

Best Education Practices (BEPs) for Water Outreach Professionals
Defining BEPs, Refining New Resources and Recommending Future Actions

POSTER PRESENTATION

Presenter(s): James P. Dobrowolski, Natural Resource Sciences Department., Washington State University

Title: Activity-Based Learning and Daily Field Experiences Help Bring Watershed Restoration To Life

Abstract: Watershed Restoration is a nationwide shortcourse for agency partners engaged in restoration of disturbed landscapes. Presented in Wenatchee, Washington during 2001 and 2003 and Logan, Utah in 2001, the course is part of the U.S. Forest Service's National Continuing Education program. It combines activity-based and field experiential learning (30% presentation and 70% practice) to provide an understanding of watershed linkages—particularly upstream-downstream and upslope-downslope relationships, essential to the success and longevity of all restoration approaches. Each instructor provides a landscape level view to restoration approaches, issues and relevance by exposing participants to experiences in a broad array of climates and geographic regions. Morning sessions take place in a room transformed to a watershed restoration context by wall peripherals, displays, models and new and innovative materials. Each session establishes clear, meaningful goals and objectives, and promotes the embracing of learning benefits through emphasis on real world examples. Verification of learning is accomplished through hands-on practice, collaborative pretests and posttests, problem solving exercises, and data gathering and synthesis. Pertinent exercises, group discussion and “food-for-thought” challenges are followed by a reinforcing field experience every afternoon. Immediate field application and observation of session exercises provide the ability to expose, in a non-confrontational manner, the environmental, operational, or organizational barriers that prevent restoration success. A relaxed, activity-charged atmosphere supplies a vehicle for evaluating each barrier to success—what can be done to eliminate it, reduce it, or program around it? “Show-you-know” exercises, clear synthesis, and detailed participant evaluations help verify learning success.

Target Audience(s): Agency partners, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Educational Purpose: Education (formalized process with a goal)

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