

# Development Guided By Nature

By Beth Casper

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In a secluded alcove in South Salem, residents live in one of the first truly sustainable developments built in Oregon. Coined Woodscape Glen, the peaceful place has grand old native trees, plant-filled bioswales and community garden space—a vision of sustainable living built long before sustainability reached national prominence.

The person behind this visionary development, John Miller, is the owner of a family of businesses with the same environmental ethic. Wildwood/Mahonia is a family of companies whose holdings include a plant nursery and sustainable vineyard, innovative green buildings rented to local environmentally minded businesses, and community efforts such as an annual literary and arts publication that honors watershed restoration. In each endeavor, the company incorporates community service.

With nature as a guide, it is natural that Wildwood, Inc. would be EarthWISE certified through Marion County. The EarthWISE practices run through each building, agricultural field and office run by Wildwood/Mahonia.

The EarthWISE program is a free business environmental assistance program of Marion County. EarthWISE staff helps businesses recycle, save energy, reduce waste and much more. To earn certification, a business meets criteria in six areas. Wildwood/Mahonia is one of more than 160 EarthWISE businesses and organizations in Marion County.

“EarthWise is a great program and for many years Marion County has been a state-wide leader in helping promote sustainable practices,” said John Miller, president and founder of Wildwood/Mahonia. “I’m pretty familiar with this territory, since I’ve been operating this way for years, and I currently chair the Oregon Sustainability Board. But the assessment process EarthWISE does has taught us things we didn’t know and they keep us on our toes with their visits.”

The Mahonia Nursery is another example

of how nature guides business decisions. It is a place where rare white oaks are grown from acorns but larger trees are taken after being “rescued” from areas slated for development. The oaks are sold or donated to projects throughout the state. And the nursery runs with as light a footprint as possible: Biodiesel fuels the equipment at the nursery and the nursery specializes in native plants, which require less maintenance and provide natural habitat for birds and wildlife.

Mahonia Vineyard is a similar operation. It is farmed with sustainable methods to control weeds and pests. Its efforts with solar power and biodiesel helped it to become one of the first vineyards in Oregon to be carbon neutral. And the vineyard also earned its LIVE and Salmon-Safe certifications for practices that do not harm salmon in local rivers. The sustainably grown winegrapes are sold to wineries such as Salem’s Evesham Wood, and the Mahonia Vineyard wines are served in fine restaurants in Oregon and Washington and are carried by Roth’s, Whole Foods, New Seasons, Market of Choice and others.

The other enterprises of Wildwood Inc. are equally impressive. The East Pringle Innovation Center is a 12-acre development off Fairview Industrial Drive designed to be a hub for food processing and agriculture-related businesses. Fresh N’ Local Foods and Wandering Aengus Ciderworks, two local businesses, benefit from the solar thermal hot water system, solar panels, and the energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, which allow them to spend precious resources on growing their business rather than paying utility bills.

“We love to help businesses that use Oregon-grown agricultural products grow and prosper,” Miller said. “Energy efficiency improves their bottom line and their “green”



practices help them in the marketplace.”

Mill Creek Junction, another sustainable development, houses Sequential Biodiesel, the largest commercial biodiesel production facility in Oregon—producing 6 million gallons of biodiesel a year. Again, Miller helped the company grow by providing a building site and investing in the company.

A new building, the Madrona Flex Building near Salem airport, is a former blueberry processing plant. With the addition of solar panels and other green elements, Wildwood Inc. hopes to attract an urban winery or brewery—a place that could benefit from the energy efficiency and unique architecture.

Miller continues to strive for the most environmentally friendly practices and it shows in the latest phase of remodeling at the Old Pringle Schoolhouse in SE Salem. Additional office space and a future restaurant space incorporate innovative energy features that complement the existing 28kw solar array on the roof: LED lighting that modulates in response to the level of outdoor light, individual high efficiency heating and cooling systems for each office space, and permeable paving in the naturally landscaped courtyard which was a former parking lot.

Honoring Our Rivers (HOR), an annual publication dedicated to showcasing watershed restoration, is yet another perfect

## Salem Area Chamber Of Commerce Urges You To Vote No On Measure 97

The Salem Chamber strongly opposes Measure 97 because the facts are clear - it is a \$6 billion back door sales tax that would harm Oregon consumers and small businesses with no guarantee the money would go to education or anything else.

We’re urging you to vote NO on Measure 97 and to spread the word to others. Measure 97 is a tax on total sales - not profits - that would increase consumer costs for all types of products and services. It has no exemptions - most costs would be passed on to Oregon consumers and small businesses through higher prices for everything from food, clothing, gasoline, utilities, cars and housing to phone service, insurance, medicine and healthcare. The nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office concluded Measure 97 would increase costs for a typical family by \$600 per year, and that it would especially hurt low- and middle-income families and seniors who can least afford it.

In addition Measure 97 would cause the loss of 38,000 local jobs, according to the State of Oregon’s non partisan study. And, as noted above, there would be no guarantee that the money would go to education, healthcare or seniors. The Legislature’s own top legal authority has stated the Legislature could spend the money “in any way it chooses.”

Ballots will be arriving next week. Now is the time for us to be actively involved to help defeat Measure 97. The NO on 97 campaign has resources you can share, such as:

- \* Breakroom posters
- \* Easy-to-customize emails, website content and social media
- \* Store, lawn and road signs
- \* Bumper stickers, lapel stickers, window signs
- \* Fact sheets
- \* And much more.

Contact the campaign at [info@defeat97.com](mailto:info@defeat97.com) to request materials and a member of their team will get them to you right away. Visit [NOon97.com](http://NOon97.com) and learn why the Salem Chamber has joined the coalition of more than 26,000 Oregon consumers, small businesses, family farmers, healthcare professionals, educators, community leaders and organizations from every part of the state in urging you to vote NO on Measure 97 this November.

Thank you for your commitment to Salem, and your investment in YOUR chamber.

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