Assessing Leavenworth’s Wetlands  Contact: Cheri Farivar, mayor@cityofleavenworth.com

**Situation:** A large part of urban growth area (UGA) of Leavenworth was designated as wetlands on a map the City adopted in the late 1990s. This map had not been verified through true wetlands studies and had been accepted without the cooperation of the affected landowners. In 2010 when one of the landowners in the UGA attempted to sell their parcel, the City told the developer that it could not be developed because it was a wetland. That landowner had her own official study done which illustrated that only 20% of her 37-acre parcel was wetland instead of 100%, as the wetlands map indicated. At this point the City realized their wetlands boundaries north of town were faulty. Other property owners also had studies done and found the designation to be inaccurate on their parcels as well. Because the UGA is the primary path of growth for the City, it was prompted to take action to establish accurate wetlands boundaries in the area.

**Challenge:** While Mayor Cheri Farivar and others in the City knew it would be an expensive process, securing a funding source was not the biggest challenge they faced. Because there was historical resistance from the affected property owners, the real challenge was creating trust with these owners in order to conduct the study. Because on-site testing was necessary, all property owners had to agree to allow full access to their properties.

**Key Activities:** Cheri said their success has hinged on developing relationships with landowners before applying for any funding.
- The City invited all City Council members, landowners in the UGA and members of the public to an initial forum in 2012 to explain the situation, seek input, and build support for the process. Because they were brought into the process early, 100% of the landowners pledged to cooperate with the study.
- The City organized a wetlands symposium for the community in 2013 with wetlands biologists to gain knowledge about the current methods for assessing wetlands.
- With this community support the City applied for a grant from the WA Department of Commerce in 2014 and received 80% of the cost of the study.
- In 2015 the City completed the study showing wetlands locations within the UGA.

**Successful Outcome:** The landowners and the public were a part of the overall process and had a voice in the City’s goals and how they would benefit both the landowners and the City in the long run. This strong community support helped the City secure the funding needed to pursue the needed assessments.
Reducing Waste, Strengthening Community

2015 NCW Community Success Summit Story Exchange

Waterville Recycling Center

Contact: Eileen Bone, 509-745-8540, jimehb@nwi.net

Situation: As early as 1971 the community of Waterville wanted to recycle. The local women’s club travelled to Omak to observe their recycling program. In 1991, a representative of the Town of Waterville met with the Chelan-Douglas Solid Waste Committee to discuss options for recycling. In 1993, Douglas County formed the Countywide Solid Waste Committee. With grants from the Department of Ecology, a building was erected in 1995 to house the Waterville Community Recycling Center. The original group that was to collect the recyclables and run the Center was unable to meet their obligations and the Waterville Town Council appealed to the community for volunteers to take over. George ‘Doc’ and Alice Hill stepped up and in February 1996 assumed the responsibility of organizing and running the Waterville Community Recycling Center (CRC).

Challenge: Doc and Alice walked into a 3-sided open building during a record setting winter with over 100” of snow and temperatures at or below zero during February. They found apple bins full of frost and snow covered cardboard and bins of mixed recyclables. There was a baler for the corrugated cardboard. They had their work cut out for them.

Key Activities:

- Clean up the mess. Bale the cardboard. Sort the recyclables.
- Set up bins for each category of recyclable.
- Set regular hours and have help available to unload and sort customer recycle.
- Encourage community involvement in recycling.

Successful Outcome: Fast forward 20 years. The Waterville CRC is the place to be on Tuesday and Saturday afternoons. Socializing as well as recycle drop off has become a popular pass time for many regular customers from Waterville and the surrounding communities. Newcomers to Waterville quickly learn the Recycle Center will take cardboard packing boxes off their hands as well as offer books for every age level, answers to any question they might have and suggestions for people to contact for services or information. In addition to mixed paper, plastics, tin cans, aluminum cans and cardboard, the Recycle Center takes styrofoam peanuts, plastic bags, metal and appliances, residential sharps, fluorescent light bulbs and batteries. Staffed completely by volunteers, the Waterville Community Recycle Center leads Douglas County in pounds collected/population and continues to grow and expand to meet the needs of the COMMUNITY IT SERVES.
Reducing Waste, Strengthening Community

2015 NCW Community Success Summit Story Exchange

Fire Relief and Recovery Network  Contact: Laurel Sylvan, 509-322-6254 ohfrm@gmail.com

Situation: The firestorms of August 2015 activated and strengthened existing community networks in northern Okanogan Valley. The North Valley Hospital quickly opened a shelter at the Tonasket High School and the Comancheros opened the Rodeo Grounds for evacuated animals. But as the fires spread, the shelter closed, and the town was evacuated; leaving many in need of a place to sleep, eat, and rest. People who had lost their homes needed clothing and other basics, including help caring for their livestock and pets, many still at the Rodeo Grounds. Others wanted to help or had resources to share.

Challenge: The challenge was to quickly connect those with resources with those who needed them. A distribution center was set up in the Tonasket Visitor Center parking lot to manage the volunteer labor and donations of food, clothing, and other supplies. Okanogan Highlands Firewatch, a Facebook page, became the preeminent online avenue for sharing fire observations. Simultaneously, volunteers formed the North Okanogan Fire Support Exchange on Facebook and using the Corkboards tool, an online bulletin board to match people’s needs with resources. Finally, a new evacuation center was established at the Community Cultural Center (CCC) where about 100 fire-affected people were served three home-cooked meals per day, and provided with other relief supplies.

Key Activities: Project volunteers Laurel Sylvan and Julie Ashmore cite the following success factors:

- The North Okanogan community has a high degree of self-reliance; it’s a value and practice that runs deep. Many people care about their neighbors; there are traditions of sharing and helping.
- The CCC is an established meeting place operated with minimal staff and many volunteers accustomed to working in teams to prepare meals, offer programs, and maintain the facility. The CCC regularly brings people from across all sectors of the community together.
- A growing part of the community is comfortable communicating online, including those who post their needs and wants on the Natural Foods Cooperative online bulletin board. This became the model for the Fire Support Exchange, as they built on a system already in place.
- People assume leadership positions when they see a clear need they can help meet, such as the volunteers who brought an RV to the Visitor Center and operated it as a distribution center.

Successful Outcome: More than 200 people per day received support during the height of the fires; at least that many volunteered their time and skills to help others. What started as an emergency shelter has now grown into the non-profit relief Fire Relief and Recovery Network (FRRN) led by Laurel Sylvan, a licensed social worker. The FRRN brings together a variety of resources to develop opportunities for community members to recover from the staggering impact of this year’s wildfires including long-term building assistance. Visit www.communityculturalcenter.org to donate to the Fire Relief & Recovery Fund.
**Situation:** The 2014 Carlton Complex Fire burned more than 275,000 acres in Okanogan County. In the course of firefighting, many more acres were necessarily affected in the process of creating firelines and restoring powerlines. The Methow Conservancy understood that many of the lands that burned would recover on their own as part of a natural cycle. Other areas, however, would need a helping hand to avoid further invasion by non-native weeds. In the fall of 2014, the Conservancy recognized that acres of land in need of reseeding could be matched with many people who were eager to help. Creating opportunities to restore disturbed lands could make a difference on the ground while also helping people process their anxieties and experiences of the fires.

**Challenge:** The challenge was to identify priority sites for reseeding and then organize volunteer teams to sow some hope. Conservancy staff provided free site visits for any private landowner to assess the damage, serving as something of a “land social worker” role. They identified sites that had either been very weed-infested before the fires or disturbed by fire management actions. Then they teamed up with local disaster case managers to provide free native seed to private landowners who needed assistance, and, local and state agencies to organize the “Seed Mob,” a 100+ volunteer effort to broadcast native seeds into disturbed areas.

**Key Activities:** Success was a combination of having the right resources and partnerships.

- Methow Native Seeds owner Rob Crandall had a good supply of native seeds suitable for the restoration sites.
- The Conservancy had staff comfortable working with people and trained to do land assessments.
- Room One and disaster case managers worked to refer landowners with financial need to the Conservancy, who in turn gave restoration advice and seed as needed.
- For the Seed Mob, the Conservancy worked with the Okanogan County Electric Co-Op and WA Department of Fish & Wildlife to identify high priority lands and find safe ways for volunteers to access them.

**Successful Outcome:** 100+ volunteers had a chance to learn about the importance of using native seeds and why some areas might need re-seeding and others may not. Volunteers had fun and built relationships among the seed mob groups and landowners who understood that they were a part of a larger community that cared about them. The Seed Mob was repeated in 2015.
Fostering Business, Strengthening Community

2015 NCW Community Success Summit Story Exchange

Highway 2 Brew

Contact: Margaret & Sid Viebrock - smviebrock@nwi.net

Situation: The vision for Highway 2 Brew began in 2002 when Margaret facilitated a series of focus groups for the local Chamber of Commerce to brainstorm solutions to a declining business atmosphere in Waterville. Focus group participants said they needed a place to buy good coffee. It was through this process that the Viebrock’s decided to pursue a drive-through coffee business. Unknown to most people, they started their business research with collecting DOT traffic counts driving by a potential location, visiting other independently owned coffee owners, and learning about the business from coffee roasters and equipment suppliers. The local bank manager saw the entrepreneurial potential in their plan and provided a start-up business loan. Within a year they purchased a run-down corner lot on Highway 2, met the building requirements, trained 12 employees and opened their business.

Challenges: Designing Highway 2 Brew to attract local customers and travelers is unique to this rural area. It was necessary to have a drive-through area that would accommodate not only cars, but campers, horse trailers and wheat trucks. Motor cycle groups needed a place to park and walk-up customers needed an area to sit and enjoy their purchases. The property now showcases a large grassy area with an attractive pergola and seasonal decorations. Other challenges were to learn how to make a quality product, train employees to understand the importance of consistency and manage a new business while engaged in other personal and professional employment. Thirteen years ago we listened to the skepticism from other business owners and the public. Today, these people are some of our best customers!

Key Activities: Many factors contribute to the success of Highway 2 Brew. The local community supports our business and in turn, we contribute to the community with support for many activities. We buy local and do our legal, accounting and banking business in Waterville. Most recently, Highway 2 Brew installed an electric car charging unit. This project, in collaboration with Plug-In North Central Washington, is part of a larger effort to support tourism and recreation with electric vehicles. A demonstration and “open house” is planned for this spring. Key activities for our success include:

- Hire friendly employees; implement an extensive training program and have employee expectations.
- Maintain consistent hours, whether it’s nice weather, snowing or cold outside. We are open 364 days a year and our customers can depend on us to be there.
- Continue to add new menu items and update the property.
- Become part of the larger community by supporting and participating in events and organizations.

Successful Outcome: Success for Highway 2 Brew is measured in several ways. This small business was built on a recognized community need and has survived several shifts in the economy. It adds a unique business to Waterville and cleaned up a major highway corner. It provides employment for 10-12 people. It offers jobs to youth who have limited employment options, need job experiences and want to develop their confidence when working with the public.