PNW Contaminants Workgroup

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NW-AIRQUEST
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Background

- The NPS sponsored an interagency workshop in 2010 to explore a coordinated approach for addressing air toxins in national parks and other protected areas in the Pacific Northwest.
  - 10 U.S. and Canadian university, state and federal organizations were represented.
  - Attendees were divided into three breakout groups to identify and prioritize data needs.
    - Source attribution and transport
    - Monitoring and risk assessment
    - Outreach and information exchange
  - All three groups identified establishment of an interagency contaminants workgroup focused on issues in the Pacific Northwest as the top priority.

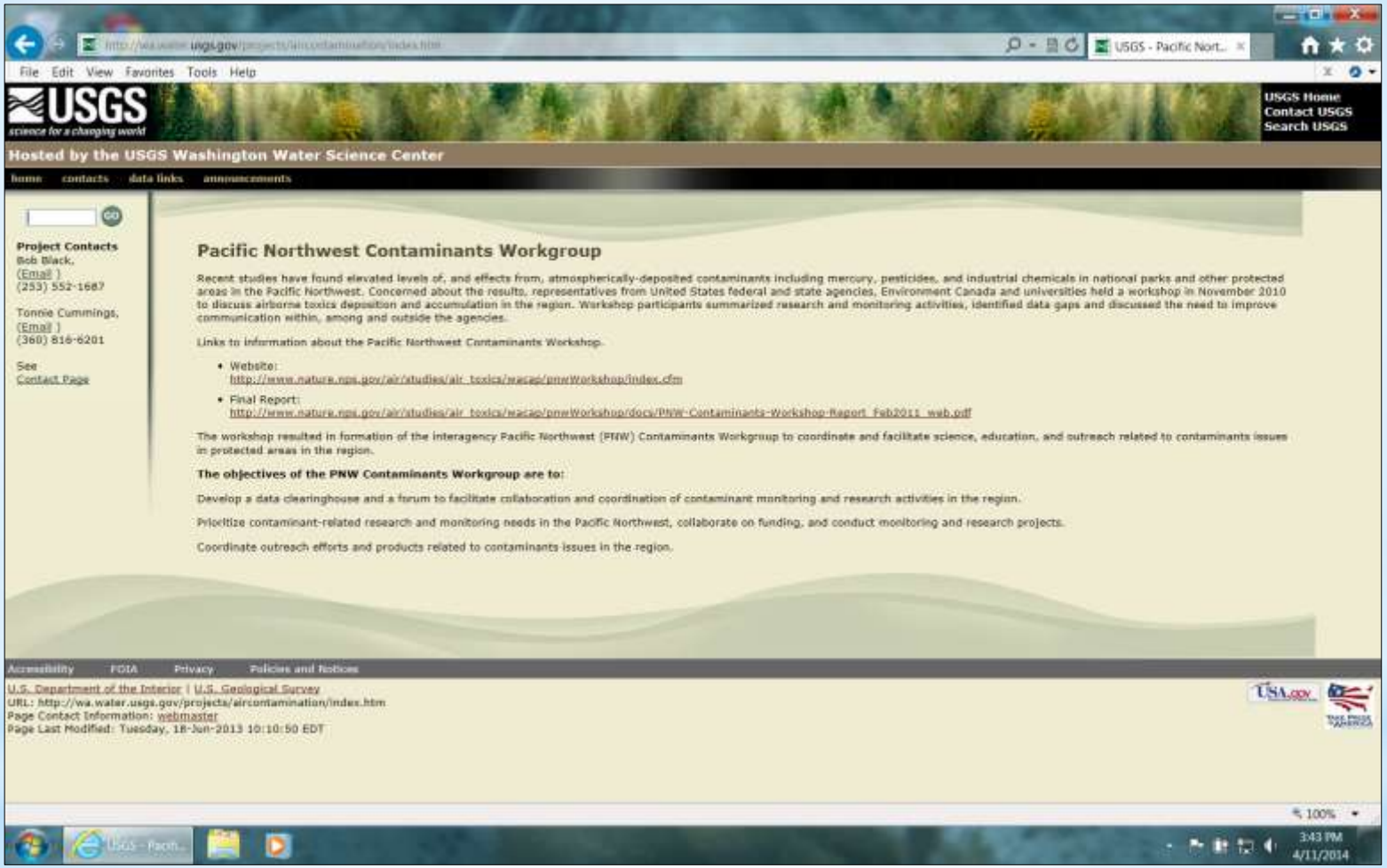
PNW Contaminants Workgroup

- The Workgroup formed in 2011 and meets every other month via conference call.
- Workgroup objectives:
  - Develop a data clearinghouse and a forum to facilitate collaboration and coordination of contaminant monitoring and research activities in the region.
  - Prioritize contaminant-related research and monitoring needs in the Pacific Northwest, collaborate on funding, and conduct monitoring and research projects.
  - Coordinate outreach efforts and products related to contaminants issues in the region.

Accomplishments

- Developed a website to improve access to information.
- In spite of flat/declining budgets, we have moved forward with a number of collaborative efforts, for example:
  - USGS analyzed mercury concentrations in hundreds of NPS and USFS fish samples at no cost. State agencies have similarly offered workgroup members no-cost mercury analyses.
  - Workgroup members are helping NPS and USFS figure out which toxic pollutants are likely the greatest threat in national parks and national forests.
  - A researcher from the University of Regina, Canada, has expanded her pesticide monitoring project to areas in the U.S., including Mount Rainier NP.
  - NPS staff are coordinating with Washington Department of Health to develop consistent fish consumption advisories.
  - USGS is studying the threat of coal train dust to wildlife in FWS refuges in the Columbia River Gorge.
- Greatest benefit has been improved understanding and building of relationships among agencies.

Website



http://wa.water.usgs.gov/projects/aircontamination/index.htm

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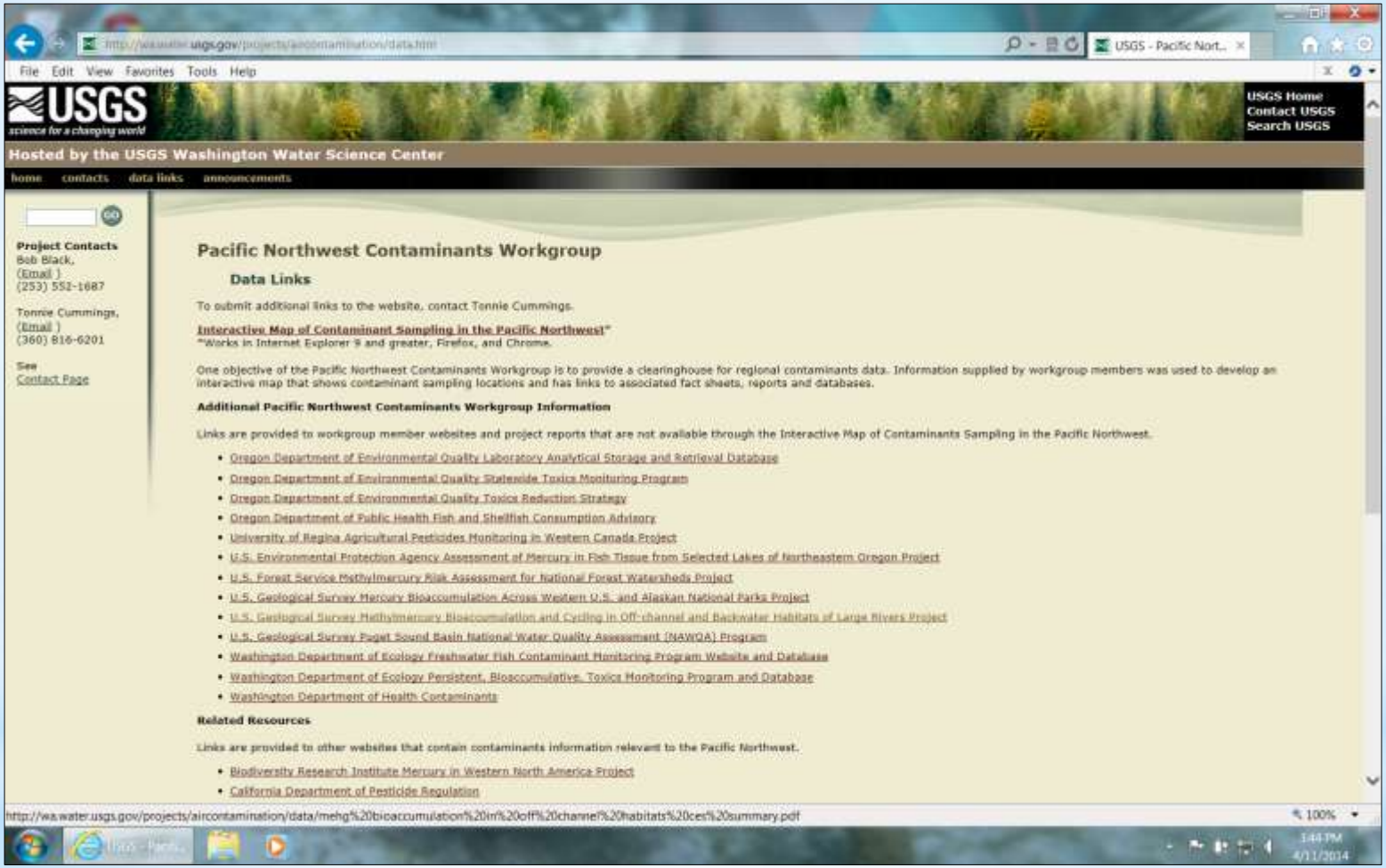

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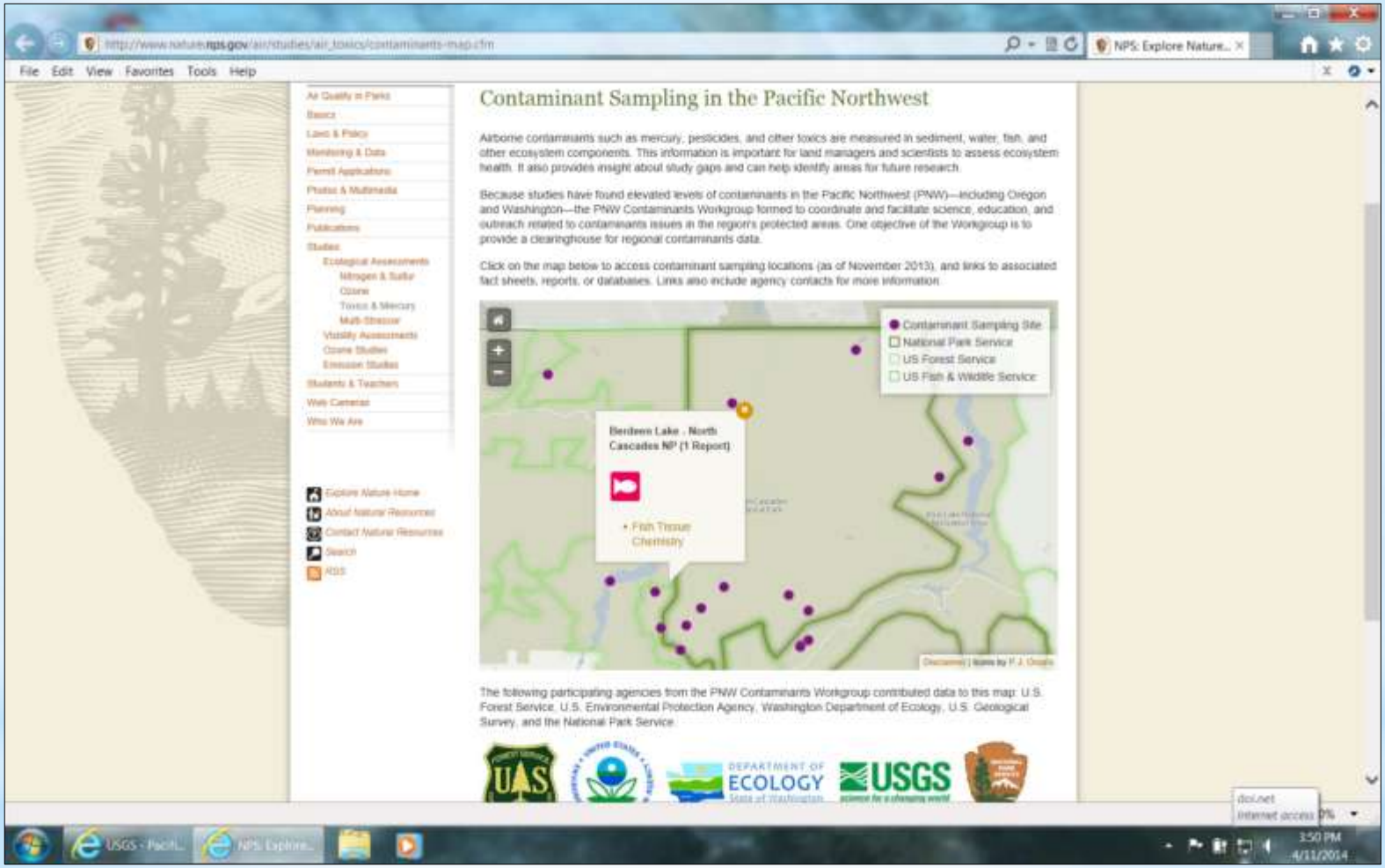

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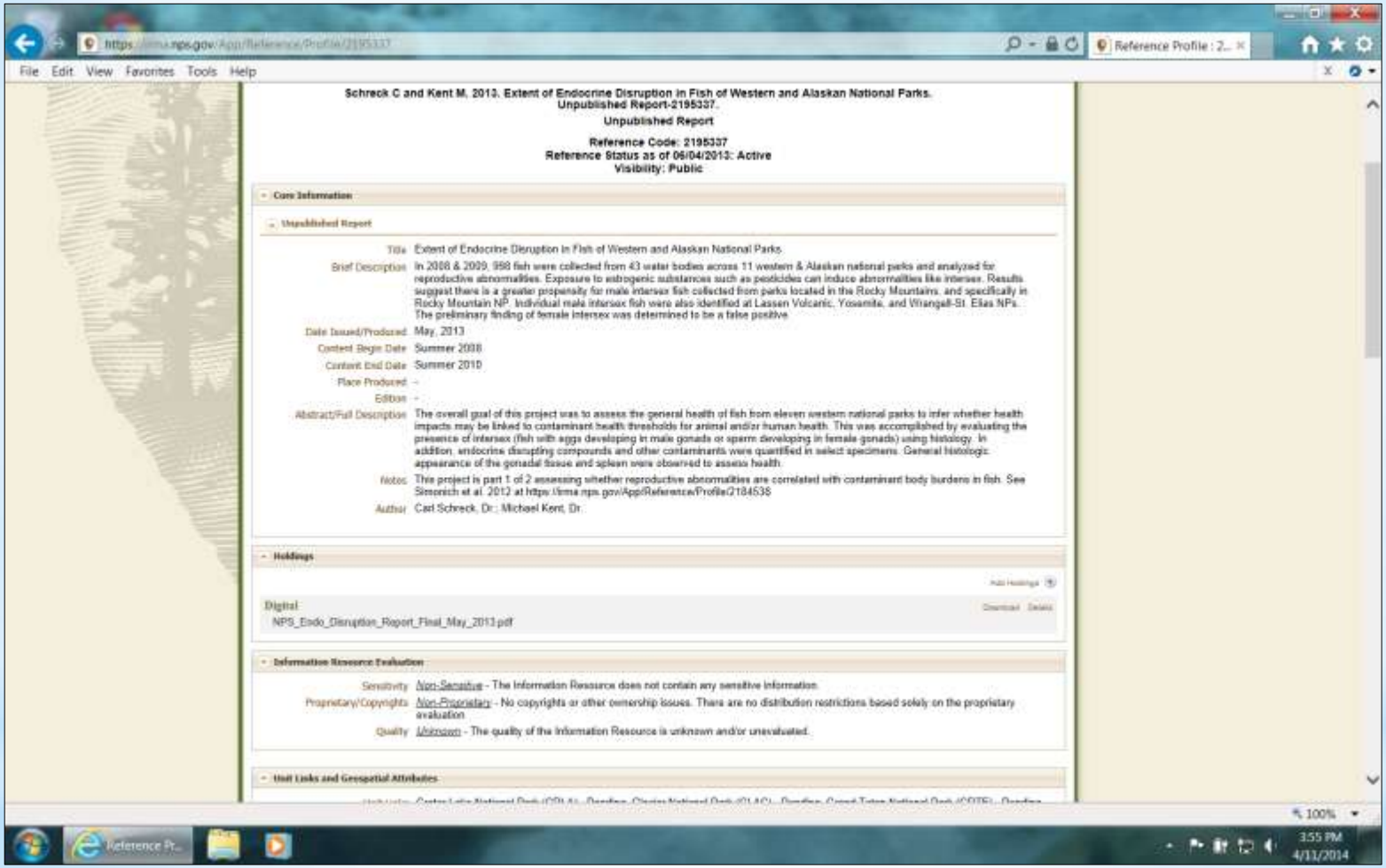

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Next Steps

- Encourage other organizations to become members of the PNW Contaminants Workgroup.
- Update interactive map annually and solicit data from other organizations to add to the map.
- Continue and expand on collaboration.

Questions?

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