

Superfund Job Training Initiative

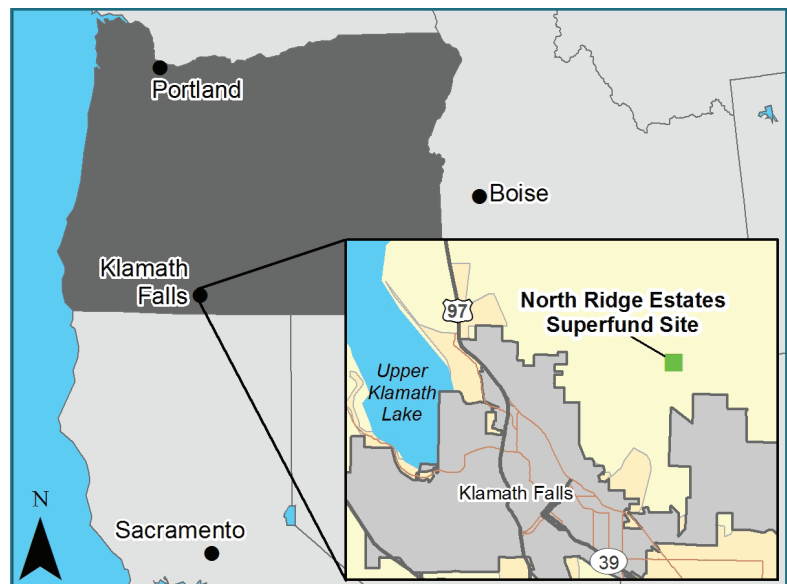


MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT THE NORTH RIDGE ESTATES SUPERFUND SITE IN 2017



Introduction

The North Ridge Estates Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) Cycle 2 is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 16 trainees living near the North Ridge Estates Superfund site in Klamath Falls, Oregon. Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce, Klamath Community College, remedial construction manager EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, and excavation and restoration contractor North Wind, North Ridge Estates SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills, certifications and hands-on training linked to construction and cleanup. EPA's goal is to help ascertain employment opportunities available for affected communities during the cleanup and redevelopment process, and to provide the workforce development skills needed to take advantage of those opportunities.



A U.S. Marine recuperation barracks was once located on the North Ridge Estates site. A residential subdivision is now located on site. (Map Sources: Esri, DeLorme, AND, Tele Atlas, First American, UNEP-WCMC and USGS.)

Outreach, Recruitment and Screening: February – March 2017

EPA Region 10 staff and the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce reached out to the Klamath Falls community by posting flyers, sending emails, advertising on social media and running ads in a local newspaper. SuperJTI and Klamath County Chamber of Commerce staff hosted information sessions on the program at Klamath Community College. In March 2017, 79 people came to the program's eight information sessions and completed a preliminary testing process. Following these sessions, 59 people returned and submitted required documents. Forty-three people participated in program tryouts. The tryouts included leadership, team-building and role-playing activities, a physical fitness evaluation, and observation by a team of evaluators from the program's partners. Sixteen trainees were selected during tryouts; all 16 people went on to complete the program.

Training and Job Placement: March – April 2017

The four-week North Ridge Estates SuperJTI Cycle 2 training program took place in Klamath Falls. Work readiness preparation provided during the program included pre-employment training modules on environmental justice, interpersonal communication, building cultural competence and effective work habits. EPA contractor Skeo provided the pre-employment training. Trainees then completed seven courses recommended for inclusion by site contractor North Wind, earning a total of six certifications:

1. 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER)
2. CPR/First Aid
3. 10-hour OSHA Construction
4. Asbestos Operations & Maintenance Class III
5. Work Zone Flagging
6. Forklift
7. Fall Protection

Klamath Community College and Argus Pacific provided the courses. Upon completion of the program, trainees were placed in positions on site working with North Wind. This North Ridge Estates SuperJTI marks the second time that SuperJTI, EA Engineering, Science, and Technology and North Wind have partnered at the North Ridge Estates site to place community members into jobs cleaning up their community. Through SuperJTI, trainees are provided with the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation and become valuable members of the workforce in their community.



Site Background

The North Ridge Estates Superfund site is located in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The site includes the 144-acre North Ridge Estates residential subdivision. Much of the site was formerly a U.S. Marine recuperation barracks. The barracks closed in 1946. After several interim uses, parties demolished buildings on site and began work on a residential subdivision. Due to improper demolition practices, asbestos from demolished buildings contaminated area soils and sediments. EPA placed the site on the Superfund program's National Priorities List (NPL) in 2011. Since 2003, EPA has removed 60 tons of asbestos-containing materials from the site every year. The final cleanup plan focuses on removing 2 to 4 feet of contaminated soils from privately-owned properties and replacing the material with clean soil. The cleanup spans three construction seasons, from 2016 to 2018. Season one started in July 2016 and finished in November 2016. EPA expects to complete cleanup of the entire site by December 2018.

GRADUATE PROFILES



Shiloh McConnell

Before SuperJTI, Shiloh McConnell had been involved in the environmental field off and on for about 20 years, living paycheck to paycheck and barely getting by. He had no time to take any classes, let alone the money for trainings that could help him earn more than \$11 an hour. Shiloh recalled the SuperJTI tryouts and selection process fondly. “It was awesome,” he said. “You can find out more about people’s skills and who has their heart in it.” The training also helped him get ready to go out and find a job. “The trainer was amazing,” Shiloh said. “He gave us a lot of energy, and I like to feel like I’m better off after meeting him, listening to him and learning from him about life and the field.”

Shiloh was hired by North Wind after completing the program. “I went into the North Wind interview with the energy from the SuperJTI training. The whole thing that the SuperJTI team did was amazing,” he reflected. While with North Wind, Shiloh helped with dust abatement, driving trucks and forklifts, and taking care of residential rehabilitation and maintenance work. At the end of construction season at North Ridge Estates, Shiloh interviewed with NWFF Environmental. With his certifications and experience with North Wind, he was hired on the spot; he is currently on track for a supervisor position. “SuperJTI changed my life. I probably wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for this program,” he noted. “We need this program in every state. There are a lot of people who really need SuperJTI.”



Michael Mead

After completing SuperJTI in April 2017, Michael Mead was hired by remedial contractor North Wind to work at the North Ridge Estates site. Michael put his new skills to use immediately, wearing protective gear and helping with dust suppression and control, a crucial task at the asbestos-contaminated site. Michael also supported construction and maintenance efforts at homes on site, working on water lines, fixing driveways, filling in top soil and making sure homes were up to code. Michael also received additional training at North Wind. “I feel lucky to have participated in the program,” he reflected. “I made more money than I have in a long time. I had an awesome experience with SuperJTI.”

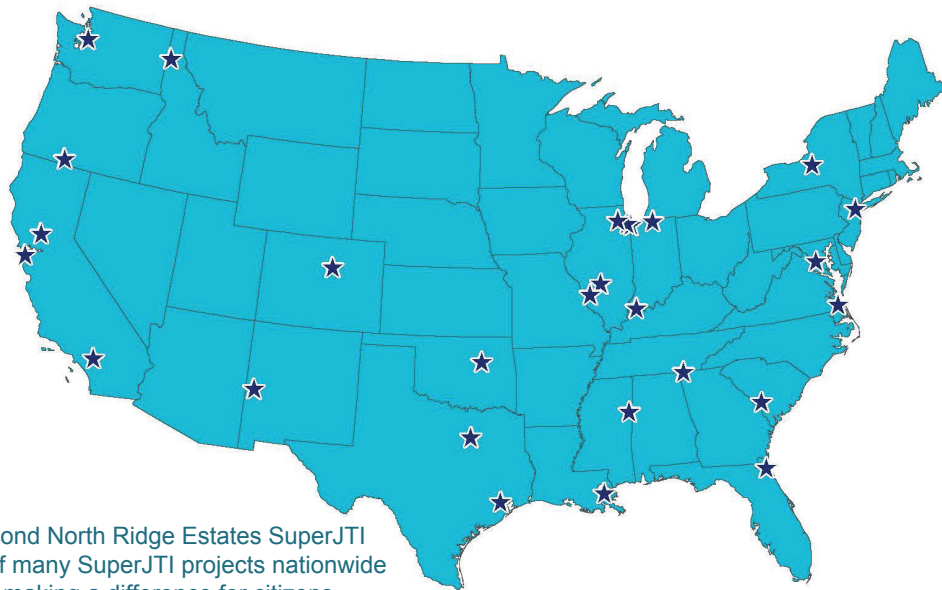


Graduation for the program’s 16 trainees took place at the Ross Ragland Theater in April 2017. Shawn Blocker, EPA Region 10’s site project manager, attended the ceremony and handed out certificates to the graduates. The ceremony included remarks from program partners as well as the graduates.

NORTH RIDGE ESTATES SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

Live near the site: One hundred percent of the trainees (16 people) live in Klamath Falls.

Come from a variety of backgrounds: Twenty-five percent of the trainees (4 people) are affiliated with a local Native American tribe. Nineteen percent of the trainees (3 people) identified as Mexican. Other trainees identified as Caucasian.



The second North Ridge Estates SuperJTI is one of many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for citizens living in communities affected by Superfund sites.



What is the SuperJTI Program?

The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups.

The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce.

EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative>

Or contact SuperJTI's National Program Managers:

Melissa Friedland
EPA Regions 1-5
(703) 603-8864
friedland.melissa@epa.gov

Viola Cooper
EPA Regions 6-10
(415) 972-3243
cooper.viola@epa.gov

