

Center for Academic Excellence

CWSP Partnership Wins Engagement Award



The [Community Watershed Stewardship Program \(CWSP\)](#), a partnership between Portland State University (PSU) and Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), was recently awarded the C. Peter Magrath/W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award, a new national designation for outstanding community-university outreach and engagement.



All public four-year institutions were eligible to apply for the award, which was created by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) to recognize exemplary partnerships at "institutions that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become more productively involved with their communities, however community may be defined."



The CWSP program was one of five regional winners honored at the Outreach Scholarship Conference, 2007 in Madison, Wisconsin, October 7-9. Lisa Libby from the City of Portland, Kevin Kecskes, director of PSU Community-University Partnerships, and Barry Messer, Assistant Professor, PSU Urban Studies and Planning, accepted the award and presented the program to a panel of judges who will choose a national winner. The national winner will be announced at the NASULGC annual meeting on Nov. 11.



Click here to view the [Community Watershed Stewardship Program Video](#) about the impacts of the program.

Engaging Citizens, Improving Water Quality
The Community Watershed Stewardship Program was developed in response to a pressing community need. As the Portland metro region has urbanized, its streams, rivers and lakes have become increasingly polluted and



storm-water runoff has overloaded the city's drainage infrastructure. Because the decisions and actions of community members cause most watershed pollution problems the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services published a plan in 1994 that called on the community to take ownership and actions to improve watershed health. To implement that plan, they turned to the community and to Portland State University for help and the [Community Watershed Stewardship Program](#) was born.

The CWSP engages and supports the community and neighborhood residents in watershed improvement projects through campus-community partnerships. The program offers the community project grants, educational workshops, technical assistance, and watershed council organizational development and informational resources. Since 1995, the program has administered \$490,000 in small grants to schools, churches and other community organizations to fund watershed improvement projects. Past grants have been awarded for educational workshops, monitoring, ecoroofs, storm water features, restoration, naturoscaping, and many others.

The grants and other partnership-led initiatives engage students, faculty, and community members in research and restoration projects, such as the planting of 81,893 native plants, the restoration of two million square feet of upland/riparian land, and enhancement of 12,000 feet of linear streams. CWSP projects have leveraged an additional \$2 million in community support through donations of services, materials, and volunteer time. The program has engaged more than 27,000 volunteers and facilitated partnerships between 860 community groups and hundreds of PSU students and faculty members.

The CWSP is an exemplary "Outreach Scholarship Partnership." For more than a decade, PSU has created model partnerships and served as a national leader in community-university partnership development and community-based research. The CWSP partnership was carefully chosen from more than 600 active community-university partnerships that annually connect more than 8,200 PSU students to communities through curricular and research based partnerships. Visit the [Community-University Partnership Map](#) to learn more about other community-university partnerships.