



The Apple

Sustainable
Schools
News

Preparing our students and schools for tomorrow, today

February 2006

The Apple is the monthly newsletter from the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative, and is prepared by the project staff at the Zero Waste Alliance (ZWA).

This newsletter is available in pdf form at <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/newsletters.htm>.

PROJECT UPDATE – February 2006

The initiative was introduced to business leaders at a very successful event in early February. The Steering Committee, first topic teams (energy and high performance buildings), student group and Summit planning team are all scheduled to meet in March. Details are below.

GET INVOLVED! – Participation and Project Support Opportunities

The Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative will engage a large number of people with diverse areas of expertise. We hope you will become a participant. Contact Lori Stole, lstole@zerowaste.org or 503-591-1454. All stakeholders are welcome!

- Students: join other students interested in sustainability and environment on March 13, 5:00 – 7:30 PM in Portland for a discussion about the Initiative and how students can be involved.
- Help plan the Kick-off Summit, an event this spring for all interested stakeholders. The planning team will meet on March 15, 1:15 PM.
- Sign up for the first topic teams, energy and high performance buildings. Related information below. First meeting is April 5, 9-12 noon.
- Sign up now for future topic teams. View the topic team list on the website: <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/participate.htm>.

As always, we'd appreciate that you:

- Pass this newsletter on to others you think might be interested.
- Send us information about upcoming events and success stories related to school sustainability, so we can share them with others via the website and *The Apple*.
- Let us know about conferences or events that provide good opportunities to share this Initiative.

Volunteer opportunities:

- Provide website design work for the final Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative site.
- Share grant writing expertise: Help write or review grant proposals.
- Volunteer to help with our fundraising campaign to support this work.

Topic Teams scheduled: Energy and High Performance Buildings

The topic teams, each focusing on various aspects of sustainability, are an important piece of the Initiative. Every month or so several new teams will begin. Each team will move through a facilitated process, meeting every two weeks for a total of 4 to 5 three-hour meetings. They will begin by forming a shared understanding of sustainability, then determine the criteria for sustainability within that area and how to measure each as well as identifying and creating other resources that schools need to progress.

The first teams, focusing on energy and high performance buildings, will be led by the Oregon Department of Energy, supported by project staff. They will meet April 5, 19, May 3, 17 and 31 from 9 AM until noon, in Portland. There will be an option of participating by phone. Team members should

participate in all meetings. If you'd like to follow progress and perhaps offer e-mail comments, but not attend the meetings then ask to be on that topic team's notification list. Contact us now to be added to the team list or notification list for either of these two teams.

Teacher Group

We held a teachers' gathering in early February to get their input about the project and their needs. Most of the attendees were just learning about sustainability themselves, and seeking resources to help themselves and their school's efforts. Lack of time is a huge factor. Several gave examples of a successful teacher training format whereby an outside person comes regularly (1-2 times/month) to provide short units. One school has begun a sustainability committee but would like some kind of guideline and training to help the group get started.

Participants suggested we organize such networking sessions on a quarterly basis. If you know of teachers interested in sustainability please direct them to us so we can add them to the contact list.

New on the website:

Case Studies

New case studies on the website include:

- Goats do the gardening at Catlin Gabel School in Portland. Instead of using chemicals to control the invasive blackberry and ivy they brought in goats. In a half year the animals ate about a half acre of invasive plants, avoiding the use of more than a gallon of concentrated herbicides.
- LaPine schools serve as an Asthma Friendly Schools demonstration project. A variety of measures lead to less absenteeism, increased participation in PE classes and better indoor air quality.
- Obsidian Middle School brought the community together to replace sod with 18,000 sq. ft. of native high desert plants. This natural area has been integrated into many aspects of the curriculum.

See the case studies at <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/resources.htm>

Benefits of the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative

Documents describing how the initiative will benefit schools and businesses are posted at the bottom of: <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/about.htm>.

Student Sustainability and Environmental Leaders

We will host a meeting of students, who are providing leadership in areas of environment and sustainability. They will meet March 13, 5:00 – 7:30 PM to learn about this project and discuss how students can add their voice and ideas. If you know a student who might be a good candidate, let us know!

The Initiative Introduces Itself to the Business Community

Earlier this month the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative was presented to the business community. Big Thanks go to PGE for hosting this event and Bill Blosser for donating wine. After learning about the Initiative itself, attendees heard about some great sustainability work already underway from Eric Shawn, plant manager at Catlin Gabel, Laurie Aquirre, a teacher at Optimum Learning Environments Charter School in Salem and Pam Brown, Director of Facilities and Asset Management at Portland Public Schools, and how their efforts will be further supported through the work of this Initiative. Rick Woodward, Corporate Director of Sustainability for Coastwide Laboratories shared how adopting sustainability has helped his company's success and can provide similar benefits for schools. PGE's President and CEO, Peggy Fowler, spoke briefly to PGE's support of the project before introducing Susan Castillo, Superintendent of Public Instruction. Castillo emphasized the positive correlation between the Initiative's topic areas and academic performance. Jack McGowan, executive director for SOLV, provided a rousing conclusion, noting that the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative is what our state needs in order to follow the vision of stewardship and leadership established by earlier leaders such as Tom McCall. Attendees continue to report that the evening was highly inspirational!

United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring a *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to begin on January 1, 2005*. The Decade emerges from a series of international conferences, declarations and initiatives beginning with the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and culminating in the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

UNESCO, the Decade's lead agency, has described the four major thrusts of education for sustainable development to be:

- The promotion and improvement of high quality, relevant basic education
- The reorienting of existing education policies and programs to address the social, environmental and economic knowledge, skills and values inherent to sustainability in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner
- The development of public understanding and awareness of the principles of sustainable development
- The development of specialized training programs to ensure that all sectors of society have the skills necessary to perform their work in a sustainable manner.

The U.S. Partnership consists of individuals, organizations and institutions in the United States dedicated to education for sustainable development. The partnership was formed as a response to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and is convening individuals and organizations in order to catalyze cross-sector communication that leverages the UN Decade to promote understanding of sustainable development. The primary goal of the U.S. Partnership is to bring about a new cultural norm in which Americans are more "literate" about sustainability challenges and have both the skills and attitudes to participate in solutions. The goals of the U.S. Partnership will be carried out by sector and action teams, including a K-12 sector team. We will be involved with the K-12 sector team as time allows. Contact them if you would like to participate yourself.

To learn more: Website for the U.S. Partnership: <http://www.uspartnership.org/>. From here you can access the sector team pages as well as connect to the UNESCO site to learn about the UN Decade and international efforts. The K-12 sector page has a long list of resource links.

Green Cleaning in Schools

The Center for a New American Dream has kicked off a Clean Schools campaign, and a new section on their web site is devoted to green cleaning in schools: <https://www.newdream.org/cleanschools/>. They're also hosting a sweepstakes! Here's the challenge: switch your school to safe, green cleaners using the list on their web site. (Note that they include cleaners from our Sustainable Oregon Schools sponsor, Coastwide Laboratories!) Then enter the drawing to win \$5,000 cash for your school! The deadline to enter the drawing is March 29, 2006.

Upcoming Events

(Details listed on the website at <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/events.htm>.)

Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative Events and Meetings:

While these events are all in Portland, out-of-area folks can participate via phone.

March 13, 5:00 – 7:30 PM

Meeting of student environmental and sustainability leaders

March 15, 9 AM - Noon

Sustainable Oregon Schools Steering Committee meeting

March 15, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Planning team for the Sustainable Oregon Schools Kick-off Summit meets.

April 5, 19, May 3, 17, 31, 9 AM - Noon

Meetings of Topic teams 1 and 2: Energy and High Performance Buildings

Spring 2006: Kick-off Summit

All stakeholders are welcome! Details to come.

Related Events:

Many events that help support sustainable schools occur throughout the year. This information is provided as a service. Listing on this page does not necessarily imply endorsement by the Zero Waste Alliance or the Oregon Sustainable Schools Initiative.

March 2 EPA HealthySEAT Webcast

What: Webcast to share capabilities and features of the new HealthySEAT assessment tool software.

When: 10:30 – 12:00 PM, PST

Details: <http://www.epa.gov/schools/healthyseat/>

March 7-9 Towards Sustainability: Western Regional Conference & Expo

What: Sustainability Conference focused on Higher Education operations and curriculum

When/Where: California State University, Chico

Details: julian@aaashe.org, <http://rce.csuchico.edu/sustainability/>

March 16 Environment and Democracy: Wangari Maathai

What: 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate hosted by the World Affairs Council

When/Where: Arlene Schnitzer Concert hall, Portland, 7 PM

Details: World Affairs Council: <http://www.worldoregon.org/events/tickets.php>, 503-274-7488.

The first woman to earn a PhD in East Africa, Dr. Wangari Maathai makes the crucial link between environmental sustainability, democracy and peace. Elected to parliament with an unprecedented 98% of the vote, Wangari Maathai is one of the most influential women of her generation. Call the World Affairs Council to learn about student scholarships.

March 17 Sustainable Development 101

What: University of Oregon, Sustainability Leadership Workshop

When/Where Eugene, 8:30 – 4:30

Details: <http://center.uoregon.edu/sustainability/seminars/courses/sustain.php>

This interactive workshop is specifically designed for those new to the field of sustainable development. It will provide an overview of the principles of sustainability and a framework for additional learning and decision-making.

March 17 Oregon Green Schools Summit – “Follow the Rainbow to a Greener World”

What: Annual Summit of the Oregon Green Schools Association.

When/Where: All day in Eugene. Deadline for registration is past.

Details: http://www.oregongreenschools.org/2006_summit.cfm

or contact Anne Donahue, at (541) 682-5542, anne.c.donahue@ci.eugene.or.us.

Green Schools from across the state will be gathering in Eugene at the 10th annual Oregon Green Schools Summit for a full day of sharing, learning and celebrating the wise use of natural resources.

March 30 Peter Donaldson ~ Stories from Salmon Nation

What: Straub Environmental Lecture Series presents storyteller, who works with schools

When/Where 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Louck's Auditorium at the Salem Public Library

Details: <http://www.open.org/~selc/>

At the center of the campaign to save salmon and champion sustainable economic innovation is the story we choose to live by. The old mythos, now dying, is based on the endless frontier. The new mythos, now emerging, is based on ecological integrity. So strong is the former that even the word mythos has come to be accepted as meaning a lie. So promising is the latter that every eighth grader gets it.

April 7 Facilities Management

What: University of Oregon, Sustainability Leadership Workshop

When/Where Portland, 8:30 – 4:30

Details: <http://center.uoregon.edu/sustainability/seminars/courses/facilities.php>

Applying sustainability concepts to the Facilities organization can ensure that operating costs are at their lowest, while simultaneously preserving the environment, and ensuring success with your employees and customers.

April 21 Systems Thinking for High Performance Organizations

What: University of Oregon, Sustainability Leadership Workshop

When/Where Portland, 8:30 – 4:30

Details: <http://center.uoregon.edu/sustainability/seminars/courses/systems.php>

A Seminar in the Theory and Practice of Systems Thinking For Sustainability

October 10-14 North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Annual Conference

When/Where: St. Paul, MN

Details: http://naaee.org/pages/conferences/stpaul/cfp_06.html

"Gathering at the Headwaters: Building Environmental Education in Society." Sustainability is one of 5 conference strands.

Other Related Events:

- Portland: Illahee lecture series: <http://www.illahee.org/lectures>
- Portland: The Oregon Natural Step Network presentations:
<http://www.ortns.org/events.htm>.

PLEASE BE A SUPPORTER

It's the contributions of you and your organization that make this Initiative happen. Consider contributing. Details at <http://www.zerowaste.org/schools/supporters.htm>.

**** Thank You to the Members of the Sustainable Oregon Schools 2005 Founders Circle! ****

They have provided funding critical to getting the Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative started.

Gold Level:

Dolphin Software
Ecoworks Foundation
Oregon Department of Energy
Portland General Electric

Silver Level:

Coastwide Laboratories
Oregon Department of Education
Metro Regional Government
Siltronic Corporation