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Water Quality and Aquatic Environment Monitoring Project

Project Review

Background

The Native Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) is a national Tribal Organization established informally during the early 1980's and incorporated in 1983. The Society has evolved into a dynamic organization that represents professional biologists, natural resource managers, technicians, and conservation law enforcement officers. The Society represents seven geographical regions across the United States with a regional office in Alaska.

The Alaska Region is committed to furthering the role of Alaskan Natives in resource management by increasing tribal technical capabilities while honoring traditional knowledge, experience and values. It will work to increase resource management capabilities while respecting and preserving the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Alaskan Natives.

The mission of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society is to assist native Americans and Alaskan Tribes with the conservation protection and enhancement of their fish, wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources.

NAFWS currently has a cooperative agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 for the Water Quality and Aquatic Environment Monitoring Project (WQAEMP). Over the course of three years the WQAEMP has been able to reach 91 Alaskan communities and provide education and training to over 142 community members.

WQAEMP Program Objectives

1. To provide training that builds local capacity in Alaskan villages for monitoring the quality of water resources.
 2. To develop networking opportunities for water quality monitoring programs including, program support between participants, technical assistance and funding resources.
 3. To provide information and referrals for the development of water quality monitoring projects.
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Program
Training
Description

The training program includes a combination of class-room style instruction and hands-on field experience. The training has been adjusted according to participant needs and staff observation. At this time the training program offers three phases, the phases are set up to build upon the first.

Phase I: Introduction to water quality monitoring:

- Envisioning a program for your community, steps for developing a water quality monitoring program.
- Fisheries Habitat
- Rapid Bioassessment
- Water Chemistry

Phase II: Development of water quality monitoring:

- Review of Phase I
- Study of Lake and Ocean ecosystems
- Continuation of Rapid Bioassessment
- Introduction to Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

Phase III: Development and Implementation of Quality Assurance Project Plans:

- Implementing a Quality Assurance Project Plan
 - Maintaining your equipment and supplies
 - Managing your data with a Database
 - How to assure the Quality of your data collected
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What to
Expect

Listed below are the resources the society will provide:

- Lodging and lunches at training site
- Transportation to and from lodging facilities and training site
- Water quality monitoring “tool kit”
- Workbooks and educational materials
- Lab analysis assistance: Provide funding for one lab test
- Technical assistance regarding development of monitoring programs or referrals to other resources

Comments from participants who have taken the training:

- *The workshop allowed me to understand the biology of fish habitat that I was never aware of and learn the effects of toxins in our waterways.*
- *I learned the importance of the quality and quantity of life in waterways and how to test for them.*
- *My Tribal Council can use the information to gain an understanding of why our sockeye salmon runs are declining.*
- *It shows how the pollution affects the amount of food in our streams/ivers. This also shows what can help or hinder fish habitat.*
- *The information was presented in a manner that was easily understood. I especially liked learning about contaminants that affect our water systems and fisheries habitat.*