President’s Corner

By Scott Luchessa, PNW Chapter President

Thankfully, the grasp of the cool, late spring weather has finally rescinded and summer has once again enveloped us in her warm embrace. Summer is a grand time of bounty from local farmers markets and hopefully, if you are like me, your own gardens. There’s nothing quite like picking and eating berries, other fruit, or vegetables produced with your own sweat equity.

Speaking of sweating, let’s hope we don’t do too much of that down the road. Fortunately, the representatives and governors of western states and representatives from the provinces of British Columbia and Quebec continue to demonstrate leadership on the global warming front through the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). In case you missed it, our regional leaders and participants in the WCI released a draft cap-and-trade program design this past Wednesday, July 23rd. It is only a ten-page document and I strongly encourage you to review and comment on it by Wednesday, August 13. Consider the regulated community, timelines, and reduction targets that are proposed in light of a suggested action needed to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) to levels that will prevent potentially catastrophic climate changes. Should other entities be regulated? Is the proposed timeline aggressive enough? A few important elements of this draft design are:

- Mandatory measurement and monitoring for all six GHGs will commence in January 2010 for all entities and facilities subject to report.
- Reporting of 2010 emissions will begin in early 2010.
- Entities and facilities subject to reporting are those with annual emissions equal to or greater than 10,000 metric tons of CO2e.
- Agriculture, forestry, and waste management offsets (see p. 8) are part of this proposed program.
- Launch date for the cap-and-trade program is January 1, 2012.
The draft document will be discussed at the third Stakeholder Workshop, which will be held in San Diego next Tuesday, July 29. These and other workshops can be attended as online webinars/teleconferences. It is very easy to participate. Please do so, our future depends on it. For a copy of the document visit the Washington State Department of Ecology website at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/wci_stakeholders.htm or the WCI website at http://www.westernclimateinitiative.org/.

In lieu of commenting on this document or participating in either the WCI or Washington’s Climate Action Team, here are some things to help reduce the amount of GHGs we each produce:

- Drive less and use public transportation when possible;
- Use teleconferences, webinars, or videoconferences for office meetings instead of flying to meetings;
- Recycle and buy products made from recycled materials, they typically require much less energy to produce;
- Keep your vehicles tires properly inflated to save fuel;
- Keep your vehicle well tuned;
- Use less air conditioning or heat when possible; programmable thermostats are easy to install and work well;
- Use energy efficient appliances and compact fluorescent light bulbs (be sure to properly recycle old light bulbs, which contain small amounts of mercury);
- On demand water heaters are more energy efficient than hot water tanks;
- Consider where your food comes from and buy locally whenever possible (support your local farmers market);
- For you homeowners, make sure you have good insulation (Seattle and other entities will conduct a free energy audit for you if asked).

Thanks for your consideration and see you all in Portland in September for a fantastic conference!

DON’T FORGET TO REGISTER BY AUGUST 1 TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EARLY REGISTRATION FEE.

Protecting Declining Amphibians: A Moral Responsibility?

By Scott Luchessa, PNW Chapter President

As many of you are aware, amphibian populations around the world have been and continue to decline. A number of reasons have been cited for these declining population trends of various species, including loss of habitat, habitat fragmentation, pollution, increased ultraviolet radiation, predation by introduced fish and invasive species, and chytridiomycosis. Some of you may have seen the article on May 2, 2008 in the Seattle Times about a “die-off incident” discovered by a central Washington University student (see http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2004387294_sickfrogs02m.html).

Chytridiomycosis, is a disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, has been linked with amphibian mortality and population declines on at least four continents, according to a 2007 paper by Christopher Pearl and others (see complete citation below) who documented the presence of this pathogen in Pacific Northwest wetlands. As noted by these authors, the causes of amphibian population declines in the Pacific Northwest is likely to be complex, but there is growing concern that this fungal pathogen may be playing an important role in the decline of ranid frog populations. A growing number of studies indicate that *B. dendrobatidis* can be contagious, persistent in the environment, and lethal to at least some anurans. This pathogen has been clearly linked to declining populations of frogs in other parts of the country. The presence of this fungus has been confirmed in parts of Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia.

Given the potential risk to already declining populations of rare amphibians in the Pacific Northwest, particularly northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*) and Oregon spotted frog (*Rana pretiosa*), as well as the potential susceptibility of other frogs to this pathogen, it would seem to be incumbent upon us as wetland scientists and consultants to take prudent steps to keep from potentially spreading it from one wetland, stream, or lake to the next. In fact, I would advocate that it is our moral responsibility to properly decontaminate any equipment (boots, waders, nets, buckets, and traps) between sample sites to help minimize the spread of this and other pathogens. While this may be a slight inconvenience, the process is easy enough. Our esteemed colleagues, Klaus Richter and Marc Hayes, two amphibian experts likewise recommend equipment be decontaminated between sites. For those of you familiar with the protocol for surveying the threatened California red-
legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), you will be familiar with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decontamination process:

The USFWS recommends scrubbing equipment with either a 75% ethanol solution, a bleach solution (0.5 to 1.0 cup per gallon of water), Quat-128TM (1:60), or a 6% sodium hypochlorite solution. Equipment should not be cleaned within 100 feet of aquatic features and care must be taken to properly rinse and dispose of disinfectants as appropriate. For sites with known or suspected disease problems, the USFWS recommends use of disposable gloves. A new pair of gloves should be worn to handle each animal. Gloves should be removed by turning them inside out to reduce potential cross contamination. Used gloves should be placed in sealed bags and disposed of accordingly.

For more information on distribution and pathogenicity of *B. dendrobatidis*, see:


For more comprehensive information on chytridiomycosis, see the Amphibian Diseases Homepage of James Cook University in Australia at [http://www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/frogs/ampdis.htm](http://www.jcu.edu.au/school/phtm/PHTM/frogs/ampdis.htm)

For a swab protocol to determine the presence of *B. dendrobatidis* see: [http://amphibiaweb.org/chytrid/index.html](http://amphibiaweb.org/chytrid/index.html)


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**Wetland and Soil Scientist Certification Update**

*By Scott Luchessa, PNW Chapter President and Jim Wiggins, PNW Program Vice President*

The process of passing a title act to certify soil and wetland scientists in the State of Washington through the Department of Licensing is moving forward. Lisa Palazzi, Jim Wiggins and Scott Luchessa, have been working with state legislators on the current version of the legislation, HB3198. Meetings with stakeholders and opposition groups are ongoing and the proposed legislation will continue to be revised to reflect the process of consensus building needed to pass a bill. We are now working on getting sponsors and drafting a companion bill in the state senate. It is a slow process and it is anticipated that it may take up to another 2 years to complete the process (i.e., pass legislation). We will be presenting this bill to a Senate workshop sponsored by Senator Kohl-Wells on September 4th in Vancouver, WA.

We are working with several professional organizations about this legislation that include forestry and engineering groups to resolve their concerns and move forward. It appears that some professional organizations opinions are that we, wetlands consultants, are not worthy of being considered as professionals. We disagree with this position and believe that if you want to practice as a wetlands biologist, you must meet specific experience and education requirements to work within the State of Washington. Many other states have requirements or are working on credentialing similar to ours. Some people have expressed concerns that this duplicates the Society of Wetlands Scientists Professional Certification Program (PCP) for wetland scientists. This legislation supplements it and is supported by the PCP but does not duplicate it.

We will be working with the Department of Ecology, meeting with Representative Hunt, Representative Williams, Senator Kohl-Wells, and other legislators soon to discuss strategies and process. Jim has hired a lobbyist using his own resources to assist us. We encourage you to contact your state legislators whether in support or opposition to this proposed legislation.


If you have any questions, comments, or would like to get involved, please contact Jim Wiggins at [wetlands@fidalgo.net](mailto:wetlands@fidalgo.net); Lisa Palazzi at

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**SWS Funds Available for Wetlands Workshops**

*By Jeff Walker, PNW Secretary*

The PNW Chapter Board is encouraging applications for SWS support to conduct workshops on relevant topics. The application for can be found on the chapter website: [http://www.sws.org/regional/pacificNW/workshop.html](http://www.sws.org/regional/pacificNW/workshop.html).
pacificrim@tss.net, and/or Scott Luchessa at sluchessa@environcorp.com.

**Want to be Included in the Consultant Directory?**

*By Jeff Walker, PNW Secretary*

The PNW SWS chapter website contains a consultant list of SWS members and their contact information on the chapter website. We update this list quarterly. If you want to be included on the list, please email the contact information you like included to Jeff at: tranger0@yahoo.com.

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If you would like to be removed from our paper newsletter mailing list and receive them electronically, please contact Jeff or Amy with your request.

Have you moved? To ensure you receive each issue of Ooze News, please change your address at the national Society of Wetland Scientists website: www.sws.org.

Fall Newsletter Deadline is October 15, 2008! Send your articles and announcements to Amy or Jeff.

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