

August 16, 2011

Subject: Update to ONRC staff

I want to provide you a status report on a number of issues relating to ONRC. I plan for this to be the first in a series of updates to keep you informed as we find our way through this transitional period. With the help of Bev Anderson and Kathy Heuring, I have developed content for eight different topic areas:

1. Leadership
2. State budgets
3. Grants
4. Revenue generating activities
5. Public information
6. Advisory Board
7. Future directions
8. Upcoming retreat

**Leadership.** Upon John Calhoun's retirement last December, Steve West and I agreed to serve as interim co-directors of ONRC. Kathy Heuring continues to oversee day-to-day administrative functions at ONRC, including approving routine spending, time sheets, procard activity, leave requests, invoices, and facility use, and providing general supervision on behalf of ONRC staff. In addition, I have asked Kathy to provide me with real-time, on-site information about emerging or unresolved issues. Ultimately, non-routine decisions and personnel issues fall to me. I will also back-stop Kathy on administrative and budgetary matters regarding the operation of ONRC. In all likelihood, this leadership arrangement will continue through at least 6/15/2012. This is a lean structure, complicated by geography. So it is important that everyone understand and follow expected lines of authority and communication.

**State budgets.** The UW's state budgets continue their rapid decline, to be backfilled to some degree by tuition distributions determined by the UW's new Activity-Based Budgeting model. In its present form, the ABB model does not reward outreach activities, only SCH production, enrollments in majors, and degrees granted. In this latest round of cuts ONRC lost \$65,000 in permanent funding. Additional cuts are expected this year. It is in this context that we are seeking new arrangements with new partners (see section below on future directions). State dollars coming to the UW and going to ONRC will continue to decline.

**Grants.** Associate Professor Greg Ettl assumed PI authority over the grants formerly under John Calhoun. David Ford manages his USFS budget, and Eric Turnblom manages two others. Miranda Wecker manages the marine and shoreline budgets. By UW policy, I am however ultimately responsible and so will step in if budgetary issues emerge. Plans regarding future research should be reviewed by me. Research staff associated with ONRC must acquire indirect costs or administrative costs to cover the support provided by ONRC staff. In mid-June, I spoke with Doug Ryan of the US Forest Service on ONRC's behalf. In the second week of July, Dr. Jamie Barbour of the PNW Research Station informed me that the US Forest Service's pass-through to ONRC had been reduced from \$225,000 to \$185,000 and that we had a very short

time in which to get budgets, proposals and authorizations to Portland. The submission deadline was met, but some content issues have arisen as of today; hopefully the respective PIs can address the concerns in time for resubmission. The US Forest Service and the PNW Station expect additional significant budget reductions of their own.

**Revenue-generating activities.** Plans regarding revenue-generating activities should be reviewed by me. Examples include the GIS contract with the City of Forks and future Greenlamp Tours. The Greenlamp Tour is an excellent example of a revenue generating mechanism that is well-managed and integrated with faculty expertise from both Forest Resources and Biology. However, like many revenue generating functions, economic conditions will affect both cost and revenue, and our ability to cushion sudden cost-overruns is weakening/disappearing.

**Public information.** ONRC staff should continue to communicate with their respective constituencies in their areas of expertise. Broad questions regarding the future of ONRC fall to me. ONRC staff should feel free to contact me directly, and to refer others to me regarding such questions.

**Advisory Board.** Meetings of the ONRC Policy Advisory Board can be suggested by anyone, but I will ultimately organize and schedule such meetings. I hope to have an ONRC Policy Advisory Board meeting this fall. At the board meeting held on March 16, we openly discussed the strong possibility of reduced federal and state funding to ONRC (along with the rest of the UW). I stated my goal of helping ONRC increase fiscal resiliency and become more self-sufficient. An ad hoc Committee of the Board was formed to support ONRC, and I was a member of this sub-committee, which produced a support letter that was widely circulated. This letter and its updates should continue to serve in its highlighting of ONRC's history, mission, and values to the Olympic Peninsula and to the University of Washington.

**Future directions.** My goal is to expand the mission and the sustainability of ONRC. ONRC has developed an important presence on the peninsula, which I wish to retain and build on. Over the past few months I have met with a number of local and regional groups to discuss possibilities and partnerships. These include the West End Business and Professional Association, Battelle's NW Marine Sciences Laboratory, the Forks Chamber of Commerce, and Peninsula Community College. A follow-up meeting with Peninsula Community College (PCC) occurred recently, August 10, for further partnership exploration. Although the environment is a student focus at PCC, their initial marketing suggests that only 5 to 7 students would participate in a Natural Resource option. PCC President Keegan plans to speak with Battelle about their interest in developing joint education and research programs in renewable energy and renewable energy certification. I will explore the value of jointly recruiting international students for undergraduate admission in forestry, natural resources, and the environment (discussion with the College and UW would be required), ways to improve the transfer connection between PCC and SFR, and ways to smooth time to graduation. Co-teaching, the use of iTV, podcasts, and joint field trips were also discussed, as well as the idea of pooling PCC and UW-SFR student populations using collaborative and/or electronic means. Finally, I have initiated discussions with the UW Real Estate office and with David Dicks on how PCC might become part of the delivery system for education, research, and outreach with ONRC to the Peninsula.

I have been indebted to the staff at ONRC who have helped introduce me to the local as well as to the broader peninsula community. These introductions build understanding and create opportunities. I will ask all of you to continue to be forthright in identifying these opportunities. I will lean heavily upon you to continue sustaining or building some of these potential connections.

**Upcoming retreat.** I strongly encourage staff to participate in the September 27<sup>th</sup> retreat. We will provide financial assistance to attend.

Please let Kathy know of any questions or concerns. She in turn will consolidate them and pass them on to me.