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We Welcome Your Comments

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Update On Our Work

Wealth Creation in Rural Communities
The Ford Foundation envisions the wealth creation approach to improving the livelihoods of low-income individuals, households and communities as one that will have widespread application in many places. Toward that end, the evolution of the approach is being chronicled and shared with fellow practitioners and interested parties. A monthly e-newsletter, highlighting reports and articles produced by the Wealth Creation Working Group, has been disseminated to over 400 contacts throughout 2010. This monthly email has generated a great deal of excitement in the field and has led to this work being highlighted in the Community-Wealth April Newsletter and excerpted on the New Economy Working Group’s website. Sharing this information has also led to the publication of a new article, “A Different Kind of Ownership Society,” by Marjorie Kelly and Shanna Ratner in Yes! Magazine (http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/a-different-kind-of-ownership-society). If you would like to be added to the mailing list for future communication on the wealth creation approach, please email ginger@yellowwood.org with “Ford Mailing List” in the subject line. To access the reports and articles that have been disseminated through this effort, visit the Wealth Creation in Rural Communities web page at: http://www.yellowwood.org/wealthcreation.aspx.

Rural LISC
In October, Shanna Ratner will be traveling to Eugene and Canyonville, Oregon to participate in Rural LISC Seminar XIX where she will be presenting Wealth Creation in Rural Communities, an approach Yellow Wood is developing in collaboration with the Ford Foundation and many others. Yellow Wood serves as the managing grantee for this multi-year Ford program.

Vermont Community Development Association
Closer to home, Shanna spent half a day in April with the Vermont Community Development Association and its members, offering training in skilled listening and skilled inquiry and introducing Yellow Wood’s Green Community Technologies® approach to investment planning for municipal infrastructure.
Wallace Writeshop 2
In July, Shanna Ratner facilitated the second of two values-based value chain writeshops for the Wallace Center at Winrock International.

Products from the second writeshop will be available shortly.

The writeshop format was invented by Paul Mundy who works in international development. Thanks to Jim Barham at USDA, who experienced a writeshop overseas and saw its applicability to Wallace, we were able to bring this approach to life in a modified format in the U.S. For more information on writeshops, visit www.mamud.com/writeshop.htm.

Community Forests
Shanna participated in a roundtable on Building an Infrastructure of Support for Community Forests in March. This was one of three roundtables sponsored by Julie Renaud Evans – Sustainable Forest Futures, Marcy Lyman – Community Forest Collaborative, Tom Horn – Quebec Labrador Foundation, Rodger Krussman – Trust for Public Land, and Steve Rohde – Sustainable Forest Futures, partners in the Community Forest Collaborative.

About Yellow Wood Associates & Yellow Wood Notes . . .
Yellow Wood Notes is a twice yearly publication of Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. We publish this newsletter to maintain contact and share ideas with friends, colleagues, and clients. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. is a private, for-profit firm specializing in rural economic research and training for community capacity building since 1985. We provide clients with research services including feasibility studies and Green Community Technologies®; training and facilitation services including See the Forest®, You Get What You Measure® and Home Town Competitiveness. Our clients include small towns, nonprofit organizations, federal, state, and county governments, foundations, and the private sector. Yellow Wood Associates are Shanna Ratner, Principal; Melissa Levy, Associate; Samantha Dunn, Associate; and Ginger Weil, Office Manager.
Update On Our Work

Community Roadmap to Renewable Woody Biomass Energy
Yellow Wood has partnered with the Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) to develop the Community Roadmap to Renewable Woody Biomass Energy: A step-by-step decision-making tool for NH communities through a contract with the North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area Council. This workbook is a civic decision-making tool to help New Hampshire communities through the information-gathering process required to decide whether woody biomass heating technologies applied to one or more buildings can help meet one or more community energy goals. This valuable tool was created so that communities will have the information they need, and a logical process to follow, to make informed decisions about the role biomass may play in their energy future. The workbook will be available electronically this fall on the New Hampshire RC&D website, http://www.nhrcd.net/.

USFS Wood Energy
Working with the Drum Country Biomass Working Group and the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency in upstate New York, we received over 20 applications from a wide range of facilities to participate in the Wood Energy Utilization Support Program offered by the Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) of the US Forest Service. Applicants were ranked based on their current fuel use, plans for expansion, type of existing heating system and completeness of application. Yellow Wood conducted site visits at fifteen facilities, including the military vehicle wash center, multiple schools, health care facilities, public buildings and industrial facilities. Site visits allowed Yellow Wood to meet with facilities staff and assess the favorability of site conditions for a biomass installation. A final selection of 11 facilities will receive full biomass pre-feasibility reports assessing whether or not a biomass project makes financial and practical sense based on a life-cycle costing analysis. Yellow Wood will continue to assess biomass feasibility throughout the northeast with WERC through 2011.
ANCA Presentation

Yellow Wood was invited to present at the Adirondack North Country Association’s (ANCA) June board meeting at the Curran Renewable Energy Plant in Massena, New York. Samantha Dunn presented “Understanding the Potential of Thermal Biomass for the Adirondack North Country Economy” at the board meeting to kick off ANCA’s initiative to develop the biomass industry in this region. The presentation provided an overview of the state of woody biomass in New York, potential for job creation in the industry and a primer on identifying good candidate sites for biomass heat.

The Next Generation of GCT

www.greencommunitytechnologies.com/
Our Green Community Technologies® portfolio of services has been expanded to meet the needs of two new types of clients. We are now working with developers to identify options and opportunities for implementing sustainable infrastructure solutions in new construction projects that will protect the environment, save money and best serve the occupants of the development and the surrounding community. In addition, the GCT approach is being applied to existing campuses to develop sustainable operations and maintenance practices that maximize economic, environmental and social benefits.

Outcome Funding in Wisconsin

We are currently working with the Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County on a multi-year learning evaluation of their Workforce Central approach to workforce development. Workforce Central is focused on working with service providers and employers to reduce the barriers to getting and keeping jobs. As part of our work, we are now assisting their Funders Collaborative in developing an outcome funding request for proposals and a workshop on how to prepare an outcome funding proposal. This training will help potential proposers to understand the outcome funding approach and what it means for their projects and proposals. Outcome funding is very different from traditional funding in that funders invest in outcomes, rather than paying for activities. Grantees are accountable for results and have more interaction with funders in an effort to achieve outcomes.

Save Passamaquoddy Bay/Canada

Shanna Ratner presented on “Separating Economic Fact from Fiction” at the annual Public Meeting on the Future of LNG in the Bay sponsored by Save Passamaquoddy Bay/Canada. Shanna’s presentation emphasized the importance of agreeing on goals for the communities on both sides of the Bay. Now that the two sides and the Passamaquoddy Tribe have strong working relationships based on what they don’t want, it’s time to figure out how to work together to articulate what they do want and protect their valuable assets against future undesired uses.
Letting it all go...

New thoughts on measurement
In the age of the internet and the free flow of information it enables, we are learning to take a new approach to our own intellectual property. Several short stories illustrate the change. Several years ago, we were asked by a publishing company if we would be interested in writing a book on You Get What You Measure®, our trademarked approach to planning and evaluation. We said “no.” Why? Because we mistakenly thought that it would mean giving all our “secrets” away. Likewise, when we set up our program to train Measurement Guides, we structured it as a three day training with a follow-up practicum accompanied by a licensing option.

It seemed like a reasonable approach at the time. But it proved too cumbersome to sustain itself and all it did was create barriers to use. So, we’ve eliminated the licensing requirement in favor of a signed agreement that simply states that Yellow Wood will be given credit whenever it is used in whole or in part by a Measurement Guide. Much simpler and, we hope, much more effective in getting our work out to the world. In the meantime, we’re still looking for a publisher for the book we are finally ready to write…Any ideas?
Join us for a celebration of our 25th Anniversary

Yellow Wood Associates is now in its 25th year and going strong. To celebrate our “silver” anniversary, we would like to gather friends, colleagues, and clients together in Vermont next summer (2011) for a shindig. It’s a twofer – this is your chance to make us blush and help us plan for the future.

As we begin our planning for this event, we welcome your input and hope for your participation. If you would like to come celebrate with us, please let us know so we can include you in our invitation list. Vermont is beautiful in the summer and you never know who you might run into...

Keeping in touch...

Photos on page 6 and 7 are from Shanna’s recent trip to South Africa. “Ostrich riding in South Africa - more fun than a barrel full of boas.”
Building a Better Water System
Starts at Home
Runoff from local roads and lawns contributes to pollution in local St. Albans Bay. Yellow Wood Associates is working with the City of St. Albans on several projects that test ways to reduce the negative effects of runoff from our property on the local watershed.

Rain Gardens protect the St. Albans Bay
Yellow Wood Associates is now a Rain Garden Demonstration site. Rain gardens located on our property divert and filter stormwater. The result is a more beautiful landscape for us and cleaner water for the bay. An informational sign in our rain garden alerts passersby to the benefits of planting rain gardens and directs them to contact the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for more information.

Exploring Permeable Pavement
Building on our success with the rain garden, Yellow Wood Associates is exploring replacing the traditional pavement in our driveway and parking lot with permeable pavement. This change would further reduce storm and rainwater runoff from our property.
What’s new at Yellow Wood?

Staff Updates
It’s been a season full of building, construction, packing and unpacking for Yellow Wood staff.

Shanna Ratner is back in her house, after over a year of repair and construction work following a fire in March 2009. Welcome home, Shanna!

Samantha Dunn recently completed remodeling work on her new home and spent the summer tackling lawn and garden beds.

Ginger Weil just bought her first home, a 1920s bungalow, and is learning about the joys and logistical challenges of home repair.

Puzzler
Unscramble these anagrams! Clue: the anagrams are about Yellow Wood.

1) Wooly Dowel
2) Arts Ran Henna
3) All Seems Ivy
4) Sun and Hat Man
5) Glee Wiring


What We’re Reading

A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire, by Amy Butler Greenfield, mixes social and economic history, political intrigue, and scientific rivalries into a fascinating, brightly drawn tale. From changing fashions to changing trade routes, this history book spans continents and centuries while maintaining a clear, engaging focus. Local issues of intellectual capital and wealth creation appear through the lens of previous centuries! ~ Ginger

Zeitoun, by Dave Eggers, is a scary, but true story of one Muslim family’s experiences before, during and after Hurricane Katrina. This book chronicles their experiences navigating the aftermath of the hurricane as well as their experiences with law enforcement in a post-911 city. ~ Melissa
Becoming a Measurement Guide
The next Becoming a Measurement Guide training will be held October 12-14, 2010 in St. Albans, Vermont. Class size is limited to five. If you’re interested in attending, we recommend that you register as soon as possible. Learn more about Becoming a Measurement Guide at http://www.yellow-wood.org/bmg.aspx.

You Get What You Measure® Public Workshops
Melissa Levy led a public You Get What You Measure® workshop in Washington, DC in March 2010, attended by a variety of federal agency representatives (EPA, USDA, etc.), foundation representatives, and nonprofit organization representatives.

Melissa Levy will lead another public You Get What You Measure® workshop in Albany, New York on November 12, 2010. Join us at the Alumni Association’s Conference Room at the University at Albany for a one-day workshop on the measurement process that builds familiarity with measurement vocabulary and indicator analysis.

Can’t join us in St. Albans or Albany this fall?
We will offer another session of Becoming a Measurement Guide training March 21-23, 2011. We are also available to provide Becoming a Measurement Guide training for groups at a location of your choice - contact us for more details.

Becoming a Measurement Guide in Alabama
Shanna Ratner and Rob Petrini will be presenting a Becoming a Measurement Guide training in Jefferson County, Alabama. This will be one of the first offsite trainings of Becoming a Measurement Guide.

Boston Facilitators Roundtable
Shanna Ratner will be presenting a half day workshop of You Get What You Measure® to the Boston Facilitators Roundtable on November 5, 2010.

Alliance for Nonprofit Management
Melissa Levy will be presenting a brief introduction to You Get What You Measure® at the Alliance for Nonprofit Management conference (October 6-8, 2010) in St. Louis, Missouri.
Measurement News

Business Alliance for Local Living Economies
Shanna Ratner was invited to present You Get What You Measure® at the BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies) conference in Charleston, SC in May. Following up on the presentation, Yellow Wood has been contacted by the Community of Practice Manager at BALLE about the possibility of using You Get What You Measure® as part of a capacity development program for BALLE’s “best and brightest network of executive directors.”

CommunityMatters
Shanna Ratner will be presenting a brief introduction to You Get What You Measure® as part of a session about Indicators at the CommunityMatters conference (October 5-8, 2010) in Denver, Colorado.

Vermont Community Foundation and United Way of Addison County
Yellow Wood is doing work closer to home with the Vermont Community Foundation and the United Way of Addison County using You Get What You Measure®. We are delivering two modules of You Get What You Measure® to grantees of these two funders. To prepare for our first workshop, we helped to convert grantees’ logic models into the “goals” and “indicators” that we use in You Get What You Measure®. In our first workshop, we worked through an indicator analysis using one grantee’s goal and indicators. In preparation for the second workshop, grantees were then asked to assemble their own stakeholders to undertake their own indicator analysis using their own goal and indicators. At the next workshop, we plan to work through measures and measurement plans.

NOTICE: Beginning with our next issue, Yellow Wood Notes will be sent by email only to those contacts for whom we have email addresses, unless you request a paper copy. If you have questions about this change, please contact us at 802-524-6141 or yellowwood@yellowwood.org