

# WORKING ACROSS ALL LANDS

## WHAT IS IT?

Across the West a new approach to collaborative land management is emerging, often described as “All Lands, All Hands.” Natural resource management across All Lands involves multiple parties who rely on neighboring land parcels for economic, social, and ecological values. The parties involved in these initiatives identify common interests that cut across ownership boundaries and pool their resources to achieve mutual benefits through collaborative restoration and stewardship activities. All Lands initiatives typically take place at scales that are meaningful to the resilience of human communities, fish and wildlife populations, and regional economies.

## WHY DO IT?

Natural processes, including fire, insect and disease outbreaks, hydrological cycles, and wildlife movement, operate irrespective of private and public land boundaries. Likewise, the health and vitality of social and economic systems are dependent upon all lands. An All Lands approach to collaborative stewardship recognizes the social, ecological, and economic interdependence that exists regardless of property and management boundaries and strategically targets the larger benefits that can be achieved when working together at broader, more holistic scales. Pooling public and private resources from across ownerships and investing long-term in local workforce development have never been more critical to natural resource stewardship or community well-being.

## WHAT IS DRIVING THE GROWTH OF THE ALL LANDS, ALL HANDS APPROACH?

Many political, economic, and ecological drivers are spurring the development of this form of collaborative stewardship, based on a growing realization that we can accomplish more together than we can alone. Tight agency budgets, lagging economic recovery in isolated rural areas, and the increasing threat and impact of climate

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritize investment in programs and tools that incentivize work across boundaries and strengthen local community-based and regional organizations.
- Develop clear guidance and direction that fosters inter-agency coordination throughout planning and project implementation.
- Provide increased training in collaboration, leadership, and utilization of existing tools for working across all lands.
- Develop clear and consistent mechanisms for incorporating local community input into project development, goal-setting, implementation, and monitoring.

change have led to a new wave of innovation aimed at achieving more durable landscape outcomes. Policy tools designed to catalyze the All Lands approach have strengthened key cross-sector relationships built on mutual benefits, understanding, and respect. As the All Lands approach grows, communities are setting a new standard for achieving long-term ecological and economic solutions backed by social agreement and joint investment.

## BENEFITS OF AN ALL LANDS APPROACH

- **Achieving Outcomes on the Ground:** By working across multiple land ownerships, an All Lands approach allows land managers to address ecological issues at the scales on which they operate. Not only can managers do more work on more land, but they can also coordinate across boundaries to make sure work is done strategically. Including a wider range of partners and operating at larger

scales, this approach allows land managers to achieve better economies of scale while leveraging additional funding.

- **Diverse Expertise at the Table:** No single agency or organization has the answer to land management challenges that are interdisciplinary by nature. An All Hands approach brings to the table greater vocational, academic, professional, and experiential depth in order to develop smarter projects that meet a range of community interests.
- **Building Better Relationships:** Working across ownerships and sectors develops relationships between community members and agency partners based on mutual trust, respect, and understanding. These relationships are critical for collaboration to produce the return on investment that that can only be achieved by effective partnerships.
- **Durable Programs and Results:** Cross-boundary projects require the creation of a common vision by a diverse range of partners. The social agreement and mutual benefit that result from this bottom-up process lead to more credible projects, durable partnerships, and the adaptive capacity to thrive in today's rapidly changing world.
- **Powerful Strategic Planning:** The conservation and economic development challenges facing rural communities are inherently intertwined. An All Lands approach allows land managers and community leaders to plan for their environmental and economic futures simultaneously by recognizing the multiple benefits a single landscape can provide.
- **Pooling Resources for Greater Impact:** An All Lands, All Hands approach can appeal to a wide range of partners, leading to pooled and leveraged investment and more work done on the ground. By increasing capital and human resources--and working on both private and public lands--cross-boundary projects can also include phases that are implemented more expeditiously. Increased outcomes can build the momentum, optimism, and relationships within collaborative groups that are critical to working on more challenging projects.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Continue Investment in All Lands Programs and Tools*

Programs such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program have created innovative projects that span ownership boundaries and lead to ecological and economic outcomes at scale. Multi-year investments in these cross boundary initiatives will help realize long-term benefits of an All Lands approach such as durable partnerships and appropriately-scaled contracts and workforce development. In addition, programs that make funding available to facilitate collaboration through an All Lands approach should include investment in community and agency capacity to implement the vision.

1. Congress should prioritize investment in programs and tools that incentivize work across boundaries, such as the Good Neighbor Authority, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution Program, and the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Program.
2. Congress should prioritize funding to programs and activities that strengthen local community-based and regional organizations, such as the Community Capacity and Land Stewardship (CCLS) Program.
3. The Forest Service should expand the CCLS to all regions of the US.

### *Improve Partnerships*

Working across ownerships requires that participating agencies and organizations be encouraged to take risks, be creative, and communicate across multiple scales and sectors. Federal agencies do not currently incentivize this kind of sophisticated leadership through hiring processes or performance elements, nor do they enable fluid communication across departments and offices. Therefore, program success and the quality of collaboration often hinge on the motivations, skills, leadership, and relationships of individual agency staff members at the table.

1. Federal and state natural resource agencies should develop clear guidance

## ALL LANDS SUCCESS STORY: STEWARDSHIP ALLIANCE OF NORTHEAST ELKO

The Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko (SANE) is an example of a successful All Lands, All Hands collaborative effort to steward a shared landscape. Located in the sagebrush steppe of northeastern Nevada, SANE brings together eight local ranchers with state and federal land and wildlife management agencies to provide and maintain healthy sagebrush ecosystems while preserving the local ranching economy. The SANE ranches encompass close to 1.7 million acres of private and public land, including both BLM and Forest Service land. The Alliance has developed a work plan of over 100 projects that benefit the Greater Sage-Grouse while preserving the local ranching heritage. To date over \$300,000 has been spent on project implementation, and another \$655,520 has been secured for future implementation.



*A Greater Sage-Grouse. Photo by Stephen Ting, US Fish & Wildlife Service.*

### SANE Accomplishments So Far:

- Creation of a working Sagebrush Ecosystem Management Plan
- Collaborative progress towards addressing threats to the Greater Sage-Grouse through activities like meadow protection, fire preparation, fencing projects, and conifer removal
- Support of the local ranching economy
- Nearly \$1 million in investments leveraged from the BLM, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and private landowners
- Over 30 projects implemented on private and public land, vetted through a Technical Advisory Committee
- Strong working relationships formed by identifying and agreeing upon common landscape values and goals and by fostering a better understanding of each organization's processes and challenges
- Contributed to the current non-listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse, alongside other local efforts to increase landowner and agency cooperation

and direction that fosters inter-agency coordination throughout planning and project implementation.

2. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) should develop hiring standards, personnel evaluation, and other incentives to encourage agency managers to engage in collaborative work across All Lands while also providing increased leadership and collaboration training that enables managers to be effective partners in these efforts.

### ***Pool Resources for Greater Impact***

Leveraging public and private resources, including funding and data, across agencies and programs holds great promise. Yet in practice, leveraging financial resources can prove challenging as

many variables influence the timing and levels of funding availability, such as staggered public and philanthropic funding cycles. Existing tools and authorities that enable maximizing public and private funds while working across ownerships (such as stewardship contracting, participating agreements, and the Wyden Authority) are underutilized. Knowledge regarding how to use these tools and the willingness to do so varies widely across agency and partner staff, leading to inconsistency and inefficiencies. In addition, effective pooling of data from across agencies and partners is often stymied by access issues, inconsistent quality and data collection methods, and a lack of reliance on local knowledge and expertise.

1. Criteria for grants, loans, agreements, and cost-share programs should reward and support All Lands collaboration and capacity building, including technical assistance.
2. The Forest Service and BLM should, in conjunction with partners, provide increased training and assistance around utilizing existing tools for working across All Lands.

### ***Include Community Benefit***

In our experience, current All Lands projects have focused heavily on ecological outcomes and underinvested in long-term community well-being. Large-scale land stewardship efforts must be tied to investment in local workforce capacity

and economic health to be sustainable. All Lands projects would benefit significantly from improved alignment and mutual support between the USDA Forest Service and other federal agencies.

1. The Forest Service and BLM should work with rural community leaders to develop clear and consistent mechanisms for incorporating local community input into project development, goal-setting, implementation, and monitoring.
2. The Forest Service should capitalize on the power of partnership and alignment with Rural Development by developing clear guidance regarding programs that can help link natural resource management and community vitality.

## **ALL LANDS SUCCESS STORY: HOONAH NATIVE FOREST PARTNERSHIP**

The Hoonah Native Forest Partnership (HNFP) is another example of a successful All Lands, All Hands project that is developing around the forests of southeast Alaska. This project is a science-based, landscape scale, community forest approach to watershed planning and project implementation that includes lands from the Tongass National Forest, two tribal corporations (Sealaska and Huna Totem), and the city of Hoonah. In addition to these land managers and landowners, the partnership also includes The Nature Conservancy, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, two local universities, and a community development financial instrument (CDFI) called Haa' Aani'. The total project area is approximately 150,000 acres. Project partners are aiming to achieve a measurable and resilient blend of timber, salmon, and deer production; local economic diversification; and improved watershed health.



*Members of the HNFP Stewardship Crew. Photo by Bob Christensen, Sustainable Southeast Partnership.*

### **HNFP Accomplishments So Far:**

- Diverse and inclusive partnership codified in a Memorandum of Understanding and Participating Agreement
- \$1.8 million secured through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- \$2 million provided by The Nature Conservancy and USDA Rural Development for loans through Haa' Aani' now available for natural resource business start-ups
- \$600,000 in leveraged funds and in-kind fieldwork from the local tribe, private landowners, conservation NGO's, city government, and universities
- Local 6-person tribal crew employed to complete a natural resource inventory and undertake implementation and monitoring field work
- Successful development of new LiDAR-based modeling tools for supporting forest, stream, and road management activities

## Alaska

Sitka Conservation Society  
Sustainable Southeast Partnership\*

## Arizona

Gary Paul Nabhan, Center for Regional Food Studies,  
University of Arizona Tucson

## California

Calaveras Healthy Impact product Solutions  
Dr. Erin Kelly, Humboldt State University  
Jim & Lynn Jungwirth, Woodworks  
Mid Klamath Watershed Council  
Sierra Business Council  
Watershed Research & Training Center\*

## Colorado

Black Forest Together  
Coalition for the Upper South Platte  
Colorado Springs Utilities  
Dolores Watershed & Resilient Forest Collaborative  
FireWise of Southwest Colorado  
Grand County Wildfire Council  
Jefferson Conservation District  
Markit! Forestry Management  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees  
Vegetation Management West, LLC  
West Metro Fire Rescue  
West Range Forest Products  
West Range Reclamation, LLC

## Idaho

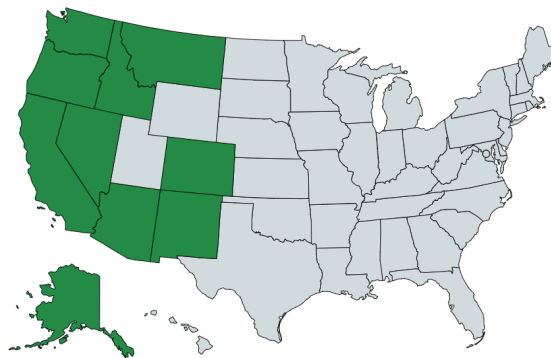
Framing Our Community, Inc.  
Idaho Conservation League  
Salmon Valley Stewardship\*

## Montana

Blackfoot Challenge\*  
Flathead Economic Policy Center

## Nevada

Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko



## New Mexico

City of Santa Fe Fire Department  
Edgewood Soil & Water Conservation District  
Forest Stewards Guild\*

## Oregon

Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council  
Blue Mountains Forest Partners  
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council  
Ecosystem Workforce Program\*  
Integrated Biomass Resources, LLC  
Project Wildfire Oregon  
Siuslaw Institute\*  
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative  
Sustainable Northwest\*  
Wallowa County  
Wallowa Resources\*

## Washington

Mt. Adams Resource Stewards\*

## National

National Association of Forest Service Retirees

*\*Denotes an RVCC Leadership Team member.*

## ABOUT RVCC

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) promotes new approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the rural West. We are committed to developing practical solutions through collaborative, place-based work that recognizes the inextricable link between the long-term health of the land and the well-being of communities. RVCC focuses on practical, equitable and sustainable solutions that are grounded in the experiences of rural community members, workers, and businesses. We work together to improve issues that affect rural communities, public and private land management, and the continuation of a natural resource-based economy in the West, advocating for the inclusion of comprehensive community interests.

For more information, contact Karen Hardigg, RVCC Coordinator.

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