

Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) and US BCSD Sign Memorandum of Understanding at Fall Meeting in Washington DC



A signing ceremony took place in the Pavilion of New Beginnings – the Woodlawn Wildlife Area located in Cecil County, Maryland. The site was a formally contaminated landfill that Bridgestone Americas Holdings Inc. has ecologically restored to viable wildlife habitat. Members of both organizations were present, and a tour of the site took place soon after, followed by refreshments.

The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding between WHC and US BCSD is to establish a general framework for collaboration between the two participants. The MOU will help create a backdrop for similar projects and programs each group focuses on, i.e. sustainability, ecosystem services, wildlife habitat, education and community outreach. A Washington DC based office for US BCSD housed by WHC is also under consideration as details and feasibility is discussed. The location would allow effective representation of US BCSD with the Federal Government and other Washington DC stakeholders. An agreement will be made after a sufficient feasibility study has been concluded. More specifically, the two groups will focus on broadening the US BCSD afforestation program, applying its groundbreaking Green Brownfields Initiative, and bringing WHC's wildlife certification program to the effort as well.

In the Lower Mississippi River Valley, where business, environmental, government and academic leaders are joining forces to convert marginal farmland in river bottomland into sustainable forests, the US BCSD-led project will be broadened to include other land areas in need of restoration. The project has resulted in more than 100,000 acres of cropland being converted to cottonwood and hardwood forests. The potential value from these conversions as a new crop for the landowners is estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Another project that will be built upon by WHC and US BCSD is that of the groundbreaking Green Brownfield Initiative. Joining forces, US BCSD and WHC will help ecologically restore brownfield sites that will produce both public and landowner benefits. By converting these sites to green space, the initiative will enhance the quality of life in this rapidly-growing region and provide landowners with a viable and cost effective means of turning a liability into an asset.

The WHC has produced a certificate and step by step program to help employees get involved in wildlife management teams at their workplace. The program is lead by a wildlife biologist in their area. The program, Wildlife at Work, encompasses various community-based projects that help bring collaboration with conservation organizations to corporations and others alike.

WHC President, Robert Johnson and US BCSD 2010 Chairman, Michael Gromacki (Dixie Chemical Company) signed the MOU document and spoke a few words at the end of the ceremony.