**National Estuaries**

**Communication, Outreach, and Education Webinar**

January 16, 2013

1:00 – 3:00 PM (EST)

Title: **21st Century Techniques for 21st Century Problems: Moving beyond traditional approaches to public engagement**

Speaker: Dave Ward, Puget Sound Partnership

Description: Many of our common, everyday behaviors and practices seem benign on their own but, when multiplied by millions of residents, their cumulative effects are harmful to our estuaries. Reversing the trend by fostering beneficial behaviors and reducing damaging behaviors (i.e., stewardship) is a key step in restoring our estuaries to health.
The Puget Sound Partnership approach to the public stewardship of Puget Sound has three prongs of action:

* Changing Practices and Behaviors
* Issue Awareness and Understanding
* Social and Institutional Infrastructure

This approach is based in social science and is informed by decades of lessons learned about behavior change, education, and outreach initiatives. It is applied specifically to those practices and behaviors among individual residents that can affect ecosystem health.

This model challenges those working to recover the Puget Sound ecosystem to go beyond traditional approaches to education, public information, and behavior change. It calls for a deeper understanding, through formative research, of the practices we need to influence and the specific audiences behind those practices. It encourages innovation, challenges assumptions, and seeks clear chains of results that can be reproduced.

Title: **How PREP creates dynamic relationships that foster increased community understanding and action**

Speakers:

Rachel Rouillard, Director, Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP)

Jill Farrell, Community Impact Program Manager, PREP

Chris Carragher, Brand and Social Media Consultant, Alpha Brandz

Roger Stephenson, Executive Vice President of Programs, Cool Air-Clean Planet (invited)

JT Thompson, Minister of Propaganda, Smuttynose Brewing Company (invited)

Description: The establishment of PREP’s Community Impact Program (CIP) arose from a need for change in the region as public policy issues surrounding pollution and EPA permitting were regularly appearing in the pages of the local papers and being discussed in municipal meetings. To help foster a progressive and knowledgeable discussion of these issues, PREP in its role as a neutral, science based organization positioned itself as a thought leader, and began a targeted effort to engage citizens and stakeholders in new, innovative ways.

The initial goals for the CIP program are:

* Broaden awareness and action for issues affecting our rivers, marshes and bays among “would-be advocates” – widen the table of voices.
* Provide greater support, organization and help to amplify the efforts of our watershed and non-profit partners.
* Increase and diversify funding for protection and preservation projects via a non-traditional sponsorship program.
* Employ latest technologies and communications strategies for high results with low costs.
* Reach out and formulate dynamic, catered and lasting relationships with identified natural alignments in the community in order to connect to already held community values of the Seacoast.

The development of our private sector Clean Water Partnership program has resulted in not only increased and diverse funding but has allowed for greater promotion of PREP’s key message points and integration in the popular culture of the Seacoast. (e.g., High profile partnership with Smuttynose Brewing Company resulted in 5,000 Clean Water - Tasty Beer pint glasses at bars and restaurants around the region).

The Community Impact Program with the support of our brand partners hosts an on-going series of sponsored events such as our Clean Water Music Series, King Tide Photo Contest and the Great Bay Initiative, a community forum that encourages solution based ideas about how we address the challenges that impact our estuaries.

As a result of these relationships, PREP has successfully managed to position the issues affecting our estuaries at the forefront of our community dialogue and continues to set the course for gradual behavior change to occur in the Seacoast, New Hampshire and Southern Maine area.

Title: **No One Gets Engaged on the First Night Out**

Speakers:

Debrah Marriott, Director, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership (Estuary Partnership)

Josh Holcomb, Volunteer Coordinator, Estuary Partnership

Description: The Estuary Partnership citizen involvement program from the outset in 2000, took the approach of engaging citizens in hands-on activities as the primary method to build stewardship. All research shows that we learn more by doing and we build personal stewardship through experience. Since 2000, we have worked with over 50,200 students providing applied learning experiences and we have engaged over 10,660 volunteers who along with students have planted over 47,000 native trees and shrubs along riparian corridors to help reduce water temperatures and restore habitat. Our education and volunteer programs include multiple components: student and community paddles on our 34’ 16 person canoes, volunteer plantings, classroom programs, student service learning projects, exploratory field trips, youth summer camp, and teacher workshops. All our programs include direct and indirect education about the river. We want citizens to ‘feel’ its importance, to embrace its care not because we told them to, but because they physically see its value.

This past year, we stepped up our engagement in three ways:

1. Keeping our citizen volunteers engaged. After a paddle or a planting, we now reconnect with the volunteer – including the very next day. We overhauled our website to be more accessible and interactive. We share pictures, results (e.g. how many trees planted), offer ways for them to ‘talk’ (e.g,. contribute to blogs).
2. Expanding our relationships with current partners. Over 60 corporations have supported the Estuary Partnership annually for over a decade. We now build multiple opportunities (see #1) to engage corporations’ employees and families in activities.
3. Building new partnerships. (See #1 and #2).

This approach and focus helps ensure that citizens build that long term relationship with the river. As they do so, they begin to see their own connection to it and over time, they value it more.