

Portland State University

PDXScholar

All Sustainability History Project Oral Histories

Special Collections: Sustainability History Project

11-20-2009

Interview with Bruce Walker, BPS, 2009 (audio)

Bruce Walker

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



Part of the [Other Business Commons](#), and the [Sustainability Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Hathaway, Zachary, "Interview with Bruce Walker, BPS, 2009 (audio)" (2009). Sustainability History Project. <http://archives.pdx.edu/ds/psu/10878>

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.

Portland State University Oral History Project

Interview Index

INTERVIEWEE: Bruce Walker – City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Solid Waste & Recycling Manager

Interviewer: Zachary Hathaway

Date: November 20th 2009

Location of Interview: Ecotrust Building, Northwest Portland

Research Assistant: Angie Cirello

Interview Series: SUSTAINING NORTHWEST LANDSCAPES & COMMUNITIES
Recording Equipment: DIGITAL RECORDER (WINDOWS MEDIA AUDIO FILE)
WITH AN EXTERNAL, OMNIDIRECTIONAL MICROPHONE

Time	Notes
:50	What brought you to Portland?
1:00	Graduate of University of Oregon
1:07	Love and work
1:19	First job in recycling - 1980
1:28	Education background
1:35	University of Oregon Political Science major
1:41	Community politics and environmental classes
2:03	Graduated in 1977
2:13	How did you get involved in your current work?
2:30	Began work during first Earth days in the early 1970s
2:44	Environmental club in high school - inclined and interest
3:20	Involvement in UO environmental community
3:30	Burn paper - bad idea
4:16	Burning failed
4:35	Bring recycling job post grad
4:50	Worked in Lincoln County on 1 year grant
5:10	Portland jobs
5:25	1987 started job with City of Portland
5:45	How do you define sustainability?
6:00	Strong environmental base, more environmental protection and green building
6:30	Recycling popular activity participated in the United States.
7:00	Social and economic issues
7:30	Who will build green buildings if uneconomical?
8:00	How do you gauge progress with sustainability?
8:50	First thing people learn in green business - job world becomes more

	specialized
9:25	Sustainability connects different elements, better than ecological.
9:50	Challenging issues in north and northeast Portland and recycling trucks
10:30	Garbage and recycling trucks
10:57	Put in standards
11:00	Is reuse a good thing in terms of trucks?
11:33	Truck replacement strategy
12:17	Genesis comes from equity issues, show as example for others.
13:20	Portland water bureau - looking at plan
13:48	What do you do and what are you in charge of?
14:00	Staff management, report to bureau manager, customer service, planning
15:10	Don't provide service, but manage it - make sure haulers are following rules.
16:00	Some repeating but also new projects
16:19	Could you tell me about how PSU's Commercial Recycling Project relates to Sustainability?
16:50	15th year, ongoing project - relates directly to economic and how much we charge or service.
19:00	Show data about what is being thrown out
19:34	Haulers can't tell you
19:53	Accurately reflects what is thrown out, very valuable tool in keeping rates lower
21:10	Economic recession and its affect on the recycling market.
21:32	Late fall showed a big drop in values of markets
22:04	Rate model - account for value of recyclables haulers collection
22:26	Prices dropped - tough for haulers
23:02	Projected rates - reward customers for more recycling reduces customer bill
23:47	Lower markets equals less revenue in system leading to higher customer bills
24:20	Markets are still in recession
25:00	Paper most recycled product
25:45	Tell tale sign in recession - more cardboard means more retail goods being brought
27:30	Markets currently flat and low
28:00	Challenges of getting people to recycle
28:35	We can do better - 75% goal set by city council
28:55	challenges - affectively communicating with the community
31:00	Food compost - expansion desired
31:20	Working with metro to find site
31:50	How does socioeconomic status affect recycling rates?
32:05	Research is right, lower status leads to more challenges
33:13	Working with community groups to be more active
34:46	Reaching out to Spanish and Russian communities
35:15	Has comingled recycling boosted recycling rates?

36:00	5% increase in recycling, garbage is down 10%
36:17	People are consuming less and recycling more.
37:17	Hopeful that there will be a better appreciation for durable goods
38:30	Consumer culture and changing behaviors
39:01	Tangible links to people's behavior - looking beyond recycling to carbon foot print and city interaction.
40:30	Lifestyle changes
40:50	Status of every other week trash collection
41:00	Compost element of recycling program, mostly business
41:42	Compost facility not in Oregon
42:00	Expanding compost program to include food waste
43:00	San Francisco example
43:22	Spring 2010 - Move green cart with food compose to weekly pickup, garbage every other week.
45:00	Plan for collection of household toxic waste curbside.
45:20	Next phase of challenging materials - drop off sites don't work because of driving.
46:45	Need to look at different model, more convenient - returning materials to retailers, bottle bill
47:53	What do you see as the future of waste management?
49:12	Less trucks on the roads, hard to recycle items
50:20	European approach, federal level governance
50:55	Green Dot Program
52:40	Embarrassing some cities don't have curbside programs
53:15	More involvement in local programs