

The AgForestry Leadership Program curriculum is designed in three modules. Modules 1 and 2 are covered in the first year of the program. Module 1 provides participants an introduction to and the foundation of leadership skills. Module 2 introduces participants to public policy; what “public” policy is, the levers for change and the impact of effective leadership.

Module 3 is covered in the second year of the AgForestry Leadership Program. Participants learn about systems thinking at the local, state and international level—including spending two weeks abroad.

This is Class 44’s “Impact Report”, identifying five major themes that captures their journey through Module 3. [Click here to read their full Impact Reports.](#)

TYLER WEST To me, this highlights the paramount importance of basic leadership lessons and skills such as listening, building trust, sharing common goals and visions, and recognizing all contributors as a leader. We have all learned and practiced these building blocks during our time in AgForestry, and I will challenge myself to apply them in a more compassionate and understanding way to the complicated problems that I face as a leader.

RYAN BAYE Looking back on the last 16 months, I could write an entire book on AgForestry’s impact on me. And while I’m sad to see the end in sight, the goal of AgForestry was never about how it could change me. Instead, I wanted to develop new tools and better prepare myself in my commitment to help my organization achieve its goals. So, this is not the beginning of the end of a journey, but rather the end of the beginning.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

ROSA DEKKER My takeaway from the Systems Thinking Module is exactly that, thinking, innovating and rising to be better in any given opportunity. Leaders need to adapt, collaborate, innovate, communicate and strive to keep our natural resources available for future generations.

COLIN TOWNE In my own leadership journey throughout Module 3 things have not always been clear or visible. Whether through my personal life and career challenges or the difficulties presented to us in AgForestry, the goal or end result is not always certain. However, with patience, perseverance, and a little bit of fun along the way, I am now able to look out and see a spectacular view. One that allows me to see all that I have accomplished with the help of my fellow classmates around me, and a view that gives me confidence to be myself and develop the leadership philosophy that is true to me.

COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATIONS

AMBER ITLE AgForestry has given me the privileged opportunity to understand and experience the complexities of the problems we are tasked to solve together...one natural resource, one incarcerated person, one immigrant, and one contentious issue at a time. The wicked problems we learned about will take the collective efforts of all AgForestry alumni, future leaders and my inspirational colleagues and friends in Class 44 to solve. The impacts of these unique experiences have been transformative to my lived experience and leadership trajectory.

MAGGIE ELLIOT I emerge from this experience empowered by the idea that change is driven by communities. Every day in our careers, our cities, and our social circles, we have the ability to harness the talent, aptitudes, and passion of those around us.

MADI ROY AgForestry serves as a template for collaboration and improved understanding. A way in which we, in our daily lives and in our extended reach, can learn from others and work towards innovative and often radical solutions. AgForestry has strengthened my conviction that wicked problems can be overcome by the ability of people to understand alternative perspectives, be creative and remain curious.

TAMMY EDMONDS Systems Thinking has expanded my horizons and will cause me to ask more questions and may cause me to pause to allow for thorough exploration of the whole.

SYSTEMS THINKING AND COMPLEXITY

WIOLETTA SKOTNICKA-KOWALEC My perspective changed: I learned to look at issues at a more complex level, not to make assumptions, to ask more questions. Each problem is like a spider web with intricate design and multitudes of connections. As leaders we have to make sure that each “connection” is represented and included in conversation and solution.

SYSTEMS THINKING AND COMPLEXITY

NATALIE SAHLI In viewing systems wholistically, it is apparent, they are interconnected. Module 3 taught me that our local and global communities are small and interdependent. To feel this greater connection with humanity, to feel part of a bigger world, this was the most meaningful impact to me from our final months in AgForestry.

CARRIE NELSON As a leader, these instances reinforced in me a reminder to be curious, connected, and resilient. Reflection has further led to the reminder of finding what connects me to my team, my passion, and my curiosity.

REFLECTION AND LEARNING

JUSTIN STANG Module 3 has helped to align my leadership values, shape my priorities, and to confront the intersection between my emerging philosophy and the greater world that I live and work in. I have seen the value in continuing to learn as much as possible about the challenges and complexity of multi-faceted problems and fostering an environment committed to understanding with empathy and compassion.

DEREK FRIEHE How do our own values relate to dams, salmon, deforestation, water adjudication, trade barriers, land use, criminal justice, immigration, environmentalism vs. economic development, etc.? On many of these issues, my opinions have changed, been reinforced, been formed, and many times have raised more questions than answers. As a result, I've grown as leader and a person – and for that I'm thankful.

ERIC DIXON Throughout these seminars we were constantly exposed to differing or alternative viewpoints and ideas that may not be exactly in line with our own, which offered up the opportunity for deep thought and personal reflection.

GLOBAL AWARENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY

MEGAN SCHULTZ This “aha moment” was continued in Costa Rica, with a visit to the U.S. Embassy. Speakers at the Embassy highlighted the good things our government has done to help positively impact the people and economy of Costa Rica and the region. It reinforced to me that even the smallest changes can have huge impacts, and how important caring leadership is when navigating sensitive issues – whether in the tiny Costa Rican community of Mastatal, or at the worldwide organization Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture.

CAROLYN GROOM Seeing so many examples of strong leaders not being afraid to start, try, fail, try again, and ultimately make an impact for those around them has inspired me to live by the “Think global, act local” philosophy, meaning take action today to improve my reach of influence and that impact will ripple far beyond.

ANDY PERLEBERG As a result of my introduction to CATIE (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center), I was invited to present at the 18th North American Agroforestry Conference and to create a durable interchange with WSU and CATIE students and faculty. Opportunities to increase agroforestry practices and our bioeconomy improves the health and beauty of family farms and forests, protect financial investments, and reduce risks.

TIFFANY PITRA After visiting with farmers in Costa Rica, I feel a strong sense of responsibility to ask questions about where my food comes from and how to use my resources to support small producers around the world. As an ambassador for hop growers and a supplier for brewers, I will continue to stress the importance of communication and connection throughout the supply chain to support long-term solutions for a truly special industry.