

November 27, 2007

To: The Westwind Community

Re: Westwind Stewardship Group's First Year

Most of you reading this letter contributed in significant ways to Westwind Stewardship Group's (WSG's) successful launch and first year of site management. Some did so with contributions of money; some with sweat equity during several volunteer work weekends; some as valued guests at Westwind; many in multiple ways. To each of you the WSG Board extends its heartfelt gratitude. We want to report a little about WSG's first year managing the site, and the impact of your contributions.

WSG successfully completed the purchase of the site from the YWCA, for cash, on September 1, 2006. Hence we started off site management on the right foot, with no debt. While I cannot list every individual contributor, major foundation and governmental participants in that purchase included the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Spirit Mountain Community Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, United States Forest Service, Samuel S. Johnson Foundation, Ann & Bill Swindells Charitable Trust, and the Autzen Foundation.

As part of the acquisition transaction WSG granted the State of Oregon a conservation easement over the entire property. This assures that the Westwind site will remain intact and that its resources will be carefully managed in perpetuity.

WSG's first guests, a group that has been coming to Westwind on Labor Day weekend for more than 40 years, arrived the same day the transfer was recorded. While there have been a few minor glitches, things overall have operated smoothly and the camp facilities have been busy. Outdoor School students were on site weekdays for several weeks in the fall and approximately 10 weeks in the spring. WSG acknowledges the support of the Gray Family Fund of Oregon Community Foundation in defraying a portion of the costs for Outdoor School use of the site.

WSG is working with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde toward use of the site by Tribal community members groups in a variety of youth and adult activities. Westwind has hosted several college groups, private groups, nonprofits, and weddings. WSG sponsored a successful 5-day workshop led by Joanna Macy in September of 2006, focused on the challenges and opportunities surrounding transition to sustainable practices. A more extensive program was presented this fall.

YWCA Summer Camp sessions during our first summer "together" went well. The time the YWCA and WSG spent developing a detailed Exclusive Use Agreement to guide our relationship paid off. WSG began providing food service during the YWCA sessions, and continues to offer food service based on sustainable and local foods.

At this point WSG expects to end 2007 in the black, despite having spent substantial funds on a number of upgrades for the site. Prime among those projects was a complete re-working of the trail system in camp both to reduce erosion and to make the trails safer to use.

Many returnees to Westwind have commented on what a great boon the new trails and steps are both for safety and ease of use on the steep trails. The nurse for one of our larger groups noticed substantially fewer trail-related injuries than have been seen in past years. Equally important, staff and others who are frequently on site could immediately see that what had been serious erosion problems during heavy rains have essentially been eliminated. The trail improvements also eliminate hours and hours of staff maintenance time, adding to WSG's organizational capacity.

Other projects: WSG remodeled the small Trillium cabin to provide housing at the center of camp for the YWCA summer camp Director, and created an office for WSG in the former "caretaker" structure. WSG has pressure-washed and stained the outside of most cabins. We will soon take delivery of a new barge designed by a marine architect for transporting groups across the Salmon River- this will be a huge safety improvement and will transport more people per trip, lessening the time it takes to cross large groups. WSG plans a second new barge in 2008.

An upgrade we hope you never have to notice is installation of an all-camp fire suppression system, with hoses reaching all buildings and much of the spit.

Some vehicle changes: Westwind now has 1-ton all purpose flatbed vehicle, which runs on biodiesel. WSG has acquired 2 small electric vehicles for staff transport in and out the emergency road, one purchased and one contributed by Farwest Golf in Portland. These help minimize use of the truck or other vehicles over the fragile roadbed.

Finally, we know that the Case tractor (essential for movement of the barges and for transport of guest luggage) and the John Deere front-loader are close to the end of their useful and repairable lives. Through this letter WSG is kicking off a campaign to raise funds for tractor replacement. WSG welcomes all contributions for this purpose and will soon post a tracking graph for this project on our web site.

WSG has not prepared a formal "annual report" for 2006 since most of that year was focused on acquisition, with only 4 months of site operation. Our IRS 990 form for 2006 may be viewed on www.westwind.org if you wish to examine financial details.

WSG is grateful to you and all others who had faith in and supported WSG's ambitious acquisition project and early operations. The stability, educational focus, and sustainability that WSG is creating for the site and its operations will bolster the experiences of the diverse groups who come to Westwind. Through the YWCA camp, Outdoor School and other programs those qualities will continue to enhance the lives and learning of children, who will ultimately guide the future.

With appreciation,

Anne W. Squier, President
Westwind Stewardship Group