

## **G. EPA: COMMUNITY-BASED ACTIVITIES**

### **G. 1. EDUCATION PROGRAM EXAMPLES — REGIONS 3 AND 10**

#### **REGION 3**

##### States Watershed Meeting

Watershed planning, tools and resources, implementing watershed projects, watershed assessment process, how EPA can help

##### Montgomery and Bucks Counties, PA land use planning

Best management practices - with local government

EPA office works with one county per year to maintain involvement with communities.

Provides someone from EPA to talk to, invited to meetings, provides workshop.

Green Communities Assistance Kit - piloted aspects of Assistance Kit in selected communities.

##### Supports a variety of community-based projects each year:

Maryland groundwater festival

Stream Awareness Day

Watershed Awareness Week

Adopt-A-Watershed

Adopt-A-Wetland

GREEN Kids Congress

Well-head protection survey in Virginia community conducted by Retired Seniors

Wichahiken Creek project - Philadelphia area, multi-racial stream monitoring effort

Anacostia River - working with community to determine solution between conflicting needs: for riparian buffer area and for safety

##### Americorps activities

EPA houses Americorps staff.

In Chester, PA activities include: neighborhood clean ups, urban gardening, school programs. Community initially chosen due to results from a drinking water risk assessment study conducted as a result of community concern.

##### Estuary and coastal initiatives

In addition to festival programs listed above

Chesapeake Bay

Inland Bay

Maryland coastal issues

##### Resource sharing initiatives

Section 319 water initiatives support community-based education through partnership with state agencies

Superfund site - community participation resources; community involvement "book"

## **REGION 10**

### Direct involvement in community environmental education

EPA Walk Programs: Streamwalk, Lake Walk, Wetland Walk  
Watershed Stewards Course - WA  
Pipers Creek Coalition  
Duwamish Youth Initiative/Urban Resources Partnership  
U of Washington Sustainability course on the Internet  
Bellevue Partners for Clean Water  
Anchorage Water Watch  
Youth Environmental Savers: Central Area Motivation Program  
Idaho Water Resources Institute  
Watch Over Washington

### Funded community education projects, without direct involvement

City of Gresham, OR - Naturescaping for Clean Rivers  
Owyhee Soil Conservation District - Education for the agricultural community  
Wascon County Soil and Water Conservation District - Education for the landowners in stream riparian areas  
Wellhead Inventory Training Program - Idaho Water Resources Research Institute  
Chautauqua Northwest - Seniors for the Environment  
Central Oregon Environmental Center - Household Eco-team  
Northwest Chicano Network - Spanish Radio program and printed materials

### Resource sharing initiatives

Brownfields projects - management and technical assistance from EPA  
Community access to EPA information via the Internet  
Funding for:

- community-based education programs about the environment
- to support environmental justice and environmental justice through pollution prevention initiatives
- pollution prevention programs
  - community planning and implementation of their own well-head protection programs using the State Revolving Fund for Drinking Water Protection

Green Lights partner program for energy savings  
Performance Plans for region priority ecosystems  
Small community compliance flexibility including technical assistance and community leader workshops  
Superfund Community Relations Plans, Technical Assistance Grants

### Place-based activities with specific communities (not listed here)

Funding  
Technical assistance  
Forest Team, Salmon Team  
National Estuary Program Funds  
EPA State Teams, Place-based staff projects at specific locations

## G. 2. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION RESOURCES

*EPA resources specifically targeting community-based initiatives are listed here.* EPA also produces numerous fact sheets, reports, and data sets which can provide the foundation for community assessment activities.

U.S. EPA. 1997. *Community-Based Environmental Protection: A Resource book for Protecting Ecosystems and Communities*. EPA 230-B-96-003.

This guide provides a foundation for understanding community-based environmental protection, tools and techniques for determining local management needs, and 30 case studies.

EPA Region 10 Office of Ecosystems and communities, Elbert Moore, Director. 1997. *Community Based Environmental Protection Strategies*. EPA 910-R-97-003.

Defines community based environmental protection and summarizes Region 10 initiatives including a detailed listing of funding opportunities.

U.S. EPA Urban and Economic Development Policy Division (UEDD)

*Sustainability in Action: Profiles of Community Initiatives Across the United States*

A collection of approximately fifty profiles (one from each state) which provide examples of how businesses, non-profit organizations, governments and citizens are taking sustainability approaches to development.

As reported by communities, some lessons learned are:

- ! importance of strong leadership from the beginning
- ! need for flexibility to overcome institutional barriers
- ! flexibility in project strategy
- ! vision and long-term view
- ! need for concrete and visible achievements
- ! strong volunteer core
- ! participatory planning worked
- ! active community participation, residents as equal partners
- ! initiatives based in community culture and values
- ! process is as important as product
- ! people will invest time if there is a sense the their lives can really change as a result
- ! cooperation among agencies and with business
- ! assistance of local and national grassroots organizations
- ! support from legislation and innovative financing systems
- ! move towards solutions rather than assigning blame
- ! need for ongoing communication
- ! sustainable development is not linear but evolves through community connections, solutions come from people
- ! advocate within local bureaucracy
- ! integration of research into an applied situation
- ! ongoing project evaluation
- ! skill building among citizens, training of local leaders
- ! accurate assessment of local conditions
- ! program featured a service that communities clearly wanted

## Community-based Environmental Protection (CBEP)

This EPA emphasis was created in recognition of the local nature of most environmental resources and impacts. The goal is to assess and manage the quality of air, water, land and living resources in a place as a whole, to better reflect regional and local conditions, and to work more effectively with their many partners in environmental protection. EPA's role will vary depending on the issue and the location. EPA may provide the lead (in multi-state or international situations), be an active partner, or support others by providing environmental information, monitoring systems, scientific analysis, etc.

### Features:

- a geographic focus
- a focus on environmental results by geographic area instead of facility-by-facility
- partnerships and stakeholder involvement

### EPA management:

- all offices have submitted action plans
- regions have additional budget flexibility
- each region described how to be more responsive to state and local needs
- EPA is developing Performance Partnership Agreements with states
- efforts are underway to develop effective information and technical tools

### Sample program - Gateway Geographic Initiative Goals:

- ensure compliance with environmental requirements
- promote creative solutions
- enhance coordination between regulatory agencies and enhance communication between them and communities to set priorities and measure success

### Key components:

- involving a variety of public and private agencies
- finding the agency with appropriate authority to do specific work
- dissemination of information throughout the community using libraries, internet, churches, neighborhood organizations, local press, cable
- involving public in developing measures of success
- involving the public and agencies in monitoring success
- build local capacity through improved access to information, technical assistance, grants, etc.

## EnviroFacts

Web page resource

[www.epa.gov/enviro/html/ef\\_overview.html](http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/ef_overview.html)

A relational database that provides an integrated single point of access to data from multiple data resources. Five system databases are included: Aerometric Information Retrieval System (AIRS), Permit Compliance System (PCS), Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS), Toxic Release Inventory System (TRIS), Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS). It also includes two cross reference databases: Facility Index System (FINDS), and ENVIROFACTS Material Chemical Integrator (EMCI).

### Green Communities Assistance Kit

Web Page resource developed by Region 3 <[www.epa.gov/ecosystems/enviro/](http://www.epa.gov/ecosystems/enviro/)>  
Includes tips and tools to assist communities to: analyze trends, develop a vision statement, develop an action plan, and implement the plan. This Kit defines a Green Community as one where: there is balance and connection between the physical environment, natural resources, economic health, and local values; government, business, industry, and residents work together; the community maintains the balance between sustainable use of resources and economic vitality; the community has a shared vision for the future; the community has developed plans and is taking action to restore and protect environment and living space; people join together to achieve health and sustainability for present and future generations.

### Office of Wetlands and Watersheds

Ficks, Benjy. 1997. *Top 10 Watershed Lessons Learned*

Provides several examples and resources for each of 10 “watershed lessons.” The watershed lessons include:

1. Clear visions, goals and targets that reflect consensus
2. Good leaders
3. Coordinator at the watershed level
4. Identifying compatibility - environmental, economic, social needs
5. Implementing a plan
6. Partnerships
7. Good tools available
8. Measure, communicate and account for progress
9. Use education and involvement to drive action
10. Build on small successes

### G. 3. EPA PROGRAM LINKS TO EXTENSION

**Examples of EPA programs conducted in collaboration with Cooperative Extension:**

Clean Water Act section 319 funding and coordination - some regions only

Environmental Education grants and grant review process

Estuary initiatives - some states only

Farm\*A\*Syst - farm based individual assessment of groundwater pollution potential,  
development and coordination collaboration

Indoor Air training programs and funding

Pesticide Applicator program

Pollution Prevention initiatives and funding