

# Massive Network Being Developed To Aid Water Quality Management

Rural Michigan residents can find a substantial amount of help in protecting private and community water resources by tapping into a broad educational network.

The easiest entry point is the county MSU Cooperative Extension Service office.

MSU Extension agents are part of an extensive educational network that includes environmental scientists and Extension specialists at the university.

They, in turn, are either members of or closely associated with other committees and organizations that can provide individuals or groups with information about maintaining local water quality.

## Extension WQ Committee

Established in 1985, the Extension Water Quality (WQ) program has a permanent committee of 12 members—campus-based specialists and field staff members from the four Extension program areas—and three subcommittees. These work in waste handling, crop and soil management, and non-agricultural areas, including community and household waste management and disposal. Extension's WQ activities have led to interagency coalitions and joint educational programs with Michigan's departments of Agriculture, Public

reduction of phosphorus leaching into surface waters.

Extension has also developed more than 25 publications and handbooks dealing with such topics as phosphorus, nitrogen and soil sediment management; solid waste handling; environmental hazards associated with storage tanks and septic systems; and crop irrigation.

## Groundwater Task Force

The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources recently established the Groundwater Task Force to assess water quality management requirements and develop needed educational activities.

Task force members represent the Agricultural Experiment Station, the Cooperative Extension Service and water quality interests outside the university.

The group's main job is to help identify, coordinate and channel educational resources to rural and urban communities that need expertise in water protection and enhancement. Their research activities range from developing and assessing more efficient cropping systems that will help improve environmental conditions to developing new methods to detect potential environmental hazards.

## Kellogg and GEM

A companion to the Cooperative

oriented groundwater protection education projects.

The program was developed by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation in collaboration with the MSU Institute of Water Research. GEM is aimed at increasing public awareness of the groundwater resource, promoting individual and broad community involvement in developing groundwater initiatives, and emphasizing pollution prevention in individual and community behavior.

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An example of GEM providing educational assistance is the funding of programs for the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council (TMWC).

TMWC is a non-profit organization operating in Emmet, Charlevoix and Cheboygan counties. Its programs are aimed at correcting problems ranging from leaking petroleum

Service is also being conducted through GEM-funded projects at Grand Valley State University and in Kalamazoo.

The Kalamazoo project, administered through the county Extension office, will focus on local agricultural and community water quality education programs during the next three years. It also includes development and implementation of special pilot programs about water quality preservation for 4-H youth groups and local grade school students.

## Other Community Assistance

Another program for small local government units is the Community Assistance Program for Environmental Toxicology (CAPET), developed by Extension WQ members in the MSU Center for Environmental Toxicology.

Funded by the C. S. Mott Foundation, CAPET is working with a few small communities (with populations of 1,500 or fewer) that cannot by themselves afford to solve contamination problems. The program provides these communities with direct access to campus-based experts in such areas as toxicology, groundwater flow, waste disposal and environmental law.

This is part of the broad Extension information network that offers assistance in water management for