



Sustainability—Creating Habits Today, Conserving Resources for Tomorrow



U.S. Forest Service • Washington Office

## Forest Service Sustainable Operations

### What is a Green Team?

A green team is a group of employees, regardless of discipline or organizational level that facilitates the pragmatic implementation of sustainable operations principles on their work site. In the Forest Service, green teams range from the informal – a few employees working together to increase recycling opportunities for themselves and their community, to the formal – a group specifically chartered by leadership to promote and foster sustainable operations that reduce the unit’s environmental footprint. Successful green teams are very “*local or place-based*,” and the issues they choose to work on are meaningful to their specific business unit, organization, community and/or geographic location. What is sustainable in one location may be very different in another location because the natural resources, culture, economic situations, and/or opportunities are all different. Many green teams begin as an internal effort and they often grow to include members of the local community or other state, federal, or local agencies so that sustainable operations efforts can become successful on a larger scale (facility-wide, community, or an ecosystem).

Most green teams choose to work across many environmental footprint areas (water conservation, energy conservation/renewable energy, waste prevention/recycling, green purchasing, fleet/transportation, sustainable leadership). However, some green teams have been created with membership across geographic units to specifically foster dialog about the sustainable operations opportunities within a particular topic area such as recreation or energy management. We have a cadre of champions to share information and ideas, and resource materials are available to assist in starting a green team in your location.

The Forest Service currently has 31 active green teams, but this number is growing all the time. Below is a current list of active teams:

- R1, R2, R3, R4, BLM, EPA, RMRS Sustainable Operations Board of Directors
- Region 1 – Northern Region
  - Northern Regional Office
- Region 2 – Rocky Mountain Region
  - Rocky Mountain Region Regional Office
  - Rocky Mountain Region Energy Management Team (USFS, BLM, NREL)

- Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee – Sustainable Operations Subcommittee
- Multi-Regional Green Purchasing Team
- Bighorn National Forest
- Medicine Bow Routt National Forest
- Nebraska National Forest – Bessey Nursery
- San Juan Public Lands Unit (BLM/USFS)
- Pagosa Ranger District
- Pikes Peak Ranger District
- Sustainable Ops and Recreation
- Region 4 – Intermountain Region
  - Intermountain Regional Office
- Region 5
  - Lassen National Forest
- Region 6 – Pacific Northwest Region
  - Region 6 Sustainability Board
  - Mt. Hood National Forest
  - Siuslaw national Forest
  - Willamette National Forest
- Region 9 – Eastern Region
  - Region 9 Sustainability Board
  - Chippewa National Forest
  - Green Mountain National Forest
  - Superior National Forest
- Region 10 – Alaska Region
  - Tongass National Forest
- Northeastern Area / Northern Research Station
- Pacific Southwest Research Station
- Rocky Mountain Research Station
- Pacific Northwest Station
- International Institute of Tropical Forestry
- International Forestry
- Washington Office Headquarters

### **Green Team Activities**

The activities our green teams work on depend on their priorities and opportunities. Activities range from encouraging people to turn off lights and switch off PC monitors to measuring paper use and seeing if it can be reduced over a time period to conducting on-site energy audits. It could also mean setting out a recycling box and having the team empty it, encouraging people to bring in mugs instead of using plastic cups or organizing bulk buying of compact fluorescent light bulbs for people to use at home. There is tremendous opportunity to make a difference!

### **A Few Forest Service Green Team Success Stories**

- ❖ The Pike-San Isabel National Forest **Pikes Peak Ranger District's** Green Team led the district's reduction of water use by 22 percent, electricity use by 7 percent and its natural gas use by 26 percent.
- ❖ The **Greater Yellowstone Sustainable Operations Subcommittee** was established to work towards implementing sustainable operations efforts across 14 million acres of public land in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Six National Forests, two National Parks and two U.S. Fish and Wildlife management units are represented on this committee. Initial areas of focus include expansion of propane cylinder recycling, fleet sharing and shared green purchasing.
- ❖ The headquarters of the **International Institute of Tropical Forestry** in Puerto Rico is a historic building which is being restored and upgraded to achieve LEED certification. LEED is a certification program for buildings which achieve significant reductions in energy, water and other resource consumption as compared to standard building practices. The headquarters will be the first LEED-certified building in Puerto Rico.
- ❖ The **Pacific Southwest Research Station's Center for Urban Forest Research** has been testing and demonstrating a "sustainable garden" since 1999. This 1,000-square-foot garden is located outside the Center's entrance on land that was once a parking lot. The garden employs a variety of mechanisms that reduce water use and energy use and encourages the design of environmentally-friendly landscaping.
- ❖ **Region 5 and the Pacific Southwest Research Station** established a 'green' microgrant program. The station funded seven microgrants, each at a maximum of \$2,000. Region 5 funded 13 microgrants, each at a maximum of \$1,500. Green microgrants are fairly modest Forest Service funds that are awarded to stimulate grassroots sustainable efforts on the ground. The microgrant approach enables Forest Service employees to decide which sustainable activities are needed most at their unit and apply for funding for those activities.
- ❖ **Six Rivers National Forest** recycles paper, cardboard, aluminum, plastic, glass, toner cartridges, and batteries at all of its ranger districts and the supervisor's office. At the Smith River NRA Visitor Center, paper that has been printed on one side is cut to tablet size and the good side is used to take memos at the front desk.
- ❖ **Grey Towers National Historic Landmark** negotiated an agreement with the U.S. Park Service to retain a Ford Thinkmobile on loan. The Thinkmobile is an electric four-passenger vehicle with no tailpipe emissions.
- ❖ The International Forestry Green Team hosted a Sustainable Operations/Ecosystem Services Cap and Trade Game as a way for Forest Services employees to think about the types of activities they could implement to reduce their unit's environmental footprint including biomass, energy, biofuels, etc.
- ❖ Several teams have produced reports describing environmental footprint on a regional and local level. These include Region 2, Region 5 and the Pacific Southwest and the Pacific Northwest Research Stations. These reports have provided a guidepost for the

development of the national environmental footprint. A national environmental footprint report for the Forest Service was just released on September 20, 2007.

- ❖ **Washington Office Headquarters Team** installed a solar trash compactor at the southwest corner of its building. This is a high use/high trash collection area and the compactor is yielding significant collection savings as well as a plastics recycling opportunity. The team also purchased two additional compactors for USDA installation and use.



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## WASHINGTON OFFICE GREEN TEAM INITIAL CHALLENGE

Footprint Area	Goals/Actions You Can Take
Energy Conservation	<p><b>Goal 1. Reduce energy use by 5 percent in the Washington Office for FY 08.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn off lights when not needed</li> <li>• Turn off computer, monitor, and printer at the end of the day</li> <li>• Minimize use of personal appliances; use communal coffee pots, refrigerators, and printers</li> </ul>
Recycling	<p><b>Goal 2. Recycle 100 percent of the collectable waste products in Washington Office.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycle paper, cardboard, bottles, cans, and printer/toner cartridges, as collected in office building</li> <li>• Use duplex printing; set as the default on your computer and printer</li> <li>• Use 100-percent recycled copy paper</li> </ul>
Green Purchasing	<p><b>Goal 3. Purchase sustainable products for the Washington Office.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase 100-percent recycled copy paper</li> <li>• Purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products</li> <li>• Look for “green options” when purchasing office supplies</li> </ul>
Leadership	<p><b>Goal 4. Foster an office environment that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation for sustainable operations.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a member of the WO Green Team.</li> <li>• Promote “green ideas” in the WO.</li> <li>• Reward “green initiatives” in the WO.</li> </ul>



**SHORT TERM PRIORITIES - JUNE TO NOVEMBER  
ACCOMPLISHMENT UPDATE  
WODG MEETING 9/24/07**

- 1. SOLAR GARBAGE COMPACTOR (BIG BELLY) - Done**
  - Installed 1 in Yates Building
  - Provided 2 for USDA Whitten & South Buildings.
  
- 2. EXPAND RECYCLING – In Progress**
  - Partnering with USDA - more containers, expanding collectables, weighing results
  - Relabeling containers to update what can be collected
  - Promoting recycling in WO Green Challenge
  
- 3. COMPUTERS / PRINTERS / COPYING – In Progress**
  - Consulting with IRM on the possibility of setting the default for printers/copiers to duplex printing.
  - Promoting better energy use through WO Green Challenge
  
- 4. 100% RECYCLED PAPER – Done, Ongoing**
  - Copy paper will be 100% recycled starting FY08
  
- 5. COMMUNICATION/ AWARENESS CAMPAIGN – In Progress**
  - FS Wiki-Site – WO Green Team information
  - WO Green Team Charter
  - WO Green Team banner for identification
  - Creating a communication forum with staff representatives on WO Green Team
  
- 6. WO GREEN TEAM CHALLENGE – In Progress**
  - Roll out at / WODG September 24, 2007
  - Kick-off at WO Green Team meeting October 3, 2007
  
- 7. SUSTAINABILITY OPERATIONS SUMMIT – In Progress**
  - Developing a Booth
  - Sharing WO Green Team Challenge/ Energy Survey results
  
- 8. USDA BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPING PROJECT – In Progress**
  - Partnership with USDA documented in an MOU
  - Providing landscape architect to lead the effort
  - Providing additional expertise on the team such as botanical/ horticultural