



Today's thought is inspired by and based on the Robert Frost poem titled *The Road not Taken*.

The poem begins with a dilemma:

*"two roads diverge in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth."*

I liken this to the decision on whether or not one should join the ESP professional organization. Does one simply perform their job to the best of their ability or does one take that extra step and join this amazing Extension Service professional organization? I looked down the divergent roads; one leading to involvement with ESP and one leading to status quo (and perhaps having the time to click off a few more "to-do" items). I noticed the road to ESP involvement was:

*"just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanting wear; though as for that, the passing there had worn them really about the same."*

In other words, as I weighed the decision to join and it seemed it was 6 of one vs half dozen of another. What would I really gain or experience by joining ESP? Or in Robert's words:

*"And both that morning equally lay in leaves no step had trodden black."*

I chose to take the road that led to ESP involvement and this year that road took me to Cape May, NJ for the National ESP Conference. And much to my delight the road ended at the shores of the Atlantic and continued via boat out into the sea where I enjoyed a fabulous sunset with friends old and new while dolphins frolicked beside us. During the course of the conference, I learned about the great work happening through the committees of this extension service professional organization's efforts, met new people, gained new friends and stretched myself beyond my comfort zone. In addition to attending the National Conference, I basked in the glory of the ESP National president being from our little chapter; just one of the accomplishments of the Oregon Gamma Chapter. Additional accomplishments of our chapter include sending representatives to the JCEP and PILD conferences – both superb conferences for leadership and professional development. I was able to help nominate members for awards and most all won at the regional and National level. I am also able to celebrate with fellow members for having several of our posters being top place finishers at the National Conference and our presentations accepted. In short, I felt a feeling of belonging, pride and companionship through my involvement with ESP.

Returning to Robert Frost's words...

*"I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence: two roads diverged in a wood, and I .. I took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."*

And I am glad I did! The Oregon Gamma Chapter of ESP is amazing.