



## DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER TOM KRESS

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Douglas County Courthouse, Room 217  
1036 SE Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 24, 2022

### Commissioner Kress Instrumental in Acquiring an \$88,000 Grant for Source One Serenity

(Douglas County, Ore.) Douglas County Commissioner Tom Kress joined Rusty & Elena Lininger at the Roseburg VA Hospital recently for a food waste pickup as part of their vermicomposting (worm composting) program which was launched in Douglas County in 2021. Rusty and Elena are the founders of [Source One Serenity](#), a local non-profit whose [HealTerra](#) earthworm enterprise funds special empowerment programs for veterans. Commissioner Kress was honored to support and play a key role in the non-profit's successful grant application submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) last summer. Source One Serenity received an \$88,000 grant from USDA as a part the USDA's [Composting and Food Waste Reduction \(CFWR\) Cooperative Agreement](#). Douglas County Commissioners, along with the Douglas County Public Works Department - Solid Waste Division have been working with Rusty and Elena for the past few years, and in 2021 worked out a deal to lease property from Douglas County at the Glide Transfer Station for their worm composting farm and other projects. The USDA grant was used to further innovate and equip the farm with specialty equipment, including a 'compost turner' (which was made in Oregon exclusively for composting), in order to allow them to continue to expand their operations. Additionally, a portion of the grant will be used to facilitate the Umpqua Valley Farm to School program to teach food waste education in local middle schools.

The Source One Serenity's HealTerra worm composting social enterprise project started with a single tub of worms in Rusty and Elena's backyard using their own food waste, and has grown into a 1.20-acre worm farm at the Glide Transfer Station that collaborates with institutional kitchens to create a rich organic water tolerant soil amendment containing a diversity of plant nutrients and beneficial microorganisms. HealTerra's process includes both composting and vermicomposting. The process begins by using traditional composting methods to break down the collected food waste, called pre-composting, so it can be fed to the worms for vermicomposting process. Vermicomposting is the process of earthworm digestion and aerobic decomposition of vegetable food waste that creates nutrient rich worm castings. Realizing the success of their worm composting project and in developing their long term-vision for community food waste reduction and large-scale collaboration with local restaurants and kitchens, Rusty and Elena contracted with expert composting consultant, Rich Flammer. Flammer has spent the last 32 years traveling all over the nation specializing in composting, and his proficient guidance provided them with the methodology and training necessary to establish their composting process and partnership with the Roseburg VA Medical Center in December 2021. The Roseburg VA Medical Center collected 8,000 pounds of food waste from their institutional kitchen in their first six months of participation with the project, far exceeding their 2,000-pound annual goal by 300% according to Tobiah Mogavero, Army veteran and Environmental Protection Specialist at the Roseburg VA.

HealTerra is the first organic collection and processing program of its kind in Douglas County. The worm composting project serves multiple purposes. It serves as a community food waste reduction program. By utilizing vegetative waste, it will help divert hundreds of tons of food waste from our local landfills annually. The worm castings produced via vermicomposting serve as a sustainable, drought tolerant natural fertilizer for the local agricultural community and eventually as a soil amendment for area gardeners. The program also promotes the collaboration of community partnerships that help provide jobs, activities and healing opportunities for veterans. Plus, the biggest bonus is that funds raised by the non-profit's social enterprise worm composting farm provide outdoor recreation and land stewardship opportunities for veterans.

***"This project is a win-win for all partners and our community,"*** stated Commissioner Kress. ***"Diverting food waste from the landfill to compost helps with land stewardship and provides a rich end-product for farmers and gardeners to utilize and help their vegetation thrive. The revenues from that product help support Source One Serenity's veterans' programs, giving our nation's heroes a much-needed outlet and purpose. The Board of Commissioners are happy to see the partnership come full circle."***

***"Source One's food waste program is genius,"*** remarked Mogavero to Commissioner Kress during the VA pickup. ***"You've got 10 culinary wizards in our kitchen feeding veterans and the leftover food waste gets picked up by Rusty at Source One Serenity and they use it for good, when it would just sit for however long decomposing at the dump. Then Source One provides people like me an opportunity to rebuild overgrown trails in the forest. Using elbow grease to release anger and aggression...reviving trails for other people to enjoy, serving my community gives me purpose. It's like this positive feedback loop."***

"Source One Serenity is a 501c3 with a mission to empower veterans to reclaim their sense of purpose through outdoor activities and land ownership." HealTerra is a social enterprise arm of their organization that uses food waste to enrich soil, increase yield, and save water with 100% of the profits going "to those who protected you." Visit their website <http://sourceoneserenity.org> to learn more.

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(Photos Attached. Additional photos available upon request.)



*From Left: Tobiah Mogavero, Commissioner Tom Kress, Rusty Lininger*

