

# E-Link

Connecting Southern Oregon's COG With Its Members

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## RVCOG MEMBERS

- Jackson County*
- Josephine County*
- City of Ashland*
- Town of Butte Falls*
- City of Cave Junction*
- City of Central Point*
- City of Eagle Point*
- City of Gold Hill*
- City of Grants Pass*
- City of Jacksonville*
- City of Medford*
- City of Phoenix*
- City of Rogue River*
- City of Shady Cove*
- City of Talent*
- Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon*
- Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District*
- Rogue Community College*
- Rogue Valley Sewer Services*
- Rogue Valley Transportation District*
- Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.*
- Southern Oregon University*

## BEAR CREEK VALLEY

### TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROJECT

In March 2011 RVCOG was awarded a contract from the National Academy of Science's Transportation Research Board (TRB) to conduct a pilot project with the intent of integrating environmental data early in long-range transportation planning efforts. This award, from TRB's Strategic Highway Research Program, was one of only four in the nation. RVCOG was chosen to conduct this pilot project due to its past success with regional conservation planning, including Regional Problem Solving, vernal pools conservation planning, and the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's ongoing regional transportation planning. The project is sponsored in part by ODOT and the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Currently, project team members are developing a GIS data library and meeting monthly with a 20-person stakeholder committee comprising developers, freight and transportation businesses, local jurisdictions, State and Federal agencies, conservation organizations and economic interests. These stakeholders, along with an adjunct technical review committee, will "test-drive" the model being developed by staff, and will test the applicability of the process to local circumstances and needs.

At the July stakeholder meeting, Gail Achterman (pictured right), Chair of the Oregon Transportation Commission, was a special guest speaker. Ms. Achterman shared her enthusiasm about this pilot



Gail Achterman, OTC Chair

project with the stakeholder committee, and noted that since she started on the Transportation Commission in 2000 she has been working to streamline environmental permitting for transportation projects, with the goal of accelerating project delivery while at the same time improving environmental outcomes. She said a new approach to transportation planning is needed. Delays in construction

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## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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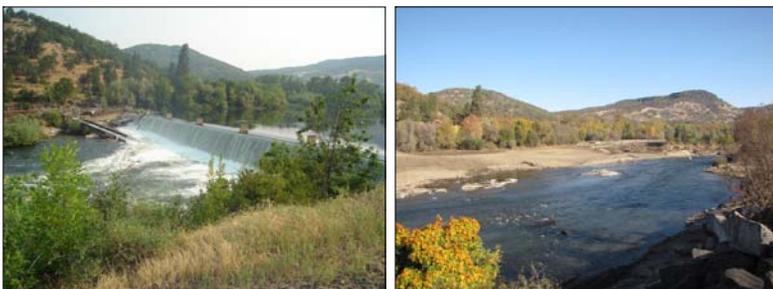
and planning occur because resource and regulatory agencies aren't involved at the early planning stages of transportation projects. When entities have completed their plans, they go to the regulatory agencies to identify what their permitting responsibilities are. Because the regulatory agencies were not involved early on, there is invariably a good deal of backtracking and justification required, which can cost time and money. Lots of time and money. As Ms. Achterman concluded, "What we need is a master plan for conservation, maintenance, and restoration of ecological functions to match up with the infrastructure plans so that everybody knows the lay of the land in the beginning."

RVCOG must complete the majority of project work by the end of December 2011 and produce the final report by May 2012.

## GOLD RAY DAM REMOVAL AND RESTORATION

It's hard to believe that Gold Ray Dam was removed a year ago. Since removal, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments has aided Jackson County by organizing cleanup days and planting events in the former reservoir area with the help of the Seven Basins Watershed Council, the Rogue Basin Coordinating Council, the Middle Rogue Steelheaders, the Bear Creek Watershed Council, the Job Council, and others.

**GRD site before and after removal**



Since September 2010, RVCOG and its partners have removed tons of debris (tires, junk metal, car bodies, etc.) from the area and planted over two thousand trees and shrubs, from the lower reach of Bear Creek downstream to Tolo and Kelly Sloughs and the former dam and powerhouse sites. To accomplish this work, RVCOG staff has coordinated, and worked alongside, upwards of 300 volunteers, with the resulting

1,200 hours spent clearing and planting having a significant, positive impact on the area's rate of restoration.

Major funding for the effort has been provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the FishAmerica Foundation, and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

In addition, generous donations of plants and equipment from community members, such as the Seven Basins Watershed Council, Lomatcatsi, and others, have made this remarkable project an even greater success for the local community.

**Kelly Slough in November 2010 and July 2011**



Yet again, this experience has proven that when the different sectors cooperate and members of the public come out and contribute their time and money, there isn't much we cannot accomplish.

RVCOG plans to continue to contribute to the restoration of the former reservoir area through the fall and winter of 2011/2012. Monitoring of the site will continue through 2013.

# UPDATE ON REGIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSESSMENT



Late this summer, southern Oregon will finally have a completed renewable energy assessment, which can be used by both the private and public sectors in Jackson and Josephine counties to assist in building greater levels of investment in renewable energy.

The eventual goal, shared by the partners in this process (RVCOG, GEOS, the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Energy Trust of Oregon, and the City of Ashland) is to create jobs in renewable energy, to lessen the amount of local money that flows out of the region (and sometimes the country) to purchase energy, and to make cost effective use of southern Oregon's renewable energy resources.



While there is still a lot of work to be completed on the assessment, we just received a draft of its first product, an inventory of existing and planned renewable energy projects in the region. Though this information is largely background for the assessment's subsequent products, which will detail the regional potential for different renewable energy types and their possible impact on job creation and the local economy, the results were interesting in themselves.



For example, many will be surprised to learn that hydroelectric power, even in this era of dam removal, is still the dominant existing renewable energy generation source in the region, representing 73% of the total renewable electricity generation per year. The next largest generation source is biomass at 24%, then landfill gas-to-energy at 3%, and finally solar, geothermal, and wind at less than 1% combined.

Information about anaerobic digesters, which will receive special focus as a result of additional funds being provided by the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District and Energy Trust of Oregon, will be added to Task 1 later.



The second major product of this assessment, which will document the relative feasibility here in southern Oregon of the different renewable energy types, is scheduled to be completed in the first half of August. Should this timeframe hold, staff will present a brief update on those results at the August 24, 2011 COG Board meeting.



## RVCOG

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### VISIT US ON THE WEB

[www.rvcog.org](http://www.rvcog.org)



### Founded in 1968, RVCog

is a voluntary association of local governments and special districts in southern Oregon.

### OUR MISSION

*We shall act as a catalyst to promote quality of life, effective and efficient services, and leadership in regional communication, cooperation, planning, and action in southern Oregon.*

### MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Michael Cavallaro**  
Executive Director

**Don Bruland**  
Director of Senior and Disability Services

**Craig Harper**  
Natural Resources Program Manager

**Alan Hudson**  
Finance Manager

**Evelyn Kinsella**  
Nutrition Program Manager

**Sandi Morton**  
Asst to Exec Dir / Human Resources Manager

**Berta Varble**  
SDS Operations Manager

## RVPSA'S 2011-2012 TRAINING SEASON

The Rogue Valley Public Service Academy concluded another successful training series in early June and RVPSA's Board members are working assiduously to assemble yet another exceptional training calendar for the 2011-2012 season, which begins in the fall.

Based on the multitude of requests received last year, Bill Gallagher will be kicking off the upcoming training season with *Generational Differences in the Workplace*, scheduled for September 29, 2011, followed by a business writing class on October 12, 2011, taught by experienced local writer, editor, and writing coach, Linda Bowman.

On March 29, 2012, Todd Lyon from Williams, Zografos, and Peck will visit the Rogue Valley to conduct two union-related trainings; one session will provide guidance on bargaining techniques for those who actually sit at the bargaining table, while the other session will focus on the do's and don'ts of administering the bargained agreement.

The online survey that the Academy is currently conducting will provide direction to the Board when rounding out the upcoming season. Your input is invaluable and we thank each of you who have already cast your vote or recommended additional training topics and presenters. If you would like to participate in the survey and offer your ideas, please visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/B3YBR6W>; the brief survey will take only 3-5 minutes of your time. Thus far, the results reflect that the following training topics are at the top of the list: Leadership Development, Coaching Skills, Generational Differences, Social Media, Time Management, and HR for Non-HR People.

As more information about RVPSA's 2011-2012 training season becomes available, it will be posted on the web at <http://rvcog.org/mn.asp?pg=rvpsa>, so please check back often.

We look forward to seeing you during our next training season!



April 4, 2011: RVPSA trainer, Judy Kaplan Baron, teaches local professionals about *Presentation Skills for Busy People*

