

Regional Strategic Plan

Southwest Pollution Prevention Roundtable

EPA Region 6

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Background

The Southwest Pollution Prevention Roundtable (the roundtable) is composed of environmental professionals who wish to promote Pollution Prevention (P2, also known as source reduction) as the preferred method for dealing with environmental issues.

The roundtable operates in the geographic area of EPA's Region 6 which includes New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana. The roundtable also works with pueblos and tribal communities within these states, along with border programs and tribal authorities which extend beyond these state boundaries. Although not formally affiliated with the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable (p2.org), many of the members are regular and active participants in the National P2 Roundtable.

Regional Priorities

The roundtable continuously assesses its priorities to determine where members can most effectively apply their skills and talents to make the biggest difference. Through this continuous evaluation the following priorities have emerged. These priorities are presented in alphabetic order and are considered of equal importance.

- Energy - Sources and Conservation
- Local Governments – Municipal and Tribal
- Public Consumption
- Regulatory Integration [of P2 Programs]
- Water Quality/Quantity

Energy Conservation and Sources

The roundtable has agreed to focus on promoting energy conservation as a means to reduce pollution. This means that members plan to incorporate energy conservation strategies into their funding proposals. They also discussed including energy conservation in onsite assessments.

The group also recognized the need for encouraging more sustainable production of energy in businesses and communities, including pueblos and tribes.

Local governments

Local governments are seen by the group as key partners in the promotion of P2. The group seeks to provide local governments with knowledge of the advantages of P2 and techniques for promoting P2. Members often work with local governments on projects, such as Environmental Management System (EMS) training.

Pretreatment programs are one of our region's key strategic partners. These local programs work with businesses upstream from the wastewater treatment plant to encourage source reduction (P2). The roundtable frequently works with these programs and holds joint meetings with the Region 6 Pretreatment Association.

Public Consumption

Pollution prevention strategies have often focused on businesses, particularly manufacturing. Many of the funds which the Region 6 P2 roundtable members operate under are structured to address businesses. However, the roundtable has recognized that there is great promise in applying P2 to individuals to minimize the environmental impact at the point of consumption. Examples include:

- Helping individual households conserve energy
- Showing the benefits of conserving gas (carpooling)
- Educating the public to reduce disposal of fats oils and grease (FOG) in the sewer system

Regulatory Integration

Environmental programs are largely concerned with implementing a series of regulations through permitting and enforcement of permit conditions. The roundtable seeks to integrate source reduction into these programs. Examples include:

- Offering regulatory reduction for facilities that go “beyond compliance”, especially those who have an active EMS
- Giving pollution prevention information to inspectors
- Identifying regulations with P2 components and working with the program area that implements the program
- Working with other regulatory programs and bureaus who perform inspections to promote pollution prevention
- Providing joint compliance assistance pollution prevention visits

Water Quality/Quantity

The roundtable considers water quality and quantity one of the top issues facing the region. Many of the states in our region have experienced severe drought as the population and industrial water use continue to rise.

Water quality is a closely related issue that has largely been addressed through partnerships with pretreatment programs. In addition, water quantity is often addressed by encouraging use reduction through means such as water recycling and reclamation systems.

Also Considered:

Climate Change - Several members of the roundtable wished to list climate change as a priority. However, some of the members are from states with no policy on climate change. After much discussion it was decided that most of the climate change issue could be addressed through reduction of emissions from energy production during peak load. The roundtable plans to readdress this issue in the upcoming year.

Material Exchanges – Although not listed as a regional strategy, many programs expressed a desire to promote material exchanges. These exchanges serve as a resource for businesses with excess materials that would be regularly sent for disposal. Instead, they can give the material to another business for use in their production. A multi-state material exchange was set up through the Zero Waste Network, based on Texas’s

RENEW program. Not all states in our region have committed to participating in this exchange.

Project Plans

After identifying strategic priorities, the roundtable identified several actions which they could take to address them.

This list, and indeed our entire strategic plan, is constantly evolving. Participation in the biannual meetings is the best way to keep current with the action plan. Reading the minutes posted at: <http://www.zerowastenetwork.org/Roundtable/minutes/index.cfm> is also helpful.

2006 Plans

In FY06, the roundtable agreed to some strategic actions to be taken in FY07 and FY08. These actions include:

- **Energy assessment** in site visits; for more information contact David James, Dianne Wilkins or Susan Roothaan
- P2 Policy and Regulatory Integration; for more information contact Thomas Vinson-Peng
- Building priorities into regional meetings; for more information contact Thomas Vinson, David Bond or Susan Roothaan
- Resource Exchange Programs for more information contact Audree Miller, Chris Campbell or Scottie Mcknight

2007 Plans

In FY07 the roundtable also agreed to some joint activities for FY08, and FY09 including:

- **Multi-state Training** - A joint training wherein each member of the roundtable gives a brief section with their best P2 lecture. The idea is that members can learn from each other and that the attendees will benefit directly from the teachings of a broad variety of programs. In other words, the roundtable meetings would give a direct benefit to the place they were held with measurable outcomes.
- **Site Visits** - In a similar vein, the roundtable has conducted joint site visits to encourage P2 based Environmental Management Systems. So far, the roundtable has conducted site visits in five roundtable meetings with over eight facilities. These visits give direct benefits to the facility and provide every program in the region with a deeper understanding of how to conduct a site visit.
- **Joint grant projects** – Programs in the region have worked together to put forth proposals that strengthen our ability as a region to achieve measurable environmental outcomes. The roundtable members have worked under a variety of grants and submitted proposals that efficiently maximize the use of federal funds.

2008 Plans

Plans beyond FY09 will be updated after the next roundtable.

Membership

- There are no restrictions to membership. Each individual is encouraged to share their experience and knowledge at each meeting.
- The group partners with many organizations, including:
 - Local governments
 - POTW Pretreatment Coordinators
 - Manufacturing Extenship Partnerships (MEP's)
 - Environmental Regulatory Authorities
 - Universities
 - Tribal Authorities
 - Hospitals
 - Trade Groups
- Members are not bound by decisions of the roundtable.

Core Group Participants



The roundtable has a few participants who regularly attend meetings, participate on teleconferences and otherwise coordinate with people in the region. This group is known informally as the “*core group*”.

Most, but not all, of the core group have been partially funded by EPA grants for pollution prevention. As a result, many of the core group conversations refer to managing and administrating these grants.

Core group participants are listed at:

<http://www.zerowastenet.org/Roundtable/index.cfm#contact>

Operating Principles

The roundtable has agreed to abide by a series of operating principles. These principles describe the way an organization or group conducts themselves. In other words, they describe how our organization acts more than what it does. Some principles we have adapted include:

- we operate while minimizing our impacts
- we talk straight and speak our mind
- we share credit
- we are intellectually generous
- we are consensus driven and make decisions without hierarchy*

- we care about one another in a bond transcending professional ties
- we respect each individual opinion

What operating principles are congruent with our vision?

- Honest communication,
- Open discussion
- Regional teamwork
- Results focused
- Promote others outside group
- Sharing Resources
- Practice what we preach
- Prioritize and strategize
- Strategic consistency
- Being forward
- Goal focused
- Fun

**Because some members may not be able to participate in a meeting for some reason; we agree on consensus for those things that are critical; Flexible consensus*

Communication

- The group confers about 10 times a year via teleconference.
 - Teleconferences are on the third or fourth Thursday of the month.
 - If you are interested in participating, sign up for the list serve and announcements will be made approximately one week prior to the meeting.
- The Regional List serve (“P2 Wazoo”) is open to anyone.
 - Subscribe by going to http://lists.preventpollution.org/mailman/listinfo/lists.preventpollution.org_p2wazoo.
 - Formal announcements, such as RFP’s, meeting information, etc., are available through the list serve.
 - Members often communicate directly through email.
- All minutes are available at <http://www.zerowastenetwork.org/Roundtable/minutes/index.cfm>.
- The Zero Waste Network maintains contact information and assists the regional P2 coordinator with all aspects of the meeting.
- The Zero Waste Network works with eight other regional centers throughout the P2Rx program to facilitate communication between national and regional P2 programs.
- Several members of the roundtable sit on the board of the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable (NPPR – p2.org) and work with the roundtable.

Measuring Impact

The Southwest P2 Roundtable has been a leader in establishing P2 programs that have made a measurable difference in the environment and in promoting economic growth. As a region, we have documented reductions in every media, including:

- 2.8 Billion pounds of hazardous waste reduced
- Hazardous materials use reduced by 140 million pounds/year
- 215 million pounds/year of air emissions reduced
- 7.9 million gallons of water conserved
- 29 million kilowatt hours of electricity conserved

Data Collection

Individual programs collect their data as part of the projects which they undertake. Grant funded programs in our region have been required to collect environmental outcomes for about four years. Some programs have been collecting results for over 15 years.

Data Aggregation

Grant funded programs submit their data twice a year to the EPA P2 program for inclusion in Grant Tracks. In addition, programs report their data in the P2Rx P2 Results Database. Our region's database is located at

<http://www.zerowastenetwork.org/measurement/index.cfm>.

The Zero Waste Network helps programs estimate their source reduction and collect their results for the system.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Individual programs in the region are challenged to meet the ambitious goals of fostering pollution prevention as an environmental strategy. In 2006, the roundtable began to consider how they could work together to be more effective. Specifically, the group hoped to:

- Identify common projects for our proposals
- Identify ways various EPA Region 6 P2 programs can support each other, including:
 - Bolstering program support with our management
 - Identifying funding sources
- Identify important dates
- Make recommendations for regional priorities to be included in RFP on P2 grants

The plan is non-binding and continuously evolving. Each participant in the Southwest P2 Roundtable has a series of individual concerns and priorities. This plan could not address all of them. It serves as a means to find our "common ground".

How this Plan Was Prepared

This plan was prepared based on a series of meetings and teleconferences held over a two-year period. Participants went through a series of strategic planning sessions which included:

- Identifying top environmental, social, economic and regional priorities
- Identifying the strengths and skills of the roundtable
- Defining a vision
- Defining operating principles



It represents the compiled thoughts and insights of several P2 specialists in our region. However, because the issue of P2 and its role in environmental protection is complex, it is by no means comprehensive.

Some of the key participants in the planning process include:

- David Bond – EPA Region 6
- Javier Ballí – EPA Region 6
- Ann Goode – EPA OPP
- Susan Roothaan - Nurtured World
- Dianne Wilkins - ODEQ
- David James -TCEQ
- Thomas Vinson – Zero Waste
- Justin Murrill – Nurtured World
- Michelle Vattano - NMED
- Audree Miller - ADEQ
- Chris Campbell – NMSU/WERC
- Marylin May – Kaufman County
- Naila Ahmed - LCRA

Participants from the Region 6 pretreatment association, TMAC and Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions also made significant contributions.