

West Coast Green Early Adopter's Workshop Interview Questions

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1. What inspired or caused you to get involved in green building & how many years ago was that? *I was inspired to be involved in green building my whole life through conservation and design experiences, it was just a part of the way I thought before we had a label for it. I started to connect the dots at an early age, during the 1920's (before I was born) my family donated our cabin to the Wharton State Track in the New Jersey Pine Barrens so that it could be historically preserved. At the time my grandfather was a planner for Atlantic County, NJ and realized where the roads were to be built would change this land for ever so he initiated a preservation plan in coordination with the state and that is how our family property ended up included in the Wharton State Track. The Pine Barrens is where I grew up and the delicate ecosystem had a huge influence on my vision of how nature and development could interface. I also grew up with a family completely committed to conservation and environmental issues so I am fortunate to be able to continue that legacy. My twin sister Ellen Southard began working with the AIA 25 years ago and has a degree in historic preservation, her influence has also been inspired my path. I am professionally trained as a commercial and fine artist and integrated building materials into my art work, where form replaced function in my vernacular. In the 90s I ran the Northwest face of a recycled timber company Duluth Timber. At the time Duluth Timber was one of the only material suppliers that had a national reputation and I realized there was a demand for more supply and more importantly education and I have dedicated the last 12 years of my life to this issue. As an early adopter the challenge at that time was to find like minded people, and we spent a lot of time mentoring each other and sharing ideas.*

2. 2 or 3 examples of what do you do to keep you on your edge.
I read everyday and look at local, regional, national and global examples of what can be done. I am not big on fiction so this is also a relaxation method for me and I feel blessed to see so much more information out there to think about. I also make an effort to spend as much time outdoors as possible hiking, canoeing and rafting. My inspiration comes from nature and ultimately I pursue this career to protect it. Our greatest teacher is nature itself and we must learn from natural systems in order to improve how we build. And lastly I think about how to improve on our built environment from a social equity perspective. I think we under estimate what there is to understand about innovation and we live in a culture that throws money at problems. My best lessons learned in green building come from cultures including those in our country that find their innovation and creativity from necessity.

3. What are the next steps for you to get to the next level?
To address true sustainability not just "green" the three legged stool is a beacon for me and I hope that we start integrating economy, environment and social equity in a more holistic way. The opportunities to improve quality of life on global scale have never

been better nor has the need been more evident then right now. I look to working in developing countries as my next personal step, until then improving the Pacific Northwest is top priority.

4. What feelings come up for you when you think of these steps?

Joy, Hope and Anticipation of change, it is what we have to hold on to and I believe that I can leave this a better world for others. This Climate Change crisis is an opportunity for future generations and we need to evolve if we are to survive as a species. In a good way I am also comfortable with us not surviving as a species. I don't mind coming back as a squirrel or a dragonfly in another life as long as I don't have to smell carbon emissions.

5. What are a couple of success stories of bringing along your network to their next level?

Recently at my work with King County I developed a CD/Rom toolkit for suburban jurisdictions. The toolkit has been developed to help kick start green building programs in our region. I think that my network is symbiotic so the next level for all of us happens by reaching out. I am volunteering in New Orleans to assist in the efforts of rebuilding with a goal of doing this in a more sustainable fashion in the last two years my networks in the Northwest have extended to the Southeast and that is very rewarding. NOLA has a new solar policy and I know that the volunteer work of many have caused that to evolve.

6. If you were to describe your network as a metaphor, what comes to mind...what would it be...? *A family of honeybees pollinating ideas, working in a really complex honeycomb.*

7. Next steps in working with your network in helping & inspiring them to the next level.

I am always thinking of how to implement biomimicry as the real model where nature is the mentor for design and building. I would love to have a green book club where people share these thoughts and implement a plan of change. To date the best product out there for doing this is the Living Building Challenge and I hope that it becomes widely adopted in an organic way.

8. Which ones are you most drawn to?

Paul Hawken's Wiser Earth is great network and one we need to use in order to develop our networks outside the confines of trade associations or we will end up back at the same place we started. I love Paul's philosophy that no one is in charge; we can march to the beat of our own drum with a mutual respect and understanding of the end goals.

9. Resources you'd suggest.

I am keeping it simple here as I could go on and on but these are my top picks for books and websites that give you the big picture as in the eyes of Patti Southard.

Websites:

Wiser Earth: <http://www.wiserearth.org/>

Biomimcry Institute: <http://www.biomimicryinstitute.org/>

King County GreenTools: www.greentools.us (for the local model that is working in our region)

Books:

Life and death of The Salt Marsh by Mildred and John Teal

The River Keepers by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Natural Capitalism by Paul Hawken, Hunter Lovins and Amory Lovins

The Silent Spring by Rachel Carson

All of John McPhee's books

Alternative Resource:

Sams and Carsons's Medicine Cards

The Native American Culture/First nations has a lot to teach us about other living creatures and as a culture took the time to observe them!

10. Anything else you'd like to tell me that I haven't asked?

The Dylan Cash sessions from 1969 and Ry Cooder with Ali Farka Toure are the two albums I cannot live without. Montana is truly the Last Best Place also home to the Biomimicry Institute. Wangari Matai is the greatest leader of the 21st Century. Everyone should watch The Royal Tannenbaums with their family. Sacajawea was the first U/S. woman to vote.

Your whole life you will hear the word No, but you will tell them YES!