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New Web site improves access to environmental information

OLYMPIA - The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) has good news for people wanting easy access, 24 hours a day, to information about Washington's environment and the agency charged with protecting it.

As a result of a major re-design of the Ecology Web site, citizens no longer need an Ecology organization chart to find the information they need.

The redesigned site, www.ecy.wa.gov brings timely, useful information directly to the front page, enabling citizens to find information about Washington's environment and environmental protection issues, without needing to have detailed knowledge of the agency's organizational structure.

Clickable text in the photographic sections for Puget Sound, Columbia River and Hanford take users to topical information about cleanup plans, economic impacts, vital statistics, frequently asked questions and more.

A new "How do I" section creates a direct path to some of Ecology's most popular services, while the "Spotlight" section showcases Ecology's action agenda, new initiatives, hot topics, cleanup activities and other timely issues.

Information about program-specific issues such as air and water quality, environmental science, hazardous, nuclear and solid wastes, shorelands, spills, toxics cleanup and water resources are now available in one click from the front page.

"It's all about service to the public," said David Workman, Ecology's director of Communication and Education. "We've made it easier for our citizens to find environmental information and get where they want to go on our Web site. We now have the flexibility to bring relevant information forward, while helping our environmental programs meet their business needs. And the compelling photos throughout the site help remind us all of Washington's extraordinary environment, people and natural resources."

Ecology's new Web site architecture and design are part of an ongoing process to make information more accessible to Washington's citizens. Further site improvements are planned for 2006 and beyond, including an enhanced "geographic-based" system of providing environmental information to Washington citizens. Ecology will also undertake ongoing usability studies, to learn more about citizen expectations in order to constantly improve the process of providing timely, relevant environmental information.

Visit the Ecology Web site www.ecy.wa.gov

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