

Sustainability in Prisons Project Newsletter



Winter 2016
Issue 7



New faces
New places

Turtles and Plantain at Larch Corrections Center

by Kelli Bush, SPP Program Manager



WDFW Biologist Stefani Bergh, Facilities Manager Terry Hettinger, and the new turtle technicians discuss how to care for western pond turtles at Larch Corrections Center. Photo by Carl Elliott.

It has been an exciting year at Larch Corrections Center (LCC) as two new SPP conservation programs have been established at the minimum security prison located east of Vancouver, WA. Prison staff and leadership have been excellent partners—they worked quickly to create a new turtle lab and build plantain beds, and have been great collaborators and communicators.

Turtles

The first new program involves work with state-endangered western pond turtles (*Actinemys marmorata*), that builds on the success of the [turtle program](#) at Cedar Creek Corrections Center. [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) biologists have been finding turtles in the wild afflicted with a shell disease. Sick reptiles are transferred from the wild to the [Oregon Zoo](#) to receive acute veterinary care. After initial treatment, turtles are transported to LCC to receive extended care and monitoring. Inmate technicians are providing excellent care. Once recovered, turtles will be returned to the wild. Currently Larch Corrections Center is caring for eight turtles which will likely be released late March or early April.



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly caterpillars munch on plantain at SPP's butterfly rearing program at Mission Creek Corrections Center. Photo by Benj Drummond and Sara Joy Steele.

Plantain for butterflies

SPP and LCC have also teamed up with the Oregon Zoo to grow narrow leaf plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). This plant is a critical food source for federally-endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterflies (*Euphydryas editha taylori*) which are being reared at the Oregon Zoo and at [Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women](#). LCC is growing about 3,500 plants to feed rapidly growing butterfly larvae at the Oregon Zoo. One to two times per week, inmate technicians will harvest leaves from plantain plants grown in 10 raised bed gardens at LCC.

We are so pleased to collaborate with the fabulous folks at Oregon Zoo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and others to bring these programs to LCC!

Planning action for Clallam Bay

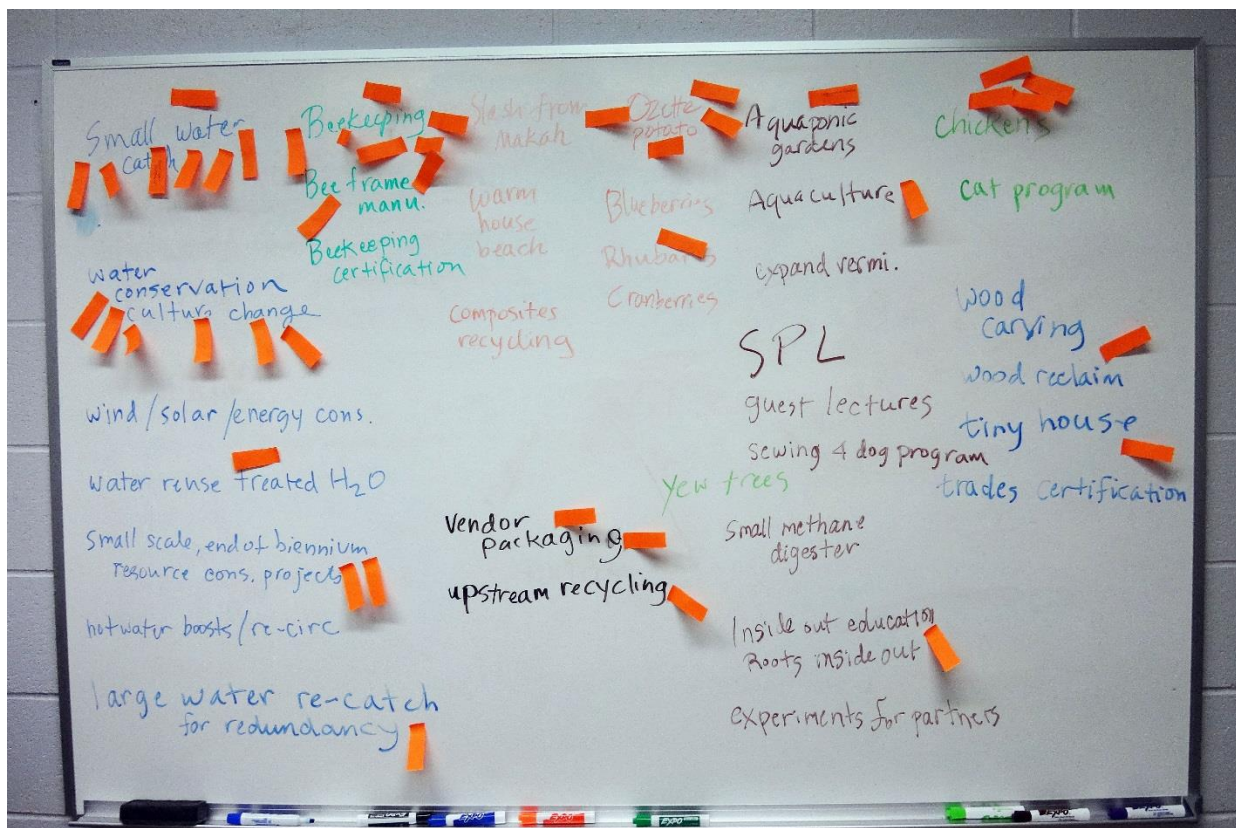
by Joslyn Rose Trivett, SPP Network Manager

After months of pre-meetings and scheduling, Clallam Bay Corrections Center (CBCC) hosted two days of Action Planning: deciding next steps to expand SPP programs at the prison. The event brought together many great minds and stakeholders: the Director of Prisons [Steve Sinclair](#), prison Superintendent Ronald Hayes, the well-stocked Sustainability Committee, visiting experts on [beekeeping](#), [rainwater catchment](#), and the [Makah tribe](#), SPP managers, and Capitol Programs staff from Headquarters. We were there to plan for two or three new sustainability initiatives.

There was no shortage of excellent ideas in the room. We explored the merits of many, many programs and strategies. Narrowing our focus was a real challenge—so many contenders, so many promising avenues toward sustainability, how to pick which are the very best? At the end of Day 1, we held a vote, and it was a relief to see a few clear winners emerge.



After a day of good-natured debate over CBCC's sustainability priorities, the group gets ready to vote.



When the votes were cast, the clear winners were water conservation/culture change and beekeeping.

Culture change through water conservation

The top choice was a hybrid focus: water conservation and culture change. At a prison where it rains 95 inches a year (that's really wet), and pulls water from a salmon-bearing stream, the group was determined to use less tap water and catch more rainwater. Promoting these changes seemed an ideal way to promote sustainable choices in general.

To achieve this goal, we decided on several action items, including:

- create posters to display throughout the facility (see example below)
- publish and distribute sustainability newsletters, with versions for inmates and staff
- in each housing unit, hold Town Hall sustainability meetings



The Sustainability in Prisons Project
 Founded by The Evergreen State College
 & Washington State Department of Corrections
 A partnership to bring education & restoration into prisons

Don't throw it away: saving resources at Clallam Bay

Why should I care?

The way we waste resources these days might mean we can't meet the needs of future generations; let's figure out how to turn that problem into a solution. We need your help figuring out how to make saving resources a real-world normal.

We should no more throw *things* away than we should throw *people* away. Saving, repairing, reclaiming, and recycling our resources shows the value of human and non-human life. Developing good habits and skills inside is a way you can take care of your community on the outside.



When you throw things away, use the sorting containers: transform your waste into something valuable.



This is what a badly sorted plastics looks like, mixed with plastic bottles and contaminated with food waste and trash. Bummer for the recycling technicians



This is what clean plastic looks like: thumbs up!

Saving resources & tax dollars are
Staff & Offender responsibilities!

Saving & sorting are *everyone's* job

The best way to conserve resources is don't use what you don't need: turn off the tap while you brush your teeth, turn off the lights when you leave the room, find innovative ways to limit resource use in program and living areas.

When you're done with a container, paper, cardboard, or food, *think about where it goes*. The best time to sort is the moment the stuff leaves your hand; you have the power to create clean recyclables from what otherwise would be waste. Look for sorting cans in every area, and put things where they go!



A Roots of Success class at Stafford Creek talks about results of a water use survey conducted by Roots students.

This poster promotes saving resources at the prison, with an inmate audience in mind; the version for staff is slightly different.

Beekeeping

The other winner was [beekeeping](#)—all agreed that a honeybee program could bring numerous rewards to the prison. Corrections staff and inmates could gain recognized education and certification. In-prison beekeepers could enjoy calming, meditative work with the hives. The hives could contribute healthy bees to pollinate the prison's organic gardens and bolster local honeybee population. All involved could help build the international effort to restore the pollinators on which we depend.

We settled on these actions to bring beekeeping to CBCC:

- Create beekeeping posters
- Write and submit a proposal to the prison Captain, identifying planned costs, siting, and safety protocol
- Consult with the North Olympic Peninsula Beekeepers on how best to offer certification program at the prison

All in all, we were impressed by how much we were able to plan in two days. The actions taken since also attest to Action Planning's worth: we have been busy as bees turning those plans into reality.

Washington State Penitentiary Collaboration for the Birds!

By Kelli Bush, SPP Program Manager

It's always nice to do positive projects. It helps us do our time with rewarding accomplishment knowing it helps the community and wildlife. ~ Michael Feeney

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the public for environmental causes. ~ Roy Townsend



Roy Townsend, Michael Feeney, Robert Beck, Robert Haugen, Luke Andrade, and Jose Ayala pose with the barn owl nest boxes they build in the Sustainable Practices Lab. Photo by DOC staff.

Inmates working in the Sustainable Practices Lab at Washington State Penitentiary (WSP) are building owl boxes for the [Blue Mountain Audubon](#). The boxes are installed in vineyards to help with rodent control—a strategy that will benefit viticulturists and owls alike. The boxes are designed to be suitable homes for barn owls. The Blue Mountain Audubon's Owl Nest Box



Blue Mountain Audubon installs a barn owl nest box in a Walla Walla area vineyard.

Project was inspired by the [Hungry Owl Project](#), a non-profit dedicated to reducing the use of toxic rodenticides while promoting owl and wildlife conservation.

Rodenticides can be slow to poison rodents. Poisoned rodents are sluggish and debilitated—easy prey for owls, hawks, eagles, falcons and other wildlife. Consuming contaminated rodents can make predator animals ill and can even result in death.

Barn owls have voracious appetites. Installing barn owl boxes can be a cost effective way to manage a rodent problem *without* relying on rodenticides, and can support healthy wildlife. According the Hungry Owl website, a single Barn Owl family can consume 3,000

rodents during their 4 month breeding cycle. Barn owls can have multiple clutches a year, raising the total for possible consumed rodents to 6,000 - 9,000 a year per owl box!

According to WSP Corrections Specialist Chris McGill, the first round of owl boxes built by inmates was “a big hit” and they have received a request for 20 more boxes. This is an excellent example of a collaborative program to benefit people and wildlife. Great work WSP Sustainable Practices Lab!

New Program Offered by SPP: Bee Certification

By Emily Passarelli, SPP Green Track Program Coordinator

It is with great excitement that I announce: SPP is adding beekeeping certification to our [lovely list of programs](#). Our goal is to bring this program to every prison hosting beekeeping within the next few years. As Green Track Program Coordinator, I have the amazing opportunity to coordinate *two* programs: beekeeping certification and [Roots of Success](#).



Staff and offender beekeepers take a break to pose for the camera. Photo by SPP.



SPP feels very positively about work with honeybees in prisons. Photo by SPP staff.

MCC, WSP, CRCC, and AHCC. We cannot wait to see what the future has in store for our partnerships with bees!

This beekeeping certification will be a 10-20 hour course taught by a local beekeeping volunteers. Inmates and DOC staff will earn the title of "Apprentice." If they find that beekeeping is their calling, they have the opportunity to advance to "Journeyman." If they're REALLY dedicated they can even advance up to "Master" (though there are only 6 Masters in the entire state of Washington!). This class will be a spectacular opportunity for hands-on experience in a green jobs field. It will also be a great way for our prisons to do more for honeybee conservation. We hope that this certification program will give a chance for everyone interested to learn about bees and their amazing life stories. To learn more about these amazing creatures check out Joslyn Trivett's [recent blog](#) or our new [beekeeping page](#)!

We have already had two graduating classes at Cedar Creek Corrections Center. That's almost 45 graduates! Prisons next in line to bring in beekeeping certification are SCCC, WCCW,



A graduating class of newly certified beekeepers. Photo by SPP Staff.



[Sustainability in Prisons Project](#) (SPP) brings environmental restoration and education into prisons. We work cooperatively with diverse individuals and organizations to create science and nature programs, and bring benefits to partners inside and outside the fence. To learn more, contact us at spp@evergreen.edu and visit our social media:

sustainabilityinprisons.org

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