

## Forest Service's "Great Green Things Award" Winners Announced

WASHINGTON, November 19, 2009 – The 2008 US Forest Service Sustainable Operations Summit awards ceremony showcased many great green things happening throughout the agency. The Forest Service recognized the formation of 35 new Green Teams—local groups of employees that facilitate the pragmatic implementation of sustainable operations principles on their work site. Over 60 Green Teams now exist in the Forest Service. Six outstanding Green Teams received the first annual *Great Green Things Award* for achieving excellent results in reducing the Agency's environmental footprint. Many of their sustainable projects involved local partners and are easily replicated across other units. The winning teams and projects are listed below; additional success stories from applicants are posted on the Forest Service Sustainable Operations Google Site: <http://sites.google.com/a/fs.fed.us/sustainable-operations/success-stories>.

### Energy Conservation

**The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (NGLVC) on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest** maintains a lighted parking lot and, for safety reasons, the lights stay on all night. The twenty lights used to light the parking lot currently use about 6-7% of the annual Center energy usage. Because the NGLVC is interested in decreasing energy usage, and therefore, carbon emissions, they researched alternative lighting for the parking lot. The Center tested the feasibility of using Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting for the parking lot in June 2008. The test was successful, and they are now in the process of replacing each of the twenty lights with LED lighting. This light replacement is only the latest in several greener changes made at the NGLVC. Other changes include converting incandescent lighting to compact fluorescents in several areas of the Center and rewiring to create options for more or less lighting throughout the Center. Switching the lights will save about 26,000 kWh annually, and will save a little over \$2,100 in electric costs to the NGLVC in that same timeframe.

### Water Conservation

**Grey Towers National Historic Site (GTNHS)** recently installed a new visitor service and parking area where a conscious effort was made to conserve water resources. Pervious pavement was installed in the parking areas and walkways to allow rain to recharge ground water by draining through this macadam surface instead of creating runoff and erosion. In reducing the demand for irrigation usually required for landscape plantings this design specified installing hardy, native, drought resistant plants and grasses. After being established for a year these trees, shrubs and meadow grasses will require significantly less irrigation.

### Sustainable Transportation

The Federal Employees Alternative Transportation program (FEAT) was developed by the **Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit** to provide incentives to employees to use an alternative to driving alone in their personal vehicle to work. The incentives for the program were purchased using a MicroGrant received from Region 5. For each day of participation an employee received one "raffle ticket". Employees also received sustainable rewards such as reusable water bottles and grocery bags for achieving a given number of days of alternative commuting.

A database program was developed to keep a log of all the days and miles alternatively commuted. A total of 8,769 miles were recorded as alternatively commuted:

Estimated fuel savings: 439 gallons (Assuming 20mpg)

\*Estimated Carbon Reduction: 2344 lbs

\*Estimated Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>: 8516 lbs

\*Source of data for calculations: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines on the EPA Website: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/420f05001.htm>.

### Waste Prevention and Recycling

One of **Wolf Creek Job Corps'** missions as a CCC center located on the Umpqua National Forest is to educate our students (age 16-24) about caring for the land through resource conservation. The Wolf Creek Green Team is working through a multi-faceted program with staff to mentor students in developing many resource conservation steps including:

- Growing a center garden where all food grown by students is used by the cafeteria (produce food locally-eat low on the food chain).
- Construction of a recycle station and satellite recycle bins located across center to encourage recycling of paper, plastic, metal, cardboard, batteries, etc.
- Reducing waste from the dining hall by shifting to products with less packaging. Examples include: Installation of a milk dispenser machine (saved 196,000 individual milk cartons per year); Issuing students individual reusable Wolf Creek water bottles (saved an estimated 10,000 individual water and powerade bottles a year); Stocking squeeze bottles instead of individual condiment packages; Recycling plastic containers, metal cans, and cardboard.
- Purchasing Energy Star products including: Construction of new dorm with energy efficient heat pumps, front load washers, computer controlled heat zones to allow heat to be turned down during the hours of non-use. Replacement of old heat pumps with energy efficient heat pumps in all dorms.

### Green Purchasing

After the formation of the **Newtown Square (NTS) Green Team** (comprised of Northern Research Station and Northeastern Area S&PF employees) several members were instrumental in making changes to building operations happen in a very timely fashion. Judy Terrell and Patty Pierce worked quickly to switch from 35% post-consumer recycled printer paper to 100% post-consumer recycled printer paper. Management of the building (Brandywine Realty) has also made some changes in recycling practices, HVAC usage, and lighting due in part to working with the NTS Green Team. Most of this communication has been done by Judy. Mark Buccowich started a battery recycling program that allows employees to bring in nickel cadmium, button cell, and lithium ion batteries. Approximately 20 pounds of batteries have been dropped off for recycling through this program.

### Sustainable Leadership

The **Mt. Hood Green Team** initiated a Mt. Hood Green Team Challenge to stimulate creative competition across the unit. The Mt. Hood Green Team Challenge will be acknowledged with framed certificates to each unit made out of recycled wood flooring from Timberline Lodge. Accomplishments across the Forest include the purchase of a composting machine, including Sustainable Operations in the new employee orientation, distribution of various Green Team non-monetary awards to acknowledge ongoing accomplishment, development of a guide to energy saving practices for computers, hosting participation in the first Better Living Show in Portland, Oregon (Mt Hood Green team booth); video conference equipment now on all units of the Mt Hood, participation in various external settings as well as "green spots" at District meetings, sponsoring unplug days, and much, much more

One unique and rewarding aspect of the Mt Hood Green team came when **Timberlake Job Corps** joined the Green Team early on. Timberlake Job Corps now has an innovative and successful Green Team made up of students and staff. They participate regularly in Green Team meetings and hold their own Green Team meetings on a regular basis. They have started a garden to demonstrate the value of local grown foods. They have been working on better recycling and energy use reduction.