

# Stakeholder Connection

Your news source on the Institute for Environmental Solutions projects and progress



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## Contaminants of Emerging Concern From Copenhagen to Iowa City



When leading scientists gather to share current knowledge, IES can serve a critical role in bridging scientific inquiry with information about preventive action. This opportunity has arisen through IES participation in international meetings of emerging contaminant specialists. IES participated in such gatherings in 2009 in Fort Collins and in 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark. IES Executive Director Carol Lyons had another opportunity to present a paper on the IES Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) Project at the August 2014 "International Conference on Occurrence, Fate, Effects, and Analysis of Emerging Contaminants in the Environment" (EmCon) meeting held at the University of Iowa. The conference drew 150 top scientists from around the world presenting the latest research on what should not be such an obscure topic.

Of the 60 oral presentations covered in three full days of meetings, only two covered non-technical action-based responses to emerging contaminant issues. The IES presentation, "Blue Crew Water Stewards: Tackling the CEC Problem through Youth Education," was well received. The Minnesota Department of Health, the U.S. leader in CEC regulatory action (including a recent statewide ban on triclosan), was the only other policy and action-focused presenter. Recent scientific findings on emerging contaminants are considerable, with conference topics covering drugs [mostly prescription and mostly antibiotics (widespread antibiotic resistance) and antidepressants, some illegal (cocaine in Brazil)]; beef, pork, chicken production and waste; fish; vegetables (research in Israel); and household and personal product chemicals, especially triclosan. As the conference made clear, both pollutants and impacts are everywhere. Following the conference, Dr. Ed Furlong of the USGS and conference organizer emailed IES: "Thanks for your participation! I think your presentation was very successful and added substantially to the meeting. I am hopeful that the policy/action component can grow in the future." IES's presentation is available at the IES website. More information: Carol Lyons, [Carol@i4es.org](mailto:Carol@i4es.org).

## Saplings Thriving in the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt

Two hundred new saplings planted by third grade students from Mountain Phoenix Community School and fourth graders from Kullerstrand Elementary in April are thriving, as of early September, thanks to their proper planting and care. IES is pleased to announce that the survival rate is over 85% in spite of spring flooding. Volunteer Tree Stewards are caring for the new saplings, making sure they have water and stay healthy. The 120 students also participated in hands-on workshops as part of the Preserve the Greenbelt Environmental Education Program.

Program funding was provided by Xcel Energy, with additional support by Wells Fargo. The City of Wheat Ridge Parks and Recreation Department, especially Forestry and Open Space Supervisor Margaret Paget, continues to ensure the saplings' survival with supplies and support for the Tree Stewards. IES looks forward to continuing environmental education and restoration programs in Wheat Ridge. A



video of the project, produced by Jesse Johnson of IOTK Media, is now available on the IES homepage, [www.i4es.org](http://www.i4es.org), and IES's YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6GjulRjjwE>. The final report detailing the program's planning, implementation, and success is available on the IES website. For more information, or to sign up as a Greenbelt Tree Steward, contact Sean Mangus at [sean@i4e.org](mailto:sean@i4e.org).

## Colorado Environmental Health Association Presentation in Steamboat Springs



The IES Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) Project Team presented an in-depth briefing for the Annual Education Conference of the Colorado Environmental Health Association in Steamboat Springs in September. CEHA is a statewide innovative and progressive organization dedicated to advancing the cause of general, professional and technical environmental health. The CEHA conference theme was "How the West was won: Pioneering public health and the environment". The conference brought many perspectives to environmental health risks such as the 2013 floods that affected so much of Colorado.

IES briefed public health specialists from across the state about CECs, and engaged attendees in brainstorming strategies to tackle the challenges. Our project mission is to reduce CEC concentrations entering wastewater and reduce human and environmental exposure to these contaminants. In collaboration with local communities, we hope to demonstrate that prevention is better and cheaper than treatment. We look forward to collaborating with CEHA members on our shared goals. The IES Prezi presentation is available on the IES website. More information: Alani Premer, [Alani@i4es.org](mailto:Alani@i4es.org).

## Collaboration Plans with City of Sheridan to Improve West Quincy Trail

IES began preliminary discussions for a watershed improvement and trail beautification project along the West Quincy Trail between Irving Street and Federal Blvd in the City of Sheridan. IES hopes to develop the project in partnership with the City of Sheridan, Sheridan School District No. 2, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District, local businesses, and other community organizations. The project would include planting of native trees and shrubs along the trail to prevent erosion and enhance water quality.



The West Quincy Trail, just south of the Sheridan High School football field, is used by residents commuting to work and school. The trail is a community portal located near Sheridan schools, local businesses, parks, and the larger trail systems along Bear Creek and the South Platte River. This is an important part of the watershed. The pilot project would address this critical trail linked to the Bear Creek and South Platte trail systems. IES looks forward to the potential opportunity to work with new partners in the Sheridan area. For more information and to participate in the proposed project, please contact Sean Mangus at [sean@i4es.org](mailto:sean@i4es.org).

## Hormones in Water Spells Bad News for Front Range Fish



A study linking exposure to steroidal estrogen in rivers and negative effects on fish survival, reproduction, and physiology was highlighted in the July/August 2014 Colorado State University Water Center Newsletter. Estrogens are female sex hormones that enter the water supply from chemicals used in household and personal care products, and prescription drugs that pass through the human body. These chemicals are unregulated in water and are not targeted for removal in wastewater treatment plants. The CSU study was designed to test the connection between estrogen exposure and negative health impacts on fish species. Test ponds were stocked with fathead minnows that were then exposed to steroidal estrogen as adults, in early life, or throughout an entire lifetime.

All exposed fish demonstrated lower survival and reproduction rates. Fish that were exposed to estrogen early in life and then transferred later on to contaminant-free water produced significantly fewer larvae than unexposed fish. These results suggest that even small exposures early in life can have long-term significant reproductive consequences. Larvae that were never actually exposed to estrogen still suffered lower survival rates. Study scientists concluded that trace concentrations of estrogenic contaminants can reduce fish growth rates and that fish may have difficulty recovering even if estrogen exposures are stopped. The IES Contaminants of Emerging Concern Project Team is developing strategies to prevent contaminants from reaching the water. More information: Zach Bodhane, [zbodhane@i4es.org](mailto:zbodhane@i4es.org).

## Research Shows Importance of Attachment to Local Green Areas and Community Activism

Attachment to one's surroundings and local community activism are significantly linked, according to recent research by University of Washington College of the Environment researchers [Green Cities: Good Health ([www.greenhealth.washington.edu](http://www.greenhealth.washington.edu))]. In particular, authors K.L. Wolf, S. Krueger, and K. Flora find that people's connection to the local environment forecasts their level of environmental involvement. The research shows attachment can result from a personal experience such as during childhood, the joy one gets from sensory interaction with the natural environment, or a feeling of increased social interaction due to the natural environment. Experience in green spaces can instill both positive and negative associations ranging from a sense of symbolic importance of nature where complex emotional thoughts might be facilitated, to negative values where a person experiences fear in response to natural surroundings. Neighborhoods that had green spaces near them and where citizens felt a greater positive connection to that space were shown to have more community activism toward environmental issues such as green housing initiatives and stewardship programs for open spaces. The researchers concluded that if urban planning projects facilitate meaning in places for local people, then community connection and activism would increase. More information: John Kelly, [john@i4es.org](mailto:john@i4es.org).



## IES Institute News

IES is pleased to introduce the newest members of The Tree Project Team, Sean Mangus, John Kelly, and Sofia Ponte. Sean has a B.A. from Swarthmore College in History. John has an M.A. in History from the University of Iowa. Sofia has a B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Joining Alani Premer on the Contaminants of Emerging Concern Project Team are Zach Bodhane and Nancy Billica. Zach recently earned a B.S. in Natural Resource Management at Colorado State University. Nancy is a Lecturer in Political Science at the University of Colorado Boulder, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University.

The IES Board of Directors is delighted to welcome Elizabeth (Beth) Woodruff. Beth is the Education Coordinator for Assistive Technology Partners with an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Colorado Denver.

IES Board Member Valerie Gleaton recently joined the staff of HealthECareers as Managing Editor.

## IES Opportunities

IES is looking for an energetic professional to join the IES **Board of Directors** who wants to ensure the application of sound scientific solutions to our pressing environmental challenges. Please contact IES at [Solutions@i4es.org](mailto:Solutions@i4es.org) for a position description and application.

IES is seeking motivated **volunteers and graduate interns** who are passionate about protecting the environment to join our project teams. We also have openings for Development / Fundraising, Social Media

Marketing, and Web Development / Programming Volunteers and Interns. Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to [Solutions@i4es.org](mailto:Solutions@i4es.org).

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