



# Wind River Nursery Conveyance<sup>2</sup>

*This completes the original conveyance of 2000, which included 180+ acres and five residences. This conveyance of 28 acres contains 21 structures which will comprise the core revenues the County needs to restore and develop this historic site.*

## Support for Conveyance of the Wind River Nursery Site

In order to preserve the history of the Historic Nursery and to restore a bit of the economic engine that the nursery historically provided to the region; Skamania County is asking for a direct conveyance of this parcel rather than an Administrative one since we are assuming the cost of deferred maintenance that has increased every year since the Forest Service closed the facility in 2000. The County has also lost substantial property tax due to the continued acquisition of private properties in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic area by the Forest Service. Annual property tax losses now exceed \$720,000 each year.

Prior to the Northwest Forest Plan the Nursery employed a mix of full and part-time workers numbering in the hundreds. Those jobs are gone. The revenues from the forest provided an annual revenue stream of \$ 7,000,000 or more to the County and our Schools. Today, it is Zero.

## Benefits:

- A Unique opportunity for a unique historic site
- Create local jobs
- Create revenue stream for the distressed county
- Allows County to create jobs and revenues that Forest Service cannot
- Prevents further deterioration of historic buildings
- Provides the public access to the surrounding Gifford Pinchot National Forest
- Maintains the historical nature of the site
- Removes these structures from the deferred maintenance budget
- Stabilizes a critical long-term water source

## Players:

- ◆ **County is committed**
  - Revenues are re-invested
  - In addition to re-investing all revenues, the county has dedicated \$200,000 per year over the past years to restore the properties and invest in new infrastructure
  - County currently funds one full-time and several part-time employees dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of the buildings and infrastructure
  - Several houses restored
  - Current annual revenue stream growing
- ◆ **Wind River Business Park Advisory Committee**
  - Provides input from citizens
  - Provides recommendations to County Commissioners
- ◆ **Wind River Trust Non-Profit**
  - Business partner for Restoration and Revenue development.
  - Wide range of volunteers
  - Many retired Forest Service employees with in-depth knowledge of the site
  - Volunteer members with long history of F S preservation projects, i.e. recent restoration of the Arboretum Site

## Status thus far:

- Repairs to water mains
- Installation of separate electrical meters on x 4 buildings
- Lease of x 4 buildings in as-is condition
- Restoration of 2 houses. One leased, one under contract for lead abatement and will be leased afterward

# We have separated our efforts into 2 phases

## Phase One

### “Learn to walk before your run.”

We will focus on creating a stable revenue base within the first 4 years that will provide for support of larger projects in Phase Two.

- Rehab of houses for short-term recreational rental and rental of existing commercial building.
- Minor improvements to many of the “commercial use” buildings.
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These will enable us to create a revenue stream which will be used to continue our current efforts on buildings needing more investments to maximize their potential.

- Expand our full-time staff for maintenance and up-keep.
- Work with the Wind River Trust to establish volunteer projects leveraging their expertise and passion for the Historic Nursery
- Relocate the “Play Pre-School” day care to a more appropriate building
- Investigate the potential of seasonal camping and RV use. We currently operate 2 such sites elsewhere in the county and these are proving to be successful revenue generators.

It is important to note that all revenues generate on-site are re-invested in the site, increasing the pace and scale of restoration and development. Much of this revenue can be used as matching funds for grants from the Dept. Of Commerce, The State Recreation & Conservation Office grants, as well as many others.



Before

After



Annual revenues for re-investment from the 7 rental homes is projected at \$300,000/yr. net when renovations are complete. The two existing ones will generate \$130,000/Yr. net by 2023. By reinvesting this and the additional income in the remaining structures, our goal is to have completed these by mid-2025. The current pace should increase as more units come on-line.

Shorter-term, the other structures ready to lease or currently leased can provide another \$150,000/Yr. A reasonable projection for 2026 is for a net revenue stream of \$5600,000 annually, which would continue to be re-invested in larger projects. Potential jobs created by these activities would range from 12 to 38, mainly dependent on the use of the processing buildings

- Other uses in the short-term plan are increased agricultural use.
- Development of multiple “day use” sites within the boundaries of the conveyance.

## Phase II

### Maximizing revenues and increasing jobs.

A potential future project is the creation of a Forest Interpretative Center, based on an existing one in the Tillamook National Forest. The center piece would be a reproduction of a Forest Service Fire Lookout Tower along with a modest museum and displays of the history of the Forest Service and the role of the nursery. Photos attached.

Another is the establishment of a regional training center for First Responders. This site is ideally located for law Enforcement, Wild-land Firefighters and Search and Rescue trainings. See attached.

**Before / After**



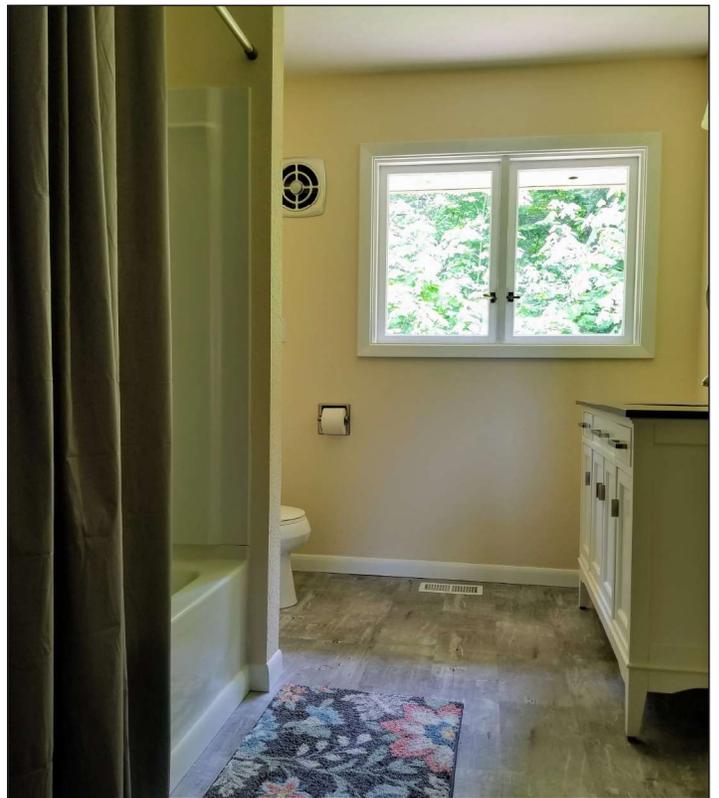
**Dry rot laundry**



**Broken window 2.0**



**Rotten siding**



**Some of the results of the County's investments thus far.**

Potential Phase II Interpretive Center similar to the Tillamook Center shown here.

