



Vernonia Schools Project

Declaration of Cooperation – Addendum

December 2, 2010

In April 2008, Governor Ted Kulongoski designated the rebuilding of Vernonia's schools an Oregon Solutions project. Since then, an Oregon Solutions team of government entities, private industry representatives, civic organizations, and philanthropies have worked with the Vernonia School District and the City of Vernonia to obtain a location and funding to build the new schools. A Declaration of Cooperation among multiple partners was completed on June 24, 2009 documenting commitment to this effort. On December 2, 2010, ground will be broken for the new school.

The purpose of this addendum is to add commitments by new Oregon Solutions team members and to update commitments of some existing partners to the Vernonia Declaration of Cooperation. Rebuilding the schools is envisioned to be the heart of a new vision for Vernonia as a model for educational, economic and environmental sustainability for rural communities across the Northwest. All Oregon Solutions team members are committed to this vision and are working together to include a Vernonia Center for Rural Sustainability on the campus of the new schools as a resource for students, members of the community, and partners throughout the region.

Partners in Declaration of Cooperation dated June 24, 2009:

City of Vernonia, Columbia County, Congressman David Wu, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Neil Kelly Company, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, Portland Community College, Senator Jeff Merkley, Vernonia Sentry, Winterbrook Planning, West Oregon Electric Cooperative, The Ford Family Foundation, Oregon State University Extension Service, Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District, Oregon State Senator Betsy Johnson, Oregon State Representative Brad Witt, Vernonia School District 47J.

New partners and additional commitments in this Addendum:

The Vernonia Health Board, Institute for Sustainable Solutions (PSU), the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, Upper Nehalem Watershed Council, Hands on Art, Oregon State University Extension Service.

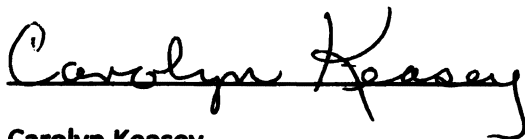
Vernonia Health Center Board

It is the mission of the Vernonia Health Center Board to provide for, maintain and safeguard the health and wellbeing of the community we reside in. We believe that the schools and other essential social services are irrevocably linked and vital to that commitment. To that end we have dedicated ourselves to the relocation and rebuilding of these entities. Since the flood of 2007 we have actively supported the schools' mission by:

- Participating in the Oregon solution process by dedicating staff time and resources to attend meetings to provide encouragement, insight and advice,
- Advocated for collaboration by other potential partners throughout the city, county and state,
- Entered into discussions regarding feasibility, benefits and development of the partnership in a school based health clinic.

The Vernonia Health Center Board will continue to:

- To support a collaborative effort to rebuilding the schools and the essential social services in Vernonia,
- Participate in Oregon Solutions process of development of strategies by lending staff time and resources,
- Continued collaboration for the school based health clinic,
- Continue to work as a team member to identify joint funding opportunities.



Carolyn Keasey,

President of The Vernonia Health Center Board



Date

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Sustainable Solutions

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Portland State University (PSU) sees sustainability as an integrating concept that encompasses the interaction of humans both with each other and with the natural environment, guided by the objective of improving the long term health of social, economic and environmental systems. While PSU has historically defined its institutional role as one focused primarily on urban issues, the challenges and opportunities facing the state, the region, and other communities nationally and internationally demand more integrated frameworks linking rural and urban communities.

PSU, through the Institute for Sustainable Solutions and academic departments, seeks to play a leadership role in fostering stronger rural-urban connections through its scholarship, teaching and community engagement. PSU's partnership with the Oregon Solutions effort to establish the Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center represents a priority opportunity for PSU to advance its efforts in this area.

Related opportunities include the NSF-funded IGERT program focused on ecosystem services in rapidly urbanizing areas, and continued interest in the "Urban and Rural Connected - UR Connected" initiative proposed by a partnership of Oregon universities. These efforts are clearly inter-related and PSU's involvement in the Vernonia Oregon Solutions process would seek to leverage and extend these efforts to support this critical, place-based sustainability initiative.

PSU's involvement in Vernonia's schools and community will include the development of atelier classes that allow students to engage in on-the-ground problem solving relevant to Vernonia's goals and objectives; interdisciplinary faculty research, including the engagement of the faculty associated with the NSF IGERT program; and partnership development with community organizations and local government to build capacity and help support Vernonia's long term vision and goals.

Robert Costanza, Director
PSU Institute for Sustainable Solutions

November 30,2010

Date

December 2, 2010

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation, based in Washington D.C., is working with Oregon State University Departments of Engineering and Forestry, Western University School of Medicine, local forest owners, the Vernonia Economic Development Commission, and Oregon Solutions to help Vernonia become a “living laboratory” for sustainability in rural America.

Through a “Forest Health – Human Health” Initiative, Vernonia will become a model community for demonstrating a shift to renewable energy, based on sustainable utilization of local forest resources. The development of a fully integrated community-based energy system will begin with sustainable management of local working forests and end with delivery of reliable, locally-produced, renewable biomass energy to homes, businesses, and public buildings throughout Vernonia.

The new Vernonia Schools serve as a catalyst in this Pinchot Institute project. In pursuit of LEED Platinum certification, the schools will install the town’s first biomass boiler as well as energy conservation measures. Eventual increase in biomass heating by other organizations and families may result in enough demand to develop a pellet manufacturing plant near town, providing more jobs.

The Pinchot Institute is also developing a first-in-the-nation model to offer carbon sequestration credits to local forest owners in the form of health savings accounts for their families and for low-income children at the Vernonia Schools. Other research may include the study of student health in a LEED Platinum environment, and student involvement in research projects about emerging sustainable technologies tested in Vernonia.

To date, the Pinchot Institute’s investment in Vernonia has helped the Vernonia Schools secure grants from the US Department of Energy and the Kelley Family Fund, as well as technical support from Oregon State University’s Department of Engineering and Office of Sustainability. To ensure that Vernonia’s rebuilt schools and community serve as a model of sustainability nation-wide, the Pinchot Institute will continue to cooperate with state and local governments and other key partners to secure financial and in-kind services to design, implement, and demonstrate proof-of-concept.



V. Alaric Sample
President



Catherine M. Mater
Senior Fellow



Purpose

The Upper Nehalem Watershed Council was formed to share information, reduce duplication of activities, help address watershed management issues in the Upper Nehalem Watershed, and provide a framework for coordination and cooperation among key interests.

Mission

To foster better stewardship and understanding of the Upper Nehalem Watershed resources, deal with issues in advance of resource degradation, and ensure sustainable watershed health, functions, and uses.

Vision

A balanced ecosystem that supports a healthy watershed and provides for an economic base and viable communities.

The ***Upper Nehalem Watershed Council*** is participating in the Oregon Solutions collaborative process to help rebuild the Vernonia schools and specifically the Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center by continuing to:

- Send a UNWC representative (staff and/or volunteer) to participate in VRSC and Oregon Solutions steering committee meetings;
- Continue to bring natural resource curriculum and related resources for use by K-12 teachers and students in the Vernonia School District as well as in urban and rural school districts in the region;
- Work with the Vernonia School District 47J administrators, teachers and staff to explore ways to deliver and support hands-on natural resource learning experiences;
- Support local ecosystem workforce development by providing restoration projects, field support and supplemental funding for the Vernonia Rural Education Corps and other students as opportunities arise.
- Seek out and maintain a network of natural resource agency, higher education and private sector advisors to support the development of a temperate rain forest ecosystem/Nehalem watershed-based adaptive curriculum; a locally driven ecosystem workforce; and provisions for on-going hands-on learning experiences both in the classroom and in the ecosystem/watershed through the VRSC.
- Seek out, forward and secure funding opportunities.
- Explore the possibility of renting space in the new VRSC facility.


Maggie Peyton – UNWC Executive Director

1-11-2011
Date



VERNONIA HANDS-ON ART CENTER

Our mission is to provide a high quality learning environment that celebrates the creative spirit by exposing the community to the arts and honors the community's heritage.

Our vision statement includes the following points:

- To provide a high quality learning environment for children and adults that celebrates the creative spirit within each of us
- To create bridges between children, teens, adults, and elders in the community and share skills, resources, and wisdom
- To expose the community to visual and performing arts by way of classes, workshops, exhibitions, and performances
- To help students collaborate with the community in educational and social programs such as library reading, school programs, and civic involvement
- To develop appreciation for and preservation of the historical heritage of our community

With the above statements in mind, we are actively supporting the school relocation project by:

- Attending the meetings of the Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center Project of Oregon Solutions, to advocate for the arts and heritage components of the project,
- Exploring the feasibility and mutual benefits of managing the community use of the planned Vernonia Rural Sustainability Center and the K-12 school building and amphitheatre, and
- Working as team members to identify joint funding opportunities.

Josette Mitchell

Josette Mitchell, Vernonia Mayor-Elect and
President of Vernonia Hands-on Art Center

11-30-10

Date

DEC 16 2010

Oregon State University Extension Service has participated fully in the Oregon Solutions process and has been represented by Glenn Ahrens, Chip Bubl and Amy Grotta. They have provided technical expertise and leadership on natural resources based education models to both the Oregon Solutions team and to faculty and staff of Vernonia School District. They have also provided technical expertise and advice in the area of woody biomass both for heat and energy production. They have also facilitated connections and exchange of information between OSU research and extension faculty and Vernonia.

In the next phase of the project:

- ~~Chip Bubl and Amy Grotta will continue to serve on the Oregon Solutions steering committee.~~
- Glenn Ahrens and Amy Grotta will continue to serve on the Rural Sustainability Center steering committee and will continue to participate in Vernonia K-12 natural resources curriculum building through the Oregon Natural Resources Education Program.
- They will notify the Oregon Solutions team when they hear of opportunities to develop additional resources for the project.
- As funding and demonstration of need develops, they will foster new research and extension projects under the umbrella of the Rural Sustainability Center.



Glenn Ahrens

12/16/10


Date



Chip Bubl

12/15/10

Date



Amy Grotta

12-15-10

Date