



THE STEWARDSHIP CHRONICLE

The newsletter of the Ecosystem Workforce Program

“Helping communities build quality jobs
in ecosystem management”

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THOUGHTS ON THE MARCH '99

ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE FORUM

BY ROLF ANDERSON

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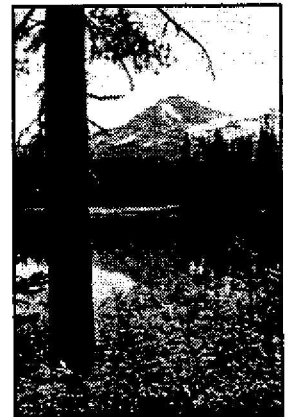
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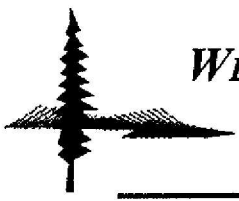
When I think about the panel speakers the first day, and the local programs described today, all I can think is — What an opportunity!! What a whole host of opportunities available to us, and articulated the last two days! What an opportunity to move away from management practices that are no longer as effective as they once were. And to put people to work! We can move in a new direction - we can address some problems that have been with us since the late 80s/early 90s - and we can show benefits for all of the participants! What a selling point!! Quality work accomplished for land managers AND quality jobs for local workers. As Denny Scott said yesterday, “This is a high road strategy!”

I picked up two major keys in the presentations and discussions the past two days. One is the need for funded work. The momentum for an ecosystem workforce program started with special program funds Jobs-in-the-Woods, Fish Habitat, Flood Repair, and Alternative Volume. We now need to move away from the reliance on special programs mentality and apply the concepts to all natural resource work. As Tom Dew said, “We need to make this a part of doing everyday business.” Agencies need to apply funds from all their programs that need this kind of work done, but contractors also need to look beyond the Forest Service and BLM, to the entire watershed. A great role for watershed councils would be to broker work among all landowners. Lon Patterson told us to “look at a larger scale, a broader area.”



Another key I heard is the need for communication. Margaret Peterson said “We have to move our knowledge to the power (decision-makers)”. If we are the choir, as Ron Ochs said, then we have to get the ear of the Music Director. We have to move from a studio choir, humming background music, to a full gospel ensemble!

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WELCOME TO THE STEWARDSHIP CHRONICLE

Welcome to the Ecosystem Workforce Program's (EWP) newsletter – *The Stewardship Chronicle*. This is our first issue. In this issue we feature the comments of Rolf Anderson who spoke at the recent 1999 EWP Forum: *State and Federal Land Management Agency Role in Linking Land Management, Social and Economic Objectives*. Sue Olson's article covers the work of the Willamette Province Workforce Partnership. Her article reviews the history and development of the WPWP and its success in helping local workers find employment in the ecosystem management

Oregon's efforts to create long term high skill and high wage jobs in the newly established ecosystem management industry. Additionally, through this semi-annual newsletter we aim to keep you informed about upcoming events and workshops that will be valuable to your work. If you have ideas for stories or names and dates of events and workshops that you think should be included in an upcoming issue please send them to Mike Hibbard or Charles Spencer. The EWP contact address is located on page 5 of this issue. In the mean time we hope you find *The Stewardship Chronicle* helpful and informative.

THE WILLAMETTE PROVINCE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP JUNE 1999



BY SUE OLSON



The Willamette Province Workforce Partnership (WPWP) is dedicated to maintaining a highly skilled workforce within our local communities in the Willamette Valley. This initiative began in 1994, and the partners include the Willamette National Forest, The Eugene and Salem Districts of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the University of Oregon (UO) Ecosystem Workforce Project. With Federal funding from the Jobs in the Woods program, restoration dollars, and resource project funds, these partners have created year-round quality jobs over the last four years.

It started as a workforce training program, then shifted when the partners pooled their resources in 1996 to provide contracts for local workers in a unique "bundled" design. The work typically focuses on contracts that develop ecosystem work skills and family wage jobs. This "bundling" offered a seamless contract across agency lines, and combined small projects into a multi-project package structured over a period of time, allowing small and large contractors alike to compete for the work. In the past, contracts were awarded based upon the lowest bid. Now contracts can be awarded based on "best value," when a contractor meets the best interests of the government. This terrific strategy has several benefits for local workers. Work is retained within the local area;

industry. Finally, Steve Mital reports on the work being done by the Economic Development Council of Tillamook County. The Tillamook EDC is actively going out into the larger community to develop partnerships with agencies on behalf of ecosystem management workers in the county. Their innovative efforts are helping Tillamookians get high skill and high wage jobs in the expanding ecosystem management industry.

In our subsequent issues we plan to feature stories and examples from different areas around the state that highlight

employment durations have increased; pay and benefits are commensurate with worker skills and competitive with other local, state and national levels. Local workers are also able to expand their skills and abilities to meet workforce needs and their individual desires.

In 1994 and 1995, the WPWP developed the Sweet Home Ecosystem Workforce Pilot Program and trained 23 workers from local communities for watershed restoration work. Other partners in the State of Oregon were inspired to take up the challenge and create similar programs in their local areas. In 1996, WPWP launched the Ecosystem Workforce Demonstration Project to shift ecosystem contracts into the private sector. Three multi-project contracts were awarded, adding up to \$320,000. By 1997, the partners focused on technical skills contracts for the private sector. They expanded their funding pool to include ERFO, non-ERFO and other resource project funds.

Six multi-project contracts were awarded, at a sum of \$500,000. In 1998, the Wyden Amendment expanded capacity yet again. Thirteen contracts were awarded to eleven contractors for a total of \$750,000.

The WPWP is now identifying milestones for the future as they build capacity for high-skill jobs of an even longer duration. They have learned a great deal since 1994, and they know that developing partnerships is critical to success for workers, the agencies, and the resultant good work on the ground. Brad Leavitt of the Forest Service has been with the Partnership since it began. He gets a real sparkle in his eyes when he speaks of the work the partners have done, and the contractors who have benefited from the program. "When the guy at the local gas station in Sweet Home says 'Hey, I just talked to a contractor, and I hear there's a great contract program I ought to look into', well, it does my heart good."



"ON THE GROUND" IN TILLAMOOK COUNTY

BY STEVE MITAL

Like much of Oregon, Tillamook County has had some rough times due to the decline in timber sales in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Many former workers employed by the timber industry lost their jobs and had to learn new skills and accept jobs that are either temporary, low wage, and/or far away from home. In response to this the Economic Development Council of Tillamook county (EDCTC) has laid the groundwork to help some start-up ecosystem management businesses secure operating capital and displaced timber workers find high wage and high skilled jobs in the ecosystem management industry. The proactive and collaborative approach used by the EDCTC's Director, Val Folkema and her staff is gaining currency.

Chris Bayham of the EDCTC coordinates *The Connection*, the periodic newsletter that is distributed to everyone registered in the EDCTC's database. He says, "the EDCTC is focusing on growing an ecosystem management industry." Bayham's job is to go out and find out which agencies and companies need workers to do ecosystem management work and then publish that information in *The Connection*.

As more and more people find out about the proactive nature of the EDCTC they begin to take advantage of its services. Bayham says that as the word gets out that people are finding jobs through *The Connection*, more people use it to both find contracts, employment or advertise available jobs. "Our goal is to make it a one stop shopping place for ecosystem management work in Tillamook County," said Bayham.

Bayham is putting together a database of workers in Tillamook County who are interested in doing restoration work. Through a voluntary survey that individuals fill out

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*THOUGHTS ON THE MARCH '99
ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE FORUM
(CONTINUED)*

But, whenever you think you have a good idea, you have to think first if it is also a good idea for everyone else that you need on board to make it work. Bart Johnson told us about that yesterday. It will be difficult to convince someone to take on a program that is good for you, but not good for them.

Well, I think there are benefits for most everyone involved. These are some of the benefits that I have heard and thought about, and that I would identify when I talk with others:

If I was going to talk to agency managers (line officers) trying to manage a workforce with declining budgets, and trying to stay away from more downsizing I'd say: This is an opportunity to stabilize your workforce with the key permanent workers you have left, and contract a big portion of your work. It is an opportunity to apply the funds you used to spend on training, meetings, lost time injuries and claims, and grievances to on-the-ground, high quality, natural resource management work.

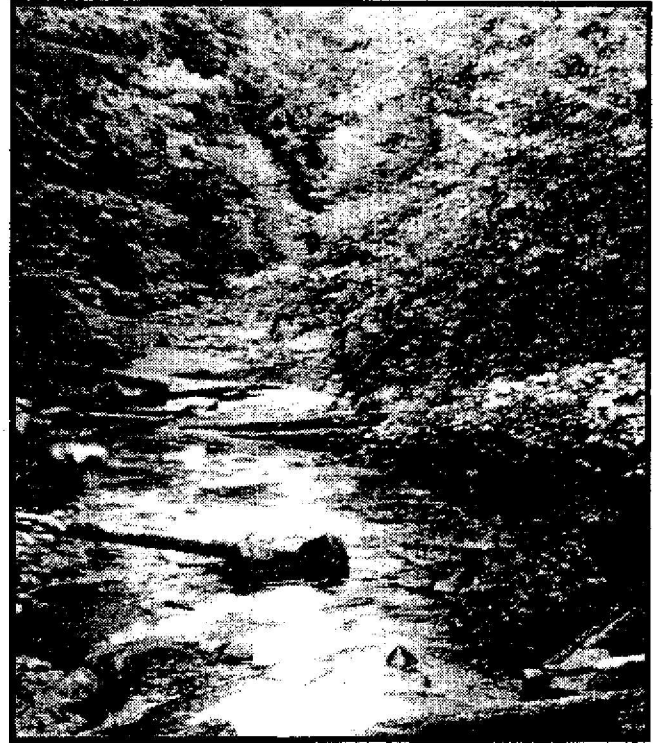
If I was going to talk to project managers, responsible for a specific program of work (biologists, silvi-culturalists, botanists, archeologists, watershed council coordinators, small woodland owners, industrial forest managers, farmers) I'd say: This is an opportunity for landscape management on a watershed scale (state of the art concepts!). It's an opportunity to accomplish quality work, with a skilled crew, requiring minimal monitoring and supervision, that is efficient, effective, and self-starting - and comes with a low risk of the need for re-work and a high probability for innovation.

If I was going to talk to workers who want to experience a lifestyle of outdoor work - living, raising families, and participating in rural communities, I'd say: This an opportunity for reasonable pay and benefits, for quality jobs, and near year around employment. It's an opportunity to be rewarded for quality work and innovation.

If I was going to talk to rural community leaders, who haven't yet quite defined their relationship with natural resource agencies after the decline of federal timber sales,

I'd say: This is an opportunity to establish a new relationship, based on addressing mutual, long term objectives, healthy watersheds contributing to quality air, quality water, and an attractive community for residents and visitors. It's an opportunity to establish a resident workforce that contributes to building that healthy community.

If I was going to talk to Watershed Council Board Members who are wondering how to establish relationships with



agencies and large industrial forest landowners, and how to go about this "collaboration" thing I'd say this is an opportunity to act as a broker, linking inventory, monitoring, analysis, project identification and prioritization. It's an opportunity to combine funds from many sources to benefit local ownership AND the entire watershed. It's an opportunity to support a skilled, contracted workforce, capable of meeting any single ownership needs, or the ultimate goal of joint/shared work.

We have had a good discussion about objectives and opportunities, but implementation of these ideas won't happen automatically. Several speakers talked about how long it takes Government agencies to make change happen. We need to accelerate the pace of change! We need to communicate directly with managers and other leaders who aren't here. While the benefits may seem to be obvious to us,

these folks have their plates full, and need some assistance looking at this program. We need you to identify who those key leaders are and communicate the opportunities.

Nancy Graybeal asked us to “work with people we can call on for help”, and to “learn and build from existing efforts.” We are willing and prepared to help you do that. We have a group organized and ready to travel to your turf, and meet with you and your local constituency. For those folks that are skeptical, or thinking “Yeah, but we can’t... We can help you discuss what the benefits are, and why the program deserves serious attention. For those who are already believers, but aren’t sure quite how to take the next step, we can help you discuss the how’s, -case histories, tools, methods, processes, procedures, and people to consult with.

The last two days were a great start - now let’s take the next step!! We’re ready to go; give us a call!

(Rolf Anderson is a retired U.S. Forest Service Sweet Home District Ranger)



“ON THE GROUND”
IN TILLAMOOK COUNTY
(CONTINUED)

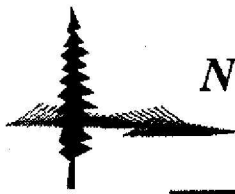
the EDCTC is able to keep track of the skill base in the county. The database serves several useful purposes. Bayham says that many government restoration contracts require that contractors have a wide skill base and a large inventory of expensive equipment. Many small local organizations can’t maintain the equipment necessary to compete with outside businesses. The database allows these businesses to collaborate and bring together the diverse set of skills and equipment needed to do the job. By consulting the database a local contractor can bring together the skills and equipment he/she needs to complete a project. The database is a tool that allows local businesses to stay competitive through collaboration. “The independent approach doesn’t necessarily work on large, capital intensive projects but the collaborative approach just might work,” mused the optimistic Chris Bayham.

Another major goal of the database is to allow the EDCTC to assess what skills are lacking in the county. As the EDCTC becomes aware of future contracts that will be available in the county they can check to see if the skills are locally available. If not, the EDCTC can help local contractors get the necessary skills training. The long-term hope is that these and other proactive measures will make Tillamookians competitive in the growing ecosystem management industry.

Overall, Bayham feels that *The Connection* will help local small businesses and local workers secure contract opportunities in Tillamook County. *The Connection* keeps track of where and what type of contract work will be available in the near future, who is hiring, and what training programs are being offered. “There’s lots of seasonal jobs in Tillamook County that go to University students from outside of Tillamook County looking for summer employment. They get them because they found out about them through their studies,” pointed out Bayham. The local students and workers were out of the loop and didn’t even know the opportunities existed. Things are changing though. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Tillamook office and the EDCTC collaborated to inform county residents of these seasonal job opportunities. The most recent issue of *The Connection* reports that “Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Tillamook hired Jerry Casterline of Tillamook County as a seasonal Experimental Biological Aide. Jerry will be measuring and marking migratory salmon in the county. Jerry learned of this opportunity through the *Connection Bulletin*.” One step at a time the EDCTC is helping Tillamookians take advantage of the growing ecosystem management industry.

For more information regarding EWP and our technical assistance programs please contact EWP coordinator **Charles Spencer** at:

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NEWS, EVENTS, WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS

Clatsop Community College announces the Clatsop Summer Institute, providing technical training in marine and coastal environmental assessment and monitoring and related topics. The Astoria-based program features one- to three-day courses from July 10 to July 23, 1999. College credits and CEUs are available with most courses. For registration details and scholarship information call (503) 338-2405, or email tlaska@clatsop.cc.or.us. Detailed course descriptions and updates are posted on the web at: www.clatsopcollege.com/summerinstitute.html.

Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy(RIEE), under agreement with the Rogue River National Forest, is currently "remodeling" a surplus Zig Zag monocable mini yarder for the Applegate Ranger District. RIEE has sub-contracted the design and assembly work out to a retired

Forest Service logging engineer, Gary "Bergy" Bergstrom, who was involved in the original development and testing of early monocable systems in the United States. He has turned out to be a valuable asset to this project, redesigning the machine in a way that may allow it to remove small diameter trees from pre-commercial thinnings profitably at the same time as it provides family wages. He will be using one or more RIEE trainees to assemble and outfit the machine after fabrication is complete.

The remodeling is scheduled to be complete in early September, the RIEE EWTP training crew will then test it on a site they recently thinned on the Applegate Ranger District. Once the bugs are ironed out the Zig Zag will be available for loan to small operators or organizations working within the Rogue River National Forest.

More information on date and location of the Zig Zag test will be available after the first of September from Glen Brady at RIEE. You can contact him by email at gbrady@mind.net or by phone at (541) 482-6031.

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