease on life and help ensure that these materials are managed safely.



It's Good for the Environment!

Donating or recycling your outdated electronics encourages the safe management of their potentially hazardous components and supports the recovery and reuse of valuable materials. It also helps reduce the pollution and energy use tied to the production of new electronics. Finally, it can put a computer, TV or cell phone in the hands of someone who really needs it.

And You Can Do It!

Many communities and businesses offer programs to collect and reuse or recycle electronics. Learn more about electronic recycling and reuse programs in your area at: <http://www.plugintorecycling.org>.

Learn more about the Resource Conservation Challenge at: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/conserved/index.htm>.

EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge: What Can You Save Today?

The Plug-In To Recycling Campaign is one of many new efforts under EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge. The Challenge seeks to increase the national recycling rate to 35 percent and cut the generation of 30 harmful chemicals by 2005.

Beneficial Landscaping

Invasive Exotic Plants -- Trouble with a Capital "T"



Invasive exotic plants (English Ivy is one example, which we discussed in a previous *WaterTalk*) are non-native to the ecosystem. They have the ability to rapidly infest new areas and overwhelm existing vegetation, and are likely to cause economic harm or harm to human health or the environment. Invasive species are cause for alarm because they are robbing us of our natural heritage. They are second only to habitat loss as the greatest contributor to decreasing global biodiversity. Invasive species also cost billions annually in damages to agriculture, recreation, tourism, and many other sectors.

So what can we do about this problem?

1. Learn about invasive plants, especially those that infest your area. The National Park Service has an excellent primer on invasives at www.nps.gov/plant/alien/bkgd.htm. Contact the local weed board or Cooperative Extension office to learn about the species of concern in your area.
2. Prevent infestations. Avoid or minimize clearing and disturbance of natural areas, including clearing of native vegetation. Plan to clear no more than you are willing and able to maintain. Land that is not replanted

soon after clearing, will be invaded by weedy plants common to the area. For landscaping, site restoration or erosion control, use plants that are native to your local region or those that are not known to be invasive.

3. **Control outbreaks.** Report new infestations of problem plants to land managers. Stop infestations on your own land before the problem becomes large. Seek the least environmentally damaging means for controlling infestations. The Urban Pesticide Education Strategy Team website at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/upest/index.htm offers integrated pest management information. Organize or volunteer to participate in weed control efforts in your community.

4. **Restore native vegetation.** Salvaging native plants from cleared areas and using native plants for landscaping will help to restore our natural heritage – and can bring you joy! Harmony comes with getting to know the native flora, enjoying the wildlife that come to live there, and restoring the integrity of our ecosystems.

For more information on this or other topics in beneficial landscaping, contact Elaine Somers at 206/553-2966, somers.elaine@epa.gov, or visit the website at www.epa.gov/r10earth/bl.htm.

February

Wastewater Month: Year of Clean Water, <http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/month.html> or www.yearofcleanwater.org.

4–7: Northwest Stream Restoration Design Symposium, Stevenson, WA. Rivers Restoration Northwest, 503/708-1191, <http://rrnw.org/Skamania2003/>.

10–14: Alaska Forum on the Environment, Anchorage, AK, 800-301-0185, www.akforum.com.

March

Non-point Source Pollution Month: Year of Clean Water, <http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/month.html> or www.yearofcleanwater.org.

24–28: The Restoration Toolbox – Society for Ecological Restoration NW Conference, Portland, OR. Melissa Keigley, 206/547-9641, info@sernw.org.

31–April 3: Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Research Conference, Vancouver, BC. Pete Dowty, 360/407-7561 or 800-54-SOUND, www.wa.gov/puget_sound.

April

Stormwater Month: Year of Clean Water, <http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/month.html> or www.yearofcleanwater.org.

11: Deadline to contribute to the May issue of *WaterTalk*. Andrea Lindsay, Editor, 206/553-1896 or 1-800-424-4372, lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

22: **Earth Day**

May

American Wetlands Month, Save Our Streams Program, 800-284-4952, www.iwla.org/sos.awm.



WaterTalk

Alaska Idaho Oregon Washington

WaterTalk is published each February, May, August and November by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10. *WaterTalk* seeks to be a useful tool for those who protect water resources and ecosystems in communities of the Greater Pacific Northwest, by providing practical resources and relevant agency news.

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 changes, or to contact the editor, call Andrea Lindsay at 206/553-1896 or 1-800-424-4EPA x1896, or email lindsay.andrea@epa.gov.

Accessibility information: To request services to accommodate persons with disabilities, contact EPA at 206/553-1200 or 1-800-424-4EPA.

Mention of trade names, products or services does not convey, and should not be interpreted as conveying, official EPA approval, endorsement or recommendation.

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