FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
December 5 – 7, 2017 • McMenamin’s Edgefield, Troutdale, OR
RVCC: where it’s cool to be reasonable.

Vision
Healthy landscapes and vibrant rural communities throughout the American West.

Mission
To develop an engaged and diverse network of community leaders who advance policy solutions that align public and private land stewardship with community benefit.

Goals
The Coalition’s work is focused on three goals: Policy, Stories, and Learning.
• Policy – Continue to advocate for investment in and inclusion of rural community interests in existing and new policy.
• Stories – Establish and grow the visibility of community based natural resource management through communications and storytelling.
• Learning – Facilitate learning among community based practitioners and institutional entrepreneurs to increase innovation and implementation of landscape-scale restoration projects.

We believe that by being pragmatic, solution oriented, and working in partnership with each other and with management agencies, we will most effectively achieve these goals.

Meeting Design
The RVCC Annual Meeting connects practitioners from across the West, facilitates peer-to-peer learning, and helps participants identify common challenges and opportunities. We believe that by bringing leaders together and asking critical questions, we can develop comprehensive solutions and ultimately be more effective as a whole. We will use the discussions that take place during this meeting to refine and shape RVCC’s focus areas for 2018.

We have designed this meeting to be first and foremost—participatory. The meeting is also a working meeting. Some of the most talented and committed leaders come together at this event – we expect that you will participate by not only listening for new ideas, but by bringing questions and creative proposals to the table. By working together, we have the ability and power to raise our collective voices in support of rural community health and conservation.

Key Topics & Themes
• Rural economic development and land stewardship: what does a holistic stewardship economy look like in rural communities?
• Shared stewardship: what are the opportunities to work across landscape boundaries to address ecosystem and community-level needs?
• Fire management: how can we support increasing fire use – prescribed and managed fire – to meet restoration needs and reduce the risk of high intensity fires?
• NEPA improvements: how can we productively engage with conversations about how to improve NEPA so that the process is effective in informing decisions but not overly burdensome?
• Landscape scale restoration: what is the status and future of some key authorities and programs, like CFLR & Joint Chiefs, and what is the role of communities?
• Tools for partnerships: what are the mechanisms/instruments/authorities that support cross-boundary and multi-entity partnerships for stewardship?
8:00 am – 12:00 pm  Optional Field Trip + Discussion: Eagle Creek Fire  
(Columbia River Gorge)  
**Purpose:** To view and discuss the ecological, social and economic impacts of the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge. Lessons from this local project will inform regional and national discussions on wildland fire management and policy.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  Registration Open (Light lunch included)

1:00 pm  Welcome + Introduction to RVCC  
(Lewis and Clark Ballroom)  
**Purpose:** Overview of RVCC and what to expect during the Annual Meeting.  
**Speakers:** Karen Hardigg, RVCC Director  
Nick Goulette, Chair, RVCC Leadership Team

1:30 pm  Rural Development through Land Stewardship  
**Purpose:** What is the role of community based land stewardship, and how might RVCC build a more inclusive movement through a renewed focus on community economic development?  
**Speakers:** Nils Christoffersen, Executive Director of Wallowa Resources  
Steve Grasty, former Harney County Judge

2:15 pm  Small Group Discussion

2:45 pm  Break (Snacks Provided)

3:00 pm  Panel: Political Realities and Opportunities in Rural Conservation  
**Moderator:** Cass Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Program  
**Speakers:** Patrick Holmes, Natural Resource Policy Advisor to Governor Bullock (MT)  
Grant Colvin, Policy Director, Western Landowners Alliance  
Dylan Kruse, Policy Director, Sustainable Northwest  
Cecilia Clavet, Senior Policy Advisor, TNC

4:15 pm  Keynote: The Role of Community Based Forestry Today  
**Purpose:** How has broader society and stakeholder engagement with and values associated with rural communities and public lands evolved? How can rural communities remain essential and relevant to public land management?  
**Speaker:** Mary Mitsos, President, National Forest Foundation

5:00 pm  Adjourn

6:00 pm  Informal social gathering (no host, location TBD)

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**Meeting Overview**

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DAY 2  Wednesday, December 6, Morning

7:00 am  Breakfast (Lewis and Clark Ballroom)
8:00 am  Welcome and Review of the Day Ahead: Karen Hardigg
8:30 am  Concurrent Sessions: Participants are asked to pick one topic and stay through both sessions.

Session 1: Problem Diagnosis – Gaining understanding of current information, trends, and conditions.
Session 2: Solutions – Identifying priorities, what’s feasible, and what we’re willing to work on together.

Large Landscape Scale Restoration – 
Stocktaking and Looking Ahead  
(Blackberry Hall N.)

NEPA: 
Red Herrings & Solutions  
(Blackberry Hall S.)

Community Based 
Fire Management  
(Barley Room)

8:30 am  Session 1: Problem Diagnosis
Over the last decade, the Forest Service and partners have been implementing programs designed to accelerate collaborative landscape-scale restoration, including the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) and the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership (JCLRP). Participants will take stock of where we stand today through the sharing of recent research, internal agency perspectives, and their own experiences. What have these programs achieved? Where have they fallen short or evolved as we have learned? Specific topics may include: What are the tradeoffs to investing in large landscapes, are rural communities benefiting from this approach, and what happens after CFLR expires?
Facilitator: Emily Jane Davis, Oregon State Univ.

8:30 am  Session 1: Problem Diagnosis
The Forest Service recently announced an agency-wide focus on changing how it engages in project design, regulatory compliance and public engagement to get more work done on the ground. This focus includes reforming NEPA policies, restoring agency-wide training, and designing new performance measures. Participants will hear from planning experts on the status and context of the challenges, and learn to distinguish which implementation delays are due to NEPA and which are not.
Facilitator: Karen Hardigg, RVCC

8:30 am  Session 1: Problem Diagnosis
Efforts to help communities live with wildfire have focused on mechanical fuels reduction and preparing their homes and landscaping to minimize impacts. In many instances, fire adapted communities will also need to begin wielding fire as an active management tool. This session will explore how community leaders can work with agency partners to plan for using wildfire and prescribed fires as tools for community wildfire protection, and how we could build cooperative partnerships and local capacity that can shift local culture and bring home increased socio-economic benefits from fire management.
Facilitator: Nick Goulette, Watershed Research & Training Center

10 am Break

10:30 am  Session 2: Solutions
How might RVCC work with the Forest Service in its effort to improve environmental analysis and decision making? Participants will consider the role of policy, practice and peer learning in overcoming the process predicament.
Facilitator: Karen Hardigg, RVCC

10:30 am  Session 2: Solutions
Building on ideas from the first discussion and the Eagle Creek field trip, participants will identify actionable policy, practice and peer learning strategies for improving community based fire management.
Facilitator: Nick Goulette, Watershed Research & Training Center
Wednesday, December 6, Afternoon  DAY 2

12:00 pm  Lunch (Lewis and Clark Ballroom)

12:45 pm  The Forest Service and Partners in the Pacific Northwest – Ecosystem Workforce Program
Purpose: Provide an overview of some of the social and economic contexts in which the Forest Service operates in the Pacific Northwest, including examples of collaborations and partnerships in the region focused on advancing and leveraging restoration efforts.

1:30 pm  Concurrent Sessions: As with the morning sessions, participants are asked to pick one topic for the afternoon.

Partnerships & Agreements for Shared Stewardship
(Blackberry Hall S.)

Rural Development through Land Stewardship
(Blackberry Hall N.)

Emerging Issues and Trends in Conservation & Community Development
(Barley Room)

1:30 pm Session 1: Problem Diagnosis
Collaborative approaches to building social agreement about land stewardship have grown in popularity, but how to get work done on the ground after conflict resolution remains challenging. RVCC has found that a lack of guidance on how to use existing programs, tools and authorities that support all lands work in practice leads to confusion about what is possible. We will review mechanisms (such as Good Neighbor and Stewardship authorities) available to share and implement work across boundaries.

Facilitators: Karen Hardigg, RVCC, Emily Jane Davis, Oregon State Univ.

1:30 pm Session 2: Solutions
Incorporating the Western Governors’ Association’s recent All Lands recommendations, we will identify strategies to overcome bottlenecks and leverage innovative solutions.

Facilitator: Karen Hardigg, RVCC

3:30 pm Break

3:30 pm Session 2: Solutions
What kinds of economic development can be realized through land stewardship? How might RVCC better tell the story of this work?

Facilitators: Bob Christensen, Sustainable SE Partnership and Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources

3:30 pm Session 1: Problem Diagnosis
This session will cover hot topics and emerging trends that are not included in the other breakout sessions. Potential topics include the 2018 Farm Bill, county payments, sage grouse management, and outcome based grazing. Participants may also continue discussions on ripe topics from the morning sessions, and engage in informal networking and mentoring with their peers.

Facilitator: Nick Goulette, Watershed Research & Training Center

5:00 pm  Adjourn

6:00 pm  Evening Networking Reception & Silent Auction (Lewis & Clark Ballroom)
Connect with colleagues and partners and bid on exciting auction items to support RVCC’s work. Heavy appetizers provided.

8:00 pm  Reception ends, evening on your own
DAY 3  Thursday, December 7

7:30 am  Breakfast (Lewis & Clark Ballroom)

8:30 am  Synthesis of Discussions and Priorities
Purpose: Session leaders will report out on Wednesday’s discussions, identifying priorities and next steps.

9:30 am  Turning to Action
Purpose: Exploring ways that coalition participants can work together, aligning respective work more efficiently and effectively. Representatives from the national, regional and state levels will provide advice on how to effectively leverage RVCC’s interests.

10:30 am  Next Steps: Identifying Actions Items and Commitments

11:30 am  Closing Comments
Adjourn by 12:00 pm

Notes:
Supporters

We would like to thank the USDA Forest Service, the Northwest Fire Science Consortium, and the RVCC Leadership Team members for their support of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition and the 2017 RVCC Annual Meeting.

Leadership Team

For more information

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Cover photo by Faith Berstein

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