November 28, 2004 – submitted by Keith Bowers, Chair of SERI
The Society for Ecological Restoration International
ASLA Reclamation & Restoration Professional Interest Group

Global Restoration Network

The field of ecological restoration is experiencing an explosion of information, ideas and creativity as the field of experts widens and more restoration projects are undertaken around the world. Like any new field, it has been a time of invention and entrepreneurship. But now that the field is more established, it has become clear that agencies, corporations and nonprofit organizations are often reinventing the wheel because there is no single, credible source of information on best practices. There is beginning to be more of a clamor from professionals in the field from funders and communities to have a cohesive, user-friendly source of relevant information, resources and inspiration for their restoration needs.

The Global Restoration Network (GRN): A Project of SERI, offers the field of ecological restoration a much-needed clearinghouse for credible information, and at the same time has the potential to become a sustainable revenue stream for SERI.

The GRN harnesses the infinite networking ability of the Internet to connect our field. GRN will be *THE* place to look first for any restoration question, from where to find suppliers of certain seeds, to where the best graduate programs in restoration are located; from the latest publications on best practices in restoration, to calls for bids on municipal restoration projects, etc.

What is the GRN?

GRN is a web-based clearinghouse of information on ecological restoration that is accessible through the SERI web site. Each section of the GRN site (see categories below) will link to related web sites. There will also be discussion groups, bulletin boards and other services to link professionals, students, etc.

Examples of how the GRN would be of help to professionals and community members:

❖ *You are writing a proposal to restore a forest that was decimated by wildfire. You go to the SER web site and click on the GRN button and suddenly you are linked up to relevant web sites, journal articles and plant and seed distributors to help you in creating your plan and developing your budget.*

❖ *You own a landscape architecture firm and want to start moving into ecological restoration. You click on the GRN to find continuing education programs for professionals who want to learn more about restoration.*

❖ *You are in a dispute with a government agency over best practices for managing a wetland restoration project. You click on GRN to find professional papers, statistics and other information to strengthen your case for how to proceed.*

What the GRN will accomplish:

➢ Bring restoration to every corner of the earth – wherever there is Internet access, there is access to vast resources on restoration via the GRN;
➢ Network developing nations with the expertise and resources of developed nations;
➢ Highlight and encourage best practices;
➢ Network funders and projects;
➢ Create online bulletin boards to invite conversations among experts in different biomes;
➢ Become a clearinghouse for technical advice and information;
➢ Help communicate the importance of restoration to laypeople;
➢ Network smaller volunteer projects with experts;
➢ Encourage research *and* link to organizations doing research.

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