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Interview with Ted Labbe, Depave, 2009 (audio)

Ted Labbe

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PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW INDEX

INTERVIEWEE: _Ted Labbe_____

Interviewer: _Chris Fogg_____

Date: _May 31, 2009__

Location of Interview: _Wayport_____

Research Assistant: _N/A_____

Interview Series: SUSTAINING NORTHWEST LANDSCAPES & COMMUNITIES

Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE) WITH AN
EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
	Introduction on first audio file
0:00:10	Born and Raised in Portland, OR
0:00:35	Schooling at Maine
0:01:00	Reasons for returning to Oregon
0:01:30	Connections to natural world (fishing as a kid)
0:02:30	Passion of plants, fish and wildlife conservation in Colorado
0:04:00	Returning to Portland, working as conservation biologist in Washington
0:04:45	Impervious Surfaces and working on stormwater pollution
0:05:20	Works on regulatory side, too many right angles in Portland
0:06:00	Land use problems, threat to Salmon, road lengths, impervious surfaces
0:07:23	Educating the public about impervious surfaces, current “small solutions” (big pipe)
0:09:00	Source solutions, getting rid of unnecessary pavement, encourage growth
0:10:00	“No magic bullet”, the issue of stormwater and erosion, cancerous salmon
0:11:30	Native communities and forced conservation
0:12:20	Reliance on snow pack, and future reliance on reservoir capacity, “not mining the mountains”
0:13:25	What Depave is and why they do what they do, how-to manual on website, all

	volunteer organization, “part of the solution”
0:17:20	Site criteria, form online, importance of solving problems (stormwater, public uses)
0:19:00	Helping neglected neighborhoods, local partners (PTA, FROGS, Friends of Trees, Groundworks Portland, City Repair, etc.)
0:21:20	How the groups help specifically, Vestol Elementary’s huge project, problem with Portland Public Schools, vision of groups/community, “mixed-use green space”
0:25:00	What is Sustainability, “least qualified generation to define sustainability”, “content with not knowing the answer”, bigger than green building industry, Depave wants to redefine sustainability
0:28:50	Constantly strive to find answer of sustainability, science is a good starting point, pavement can lead to soil problems
0:30:18	Sustainable goals/achievements of Depave, cleaner product when using hands instead of large machines, old pavement recycled to newly regulated pavement, composts, rainwater storage
0:35:00	Research about impact of pavement on soil, lack of access to organic material/natural breakdown process, desert like soil, jumpstart system, first earthworm
0:38:20	Vision/beginning of Depave, begins in backyards, importance of word of mouth, newer and larger sites in the future
0:41:24	Relationship with City/Government, pioneering programs in city government, permits for development regulations, challenges with program classification and how the city would handle them, developing expertise
0:45:25	Volunteer outreach for those with the skills to help them the most, relationship with Portland and local communities, want to be a “special case” for the good they do, forced to drywell and what they do, community outreach
0:51:15	Environmental equality and the need to help lower income neighborhoods, “Urban Green Space Equity Atlas”, lower income areas are underserved by public green space
0:54:55	Typical workday at Depave, need to focus social infrastructure, party atmosphere but getting things done, Depave culture is being created/growing subculture
0:57:10	Creating supply for the needing industry demand, word of mouth, need for volunteers, part of larger organization City Repair, one of the most active elements

	of City Repair, other organizations that help, co-housing communities
1:01:30	Closing thoughts, encouraging people to come to work parties, “Depave your own backyard if you can”