



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



The Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership (Estuary Partnership) has found that the key to educating people about the importance of protecting and restoring the watershed is to personally involve them in the effort, which is reflected in most of Estuary Partnership water quality outreach and education projects—especially in the classroom.

The Estuary Partnership centers on protecting and restoring the lower 146 miles of the Columbia River—but like all NEPs, they don't do it alone. A cadre of experts and supporters comprise the 'partnerships' ensuring that the Estuary Partnership supports existing efforts, and fills gaps, and builds the stewardship needed to sustain the lower Columbia River.

THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM IN ACTION

Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership

With a team of educators, the Estuary Partnership has developed 50 classroom curricula and reached over 94,000 students from all grade levels in 32 school districts in lower Columbia River communities. Working closely with teachers to tailor and deliver classroom lessons, field trips and service learning projects, the work constantly adapts to teacher needs as it works across the region.

An important focus of the service learning projects offered is helping students meet their require-

ments for community service while restoring sites along the lower river. There are 11,900 students involved in service learning projects.

In 2006, the Estuary Partnership introduced the Schoolyard Stormwater Project, a new initiative that gives students from elementary, middle and high schools hands-on education about sustainable stormwater management and implements stormwater infiltration projects right on the school property—projects that have the added

benefit of reducing the schools' stormwater fees.

Funded in part by the EPA, the Estuary Partnership received additional funding for the schoolyard projects from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, the philanthropic arm of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, which supports a variety of environmental protection and education projects, and the City of Portland. The Estuary Partnership also enlisted the help of landscape and architectural designers who helped students

create the plans, frequently at no charge or reduced rates. Creative, educational elements were woven into the designs to appeal to young minds and outdoor classroom space was integrated for added learning opportunities. A series of classroom discussions and lessons, focused on stormwater, watershed health, and water quality, prepared students for field trips that allowed them to view innovative stormwater approaches outside the schoolyard. The Estuary Partnership collaborated with local businesses, including a local

grocery chain that has integrated sustainable stormwater infiltration elements in its parking area, sharing their commitment to the environment.

In 2007, the Estuary Partnership purchased two 34-foot canoes, replicas of the fur trappers, canoes. These seat about 15 students, allowing the Estuary Partnership to add an on-river component to many of its applied learning programs. The Estuary Partnership also collaborates with the outreach and education staff at Lewis and



Clark National Historic Park in Astoria, Oregon, to offer an affordable summer camp experience to students in grades three to six. The joint venture provides unique and memorable summers infused with educational elements that aim to positively influence young minds as they make choices that impact the environment.

The Estuary Partnership is engages adults and other community organizations including the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Over 9,300 volunteers have removed invasive species, planted native trees and shrubs, paddled the river, and cleaned up sites; one project removed thousands of pounds of river-polluting debris from a small island. Local and state agencies help, too. Two members of a neighboring yacht club donated a boat and barge to carry away the 4,100 pounds of car batteries, propane tanks, gas cans, abandoned boat parts, bicycles, and other trash left behind by squatters on the Hump Island shoreline. Volunteers have also mowed grass, removed trash, and assisted in various repairs at another site along Reed Island's water trail campsite.

With public and private partners, the Estuary Partnership is building stewardship that lasts a lifetime.

Visit www.lcrep.org to learn more about this and other LCREP efforts.

EPA's National Estuary Program (NEP) is a unique and successful coastal watershed-based program established in 1987 under the Clean Water Act Amendments. The NEP involves the public and collaborates with partners to protect, restore, and maintain the water quality and ecological integrity of 28 estuaries of national significance located in 18 coastal states and Puerto Rico.

For more information about the NEP go to www.epa.gov/owow/estuaries.