

# The Network Hub is Here to Help

## Coordinating the Network



Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) is a University of Connecticut educational program for land use decision makers that addresses the relationship of land use to natural resource protection.

For more information, contact NEMO at:  
University of Connecticut, CES  
PO BOX 70  
1066 Saybrook Road  
Haddam, CT 06438

Phone: (860) 345-4511

Fax: (860) 345-3357

Email: david.dickson@uconn.edu

Web Address: nemonet.uconn.edu

Written by: Chester Arnold & John Rozum, 3-99

A primary role of the Network Hub is to help states interested in starting programs take the first few steps in getting organized. To date, the Hub has conducted over 100 workshops and scoping sessions, facilitating the creation of NEMO programs throughout the U.S., and underwriting a steady growth in the size of the Network. The Hub also provides developing programs a NEMO Starter Kit that contains all the materials necessary to get a NEMO program up and running, including presentations, publications and tips for setting up a program.

The role of the Network Hub has expanded considerably since late 1999, when funding for Network coordination was first procured. The brisk expansion of the Network underlined the importance of keeping both existing and new programs abreast of new advancements in land use practices and educational outreach. Developing communication links between Network programs is a key responsibility of the Hub.

### A list of the resources the Network Hub provides includes:

**Workshops:** As noted, one of the most important Hub functions is conducting workshops focused on building or enhancing a NEMO program. Scoping sessions are conducted in states considering forming a NEMO program. From time to time Hub staff participate in follow-up workshops focused on a particular issue or topic. In addition, program coordinators often visit the Hub for advise on keeping a program going.

**Communication:** The strength of the Network lies in the communication that is fostered between diverse professionals with common objectives. The Hub facilitates sharing and communication through a Network newsletter that highlights developments around the Network, a Networkwide List-Serv and the National Network website. The Hub has also recently expanded its online communications to include social media sites including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.



*The NEMO Hub and CT NEMO team pose for a group photo at NEMO U6 in Monterey, California.*

**Networking:** The Hub organizes a yearly Network conference, NEMO University (NEMO U). The purpose of the conference is to facilitate networking between programs. A typical NEMO U conference agenda features a mix of presentations, training sessions and networking events. NEMO U6, held in October 2008 in the Monterey Bay area in California continued the NEMO tradition of an engaging, educational and enjoyable event.

**Tracking Impacts:** NEMO measures its success in real, on-the-ground changes to land use policies and practices. This requires programs to remain in contact with municipalities long after the workshop has ended. The Hub assists Network programs with incorporating impact reporting into their programs. In addition the Hub compiles and promotes impacts in a semi-annual Network progress report.

**Geospatial Resources:** NEMO programs are in the vanguard of utilizing geospatial technologies as an educational resource. The Hub, together with the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), are working



*(Image, from left to right) The Hub's Network-wide tool the LID Atlas shows a green roof installment upclose; the LID Atlas interface shows menu options on the left and the map with LID location markers are shown on the U.S. map; the National NEMO Newsletter has been helpful in getting members updates from around the Network for over 10 years; The Hub compiles and promotes impacts in a semi-annual Network progress report; The Hub uses the Network website to post pertinent information and materials, initiatives, resources etc... (the home page for the post NEMO U6 conference website is seen above); members attending the Putting Maps and Data on the Web workshop in Connecticut pose for a group photo.*

to make connections and create new tools for the use of NEMO programs. These include the Community Resource Inventory (CRI) and the Impervious Surface Analysis Tool (ISAT). The Hub is also connected to other agencies and networks that are working on cutting-edge geospatial information and technology, such as the NASA Earth Science Enterprise's Regional Earth Sciences Application Center (RESAC) network, the NOAA Coastal Services Center and the NASA Space Grant Geospatial Technology Extension Program.

**Tools:** In partnership with the CA NEMO effort (WALUP) the Hub released its very first Network-wide tool—the National Low Impact Development (LID) Atlas. The Atlas is a resource for communities, developers, educators and others to find examples of LID and other alternative stormwater management practices around the country. The tool can be easily embedded in individual NEMO program websites either as is or as a localized, state specific version. So, now every NEMO program can build their own online LID Inventory and in doing so help build the Atlas as a national resource.

**Trainings:** In addition to facilitating interaction between programs, the Hub provides member programs with training opportunities to help build their topical and technical prowess. Past Network-wide training workshops have focused on helping programs establish new educational resources on topics like open space protection and forest resources, develop or expand their use of geospatial technologies and adapt technical tools like the Online Community Resource Inventory (CRI) or the Impervious Surface Analysis Tool (ISAT) to their state. The Hub has started training sessions online via webinars.

**Partnerships:** The Hub also serves as the Network's liaison to federal agencies and regional and national organizations. As such, the Hub keeps partners and potential partners informed on the progress and achievement of individual programs and the growth of the Network as a whole. In turn, these agencies and organizations provide technical, topical and, occasionally, financial assistance to member programs. Key partners include the USDA CSREES, U.S. EPA, NOAA, Center for Watershed Protection and the Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET).

The National NEMO Network is a group of affiliated projects that educate local land use decision makers about the relationship of land use to natural resource protection. The Network is coordinated by the University of Connecticut Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Program, with funding from USDA/CSREES and EPA/OWOW. The National NEMO Network is a program of the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). Land, Sea and Space Grant collaborating.

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