



Mike Rigney at Glade Creek

Orvis means (environmental) business

When you think of the Orvis Company, the first thing that comes to mind is fly fishing. It's true, Orvis built its business on selling fishing tackle. Even though it has expanded to selling things like clothing, gifts, luggage, and art, it has never strayed from its environmental roots. Instead, those roots have continued to be part of the culture of the company Charles Orvis founded in 1856. In fact, Orvis himself was a conservationist and served on what today we would recognize as nonprofit boards.

Orvis' Roanoke office opened in August 1987, and is very much a supporter of the company's legacy. "We believe conservation is important to our lifestyle and our business," says Mike Rigney, Vice President of Operations. "Orvis measures what we're consuming and identifies how we impact the environment through our use of water, electricity, propane gas, paper, trash taken to the landfill— every consumable product."

To demonstrate it means business, Orvis has set some specific goals for itself as a company. For example, they donate 5 percent of pretax profits each year to conservation efforts around the area, and are committed to becoming carbon neutral by the year 2020.

Like many other companies who have committed to environmental stewardship, Orvis' Roanoke facility has replaced all its old light fixtures with T-8s and added motion sensors. The company made a \$350,000 capital investment to replace the lights in its Roanoke facility. "By using more efficient lighting and less energy, we are not only saving the planet, we are saving money," says Rigney. As a result, they are saving 39 percent on electricity bills, allowing them to save between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per month.

Another reason Rigney believes Orvis' conservation emphasis is beneficial from both an environmental and a business standpoint is because it gives the company a competitive advantage in attracting employees with like values. "We lead by example and demonstrate to our associates and the community how important environmental stewardship is," says Rigney.

"Conservation is part of our core values," adds Rigney. "We encourage our associates to instill these values into the workplace as well as their daily lives. We are always seeking ideas to impact the community through conservation."

For example, the Roanoke facility will be implementing new warehouse systems in 2009 with less dependency on paper. They are also encouraging customers to use their Web site for service, as well as their Live Chat feature. According to Rigney, this will provide better service for customers without impacting the environment.

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By **Melinda Mayo**

One of the projects the Orvis Roanoke office staff is working on is the restoration of Glade Creek. With the assistance of Trout Unlimited, they hope to approach businesses near the creek's location that would be willing to partner with them on this project. The stream runs alongside U.S. Route 460 for a short distance and passes within 3 miles of the Orvis distribution facility. Glade Creek has potential to offer excellent habitat for trout and would be an important restoration in an urban setting.



Another way Orvis demonstrates it is serious about protecting the environment is through the company's decision to hire a Senior Facility Manager to look at the life of the facility and its sustainability. Other Orvis offices are doing this as well to reinforce the focus on sustainability and conservation.

Orvis maintains its environmental philosophy by modeling its values to employees and encouraging them

to look for opportunities to conserve energy, such as carpooling. Another opportunity the Roanoke facility offers is for employees who live in areas that don't recycle to bring their items to work for recycling. Orvis' staff has also established a Social Concerns group, comprised of employees who want to volunteer their time to help promote special initiatives, including conservation efforts.

"It's worth the investment of time and energy for our company to be a good environmental steward," says Rigney. "It comes down to this: We are walking the talk when it comes to putting our values into action." ■