



Healthy Waters Coalition Update

February 2013

The Healthy Waters Coalition is a diverse group of municipal and state water and wastewater organizations, and conservation and sustainable agriculture organizations working in Washington DC and in communities throughout the country. The Coalition is focused on strengthening links between our working agricultural lands and the quality of our Nation's waters with a specific focus on nutrients. If you do not wish to receive these updates, we can remove you from our lists.

Below is an overview of the related press coverage during the month of February.

Studies and Research

[Smarter Use of Nutrients Will Help Clean-up the Planet, Say Scientists](#)

Cornucopia Institute

A new report commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) highlights how humans have massively altered the natural flows of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients. While this has had huge benefits for world food and energy production, it has caused a web of water and air pollution that is damaging human health, causing toxic algal blooms, killing fish, threatening sensitive ecosystems and contributing to climate change. "[Our Nutrient World](#)" was launched at the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 18 to 22 February 2013. The study was carried out by nearly 50 experts from 14 countries. Also covered in: [Science Media Centre](#); [The Times of India](#); [All About Feed](#); [Sustainable Business.com](#); [The Independent](#)

[Research Scientist reduces runoff protecting Chesapeake Bay](#)

University of Maryland, Baltimore County Blog

Stuart S. Schwartz, a senior research scientist at UMBC's Center for Urban Environmental Research and Education (CUERE) is developing new methods that may help minimize potentially harmful runoff from green spaces into the Chesapeake Bay. "What we find when you look around at construction sites is the way that we develop the landscape deeply disturbs [the soil]," says Schwartz. One particular culprit is soil compaction, which allows runoff to flow more readily into the Chesapeake Bay or other bodies of water. So Schwartz and his team have devised a plan to loosen urban soils and mix them with vegetative compost to create a thicker, deeper soil that also allows more rainfall to infiltrate it and be retained in the soil, thus producing less runoff.

National Activities

[Floating Islands to the Rescue](#)

New York Times Green Blog

Nutrient pollution is a growing problem along the Upper Mississippi, where water rich in nitrogen and phosphates from crop fertilizer flows directly into the river without the benefit of wetland filtration. The problem is particularly acute in the levee region of southern Iowa, where farmers are groping for a remedy. The polluted water eventually reaches the Gulf of Mexico, creating a dead zone that now spans 6,700 square miles and costs fisheries \$2.8 billion per year. Also covered in: [Energy Guardian](#); [Sustainable Business.com](#)

State Activities

[Iowa Soybean Group Working For Nutrient Management Bill](#)

WNAX Radio

Iowa Soybean Association leaders and officials are working with State Ag Secretary Bill Northey on his nutrient management strategy in hopes of getting state legislation passed this session. Soybean Association's Policy Development Director Carol Balvanz says that reduction plan is a great way for farmers through volunteer steps to do the right thing in benefitting the environment. Balvanz says her group has put into practice the Nutrient Reduction Management Strategy with their own programs and it has worked well with their members. Also covered in: [Dubuque Telegraph Herald](#)

[Committee Searching for Nutrient Reduction Strategies](#)

AG Professional

Nutrient loads can cause problems with water quality. That's why the Missouri Nutrient Reduction Strategy Committee is working to decrease the amount of nutrients that end up in the Mississippi River. The committee, which is made up of 31 organizations and individuals, formed in 2011 when the Environmental Protection Agency made grants to states in the Mississippi River Basin to develop and implement nutrient reduction strategies. Before taking steps to reduce the nutrient load, it's important to understand where the nutrients are coming from, said Bob Broz, a University of Missouri Extension assistant professor and member of the committee.

Local Activities

[Maryland's farm oversight called weak](#)

The Baltimore Sun

As large-scale poultry farmers are required to do, Alan Hudson of Berlin filed a plan last year with Maryland environmental regulators spelling out how he intended to prevent manure from his flocks from fouling the Chesapeake Bay. Hudson had hired a consultant to write the plan, but before submitting it he made the consultant remove recommendations that he take steps to prevent manure blown out of his chicken houses by ventilation fans from reaching a drainage ditch, according to court documents and testimony in a recent trial. He also had a statement deleted about how he had put too much fertilizer on some fields the previous year.

[Farmers urged to help resolve Lake Erie pollution problems](#)

The Lima News

A Friday meeting in Findlay focused on the role of farmers in controlling phosphorous runoff that feeds the blue-green algae polluting Ohio's lakes. "We need to take a proactive approach," said Ed Crawford, with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. "If we don't do the job, it will be legislated." The meeting brought together the Ohio Farmers Union, Ohio Environmental Council, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service at the Hancock County Agriculture Center. The agencies presented voluntary measures farmers can use to manage the phosphorous runoff from their fields.

[DEP: Toms River top source for nutrient pollution to bay](#)

Asbury Park Press

The Toms River is by far the biggest source of nitrogen compounds flowing into Barnegat Bay, where they work as fertilizer fueling explosive growth in algae blooms, according to findings from the state's stepped-up water monitoring project. Altogether scientists calculate some 814,000 pounds of nitrogen are flowing into the bay each year from the Toms River, which along with the Metedeconk River in Brick drains the heavily suburbanized northern part of Ocean County. That number is based on an intense sampling program started in 2011 as part Gov. Chris Christie's administration's Barnegat Bay restoration program.

[Grant for Cape Elizabeth Farm aims to improve Trout Brook water quality](#)

The Forcaster

A Spurwink Road farm's new waste management shed is playing a part in the effort to reduce pollutant runoff in the Trout Brook watershed. Down Home Farm received a \$68,000 grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to build a covered storage facility that manages manure from livestock and prevents nutrients from running into the brook. The shed contributes to the storm-water management plan managed by South Portland and Cape Elizabeth to improve the brook's status. The brook has been deemed impaired by the Department of Environmental Protection because it doesn't meet state water-quality standards.

[At the Capitol: Iowa State Senator Nancy Boettger \(R-Harlan\) Newsletter](#)

Southwest Iowa News

One of the issues that I have heard from many of my constituents is Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy so I decided to address the issue in my newsletter this week. The long-term livelihood of Iowa farmers depends on responsible land stewardship, and Iowa has excellent practices in place to ensure we retain soil, soil nutrients and protect waterways. These practices allow Iowans greater control over land issues like nutrient reduction, and discourage the federal government from coming into the state and over-regulating our businesses and agricultural practices. Iowa's agriculture-driven economy will thrive as we continue to develop innovative solutions to deal with our challenges in nutrient management.

Litigation Activities

[Earthjustice Files Lawsuit To Stop Further Pollution in the Everglades](#)

E-News Park Forest

February 8, 2013. Earthjustice has filed a legal challenge on behalf of the Florida Wildlife Federation to block Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Cabinet from allowing Big Sugar and corporate vegetable plantations to continue farming state-owned land in the Everglades for another 30 years. The farming causes severe pollution in the very areas where taxpayers are footing the bill for a multi-billion-dollar Everglade environmental restoration project. "We should be using these public lands to clean up the Everglades, not allowing corporations to continue to pollute our public lands," said Earthjustice attorney David Guest.