



About the NEMO Network

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The National NEMO Network is a confederation of programs that educate local land use decision makers about the links between land use and natural resource protection. Network programs are patterned after the original **Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials** (NEMO) Program developed at the University of Connecticut, but each program is a unique entity, typically operated as a multi-organizational consortium.

The University based USDA Land Grant and NOAA Sea Grant systems are the most common institutional homes of NEMO programs, although lead organizations also include state agencies and nonprofit groups. These programs, now numbering 32 in 30 states (map, back cover), have joined together of their own accord to create a unique national network that is sharing information, educational methods and technical tools across state and agency lines.

Institutional makeup, geographic coverage, topical focus, methodology, funding and staffing vary from state to state. However, all NEMO programs share these few key elements:

- **The method is research-based education.** NEMO programs use good old-fashioned outreach education to put communities in the driver seat as they seek to balance growth and protect natural resources and community character. We believe that, as this report demonstrates, outreach education is the most flexible, effective



VT NEMO Coordinator, Emma Melvin, officially joins the Network by signing the National NEMO Network Charter.

and cost-effective method for catalyzing change to local land use policies and practices.

- **The topic is natural resource-based land use planning and site design.** As countless studies have found, many indicators of a community's health trace back to land use. Chief among those is the health of the community's natural

resources. However, all too often natural resources are seen as an afterthought. NEMO programs encourage communities to consider conservation and development as two sides of the same coin to be considered in tandem at every phase of the land use planning process.

- **The target audience is local land use decision makers.** While land use has wide ranging impacts on com-



munity health, land use decisions are primarily made by volunteers serving on local boards and commissions of various shapes, scopes and sizes. These folks need tools, resources and support to help them make informed decisions for their community's present and future.

- **The educational messages are enhanced by the use of geospatial technology.** One of the greatest challenges local land use officials face is putting individual land use decisions into a broader community or watershed context. Geospatial images and technology help provide this context, as well as analyze land use trends and impacts.

The formation of a network allows for the transfer of innovation and information between programs so that it ultimately can benefit the people who will actually make the difference—land use decision makers. Communication and coordination for the Network comes from the University of Connecticut “Hub,” a part of the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). Member programs demonstrate their commitment to the Network by signing a Charter of Operation. Additional information on the Hub and Network-wide initiatives appears in the “Network Coordination” section of this report.

Network Facts

- There are 32 NEMO programs in 30 states.
- NEMO programs on average work with 13 communities and reach approximately 450 local officials per year.
- The typical NEMO program gives a workshop or presentation once every three weeks, or 17 times per year. The most active programs conduct over 100 workshops per year.
- In addition to face-to-face presentations and workshops, NEMO programs employ the whole gamut of outreach/educational tools to reach their target audience. See the graph below for more on the tools and publications NEMO programs use to supplement workshops.
- About two thirds of NEMO programs review community plans, regulations, and/or ordinances, make suggestions for incorporating natural resource protection into them, and provide examples of model regulations.
- On average, NEMO programs operate on an annual budget of about \$80,000.
- Universities, either through Cooperative Extension or Sea Grant systems, lead the majority of NEMO programs (28).

(Graph) NEMO programs use a variety of tools to reach their target audience.

