



THE NORTHWEST COALITION FOR
ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2011-2013):
PROMISE AND OPPORTUNITY IN PESTICIDE REFORM

We stand now where two roads diverge. But unlike the roads in Robert Frost's familiar poem, they are not equally fair. The road we have long been traveling is deceptively easy, a smooth superhighway on which we progress with great speed, but at its end lies disaster. The other fork of the road -- the one less traveled by -- offers our last, our only chance to reach a destination that assures the preservation of the earth. Rachel Carson (1907-1964)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides' (NCAP) new strategic plan emerges during a global economic crisis unlike anything seen in the last 80 years. At this point in time and for the next three years the United States has a Presidential Administration that offers new promise and opportunity for strengthening health and environmental laws and policies.

This offers a window of opportunity for NCAP to effect major pesticide reform in our region by changing policies at the national level. We see positive movement by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to strengthen regulation, improve monitoring, and seek alternatives. Lisa Jackson is one of the most environmentally motivated leaders of the EPA to date. We want to take advantage of this timely opportunity to advocate for stronger regulation and better monitoring of pesticides, and to build the case that we need more ecologically sound alternatives to control pests.

Many recent studies have pointed to the real and suspected impacts that pesticides have on human health. Pesticide awareness is growing as is evidenced by the continued rise in organic sales. Additionally, larger environmental topics like global warming and corporate pollution are highly visible, now more than ever as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. These trends further fuel a growing "green" interest that offers the opportunity to educate people in our region about alternatives and to work with willing agency staff and business leaders to find greener solutions in schools, homes, parks, low-income housing, and agriculture.

We are boldly and necessarily shifting to focus our pesticide reform work on broader citizen education and engagement, demonstration projects, and policy advocacy with a social change agenda. We must engage more people in this work to attain the major pesticide reforms we seek.

We have three new areas of priority work to achieve the pesticide reform goals we have set forth in this new strategic plan. We will:

- Expand our work on federal policy to include needed reforms within the 2012 Farm Bill and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA);
- Broaden our urban based work to include low-income housing as well as parks, schools and other public places; and
- Grow our sustainable and organic agriculture policy, technical assistance, and education work into Oregon.

For the next three years, NCAP will focus on five strategic directions:

1. Promoting safer, ecologically sound alternatives to pesticides in urban places such as schools, parks and low-income housing.
2. Expand our education, technical assistance and citizen engagement among farmers in Idaho and Oregon to promote sustainable and organic agriculture and alternatives to pesticides.
3. Protect water quality and endangered fish and wildlife by building on our winning Endangered Species Act (ESA) lawsuit and further strengthening federal pesticide regulation.
4. Expand our efforts to impact federal pesticide reform in the legislative, administrative and judicial arenas. Develop policy options and strategically participate in those with significant impact.
5. Ensure that NCAP has the financial and human resources to remain a vital and effective organization.

II. HISTORY AND CONTEXT

NCAP has effectively worked to bridge and mobilize diverse stakeholders toward the goal of advancing alternatives and reducing the use of pesticides for over 33 years.

NCAP formed in 1977 as a coalition of many groups working to stop the use of pesticides in Northwest forests. In those early years NCAP worked on clarifying goals and building membership. Citizens took direct action and NCAP offered a hub for community organizing, citizen-led campaigns, and information sharing.

In the 1980's NCAP was party in a winning lawsuit to stop the use of certain herbicides in forest spraying in Oregon. The ban stopped short of ending all herbicide uses, allowing targeted applications for invasive and noxious weeds. Through that process the organization grew and learned. To make lasting change NCAP needed to focus on creating high-impact changes in key areas. We targeted on the ground efforts in the region, and strengthening federal pesticide policy. We learned to pick our battles carefully.

In the 1990's, we initiated an effort to close a flagrant loophole in federal regulation allowing inert ingredients, including hazardous chemicals, to be secretly added to pesticide products. This loophole presented significant risk to poisoning victims and violated the public's right to know.

In 2001, with the knowledge that more than 70 percent of pesticide use occurs in agriculture, we began our work in Idaho with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to help them, and those farmers renting their land, to reduce the use of the soil fumigant metam sodium which is a human carcinogen and can cause birth defects.

Many of our programs showed measurable success in our third decade. NCAP's work to reduce metam sodium use led to our promotion of the cultural practice of planting mustard greens as a "green manure" and crop rotation with potatoes to control soil pests. As a result, farmers adopted the green manure practice on 40,000 acres in southern Idaho thus reducing reliance on the dangerous pesticide.

Furthermore, the Obama Administration finally recognized the government's responsibility to disclose all ingredients in pesticide products.

Starting in 2000 NCAP also made a concerted effort to collaborate with people who use pesticides in their profession and are faced with pest problems on a daily basis. Building alliances with farmers, parks and school maintenance professionals and others signifies a new era of collaboration for NCAP.

Our work also led to the Pesticide Free Parks Program. To date there are more than 90 parks in 19 cities throughout the region that are now pesticide free. The energy of the pesticide-free parks campaign led to creation of the Sustainable Parks Information Network (SPIN). SPIN is a social networking site designed for pest professionals to share and learn from each other about alternatives to pesticides

Peer-to-peer learning is another hallmark of NCAP's work over the last decade. It was in this decade that NCAP initiated organic field days for farmers in Idaho to learn from each other. When it comes to pesticides, peers listen to each other and are more receptive to hearing about alternatives. NCAP promotes a peer-to-peer learning model in our agriculture and urban work.

Still, we did not shy away from controversy when the health of people or the environment was at stake. In 2000 we launched the Clean Water for Salmon Campaign and won a lawsuit leading to the first ever measures to protect thousands of miles of salmon-supporting waters from pesticides.

NCAP has continued to mature and learn as an organization. By strategically choosing our work, we have:

- Attained stronger protections for threatened and endangered Pacific salmon;
- Pushed the government nearer to disclosing the inert ingredients in pesticides;
- Lessened the amount of pesticides that are used in parks, schools and homes; and
- Assisted farmers to transition to ecologically sound alternatives resulting in pesticide reduction.

NCAP serves both rural and urban communities in the Northwest across Oregon, Washington, Idaho, western Montana and northern California. Its main office is in Eugene Oregon, with a satellite office in Boise Idaho.

III. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides is to protect community and environmental health and inspire the use of ecologically sound solutions to reduce the use of pesticides.

IV. VALUES AND BELIEFS

NCAP believes that the following core values shape and guide its work.

1. Reaching long-term ecological balance and harmony between people, planet and profit takes ingenuity and persistence. As sure as nature changes, so too must our approach.
2. Lasting change is possible when people speak their own truth and organize their power.
3. Government has a responsibility to develop and enforce policies that protect the health and safety of people and the environment. It is our responsibility to help hold government accountable.
4. Sensitive populations set the bar for pesticide regulation. Protect those most sensitive and we are all better protected.
5. Considering who stands to lose and who benefits in all environmental decisions and actions is crucial to achieving social justice and equity.
6. Effective pest management requires an ecological approach that looks at the whole system and root causes, not only the symptoms.
7. People deserve to be treated with respect and patience, especially when asked to change their views and behaviors.

V. FUTURE VISION

In the next 5 to 10 Years NCAP will help to create pesticide policies and practices that:

Transform Northwest agriculture with more sustainable approaches in food production, less reliance on pesticides and more ecological systems-based approaches to pest problems.

1. Better protect children, families, communities, and those with the least voice by ensuring that public places particularly, northwest parks, schools and low-income housing manage pests in ways that don't compromise the health of people or the environment.
2. Strengthen federal regulation of pesticides to ensure that pesticide use does not harm people, fish, wildlife, or the environment.
3. Ensure federal, state and local governments are rigorous, ethical, and transparent in their regulation and use of pesticides.
4. Utilize multi-disciplinary, systems-based science and foster research to find reliable and safe alternatives to pesticides.
5. Recognize new challenges arising from climate change and prepare farmers and others for the increasing pest pressure.

In the next 10 to 15 Years NCAP will help to create an organization that:

1. Is recognized as a national and regional leader in pesticide reform and continues to be regarded as a trusted provider of educational resources and sound scientific information on pest solutions and hazardous pesticide impacts.
2. Is knowledgeable and effective in using interactive electronic communications as a way to reach new people and to network, target and share information among key stakeholders and constituents.
3. Has 20,000 key supporters who receive our newsletter, take action and/or financially support NCAP, a staff of 15 and a satellite office in each of its five Northwestern states that can engage members in localized programs that are appropriate to that state or area.
4. Has a diverse and sustainable funding stream, with members and individual donors supporting 50 percent or more of NCAP's annual revenue.
5. Influences major pesticide reforms at the federal and regional levels.

VI. NICHE

NCAP is based in the Northwest and specifically serves Oregon, Washington, Idaho, western Montana and northern California. NCAP has a national presence and works on federal policy impacting the northwest as a member of such coalitions at the Pesticide Working Group and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

To reduce pesticides, NCAP promotes practical and ecologically sound strategies for pest management, and at the same time, advocates for strong governmental regulation of pesticides and their use. NCAP has an emphasis on community and environmental health and safety, particularly concerning how pesticides impact vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, and endangered fish and wildlife.

NCAP works in both urban and rural agricultural settings to reduce the use of pesticides. We work with pesticide users, as well as those negatively impacted. We provide education, policy research and development, advocacy, and expert referrals on pesticide issues at the regional and national levels.

VII. NCAP'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Over one billion pounds of pesticides are applied annually in the United States. While pests are a problem, so to, are the pesticides too often used as controls. Pesticides are known to cause health and safety risks for families and communities and to negatively impact land, air, soil, plants, water, fish and wildlife.

NCAP works collaboratively in both urban and rural settings to create systemic and lasting change by educating about the hazards associated with pesticides. We work to address the underlying causal effects of pest problems and then to promote and implement ecologically sound solutions. We join forces with many organizations with allied missions including those who promote better working conditions and health protections for those who are exposed to pesticides in their work such as farm workers.

NCAP works by strategically identifying areas where by leveraging our expertise and finite resources we will make the most change and where we can win and build the movement. Our strategic plan reflects these priority areas of work. We take a measured approach to our work by doing our research before we take a position or align with any one group.

We stand in the face of the tremendous economic and political power of the pesticide industry. In the spirit of Rachel Carson, Dr. Sandra Steingraber, and other advocates of health and the environment, NCAP will continue to speak truth to that power.

We often use a “carrot” approach to achieve social change such as in our work to increase federal incentives for transitioning to organic agriculture. At times, change requires holding government accountable for protecting human and environmental health, over the interests, profits, and influence of the pesticide industry. When necessary we use a “stick” approach, such as taking legal action.

Change requires continuing to build a broad-based, mobilized grassroots movement for alternatives to pesticides in order to generate the needed political power to win on our issues. This, in turn, requires building the capacity and organizational strength of NCAP.

We look to create higher-level change. Imagine a river where you see dead fish floating on the surface and brown, dead riverbanks. We not only look at the downstream symptoms of the dead fish, but we also look at what is happening “upstream” so problems don’t continue. We can’t stop the problems “downstream” until we fix those “upstream” problems. Thus, we work at the administrative, judicial, legislative, institutional, community, and individual levels.

What sets us apart from many pesticide or toxics change organizations is that we work with those using pesticides to help implement solutions. It is critical to understand – from their perspectives – the pest problems they face and what factors lead to their decision to use or not use pesticides. We seek common ground in order to achieve incremental and long lasting change.

We work to build systemic change within institutions like parks departments and at federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency. We work with pesticide users such as farmers and parks maintenance staff to reduce their use or to help them implement alternatives.

Currently, more than 75 percent of pesticide use is in agriculture. We work with farmers to find common goals to create change in how pesticides are used. We evaluate possible alternative solutions that are both economically viable and environmentally sound and that fit into the farmers’ management practices.

Change requires increased research into, and availability of information on, non-toxic and healthy solutions to pest problems. We work with allied researchers to increase support for and to expand research into alternatives and to increase innovative on-farm or on-site research that works in “real life” situations.

In the long run, change will require that the least powerful and most vulnerable are protected. In other words -- if society protects the environment, pregnant women, infants and children, farm workers, pesticide applicators, those who work in and live near pesticide manufacturing facilities, and vulnerable plant, wildlife, and fish populations -- we will all be better protected.

NCAP works on behalf of future generations and the impacts pesticides will have on our grand children and great grandchildren. We work to inspire a healthier future.

VIII. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS: FIVE FOCAL AREAS FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS

1. Broaden the reach of NCAP's work to protect children, families and communities from pesticide exposure in their homes, schools and local parks by inspiring safer, ecologically sound pest management policies and practices.
2. Work with farmers and researchers in Idaho, and expand into Oregon, to develop and implement ecologically sound pest management practices. Ensure farmers have knowledge of and access to current federal Farm Bill programs that provide incentives to strengthen and transition to sustainable and organic agriculture. Begin to organize and engage interested stakeholders in crafting future federal policy that supports research and practices in sustainable and organic agriculture.
3. Protect water quality and endangered fish and wildlife from pesticides by strengthening federal pesticide regulation. Ensure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency imposed restrictions to protect endangered fish and wildlife from pesticides upholds Endangered Species Act requirements.
4. Collaborate with other organizations on proactive federal pesticide reform in the legislative, administrative and judicial arenas. Monitor legislative and agency efforts within our region at state and local levels. Develop policy options and strategically participate in those with a significant impact.
5. Continue to build NCAP as a vital, healthy organization by expanding, developing and diversifying its human and financial resources as well as engaging new and broader audiences in NCAP's work.

IX. PRIORITY OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES/STRATEGIES

Protecting Children, Families and Northwest Communities

Priority Outcome #1: More than 200 pest management professionals working for city government, school districts and low-income housing projects will have the knowledge and skills needed to reduce pesticide use by at least 50% while reducing pest complaints.

Priority Outcome #2: Secure passage of at least two local integrated pest management (IPM) policies for low-income housing authorities. These policies will protect thousands of families and communities from pesticide use.

Priority Outcome #3: Ensure strong compliance with Oregon's new law requiring all schools to adopt integrated pest management (IPM) policies.

Sustainable Agriculture

Priority Outcome #4: Northwest farmers will have knowledge of and access to Farm Bill programs to help them transition to and strengthen their sustainable and organic practices.

Priority Outcome #5: Increase the technical knowledge and practices needed by farmers in Idaho and Oregon to advance alternatives to pesticides on their farms.

Water Quality and Endangered Species

Priority Outcome #6: New federal regulations will be in place to protect 27 species of threatened and endangered Pacific salmon and steelhead from 37 pesticides. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will strengthen pesticide product labels to clearly state requirements to protect salmon and water quality.

Endangered Species Act evaluations will be routine in pesticide registration processes.

Policy Change

Priority Outcome #7: NCAP, working with our partners, will achieve targeted gains on key provisions at the federal policy level building on four areas of our policy work: 1) NCAP will push EPA to begin improving pesticide environmental and human health monitoring by coming into compliance with Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requirements (Section 20 of EPA w/congressional oversight); 2) NCAP will work with EPA to increase steps to promote ecologically sound solutions to pesticides (EPA administrative reform); 3) Key provisions in the 2012 Farm Bill Research, Conservation and Organic Titles will include policy options that will advance ecologically sound approaches in agriculture and will help farmers transition to organic and to reduce their use of pesticides; and 4) the regional Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers will gain back federal funding and IPM will receive more support at the federal level.

Marketing and Communication

Priority Outcome #8: NCAP will empower its supporters with the tools and information needed to take effective action.

Financial Stability

Priority Outcome #9: NCAP will weather the economic downturn and have the resources to excel and effectively carry out its mission.

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