

CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking

TRACKING TRIBUNE

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MILESTONES

In July 2009, CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program successfully launched the Tracking Network online. This year, we celebrate the Tracking Network's fourth anniversary as the first surveillance system to provide environmental and health data together in one place. Over the course of these four years, the Tracking Network has added new data, improved functionality, and added many new features that better assist users to assess the connections between the environment and its effect on health.

Just as the amount of data and information has increased on the Tracking Network over the past four years, so too has the number of users who have visited the Web site. As of May 2013, The Tracking Network now boasts over 1 million page views from users searching for information regarding the environment and health. Our longevity and growth in numbers only represents a small piece of the numerous successes that we have seen both on the national and state levels. Continue reading

In This Issue:

- **Milestones**
- **Innovations**
- **Fellowship Program Fuels Tracking Efforts in Kentucky**
- **Video Series**
- **Tracking in Action!**
- **Tracking in the News**

INNOVATIONS

The California Environmental Health Tracking Program (California Tracking Program) has developed the Drinking Water Systems Geographic Reporting Tool, also known as the Water Boundary Tool to produce a high-resolution, digital map of customer service areas for 90% of the drinking water systems in the state. This unique tool gives users a map layer that can be used for:

- emergency preparedness in order to allocate resources efficiently,
- public health prevention and response in order to identify affected areas and mobilize action, and
- research to better understand the relationship between drinking water, health, and the environment.

This publicly available system is the first of its kind in California, and has allowed for valuable investigations in public health areas including researching water costs, evaluating nitrate pollution in agricultural communities, identifying cumulative impacts of land use on water quality at the neighborhood level, and more. Visit the California Tracking Program website or read their recent newsletter to learn more about this innovative tool.



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FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FUELS TRACKING EFFORTS IN KENTUCKY

When the state of Kentucky's health department first became involved with environmental public health tracking in 2009 as a fellowship participant, no one knew that their efforts over the next few years would lead to a significant step forward for them and the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. In May 2013, Kentucky became the first non-funded state to submit data to CDC's National Tracking Network by submitting community water data for the state including the number of people served by public water systems and data on levels of 10 contaminants in community water supplies. By participating in the Environmental Public Health Tracking Peer-to-Peer Fellowship Program sponsored with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Kentucky received mentorship guidance that ultimately resulted in this "hands on" experience in collecting, formatting, and submitting data to the national Tracking Network.

CDC has plans to fund another round of fellowships with ASTHO starting in fall 2013. Join the Tracking list-serv to stay informed about application information and important dates. Send an email to epht@cdc.gov to add your email address to our distribution list. Read previous fellowship reports and see our current list of fellowship states by visiting <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/flashmap.html>

TRACKING IN ACTION VIDEO SERIES

The Tracking Program is pleased to announce the release of four new online videos that highlight the work of "Tracking in Action." In the video series, we take a look at how tracking programs across the country are making important, lasting contributions to the health of their communities. These stories include preventing mercury exposure in Florida,

protecting air quality in Massachusetts, making Missouri cooling centers easier to find, and identifying asthma triggers in New York City. These products show how Tracking Network data can be used for a wide variety of environmental and public health actions. See for yourself how diverse its applications can be by checking out the "Tracking in Action" video series!

TRACKING IN ACTION!

Minnesota is tackling the problem of melanoma head on. Melanoma is the most dangerous form of skin cancer and one of the most rapidly increasing cancers among Minnesotans, head on. The Minnesota Tracking Program published interactive maps and charts on their state tracking network showing trends and geographic patterns of melanoma across the state. They also collaborated with the state cancer registry to add county-level melanoma data to MN County Health Tables, a resource used by state and county public health officials to guide program planning and evaluation. Tracking program staff worked with state programs and other partners, such as the American Cancer Society of MN and the MN Cancer Alliance, to use the data to support program and policy initiatives to prevent melanoma. For example, these partners identified reducing the use of artificial UV light for tanning as a key objective in Cancer Plan Minnesota: 2011-2016, a framework for preventing and controlling different types of cancer.

TRACKING IN THE NEWS

1. CDC website protects drinking water safety. Public Health Newswire. 12 August 2013.
2. States collect, analyze public drinking water data: California, Vermont make information available to public. The Nation's Health. August 2013.