

# Sustainability in Prisons Project Newsletter

Spring 2013  
Issue 3



Photo by Cyril Ruoso

We bring  
science, nature,  
and sustainable  
practices into  
prisons

## Thank You to WDOC Staff

Andrea Martin, Graduate Research Assistant

SPP is based on partnerships, and every partner is crucial to the success of every program. Here we would like to celebrate our partners at the Washington Department of Corrections (WDOC): the staff and officers at each prison who are essential to our continued success. Prison staff include the Superintendents and other administrative staff that keep a prison running smoothly, and the counselors who work closely with inmates and monitor their progress, growth, and successes. The custody officers who supervise the prison community every hour of every day also deserve our deepest appreciation.

All of these folks have graciously accepted SPP as part of their jobs, and the results of their willingness and commitment are incredible. We would not be able to do what we do without their continued support and assistance. Thank you WDOC for your time, efforts, and inspiration! Thank you also to corrections staff across the country who are partnering with new SPP Network teams!

## Another Thank You ~ Brittany Gallagher, Graduate Research Assistant

Many WDOC staff have been absolutely essential to the success of this year's SPP-WA statewide evaluations project. The following is just a partial list of those who have assisted with background information, logistics and follow-up throughout the ongoing study. Many thanks to the staff at every participating institution for facilitating the surveys!

Dan Pacholke, Teri Herold-Prayer, Mike Evans, Julie Vanneste, Karen Duranceau, and Luann Kawata (HQ); Maggie Miller-Stout and Risa Klemme (Airway Heights Corrections Center); Douglas Cole, Charlie Washburn and Pam Moore (Cedar Creek Corrections Center); Robert Herzog and Donna Simpson (Monroe Correctional Complex); Patrick Glebe, Chris Idso, Marcia McCormick, Becky Dombrowsky, and Jon Rydman (Stafford Creek Corrections Center); Stephen Sinclair and Rob Branscum (Washington State Penitentiary); John Aldana, Tracy Hixson, and Lori Capp (Olympic Corrections Center); Scott Russell and Matt Cossette (Washington Corrections Center); Jane Parnell, Dave Flynn, and Paula Andrew (Washington Corrections Center for Women); Wanda McRae, Anne Shoemaker, and Jacquie Lewis (Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women).

### Inside this Issue

- |                                      |                               |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2. Featured partner: Scott Skaggs    | 4-5. SPP Network teams        |
| 2. New plant conservation program    | 5. Oregon spotted frog update |
| 3. SPP & The Evergreen State College | 6. SPP at TEDx                |
| 4. Carri LeRoy & Dan Pacholke        |                               |



## Featured Partner



### Scott Skaggs

Construction and Maintenance Project Supervisor, Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW)

Scott Skaggs is one of the SPP-WA's newest partners. He manages the conservation nursery at Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), and he has quickly proved to be invaluable. Skaggs has been involved with the new nursery since the first pieces of the hoop houses went up. He has always had a "green thumb," and can be quoted as saying he "loves working with treehuggers" even if he's not one himself.

Skaggs has very high expectations for his inmate crew. The crew is responsible for maintaining the prison campus landscaping, and the conservation program has added a positive focus for the crew: "It keeps up the feelings of accomplishment and production during the dry months," he says. He is excited to introduce inmates to this field of work, and not only because of his own love for it; he holds a steadfast belief in making opportunities for inmates to give back to their community in a positive way after having been surrounded by negativity. We are thrilled to have such an experienced and passionate staff member working with us at WCCW and we are looking forward to more planting together as spring rolls on.

~ Bri Morningred  
Graduate Research Assistant



## New Prairie Plant Conservation Program at WCCW

Candace Penn, Undergraduate Prairie Plant Production Assistant

The nursery crew at Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW) has been hard at work these past four months—it has been the key time for seed-sowing. The expanse of sown trays now inside the hoop houses is quite remarkable considering this project is barely a year old.

The inmate-technicians working in the new nursery program have grown just as much as the plants they tend. Most of the women came into the program without any horticulture

background. Now they could not be more invested in the propagation and care of the rare and endangered plants. They are constantly engaged, asking questions about each species and the reintroduction plans for the plants. They are starting to understand their part in the larger network of scientists, nonprofit staff, volunteers, and students that are all working together to make this project a success. Conserving endangered species is just another day at the office.



SPP Graduate Research Assistant Bri Morningred and WCCW conservation nursery crew pose in a WCCW hoop house. Photos by Bri Morningred and Scott Skaggs.



## SPP's Partnership with Evergreen

Fiona Edwards, Graduate Research Assistant



Photos by Jaal Mann

One of the main draws for my attending Evergreen was SPP. As an undergrad in New York, I had participated with a prison project that gave inmates the opportunity to earn a college degree. My hope was to continue this work as a graduate research assistant with SPP while enrolled in the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) program. In January of this year, this hope was realized and I became the website and multimedia assistant for the Project. I've been lucky to gain the experience I wanted, with an organization that is directly supported by Evergreen faculty and staff.

As a grad student, it is oftentimes easy to feel alienated from the Evergreen community because our classes are held at night when campus is mostly empty. However, working with SPP allows me to interact with many programs and people on campus who I would not normally see on a daily basis. With consultation from Academic Computing, I have worked on a SPP Network site that serves Network members from all over the country. I have watched my fellow MES students and SPP research assistants travel to conferences across the map to present their theses comprised of SPP data, representing the work of Evergreen and SPP simultaneously. I enjoy coming to the SPP offices on the campus each week because it reminds me that I am a part of an interdisciplinary organization where my academic pursuits make a difference. I am excited to continue participating in the SPP and Evergreen collaboration.

The Sustainability in Prisons Project is a partnership founded by:

**EVERGREEN**  
 THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE  
 OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

 Department of  
**Corrections**  
 WASHINGTON STATE

## Directors' Corner

**Carri LeRoy  
& Dan Pacholke**  
SPP Co-Directors



We are excited to bring you this season's newsletter. It has been a productive spring and we are pleased to report on several key achievements. Of special interest to us:

- SPP was invited to present a TEDx talk – you can find a report on it on pg. 6;
- the second of our NSF-funded conferences was held in Salt Lake City, UT in March and was a major success; and
- we are pleased to report outstanding progress on the

part of new SPP programs in OR, CA, OH, MD, and UT – for some updates on these new programs, please see the story below and continuing on page 5.

Several of the photos in our newsletter were taken by Cyril Ruoso, a French photographer who works with National Geographic. He was recently granted an exhibit at the Natural History Museum in Paris, France and will begin showing photographs of Oregon Spotted Frogs (*Rana pretiosa*) reared at Cedar Creek Correctional Center, titled “*Planete Grenouille*” (Planet Frog).

Finally, we would like to thank all of our collaborators and partners in this effort. The SPP exists as a tenuous web of linkages among all of us – our efforts and intention make SPP what it is. We thank you all for your contributions, no matter how big or small.

## SPP Network Teams' Snapshots

### Andrea Martin and members of the SPP Network

Following two NSF-funded conferences, the Sustainability in Prisons Project Network has officially launched! Two-and-a-half days in Salt Lake City gave the new teams an opportunity to share their accomplishments bringing science and nature “inside.” Here is a snapshot of each team's work:

**CALIFORNIA:** The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has seen substantial energy savings and waste reductions since implementing sustainable operations. The state of California is working to add programming with the Center for Natural Lands Management, Mills College/Saint Quentin, and other potential academic and conservation partners.

**LOS ANGELES County:** The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is pursuing local, organic gardens for job training and reduced food costs, and has plans to restore local creeks and streams bordering or flowing through residential facilities. They are also pursuing a partnership with local zoos to grow plants for animal diets.

**MARYLAND:** The Maryland Department of Public Safety has collaborated with Correction Services and a scientist at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County to create the Maryland Green Prisons Initiative. They are providing tree-planting programs, Master Gardener certifications, and oyster growing efforts to restore the depleted Chesapeake Bay.

**MULTNOMAH County:** The Sheriff's Office is working with food contractors to buy at least 10% of food locally, and is greening jail operations to save both natural and financial resources. The county jails are also developing garden programs and creating evaluation tools to learn how these opportunities can benefit inmates.

**OHIO:** In addition to pursuing their Three-Year Strategic Sustainability Plan goals and objectives, SPP-OH's team of corrections professionals, scientists, the Columbus Zoo, The Wilds, and The Vera Institute of Justice have chosen to rear an endangered salamander, the eastern hellbender, in a corrections setting.

>>>More next page!

OREGON: All of Oregon's prisons are involved with SPP programs and offer programming including science lectures, growing native plant species and gardening, among others. Oregon also designated a full-time sustainability coordinator who is using his many years of experience as a correctional officer to find the best outcomes for science and sustainability programs.



Photo by Guinnevere Shuster

SANTA CLARA County: The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department is integrating sustainability into its programming and operations. Landscaping crews are improving outdoor areas and applying sustainable practices to weed abatement. Worm boxes have been designed and built for a vermicomposting project; a corresponding classroom curriculum and certification program should be ready soon.

UTAH: The Utah Science in Prisons Project (USPP) has developed partnerships with academics from multiple fields at the University of Utah, and has made extensive preparation to bring science and sustainability programs to local prisons and jails. USPP also has evaluation tools in place, and will be perfectly situated to share evaluations of their projects with the Network.

## Oregon Spotted Frog Update

Carri LeRoy, SPP Co-Director

The Oregon spotted frog (OSF) rearing program at all institutions (including ours at Cedar Creek Corrections Center) has completed its five-year pilot. Preliminary reintroduction data look excellent and all partners have been pleased with the operation of the program.



Photo by Cyril Ruoso

SPP partner & conservation biologist Marc Hayes stalks the elusive Oregon spotted frog.

In 2013 none of the facilities are rearing OSF; instead we are working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to examine the Endangered Species Recovery Program and will be making plans with the OSF working group for the rearing season in 2014.

In the interim year, we are working to convert the prison facility to care for western pond turtles recuperating after intensive veterinarian treatment for a shell disease. This could provide the perfect opportunity to create a prison-based protocol for turtle care, capitalizing on the available facility and expertise of staff.

## SPP and TEDx



Photo by J. Fischback

Dan Pacholke and Andrea Martin take the stage at TEDx.

In February, The Evergreen State College coordinated its second annual TEDx event. The theme was “Local Innovations for a Changing World” and the Sustainability in Prisons Project was selected to present first of six speakers. SPP Co-Director Dan Pacholke and Graduate Research Assistant Andrea Martin bent the TED rules by co-presenting; together they told the story of SPP’s incredible history and growth. They linked SPP’s evolution and success to the metaphor of ecological disturbance and renewal. Hundreds of Evergreen students and community members watched live on campus. The event was also streamed live online, allowing many more viewers to learn about SPP’s contribution to a changing world. To watch their talk, go to <http://goo.gl/Wje5r>



### The Sustainability in Prisons Project

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## Sustainability in Prisons Project 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.

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://give.evergreen.edu/profiles/prisons.html>



Photo by Cyril Ruoso