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Center for Watershed Science and Education receives prestigious NSF grant to combat nutrient transfer to water bodies

What is the relationship between today's land use decisions and tomorrow's water quality in our lakes and streams?

This is a key question for Paul McGinley, assistant professor of water resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), and other scientists in the Center for Watershed Science and Education (CWSE). A prestigious \$64,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant awarded late summer 2005 will allow the laboratory to purchase a state-of-the-art nutrient analyzer. Their grant titled "Acquisition of a Nutrient Analyzer for Understanding and Communicating Land to Water Nutrient Transfer" will help them continue to study how nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, move from land to water.

According to McGinley, increased nutrient movement from land to water can harm lakes and streams. These increases may result from changes to land that seem minor, but the harmful effects to water quality can be almost impossible to reverse once they become a serious problem. This newly purchased equipment will increase the laboratory's ability to process and analyze water samples. That will provide more research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, giving them access to the latest analytical technology while involving them in many projects that study nutrient movement. In addition, "the equipment will benefit not only our students and faculty but also the citizens and organizations we work with," said McGinley. "

This award is recognition of the importance of this problem and the partnerships the Center for Watershed Science and Education has developed with lake groups, agricultural organizations, and government agencies over the past thirty years. Communicating the issue of nutrient transfer beyond the campus to other public and private organizations is an important project goal, according to McGinley. "We want to help increase the understanding of how changes in land use alter nutrient movement not only on campus, but in the communities and organizations with whom we collaborate," said McGinley.

McGinley received his bachelor's degree from UW-Madison, his master's from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and his doctorate from the University of Michigan.