

THE CENTER FOR WATERSHED AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

Creating Good-Neighbors in Your Watershed A Resource Guide for Establishing Watershed Good-Neighbor Programs

Introduction

Welcome to the growing number of people in Oregon who wish to improve their communities, economies, watersheds, and environment by educating and recognizing the positive steps taken by local businesses.

The Watershed Good-Neighbor program is a unique voluntary, community-based approach to educating and training local businesses and landowners on how they can improve their business productivity and profitability and, in doing so, improve the health of their watershed and environment. This resource guide outlines how a community can establish a locally tailored Watershed Good-Neighbor program in their area.

The Watershed Good-Neighbor program works through the existing business associations or civic organizations (e.g., the chamber of commerce, watershed council, council of government, etc.). The program provides education, training and public recognition for those businesses and landowners which voluntarily take the initiative to adopt "lean and clean" management practices to improve their business efficiency and profitability while enhancing the local environment. Specifically, this first-of-a-kind program helps local organizations adopt systems-based management programs to increase their productivity and profitability by improving energy, water, and raw material efficiency and by reducing waste, pollution, and habitat impacts.

This document provides a model for communities to set up a Watershed Good-Neighbor project and outlines the steps necessary to save companies money, save the community money, and help conserve local watersheds and the environment. The program is applicable to small, medium and large retailers, manufacturers, and to agricultural and forest landowners.

This Resource Guide is a guidance document that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the participating community. The Center for Watershed and Community Health hopes that communities will adjust it, as they see necessary, to meet the distinct needs of their situation.

As the underwriting organization, the Center for Watershed and Community Health at Portland State University provides technical assistance to help

community groups establish and operate a program. We can also operate the workshops and provide other forms of technical assistance and training.

This project is a unique and timely opportunity to help improve the management practices of many businesses, organizations, government agencies, and landowners throughout the region. By establishing a program where the local community helps to educate and train their own members in how to adopt practices to improve their economic bottom lines and the environment, a whole new positive atmosphere can be created. You, as a participant, will have a significant positive impact on the overall health of the economy, communities and environment of the Northwest. Bev Rowland, Hood River County Commissioner stated that she is "proud of the people who were involved in the program and in their efforts to reduce consumption and the resources used in production." She feels that Hood River was an excellent place to pilot the program and views the benefits to the community as significant. "It's only through working together to improve the resources available to us in Hood River that we can assure that the quality of life here will continue to improve. Green Smart is a formal program to help us do that."

SECTION I - HOW TO ESTABLISH A WATERSHED GOOD-NEIGHBOR PROGRAM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Watershed Good-Neighbor Program is a voluntary program that seeks to educate, train and reward small, medium and large-sized businesses, landowners and organizations for adopting "lean and clean" management practices. "Lean and clean" management helps organizations to:

- * improve efficiency;
- * reduce operating costs; and
- * enhance watershed and environmental health.

Specifically, the program seeks to help local businesses and organizations adopt efficiency and quality control measures, phase in technologies and practices that reduce energy and water usage, reduce and shift to non-toxic raw material, and increase waste minimization, reuse and recycling options. Once an organization adopts a sufficient number of these steps to meet established criteria, they are given public recognition for their actions.

The Watershed Good-Neighbors project is designed as a partnership among local civic organizations, such as the chamber of commerce, the local watershed council, and the Soil and Water Conservation District. A broad base of local support for the program helps to attract the largest number of people to participate in the program.

Why Should Businesses or Organizations Participate?

There are many reasons why local businesses, landowners and organizations may want to participate. Perhaps the most important reason is that they can save money. Pollution, waste and habitat impacts are signs of inefficiencies in the way a business operates. Every business seeks to operate as efficiently as possible to reduce unnecessary costs. This program can help local organizations identify their inefficiencies and save money.

In addition to cost savings, businesses and organizations can gain competitive advantage over competitors because qualifying organizations will be promoted in the media and to local consumers as Good-Neighbors in their community. This can generate new customers and solidify relationships with existing customers.

Examples

There are a number of programs underway in western states that demonstrate the potential money that can be saved through improved business management. For example, the City of Portland has a program where Mentor Graphics reports savings of \$130,000 each year in disposal and purchasing costs by recycling, using, selling or donating excess supplies, eliminating unnecessary forms, using electronic technology, and streamlining its mailing list.

Red Lion Hotels (now Doubletree) reported a savings of more than \$320,000 by replacing inefficient lighting, improving the heating and cooling systems, changing guest-rooms to improve water usage, and replacing their laundry system.

Local businesses and organizations can also gain the benefit of being viewed as civic leaders. This voluntary program can help dissolve polarities between economic and environmental issues within a community and help residents feel positive that the community has taken steps to control its own economic and environmental destiny.

Finally, many business owners and organization leaders care about salmon and trout, good water quality, watershed health and the environment. Running a business is an all-consuming task and activities that may impact these resources are often the result of lack of knowledge and/or lack of time. The Watershed Good-Neighbor Program can help local businesses and organizations put their concern for the environment into actions that benefit their own economic well-being as well as their local watersheds and community.

Stahlbush Island Farms, a food grower and processor in Corvallis has reduced its water consumption by more than 50%, due to an innovative system where water is used in 3 or 4 different applications before it is sent to the wastewater system. The water is used to cool pumpkin puree, then to cool the oil from

ammonia compressors used in the refrigeration cycle. Since the water has been contained in pipes until this time, the water can then be used to wash pumpkins, clean equipment, or used in the boiler. Stahlbush Island Farms then uses the water for irrigation and fertilizer supplement because they only introduce chemicals to the water that contain elements such as nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus.

The Ten Step Process to Organizing a Local Watershed Good-Neighbor Program

1. Identify Sponsoring Organizations
2. Establish a Steering Committee
3. Establish Program Criteria
4. Hold Kick-off Event
5. Offer Workshops
6. Provide On-Site Technical Assistance
7. Verify Requests for Certification
8. Hold Public Media Event to Recognize Qualifying Organizations
9. Promote Qualifying Organizations to Local Consumers
10. Repeat the Process Twice Yearly

The following sections explain this process in detail

Section II: Identify Sponsoring Organizations

The first step is to identify local civic sponsors for the program. Associations that represent the business community, such as the Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations are good choices. Since you are using this resource manual, it is likely that at least one local sponsoring organization has been identified. However, by partnering with a number of local groups it becomes possible to utilize the skills and connections of a variety of groups. For instance, by linking the Chamber of Commerce or another economic development organization with a watershed council, the program is more likely to attract business owners with a wide range of contacts. The sponsoring organizations will be used to spread the word about the program and provide alternative viewpoints about its design. Therefore, having a number of different groups committed to the success of the Watershed Good-Neighbor project is critical.

The sponsoring organizations will present the awards to participating businesses that improve their efficiency and environmental management practices. The key element to the Watershed Good-Neighbor project is to have local organizations and a local program recognize the achievements of local business. This provides a much stronger incentive for local businesses than if an outside organization or agency provides the recognition.

The sponsoring organizations provides some in-kind and financial contributions to implement the program. This might include office space, office supplies, staff time, computer usage, meeting facilitation, local contacts, marketing assistance, grant writing, etc. A sponsoring organization can expect to spend about \$5,000 in the first year of operation. The Watershed Good-Neighbor program is funded through foundation and government grants, local corporate sponsorship and fundraising, and program fees.

Section III: Establish a Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the locally comprised group that oversees the development of the Watershed Good-Neighbor program in a particular community. This group makes decisions regarding the structure of the program, the local name for the program (if the community wishes to choose something other than Watershed Good-Neighbor), and rules regarding application to and verification by the program. In essence, this group designs the program for a given community and continues to oversee implementation and on-going management of the program.

The Steering Committee should be comprised of a combination of local government official, community leaders, a wide variety of small/medium-sized business owners, and institutional representatives, such as the school district or the local hospital.

The Steering Committee should meet at least monthly during the design phase of the program development. This allows for enough time between meetings for the program coordinator to present ideas and receive feedback. Following the start-up phase, meetings can be less frequent, as needed for the program to continue to operate smoothly.

The Steering Committee operates by a majority rule system that allows votes on all substantive decisions. Decision-making is through presentation of draft documents by the local sponsor and the Center for Watershed and Community Health and discussion by all Steering Committee members present at the regularly scheduled meeting. An oral vote will be taken to determine the opinion of the Steering Committee members and the majority opinion will be the decision-making procedure.

Decisions will be made by those members of the Steering Committee that are present at the meeting. If a member misses a particular meeting their vote will not be counted toward the final decision. If a member wishes to comment on any material received through a mailing they may do so by contacting the program coordinator at the sponsoring agency. Their opinions will be considered in any discussion of the topic.

An additional task that falls to the Steering Committee are the design of a program logo. Included in this resource guide is a sample logo designed by the Hood River Watershed Good-Neighbor program (known as Green Smart) and used on all correspondence, advertising, certificates, and window decals.

Production of a community-specific brochure is another task for which the Steering Committee will provide input. Attached is a sample brochure designed by the Hood River Green Smart program, with assistance from the Center for Watershed and Community Health, that describes the program, lays out the workshop schedule, and provides the philosophy behind the program. Brochures are critical to marketing the program and presenting a professional structure for the program to the community.

Section IV: Developing the Mission Statement

Another task that is a responsibility of the Steering Committee is development of a local mission statement. It is critical that the mission statement capture exactly what the Steering Committee, and therefore the community, wants to convey through a Watershed Good-Neighbor program. It can be as simple or as complicated as the Steering Committee chooses to make it. The focus can be on either the business aspects or the environmental aspects of the program. Examples of a mission statement are:

"To promote environmentally and economically sound business practices through education and communication."

or

"To promote sound business practices to enhance local community and watershed health."

Section V: Program Outline

Following is a possible program outline and a description of its elements. This program outline may be altered to meet the specific needs of the participating community. The outline given here should be used as a guideline to direct the discussions relating to the best design of the program within the community.

Program Actions

The first goal of the project is to involve the community in supporting good business management decisions. The program does that by giving awards to participating organizations that improve their efficiency and waste management practices. Participating organizations will be required to exhibit improvement in and/or adoption of efficiency or environmental management practices that

holistically address the management situation of that individual business. The approach will be tiered and give different levels of recognition for different levels of commitment to change. The specific action descriptions are broken into two parts: general criteria and industry-specific criteria. Level I Requirements present the potential program requirements for the general criteria that applies to manufacturing, retail and wholesale, and land management-based businesses and organizations. Level II introduces industry-specific requirement that apply specifically to particular industries, in addition to further requirements for general businesses. Following is a brief description of each Level within the program. Included in the appendix is an outline for the possible program structure for Level I general requirements and Level Industry-Specific requirements.

Level I Guidelines

Level I Guidelines include the baseline criteria which are actions taken by any type of organization that improve both their economic picture and the environment as a whole. The benefits of working to meet the baseline criteria are two-fold. First, such practices have been proven to reduce operating costs, improve worker productivity and thereby increase profits. There are many business awards programs set up around the country that have proven successful at helping businesses improve their bottom line. Secondly, there is benefit to the environment. By using more efficient practices, increasing recycling efforts, and applying waste reduction strategies there is a strong benefit to the business itself and to the environment of the participating community. Ultimately, these baseline criteria are a way of stopping environmental problems before they start.

The general criteria take three forms:

- * Efficiency strategies (pollution prevention)
- * Waste reduction strategies
- * Recycling strategies

Achieving success in the general criteria could be accomplished through a variety of techniques. Possibilities might include (See attached Level I Guidelines for specific program outline):

- * recycling mixed waste
- * double-sided copying
- * changing lighting from incandescent to compact fluorescent
- * altering water processing system to improve efficiency
- * rainwater collection and recycling
- * purchase of recycled materials
- * fuel efficient vehicles for company fleet
- * encourage flexible schedule or telecommuting
- * encourage biking to work or locate in a pedestrian friendly location

Level II Guidelines:

In addition to more stringent requirements of the baseline criteria, Level II includes industry-specific criteria that address practices and concerns distinct to particular industries. It includes voluntary waste reduction, pollution prevention, and resource conservation that results in more efficiency and goes beyond the minimum compliance requirements specified in Level I. Included in this resource manual are possible program requirements for land management businesses (orchards, wineries, small vegetable farms, etc.), restaurants/food service, and offices. In addition, we are continuing to develop techniques specifically designed to help improve practices in the auto work, printing, paint, dental, graphic arts, and dry cleaning industries. These focus the action of specific industries in ways that are most suitable to improving their profitability and environmental management prospects.

Level III Guidelines:

Level III includes a full-fledged environmental management system for the individual business that address the aspects and effects that were developed in Level II. The EMS can be as simple or as complicated as necessary for a particular business.

Work is on-going to develop the specific program requirements for Level III.

Level IV Guidelines:

Level IV includes formal certification under such programs as ISO14000, forestry/agriculture, etc..

Work is on-going to develop the specific program requirements for Level III.

Section VI: Getting Participants

The first step to identifying businesses, landowners, or organizations that might be interested in participating in the Watershed Good-Neighbor program is to advertise and promote the program throughout the community so that a wide number of people in diverse industries are aware of its existence. This may be done through newspaper advertising, radio advertising, or public service announcements in addition to public speaking engagement. Describing the program and its benefits to the services clubs, such as the Rotary, Lions, Soroptimists, etc. provides information to wide variety of business owners and local leaders. Chamber of Commerce or other newsletters and mailing also reaches a wide audience and easily shares information about the program.

It is important that participating business, landowners, and organizations understand the level of commitment that is involved in the Watershed Good Neighbor program. While the program is not a great deal of work on an individual basis, participants are encouraged to attend the series of three workshops, complete the self-assessment checklists on their own, and examine

their business management practices for any changes that might result in positive effects on the environment and their financial picture. To get the most out of the program, it is important for participants to commit to taking the time to examine their processes and practices and look critically for ways to change that might have a positive impact.

In addition, it is important for participants to understand that there is a cost for participating. Program fees are an important source of revenue for the program and an important means for showing commitment. The steering committee will determine the actual level of program fee that is practical for a given community.

Section VII: Workshops

A series of workshops would help participants identify the most appropriate program actions for their type and size of business based on current practices. The workshops could be facilitated by the Center of Watershed and Community Health. Three workshops are held over a period of three months which assist businesses in laying out their goals and objectives as part of the program. Attached is the background document that provides the philosophy behind the program and the specific information to be conveyed during the workshop series (see Strategies and Tools for Self-applied Environmental Assistance).

In general, the first workshop should be an introduction to the program and a layout of the basic strategy. Each participant will leave with a self-assessment worksheet to be completed between workshops regarding their particular business and the practices they engage in and those that could be improved (included in this appendix).

The second workshop should be a review of the completed self-assessment worksheet and identification, on an individual basis, of the target areas for each business to alter.

The third workshop should help participants layout their goals within the framework of the program and identify a strategy for achieving those goals and meeting the targets set.

The final event is an awards and recognition ceremony to celebrate and promote the achievements of the organizations that have completed the requirements for the program. This should be a public event that serves to spread the word about the program and attract future participants and support, as well as promote those who have completed some requirements..

Once a participant has attended the first workshop they are free to attend no more workshops but rather complete the self-assessment worksheet and program application on their own. On the other hand, if a business feels that

they would like additional help in assessing their efficiency and management practices, the local partner and the Center for Watershed Health could arrange an on-site technical assistance visit.

Incentives

The benefits that businesses receive is one of the key factors in determining their participation in the Watershed Good-Neighbor project. The potential benefits are three-fold:

Training:

- * Education and training courses on efficient management practices
- * On-site consulting to identify and improve business efficiency practices
- * The opportunity to share information with and learn from other participating businesses

Fiscal:

- * The potential to save 10-30% or more in operating costs
- * The potential to avoid costly legal challenges by failing to meet state/federal requirements
- * Publicity in newspapers, newsletters, directories
- * Public recognition as a leader in business management and pollution prevention

Environmental:

- * The achievement of watershed and water quality standards and improvement objectives

Section VIII: Measurement

The included "Level I Program Requirements" provide the number and types of requirements to be taken by each participating business or organization. These provide the measurement needed to identify that each participant is doing the appropriate changes to meet program requirements. Measurement means the qualitative or quantitative changes that result from the program. This includes the individual changes and savings that each individual participant experiences as well as the overall changes that occur in the community. It is important to measure the results of the Watershed Good-Neighbor program for a number of reasons. Measurement can be used to promote the program, to encourage continued funding, to calculate the cost-effectiveness of the program, and to demonstrate the legitimacy of the program.

Measurement can be described in a number of ways, ranging from very simple to more complicated:

- * tally the number businesses/organizations participating
- * tally the number of changes made in each area
- * calculate the percentage of business/organizations in an area participating
- * reporting of real or estimated reductions and cost savings in use of materials, electricity, water or fuel
- * reporting of real or estimated reductions in waste disposal and related cost savings
- * real or estimated increases in purchase of items containing recycled material

A combination of these measurement tools can be used to present a picture of the effectiveness and results of the program to promote the program and to secure funding from outside sources and from sources within the community that are interested in improving the quality of life within the participating community.

Section IX: Verification

Verification procedures are necessary to ensure that participating businesses are meeting the requirements set for each level of participation, to make adjustments as needed as certain criteria are met, and, ultimately, to track whether the changes in management practices are achieving results in both bottom-line profits and environmental conditions.

Self-Verification

When establishing the program requirements, the steering committee must decide between self-verification or third-party verification. When self-verifying, a participating business or organization completes a form stating the changes that they have made and declaring that they have completed the program requirement fully and faithfully.

The steering committee may decide to establish a "spot check" system, whereby a certain percentage of verified businesses are checked each year to ensure that they are accurately and fully completing the required changes.

Third Party Verification

The alternative to self-verification is third party verification. The steering committee may determine that it is necessary to establish a standing verification team to check applications to ensure that businesses are actually carrying out the requirements properly. Steering committee members, high school students, community volunteers, etc. may be trained to carry out the verification visits in order to minimize the burden on either local staff or the steering committee

Third-party verification would be required for Level III and above and would require the services of a qualified environmental management specialist to determine whether the business had met the requirements laid out in the on-site

consultation. Qualified third parties might include ISO 14000 auditors, consultants, trade association, or other trained individuals. It might also include DEQ field staff, although evaluation would then need to take place by specific media (i.e., water, air, hazardous waste)

Other Issues

There are a number of issues that should be considered when developing the verification procedures.

- * Are there any eligibility requirements for participation, such as size of business?
- * Will self-verification be used at Level I. If so, what is the process for checking self-verifications?
- * Will a spot check be done to ensure that businesses are complying with the requirements?
- * If a spot check is used, how often will be spot checks be done and to what percentage of the verified businesses?
- * What fee do businesses pay to participate?

Section X: Recognition

The recognition aspect of the program will play a critical role in increasing participation. As the Watershed Good-Neighbors appear more often throughout a local area and as friendly competition between participating businesses increases, the desire of others to participate increases. In addition, as residents of the area learn about the Watershed Good-Neighbor program and seek out businesses that achieve the various levels of Chamber of Commerce recognition, it will become more important for the success of businesses in the area that they be a part of the program.

Recognition can come through a highly publicized media event such as a banquet, reception, or other social gathering. Various existing programs invite a high placed public official to present the awards to the participating businesses at a ceremony that can take place annually or semi-annually.

Additionally, recognition will occur through advertising both on an individual business basis and through the Chamber of Commerce. Examples of effective advertising might include notification of participation in the program, tallies of savings in cost or resources, and benefit to the local area.

Recognition can also occur through the placement of the actual "Watershed Good-Neighbor" decal in the window of the participating business. The decals will state the date on them and be issued for that yearly period. Businesses certified for a particular year may only use the Watershed Good-Neighbor program in their advertising for that year. Re-verification will be required on an

annual basis in order that businesses continue their improved efficiency practices. Self-verification or third-party verification will be required for the participating business to continue to receive re-verification and reap the benefits of membership in the program.

Section XI: On-going Funding

Long-term funding of a program such as this is crucial to its continuation. Grants and inclusion in the budget of a partner organization are both possibilities to carry out the program in the long-term. However, granting organizations often will not fund a program after its initial year or two of operation. Many of the partnering organizations are on tight budgets themselves and are unwilling to commit to supporting an additional program. Therefore, it is important for Watershed Good-Neighbor program to attempt self-sufficiency early in the program. Following are a number of suggestion that might assist the program in continuing its operation beyond the start-up phase.

I. "Good-Neighbor Card". The card is similar to the entertainment books that exist. It can operate one of two ways:

1. Sell cards to public for a minimal fee (i.e., \$5-\$10), each card entitles carrier to same, set discount (i.e., 5%-10%) at participating Watershed Good-Neighbor verified organizations, or
2. Sell cards to public for a minimal fee (i.e., \$5-\$10), each verified organization can choose what discount/special offer they wish to offer as part of the program, such "buy one, get one free at first visit."

II. Corporate Sponsorship

Corporate sponsorship is critical to the on-going success of the Watershed Good-Neighbor program. It is important that local businesses and organization take ownership of the program and embrace it as a community program that benefits everyone. In addition, it is important, when seeking grants in the development phase of the program, that grantmakers see community financial support. It is not in their best interest to provide funding for a program that the community in which it is located is not committed enough to provide some funding. A community might attempt to get 10% of the budget from corporate sponsors located within the community. This is not a high percentage and the amount given by any one business or organization could vary with their size and ability to give.

III. Fundraising Events

There are a wide range of fundraising activities that could take place to augment the budget for the program. Beyond grants in the early phases, program fees

and corporate sponsorship can be supplemented with annual fundraising events such as banquets, booths at fairs, or other events that are appropriate locally. In Hood River, for example, the community might use the Gorge Games, Harvest Fest, or BlossomFest to spread the word about the program as well as raise funds from the community at large. It is important to work with the steering committee early in the program development to begin thinking about on-going funding for a program such as this.

Section XII: On-going Education Programs

As the program continues it might be helpful to participants for the local program coordinator to arrange periodic information sessions and newsletters to continue the education process and the information sharing that was begun in the workshop sessions. These might include presentations by experts in industry-specific environmental management techniques, state agencies such as the Extension Service, or specific programs such as the Home*A*Syst Homestead Assessment System which helps land owners protect their groundwater.

These training programs would be in addition to the various levels within the Watershed Good-Neighbor Program and would provide more knowledge, a chance to share information between and beyond the workshop sessions, and formal, on-going connection to the program.