



Natural Resources Assessment NEWS

Washington State Department of Agriculture ← Natural Resources Assessment Section Newsletter

WSDA consolidates water assessment programs

WSDA has merged the two agency programs that deal with pesticides issues affecting surface and ground water into one organization.

“The merger of the Endangered Species Program and the Water Quality Program into a single Natural Resources Assessment Section will eliminate redundancies and make oversight easier,” according to Kirk Cook, supervisor for the newly created Section. Previously, Cook was manager of the Water Quality Protection Program.

“The result of this restructuring includes increased organizational efficiencies, improved coordination by streamlining functions, and budget savings for the agency.”

“I’m very happy with the consolidation, staff and structure, and I look forward to working with this talented and innovative group,” said Cook.

Along with providing technical assistance on water-related issues, the Natural Resources Assessment Section will also oversee the surface water pesticide monitoring program, gather the data necessary for EPA to develop Washington state-specific Endangered Species Protection Bulletins, and provide EPA with pesticide impact assessments for ground and surface waters in Washington state. ♣

Surface Water Monitoring Report released

Results from the first three years of Washington state’s ongoing surface water monitoring program were released Oct. 11 by the state departments of Agriculture (WSDA) and Ecology (Ecology).



From 2003 to 2005, a total of 51 pesticides and degradate compounds were detected in urban and agricultural drainages. The majority of the pesticide detections were low and close to analytical detection limits.

Ten of the 51 pesticides detected – azinphos-methyl, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, disulfoton, endosulfan sulfate, malathion, oxyfluorfen, and DDT and its breakdown product, DDE – were periodically found at levels that could potentially have impacts on the aquatic health.

Herbicides were the most frequently detected pesticide in both urban and agricultural watersheds. However, the study found two general differences between the urban and agricultural drainages. Pentachlorophenol, a wood preservative, was frequently detected in the urban watershed while insecticides were more frequently detected in the agricultural watershed.

WSDA and Ecology conducted the research in streams selected to be representative of urban and agricultural watersheds. In the study, agency scientists typically collected water samples weekly from March through October, which is the highest application period for pesticides.

For detailed information about the study results, visit the WSDA Web site at agr.wa.gov/PestFert/EnvResources/SWM/default.htm or the Ecology Web site at ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/toxics/pesticides.html. ♣



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QUESTIONS?

For more information about the Natural Resources Assessment Section, visit our Web site at agr.wa.gov/PestFert/EnvResources/EndangSpecies.htm

We welcome your input. Please send your comments and questions to the WSDA Natural Resources Assessment Section at esp@agr.wa.gov

Awareness

Assessment

Action

Bulletin web site available in 2007

Despite the fact the first bulletin may not be posted on the Internet until 2008, EPA announced that its web-based system to provide Endangered Species Protection Bulletins to pesticide users would be available in early 2007.

At the Endangered Species Partners' Workshop Nov. 15 – 16 in Phoenix, AZ, EPA stated the Bulletins Live! system will be made accessible to pesticide applicators even though label statements referencing the Bulletins are not in the marketplace.

Once EPA determines that use of a pesticide poses risk of harm to listed species or their designated critical habitat and merits additional use restrictions, the pesticide label will refer to the Endangered Species Protection Bulletins to inform users of the enforceable, geographically-specific use limitations for the pesticide.

Bulletins will be available through the Bulletins Live! system or via a toll free number; both of which will be identified on the pesticide label. The Bulletins will generally include a map of the county to which it applies, a description of the species being protected, and a list of the pesticides of concern and their use limitations.

The Endangered Species Protection Bulletins are part of the Endangered Species Protection Plan. The ESPP allows EPA to carry out their FIFRA responsibilities in compliance with ESA while not placing an unnecessary burden on agriculture and other pesticide users. ♦

Judge rejects streamlining of ESA consultation process

This summer, a U.S. District Court judge set aside federal plans to streamline Endangered Species Act consultation requirements, and restored prior standards for protecting threatened and endangered species. Judge John Coughenour stated in his ruling that joint counterpart regulations would "actually result in harm to listed species."

Issued in 2004, the counterpart regulations were intended to enhance and streamline the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process by allowing EPA to register a pesticide without additional consultation when it has determined the pesticide has no effect or is not likely to affect endangered species.

Under Section 7, EPA is required to ensure that the use of pesticides will not set back the chances of survival and recovery of threatened and endangered species and requires the EPA to consult with wildlife specialists in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to apply the best available science to protect the species.

In 2001, Coughenour ordered the EPA to conduct consultations with NOAA Fisheries Service or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine whether 55 pesticides were likely to harm salmon.

Also in this summer's ruling, Coughenour declared repeat emergency exemptions from federal registration (Section 18 of FIFRA) are not exempt from the ESA consultation process.

The judge stated, "'emergencies' must also be unpredictable or unexpected in some way. This definition of 'emergency,' ... does not include those FIFRA section 18 actions involving repeat 'specific' exemptions for the same pesticide for the same site, especially where those specific exemptions have been granted for many years on end."

The ruling is expected to have significant impacts on the agricultural community when it comes to pesticide use and endangered species.

NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the defendant-intervenors in the lawsuit have appealed Coughenours' decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. ♦

Resource Realities

Over 42,000 gallons of water are needed to grow and prepare the food for a typical Thanksgiving dinner for eight in the United States. This is enough water to fill a 30 by 50 foot swimming pool. ♦



"Freedom from Want" – Norman Rockwell