



The NEMO Program

(Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials)

Overview

The NEMO Program was created in 1991 at the University of Connecticut, as a collaboration of the Cooperative Extension System, the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program and the Natural Resources Management and Engineering Department. NEMO was created in recognition of the relative lack of education and assistance available for community land use decision makers. Local land use decisions are a key determinant of the social, economic and environmental health of our communities, yet our local decision makers are volunteers with little or no training in land planning or natural resource protection. Originally a pilot effort working in three coastal towns, to date NEMO has worked with over two-thirds of the 169 municipalities in Connecticut, and is an integral part of the state of Connecticut's Nonpoint Source Management Program.



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How NEMO Works

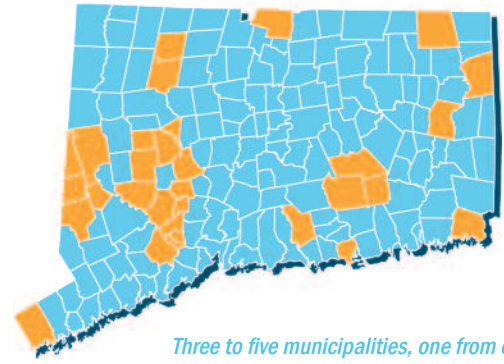
NEMO's basic educational method is face-to-face workshops for local officials. Over the years, the program's list of workshop topics has been expanded beyond the original *Linking Land Use to Water Quality* presentation. All the topics, however, cover some aspect of natural resource-based land use planning and design—the overall approach promoted by NEMO for communities to guide their future landscape. This approach goes beyond a laundry list of natural resource problems, helping towns identify strategies that address key land use issues.

Research and technology play a large role in NEMO educational programs. Satellite-derived land cover maps are used to better understand landscape patterns. GIS technology, or computerized mapping, is used to create maps and analyses that convey complex information in an intuitive,

understandable fashion. The NEMO website is used to display and distribute information, increasingly in an interactive way, through tutorials and web-based GIS mapping. Through this combination of sophisticated technology and old-fashioned Extension education, the program strives to engage its target audience of local land use officials.

Traveling to Town Hall

NEMO goes to its target audience. In a typical year program staff might conduct over 100 educational workshops, virtually all evening presentations at community venues. NEMO staff work with community contacts to ensure that the format and audience of the workshop help to maximize the chances for positive follow up. The ideal audience is a group that has representation from all of the local land use boards, as well as municipal departments (planning, engineering, public works) and any inter-



Three to five municipalities, one from each of the major Connecticut river basins, are chosen each year to participate in the Municipal Initiative. (Towns that have participated are in orange on the CT map above).

NEMO Facts

- NEMO has 16 different educational programs covering various aspects of natural resource-based community planning—with more planned.
- NEMO staff give over 100 presentations per year to community officials.
- Workshops have been given in 3/4 of CT's 169 communities.
- NEMO has been designated the CT "smart growth contact" by EPA Region One.
- NEMO has won national awards from the American Planning Association and the National Environmental Education Training Foundation.
- NEMO is the inspiration for, and coordinating center of, the National NEMO Network, a group of 31 sister projects in 30 states (as of 2007).
- NEMO's integrated research/outreach model is the foundation of UConn's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), created in 2002.

ested organizations (land trusts, chamber of commerce). To date, three-fourths of the 169 communities in Connecticut have participated in at least one NEMO educational workshop (see map).

The Municipal Initiative

In 2000, NEMO staff, in collaboration with the Nonpoint Source Section of the CT DEP, developed the Connecticut Municipal Initiative. The Municipal Initiative allows the NEMO Team to focus more resources on fewer municipalities, establishing relationships between the program and these towns from the initial educational workshop through implementation of on-the-ground changes.

Each year, NEMO distributes a Request for Proposals to all 169 towns in Connecticut, soliciting admission into the Municipal Initiative. Three to five municipalities, one from each of the major Connecticut river basins, are chosen each year (see map).

on a list of specific town objectives, drawn from the general categories suggested by NEMO but heavily influenced by the needs and interests of the town. In addition to the educational presentations, NEMO provides support through guidance documents (fact sheets, publications, CD's), internet tools, GIS and remote sensing information and consultation via telephone or meetings.

Making a Difference

NEMO has assisted many towns in Connecticut to make changes to their plans, regulations, policies and procedures to better protect natural resources while accommodating growth. Towns have conducted natural resource inventories, developed open space plans and updated their Plan of Conservation and Development to better protect priority resources. Other towns have changed their subdivision and road regulations and adopted development design and stormwater management practices to better protect their waterways. Still others have improved their land use process by forming new committees, conducting new studies, or using new technologies for information sharing.

The municipalities and NEMO staff agree