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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

GIS TOOL INTEGRATES CONSERVATION AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Southern Oregon is known for its natural beauty and resources. The salmon fishing, abundant wildlife, and green open spaces are just a few of the things that attract visitors and new residents alike. As our population continues to grow, communities will be looking for ways to develop the necessary infrastructure to accommodate that growth, while at the same time preserving the resources that make our region so unique and livable.

With funding from the National Academies' Transportation Research Board (TRB), the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG), in collaboration with federal, state, county, non-governmental, and private partners, has created a new mapping tool designed to integrate ecosystem function, concurrent conservation planning, and environmental data into local transportation planning in Jackson County, Oregon. RVCOG used the tool to create a set of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps and an accompanying data library which identifies conservation areas (nodes), linkages between the nodes, and potential conflict areas with transportation, infrastructure, and other uses (e.g., archaeologically sensitive areas).



NY Daily News Staff

The products provide information for transportation planners, city/county planners, developers, conservation interests, and others wanting information on ecologically important areas in the valley. The information is available at several scales: larger through the use of the maps or finer by using the information in the data library.

The goal of the effort was to develop a tool to assist planners in balancing the Rogue Valley's environmental, economic, regulatory, and infrastructure needs. By

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MAPPING TOOL

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simultaneously addressing these sometimes conflicting needs, the conservation tool could serve to streamline the permitting and review process, strengthen relationships among entities and advocacy groups, and deliver a project that effectively addresses community needs from a social, environmental, legal, and fiscal perspective.

We have all heard of or experienced the dreaded last-minute project modifications and design fixes that cost the project (and the taxpayers) more money and time than originally planned. Situations like this can result in greater public mistrust of public entities, hard feelings among agencies, and additional stress on already over-worked planning staff. The use of this tool in the early planning stages will add value to the planning process, contribute to project design competence, and head off some of those last-minute surprises that can translate into costly modifications (mitigation measures) that do not deliver the expected results.

Here is an example of how this tool, after it is fully developed, could be used to inform plans and projects: ODOT intends to improve a section of Kirtland Road, north of Medford, Oregon. ODOT planners review the map and data library to identify potential conservation/transportation conflicts in the area. The result of this review is the identification of three stream crossings which need to be improved to meet fish and wildlife passage concerns. Two of the crossings can easily be improved, but one must be upgraded to a bridge rather than a box culvert.

By looking at the data, the planners are able to quantify the benefits of improving fish and wildlife passage at each of the three crossings. Benefits include providing access to three miles of Coho salmon and steelhead habitat, reducing vehicle/deer and elk collisions, and improving native riparian vegetation along one mile of stream and greenway frontage. These benefits are approved and supported by agencies such as ODFW and NMFS, contribute to recovery of Coho salmon, reduce a traffic safety issue, *and* provide enhanced aesthetics for the local community. ODOT realizes a cost benefit ratio of 3 to 1 rather than the average 1 to 1 ratio. A clear win for all concerned.

RVCOG would like to thank the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization for sponsoring this project; the TRB for funding the work; local entities, public and nonprofit, such as Jackson County, the City of Medford, and The Nature Conservancy for their active collaboration; and members of the public for providing feedback, ideas, and information.

The maps and data library produced through this project will be available this April. For further information, please contact the project's lead, Craig Tuss, at 541-423-1366 or ctuss@rvcog.org.



Left to right: Pepper Trail, ornithologist; Jeff LaLande, historian and archaeologist, and Darren Borgias, conservation ecologist with The Nature Conservancy.

REGIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSESSMENT

Last Spring, the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Jackson County, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Geos Institute, Energy Trust of Oregon, and the City of Ashland kicked off a collaborative exploration of renewable energy opportunities in Jackson and Josephine Counties. Working together as the Renewable Energy Assessment Partnership, we contracted with the Good Company in Eugene, Oregon, for a Regional Renewable Energy Assessment to evaluate the potential for renewable energy generation projects in the region.

The objective behind the assessment was to create a baseline study that would establish the degree of viability of different renewable energy technologies in our region; to provide technical support for future proposals for renewable energy funding; and to generate a collaborative momentum and focus around specific technologies.

- Energy efficiency
- Solar electric
- Wind
- Direct-fired biomass
- Anaerobic digestion
- Hydroelectric

The assessment identified six renewable energy technologies that have potential here in the Rogue Valley:

Energy Efficiency: Conservation and energy efficiency represent the greatest potential for the Rogue Valley area over the next 20 years. There are many types of projects that are possible for all economic sectors such as weatherization, energy efficient lighting, heating/cooling systems, pumps and motors.



Solar: Like energy efficiency, installing solar electric panels on rooftops has great potential in the Rogue Valley. Solar hot water systems also offer another opportunity.

Wind: One ridgeline was identified as promising in terms of potential resource, site access, and interconnection, but there may be significant challenges associated with land ownership, as the area is a mix of public and private lands. More study of this site will be required to determine final feasibility.

Biomass: Biomass is already a significant source of electricity in the Rogue Valley. Existing generation capacity could theoretically be expanded, but is constrained by high feedstock acquisition costs, availability, and wholesale price of electricity. A second option is converting building boiler heating systems to run on biomass fuel.

Anaerobic Digestion: This technology uses existing organic wastes (i.e., food waste, yard waste and manure) to produce methane gas that can be used to generate electricity or as a vehicle fuel.

Hydroelectric: The greatest opportunity for this technology is incremental efficiency projects, such as adding electricity generation to existing flood control dams, water supply lines, or irrigation canals.

The next step for the project is to form Renewable Energy Working Groups (REWGs) for each of the technologies described above. The REWGs will create Action Plans for implementation of specific projects for each of the six renewable energy technologies. The goals are to encourage development of renewable energy in Jackson and Josephine Counties in a manner that:

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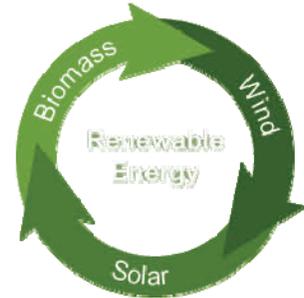
RENEWABLE ENERGY

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1. increases the region's energy independence, resilience, and adaptive capacity;
2. reduces the region's greenhouse gas emissions;
3. generates local employment; and
4. is acceptable to the community.

Each of the REWGs will use the data and analysis of the REA as a launching pad for their work, and will evaluate opportunities for implementation of specific projects (e.g., demonstration projects, education projects, etc.) in their respective renewable energy technologies. For each recommended project, the Action Plans will:

- ◆ identify specific implementation steps,
- ◆ estimate implementation costs,
- ◆ propose funding options (including existing and potential public policy incentives),
- ◆ identify implementation barriers (e.g., research needs, public policy impediments),
- ◆ assess risks and benefits (including an assessment of risk/benefit to jobs and the environment, and an assessment of community acceptability), and
- ◆ estimate resource potential and energy return.



The work of the REWGs will be coordinated with ongoing efforts at the state level. The full Renewable Energy Assessment can be accessed via the following link:

http://www.rvcog.org/cogboard/2011/Dec_14/RVCOG-REA_Final_Report-120811.pdf

For more information, contact Dan Moore, Planning Coordinator, RVCOG: 541-423-1361 or dmoore@rvcog.org.

LIVING WELL WINTER ACTIVITIES



WORKSHOPS

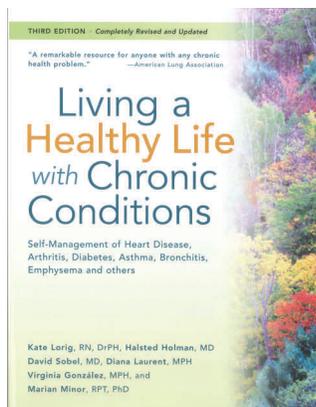
- **Avamere Health and Fitness Club, Medford**
Tuesdays: 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.
February 14 through March 20, 2012
Call to register: 541-864-9611

LEADER TRAININGS

- **Three Rivers Community Hospital, Grants Pass**
February 23 & 24; March 1 & 2, 2012
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Call to register: 541-864-9611

TOMANDO CONTROL DE SU SALUD

- **Ascension Lutheran Church, Medford**
Lunes a jueves, el 27 de febrero al 1° de marzo, 2012
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., cada día
Llame para inscribirse: 541-423-1383



R V C O G

LOCATION

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VISIT US ON THE WEB

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

POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

The *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* program is a 6-week scripted curriculum that provides family caregivers with tools and strategies to better handle caregiver challenges; to “thrive, not just survive.”

During the six-week course, participants discover the importance of self-care as they develop personalized action plans. They acquire tools to reduce stress; communicate effectively with family members and service providers; diminish guilt, anger, and depression; and make tough decisions.

Classes are held in Josephine and Jackson Counties, with the next session beginning Tuesday, February 21, 2012. The classes will be held once a week at Providence Guest House, 799 Spring Street, in Medford, from 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. Caregivers attending the class receive a comprehensive *Caregiver Help-book*, developed specifically for this class.

For those individuals who have already attended the 6-week series of classes, and who wish to become a class leader to assist in replicating the program, the next Class Leader training opportunity is February 27-28, 2012.

Please call Carol Terry at 541-471-2863 for more information, and consult the following link for a schedule of classes:

[http://rvcog.org/mn.asp?pg=SDS Powerful Tools](http://rvcog.org/mn.asp?pg=SDS_Powerful_Tools)



Left to right: Class Leaders, Sandy Divine and Monica Sandgren.

ROGUE VALLEY PUBLIC SERVICE ACADEMY

Labor and employment law attorney, Todd Lyon, will be in Central Point on Thursday, March 29, 2012, to present these dynamic and informative trainings:

- ***Navigating Stormy Seas: How to Negotiate A Collective Bargaining Agreement That Won't Sink (Workshop 1)***
- ***Gazing Into the Crystal Ball: Correctly Interpreting a Collective Bargaining Agreement (Workshop 2)***

Visit www.rvcog.org/mn.asp?pg=rvcpsa_training for details.