WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

Project ID: ID4541

Title: Integrated Drinking Water Protection on the Clearwater Plateau of Idaho, including the Nez Perce Tribe Reservation

Focus Categories: Non Point Pollution, Management and Planning

Keywords: Land-Water Interactions; Indian Water Issues; Land Use; Geographic Information, Surface-Ground Relationships, Soil-Water Relationships

Start Date: 03/01/2001

End Date: 02/28/2002

Federal Funds: $13,185

Non-Federal Matching Funds: $26,370

Congressional District: 1

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Abstract

Many costly initiatives and programs have been developed to protect drinking water, yet there exists no easy format for land users and community members to access this information in a way that is easily usable. This is particularly important in a demographically complex area such as the clearwater plateau in northcentral Idaho, including the Nez Perce Tribe Indian Reservation. While jurisdictional boundaries exist and must be recognized, the areas are hydrogeologically linked - complicating protection efforts.

Non-point source water quality problems such as high nitrate levels in both surface waters and in at least one deep aquifer (Bentz, 1998, and Crockett, 1995) on the Clearwater Plateau have driven the need for Federally mandated programs such as Total Maximum Daily Load development and Sourcewater Assessments. Significant reaches of Lapwai Creek and the Clearwater River are believed to recharge the Columbia River Basalts, a fractured formation that allows surface/groundwater interaction. Intergration of land/water protection programs such as TMDLs and sourcewater assessments in a way that is usable by the land users is critical in successful implementation of drinking water protection.