

Portland State University

PDXScholar

All Sustainability History Project Oral Histories

Special Collections: Sustainability History Project

11-22-2010

Interview with Michael O'Brien, OSD, 2010 (audio)

Michael O'Brien

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/sustainhist>



Part of the [Environmental Design Commons](#), [Sustainability Commons](#), and the [Urban, Community and Regional Planning Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

O'Brien, Michael, "Interview with Michael O'Brien, OSD, 2010 (audio)" (2010). *All Sustainability History Project Oral Histories*. 71.

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/sustainhist/71>

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Sustainability History Project Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

Interviewee: Mike O'Brien

Interviewer: Ian Caputo

Date: 11/22/2010

Location of Interview: DiPrima Dolci

Research Assistant: Brian Hubel

Interview Series: Sustaining Northwest Landscapes & Communities

Recording Equipment: Digital Recorder (Windows Media Audio File) with an external, omnidirectional microphone

0:26 - How long have you lived in Portland?

0:43 - What brought you to Portland?

1:27 - Post high school education.

1:43 - How did you become involved in OSD? Energy Office merged.

3:14 - What did the Energy Office do?

4:18 - What are OSD's goals? Reduce, reuse, recycle. Help people rethink assumptions.

10:05 - Day to day activities.

10:42 - Initial involvement with LEED. Dialogue with builders.

13:03 - Green Investment Fund.

14:58 - Sustainable tenant improvement guide.

18:30 - Most effective programs? Tours of sustainable houses.

21:57 - Programs that were unnecessary in hindsight? Grants to businesses.

24:00 - Why has sustainability caught on in Portland? More open to sharing information and community input.

25:40 - Building approval process with helpful feedback vs. black box.

29:10 - Advice to contractors hoping to receive LEED certification.

34:44 - Graywater. Reuse on sight better for the environment, but poses health concerns.

38:20 - Composting toilets. Also a good idea, but with health concerns. Should be experimenting to perfect both before they're needed.

43:05 - How do you feel about the merger of Planning Bureau and OSD? Not pleased. Making it work is an unnecessary drain on both organizations' resources.

47:00 - What changes would you like to see? Climate change is not getting sufficient attention.

54:00 - Green construction. Energy efficient materials, such as clay.

59:10 - Your photography. Always wanted to be a photographer. Capturing images of things that may not last.

1:02:00 - Integrated design of buildings.

1:05:48 - What about the aesthetics? Arise out of making the building work.

1:06:55 - Changes in LEED standards. Now requiring that a building's actual energy usage be monitored before being certified.

1:10:30 - Need ways to give builders more incentive to care about a building's energy efficiency.