

College Forestry Program at Satsop Business Park Wins Top Award

Local News

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ELMA, Wash. - The Satsop Business Park/Grays Harbor College forestry program has received the 2011 Pacific NW Champion Award from the Forest Stewardship Council -US. The award is given each year to a for-profit and not-for-profit organization operating in Oregon, Washington or Idaho that has demonstrated innovation, dedication and made extraordinary efforts to promote and expand participation in FSC certification. The FSC-US so appreciate the partnerships that Grays Harbor College and the Satsop Business Park have put together to educate future generations about sustainable forestry and introducing them to FSC certification - Diane Moody, Northwest regional manager of the Forest Stewardship Council. The award was presented to Satsop Business Park CEO Tami Garrow May 1 at the annual meeting of the FSC-US in Portland, Ore.

We are thrilled and honored to receive the award, the partnership between Grays Harbor College and Satsop Business Park to manage these natural resources has been a rewarding, challenging and educational experience for all of us. - Todd Bates, forestry instructor at Grays Harbor College "Managing our forest resources in a contemporary manner while providing educational experiences to a varied suite of the public – college students, high school students, adult learners and continuing education – is a major objective in the mission of the Park,” he said.

Currently, 20 students are enrolled in the program. Since the forestry classes began in the spring of 2009, 14 students have graduated from Grays Harbor College and 10 from Centralia College, earning an associate of applied science degree in natural resource technology. Ten core courses in natural resources are included in the program.

In 2008, when Satsop Business Park – the site of a never-finished nuclear power plant – completed its first-ever comprehensive master plan, the 1,200 acres of forestlands were returned to the Park for management. Previously, the lands were held in a "no-touch” status by the State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The Park’s new master plan included an element specifically focused on managing and enhancing its forests. Working with the Northwest Natural Resources Group out of Olympia, Business Park staff developed a new forest management plan, which was then certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Trees removed from the Satsop business Park’s FSC-designated timberlands will end up as a "green” building material or product.

FSC is a third-party, transparent certification system that ensures forests are responsibly managed to the gold standards of forest stewardship. The gold standards incorporate social, environmental and economic factors that are essential to sustaining all the rich resources a forest provides to its community. It is the only forest certification system supported by the leading world-wide environmental organizations, Moody explained.

"I’m thrilled and honored by this award and so appreciative of all the hard work Todd Bates has done to manage the forest well as well as use it as a huge outdoor classroom for his vibrant forestry program,” said Tami Garrow, CEO of Satsop Business Park.

"This program has been a great success for the Park and the College,” said Garrow. "I love how this forestry program ties so many of our objectives together,” she said.

“We continue to reinvent ourselves, recycle and revitalize the regional economy while restoring our forests to optimal health and educating students to help them find meaningful family-wage jobs someday,” Garrow said.

“It’s definitely been a win-win,” Bates agreed.

And now with this champion award, it’s a win-win-win.

Satsop Business Park is a 1,700-acre mixed-use business and technology park located in scenic Grays Harbor County in Southwest Washington just 30 minutes from Olympia and the I-5 corridor. It is home to more than 30 businesses, offers 440 acres of developed, pad-ready land and buildings supported by super-sized infrastructure and surrounded by 1,200 acres of sustainable managed forestland.

The Park is managed by the Grays Harbor Public Development Authority, a public corporation whose mission is to create new jobs and investment for the region. More information on Satsop Business Park can be found at www.Satsop.com.