

Sustainability in Prisons Project Newsletter

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Edmonds Community College horticulture program creates gorgeous gardens at Monroe Correctional Complex.

We bring
science, nature,
and sustainable
practices into
prisons

The Importance of Peers

By SPP Network Manager, Joslyn Rose Trivett

About a year ago, our SPP Network peers in Utah suggested that we spend down the remnants of the NSF conference grant (Award 120448) on “peer-to-peer mentoring.” Utah and Washington helped teams shape their peer-to-peer plans, made small grants available, then watched how far those small dollars could stretch!

In SPP-Washington, we hosted SPP Network visitors from Maryland, Ohio, Santa Clara County, and Oregon. We traveled to Sustainable Jail Project (Multnomah County) for their statewide summit. We created a peer-to-peer action planning session at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center in south-central Washington State. I was stunned by how much we learned and gained from each meeting, how much energy was generated just by sharing time and ideas. Into the fall, we continued to make more connections, and visit prisons further afield in our own state.

This April, we will follow The Sustainable Jail Projects’ peer-to-peer example, and host our first statewide WA summit. SPP partners and potential partners from across the state will meet in the Olympia area for two full days to discuss WA DOC’s new Sustainability Policy, what it means to be “SPP,” and what we want to do next. I cannot wait!



Left: Oregon’s statewide summit met in late June. Photo by McKenzie Southworth. Right: Warden Buchanan of SPP-Ohio & Director Felicia Hinton of SPP-Maryland talk with Supt. Glebe at Stafford Creek CC.



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& a new turtle shed

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SPP CONSERVATION PROGRAMS: How can something so complicated be so successful?



An inmate turtle technician releases an endangered western pond turtle. Photo by a WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife Biologist.

Programs working with rare and endangered species require the most partners and coordination; they require cooperation from government regulators, biologists, veterinarians, zoos, land owners, plus all regular SPP partners. Even so, conservation programs are flourishing in 5 WA prisons, and 3 more are in the works. Unbelievable!

We think it shows what teamwork can accomplish.

A Big Thank You for the New Turtle Shed!

by Sadie Gilliom, SPP Frog and Turtle Program Coordinator

After discovering that the western pond turtle program at Cedar Creek Corrections Center needed a new turtle shed, Mr. Bruce Carley, the building maintenance education instructor from Centralia College, decided that if they were going to build a new shed they were going to *do it right!* He wanted the new building to reflect the uniqueness of the program and provide a new building challenge for his inmate crew. He successfully achieved both goals! With the leadership of Mr. Carley and inmate Noblin, the team created a turtle shed masterpiece! They used



The Amazing Turtle Shed was built by students of Centralia College's building program. Photo by Mr. Bruce Carley.

mostly re-claimed and recycled products and learned how to install a prismatic skylight that helps bring in light and heat to the building. The most magnificent aspect is that a giant turtle that acts as a roof for the building!

Thank you so much to everyone involved in the project and for providing the turtle program with such a unique and representative structure! Thank you to Mr. Carley for your initiative, expertise, guidance and skill building! Thank you to inmate Burham for your beautiful sculpting artwork! Thank you inmate Noblin for your leadership skills! Thank you inmates Gronholz, Torres, Gosney, Wharton, Easton, Ausen, Feltus, Jackson and Link for all of your hard work! Finally, thank you Superintendent Cole and all other staff involved for your support of this project!

Director's Corner

Dan Pacholke
Deputy Secretary for WA Corrections

Our path with SPP in Washington State is based on an array of unlikely partnerships, and the tension and success each has provided over more than eleven years of sustainability work. Our model is more complex and messier than most, and this has been part of our success. Still, there can be advantages to a more formal path, and the time is right to announce a Department-wide Sustainability Policy. This is WDOC's first overarching policy for how sustainability programs are coordinated, tracked, and improved. It also points to the resources and support available to every SPP program across the state.

The policy will serve to unify our efforts and will help us share our stories. It will help prisons access expertise, connect with kindred efforts, and make their unique contributions to a growing culture of sustainability. We think of the policy as another tool in our tool box that will reduce the human, environmental, and economic costs of prisons.

Dan Pacholke, left, shakes hands with a fellow speaker at Monroe Correctional Complex's TEDx.



Partner Profile

Mary Linders, Species Recovery Biologist, WDFW

by Lindsey Hamilton, SPP Butterfly Program Coordinator



Mary releases caterpillars to the prairie.
Photo by Dennis Aubrey.

It is hard to know where the Washington Taylor's checkerspot butterfly population would be without Mary Linders. Mary is a species recovery biologist at [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) (WDFW) and she is highly involved in all south Puget Sound recovery efforts for this State and federally-endangered species. She recalls collecting monarch butterflies near her house as a child in Minnesota, yet took an indirect path to becoming our butterfly superhero. Inspired by a summer wilderness camp as a teen, she started a limnology (the scientific study of lakes) program at the University of Wisconsin. She graduated with a degree in anthropology, which she says "is a better match for wildlife than you ever would have guessed, because wildlife is all about working with people." After many adventures working in wildlife and anthropology in Wisconsin, Colorado, and Wyoming, she completed her Master of Wildlife Science at the University of Washington in Seattle in 2000.

Mary has been a fearless leader and enthusiastic partner in the Sustainability in Prisons Project (SPP)'s Taylor's checkerspot butterfly rearing and breeding program at Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women (MCCCW). She had already worked with [Oregon Zoo](#) on captive rearing for several years, and when they needed to expand the program, she identified SPP as the most promising partner. Mary's passion for what she does is inspiring. She consistently goes above and beyond her mountain of responsibilities. She has provided an amazing opportunity for SPP staff, students and MCCCW inmates, while saving a regionally unique and beautiful butterfly.



Students of the lecture series show systems diagrams they created in a sustainability workshop at WA Corrections Center for Women. Photo by Joslyn Trivett.



A student poses with a guest lecturer. Photo by Tiffany Webb.

Lecture Series Update

By Tiffany Webb, SPP lecture series coordinator

SPP's Science and Sustainability Lecture Series started in 2004 and is going strong at two prisons in Washington—the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) and Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC). Each month, a guest expert gives a 90-minute presentation or workshop. Topics range from climate change to beekeeping; this past year's lecture topics included solar energy, salmon habitat enhancement, environmental justice, nature drawing, greywater reclamation, volcanology, pollinators, native plants and the natural history of Mt. Rainier. Lecturers came from a variety of organizations including the [USGS Cascades Volcano Observatory](#), [RainThanks](#), [South Sound Solar](#), [Yoga Behind Bars](#), [Facing the Future](#), [WA Dept. of Ecology](#), and our own [Evergreen State College](#). And we have expanded our program to include certification in science and sustainability education to inmate students who attend the series regularly!

Recent feedback from lecture students and guest presenters was exciting and encouraging. We heard from guests that the inmate audiences were attentive and asked many thought-provoking questions. The students expressed gratitude for the program and the educational opportunity it offers. In fact, inmates are constantly seeking new educational outlets. [Roots of Success](#) has complimented the lecture series at SCCC by providing a 10 week environmental literacy curriculum led by inmate instructors. Since the start of this new program, lecture attendance has increased by 40%. WCCW hopes to implement Roots at their facility soon, too, and we hope for a similar bump in lecture series students as a result.

Data analysis from lecture student surveys has shown that inmates who attend the lectures 1) show an increase in content knowledge related to environmental topics and 2) an increased interest in seeking information and talking to other inmates about the environment and the specific lecture topics presented. The data match the experience!



SPP Taylor's checkerspot butterfly coordinator Lindsey Hamilton describes the program at Stafford Creek Corrections Center. Photo by John Dominoski.

Roots Update

By Christina Stalnaker

SPP Roots of Success coordinator

Following [SPP-Ohio's success with Roots of Success](#), an environmental literacy curriculum, SPP-WA is bringing the course to all 12 prisons in Washington. During 50 hours of classroom instruction, "Roots" covers vital environmental topics and vocabulary to discuss prominent issues, and challenges students to think critically in order to innovate community-based solutions. Students are also equipped with job readiness and re-entry skills to prepare for jobs in the green economy.



A Roots graduate at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center shows his dramatic feelings for the course. Photo by Joslyn Trivett.

Roots supplies a fitting introduction to SPP's other sustainable programs, and we hope it will become the regular first step for participation in our sustainability programs. At Washington State Penitentiary's [Sustainable Practices Lab](#), successful completion of the course is a prerequisite for inmates seeking employment in the pioneering laboratory. The lab is also paired with the classroom work, and the students gain practical experience working in many sections of the lab until they graduate. They have the chance to extend theory to the practice of vermiculture, aquaponics, wood reclamation, and more.

Roots classes are instructed by inmates who have been trained by [Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes](#), Professor of Urban Studies & Planning at San Francisco State University and an internationally recognized expert on the green economy and green workforce training. Austin Mays, recent Roots graduate, cook, and inmate at Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC), says that

...living in a place where you have little outside interaction causes you to be left behind. We, in prison, fail to see the world consuming itself. I recently graduated from Roots of Success (an environmental literacy curriculum) and during this course my eyes were opened. Prison is its own city. The overhead is huge and anyway we can work together to create the best living conditions, by using the natural resources around us, is the best way.



A Roots instructor delivers the curriculum to his peers at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center. Photo by an inmate volunteer.

To date, SPP-WA has graduated 334 students from Airway Heights, Cedar Creek, Coyote Ridge, Stafford Creek, and Washington State Penitentiary.

Clallam Bay will soon graduate their very first cohort, and Monroe Corrections Complex and Washington Corrections Center are preparing for their first classes to start in the spring of 2015. Washington Correctional Industries will also be delivering a shorter, 12-hour version of Roots to all employees with less than two years to release.



NPR's Tom Banse interviews members of the Conservation Nursery at Stafford Creek Corrections Center. Photo by Ricky Johnson.



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Mission & Vision

The mission of the Sustainability in Prisons Project is to bring science and nature into prisons. We conduct ecological research and conserve biodiversity by forging collaborations with scientists, inmates, prison staff, students, and community partners. Equally important, we help reduce the environmental, economic, and human costs of prisons by inspiring and informing sustainable practices.



Students of SPP's lecture series at Washington Corrections Center for Women meet a rescued 'possum. Photo by Tiffany Webb.

This union of ideas and activities—and people inside and outside prison walls—creates a collaborative, intellectually stimulating environment in which incarcerated men and women play key roles in conservation and the advancement of scientific knowledge. We encourage teamwork, mutual respect, and a stewardship ethic among individuals who typically have little or no access to nature or opportunities in science and sustainability.

To donate to the project, please go to: <http://goo.gl/jkYHF7>.