
Project POWER: Protecting Our Wetlands with Educators & Regulators

Sponsored by
U.S. EPA
WCS
NYSDEC

History: *“What these guys needed was an education, not a violation”*.

JGilmore NYSDEC

The frequency & scale of violations increased with the inception of the NY Marine Habitat Protection Unit.

- Since 1994 NYA & DEC conducted tidal wetland classes to violators and offered fine reductions. The seed money (20K) came from DEC violations revenue.
- In 2003, Region II EPA funded Project POWER, a citywide proactive measure to offer free wetland workshops in each of the 5 boroughs.
- About 500 people, mostly violators, attended the workshops (home-owners, contractors, a yacht club, city agencies, a university and a youth club).

Justification & Motivation: Respond to the Community's Need to Know

"It's cheaper to educate than to mitigate" MK

A 1994 survey to violators justified the need for collaboration to promote wetland education and compliance:

- Prior to the class, 69% never heard of the Wetlands Protection Act, and those who heard of it did not understand it.
- Should wetland issues be taught in the H.S. curriculum?
89% YES
- Would courses like this help other people avoid violations?
79% YES
- Would you attend free classes on wetland issues?
73% YES



National Call for Project POWER Participants

- **Year 1:** Difficult for state regulators to join with their zoo/aquaria educators. Required EPA extension.
- **Year 2:** Circulation via ASWM, AZA, Coastal America
- **Finally.....** 23 teams applied
 - Grant called for 8
 - Accepted 13 teams composed of 36 wetland leaders.



Obligations:

- Attend 2 day Leadership seminar at NYA (all expenses paid)
- Complete action plans: logistics, resources, press releases, responsibilities of each partner, reaching target audiences.
- Conduct your own wetland workshop (\$1000 stipend per team)
- Complete evaluation surveys

National Wetland Leaders

National Distribution of Wetlands in the contiguous U. S.
(National Wetlands Inventory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Petersburg, FL)



2006 National Distribution of Project POWER Partners



Educational Facilities and Regulatory Agencies That Participated in Project POWER

Educational Facilities	Regulatory Agencies
Aquarium of the Bay	San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission
Chahinkapa Zoo (ND)	Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge
Florida Aquarium	Southwest Florida Water Management District
Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve	New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
New England Aquarium	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Newport Aquarium	Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources
North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher	North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Water Quality
Oklahoma City Zoological Park	State of Oklahoma Conservation Commission
San Diego Wild Animal Park	California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Seattle Aquarium	United States Army Corps of Engineers
Sedgewick County Zoo (KS)	Department of Environmental Health Water Center
Texas Zoo	Guadalupe – Blanco River Authority
Virginia Aquarium	Environmental Management Center

Project POWER

*Protecting Our Wetlands
With Educators and Regulators*

March 20-21, 2006



Sponsored by:
 **United States**
Environmental Protection Agency

 **NEW YORK**
AQUARIUM

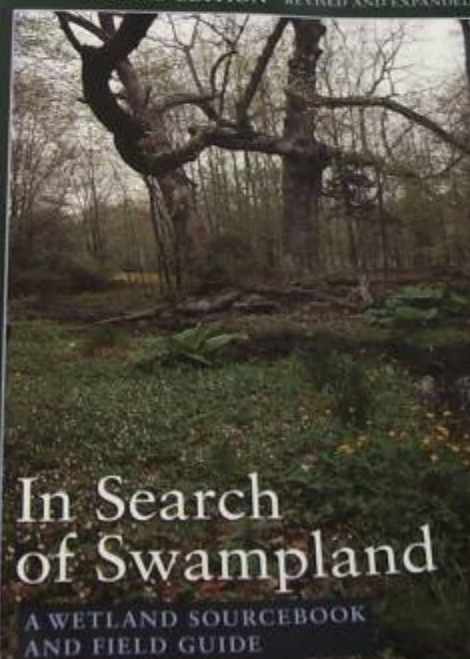
 **New York State**
Department of Environmental Conservation

Tools for Watershed Protection

A Workshop for Local Governments
A Two-Day Short Course



SECOND EDITION REVISED AND EXPANDED



In Search of Swampland

A WETLAND SOURCEBOOK
AND FIELD GUIDE

Wetlands Stewardship A Call to Action

Produced by the
Isaak Walton League of America





Educators & Regulators
develop action plans...

for their wetland
workshops.



Key Findings

- Gained new experiences in wetlands ecology and regulation. Regulators reported limited opportunity for professional development, compared to informal science educators.
- Time to develop collaborative action plans was essential during and after the training. Those who followed this model provided higher feedback rating.
- 12 out of the 13 teams conducted wetland workshops, reaching slightly over 300 community members living/working in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Several teams are planning or have already conducted additional wetland classes beyond the obligation of the grant. In fact, ND regulator obtained a 15K grant to sustain the mission.

Key Findings II

- Extremely effective at strengthening relationships between educators & regulators and their respective institutions: the relationship expanded curriculum, service to the public, and use of facilities.
- Less effective at affecting policy (a secondary goal) such as fine reductions.
- Several regulators indicated that this was not in their domain. VA, however, is investigating this policy, which was developed in the NYDEC.

Educator and Regulator Training Prior to Project POWER

	I received formal training in this area to obtain my degree.		I have informal training in this area through workshops.		I have experience with this content, but have not received training.		Project POWER will be my first experience with this content.	
	ED	REG	ED	REG	ED	REG	ED	REG
Tidal (coastal) wetlands	2	0	6	6	3	0	0	0
Freshwater wetlands	4	0	8	6	1	0	0	0
Wetlands conservation	4	1	7	8	2	0	1	0
Wetlands regulations	0	0	4	4	4	0	3	0
Effective instructional techniques	3	0	7	3	3	1	0	0
Wetlands program logistics	0	0	5	5	4	1	4	0
Action Plans for wetlands programming	0	0	3	3	3	1	4	0

Number of Educator respondents ranges from 10-14 across questions. Number of Regulator respondents ranges from 3-8 across questions.

Number of Workshops Offered that Featured Regulatory Content Prior to Project POWER

	State or local Wetlands regulations		Federal Wetlands regulations		Wetlands permit procedures	
	ED facilities	REG agencies	ED facilities	REG agencies	ED facilities	REG agencies
None	6	6	6	6	7	6
One	1	1	1	2	0	0
Two	0	0	0	0	0	0
Three or More	0	2	0	1	0	3

The number of educational facilities used for this analysis was 7 and the number of regulatory agencies was 9.

67% of regulatory agencies surveyed have not provided public educational workshops on regulations and permit procedures.

Our Role & Contributions

New York Aquarium:

- Resource-rich facilities with animals, aquatic exhibits, and dedicated staff committed to conservation education.
- Role as public educator to respond to the needs of society.
- Neutral ground between community, agencies and violators

Department of Environmental Conservation:

- Allow human interface/dialogue with public, and establish positive relationships with community, hear concerns and questions
- Enhance awareness of wetlands ecology, value and functions
- Improve public compliance to wetland regulations

Thank You

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National Wetland Leaders

