

## **RURAL VOICES FOR CONSERVATION COALITION**

*Working together to find policy solutions to the ecological and economic challenges of the rural West.*

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### **JOINING A WORKING GROUP:**

To join a working group contact Alaina Pomeroy, [apomeroy@sustainablenorthwest.org](mailto:apomeroy@sustainablenorthwest.org) with the following information:

- The name of the group you would like to join.
- Your contact information (telephone number and email address)
- Your membership preference (full member or FYI member of the group)

For those of you who are already in a working group, please review the working group member lists (page 5) to help us compile accurate, updated lists of the 2009 working group members. Correct contact information is crucial to ensure communication between working group members. Send any edits to your contact information to Alaina, [apomeroy@sustainablenorthwest.org](mailto:apomeroy@sustainablenorthwest.org).

### **PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE 2009 RVCC CORE GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS**

#### ***Core Group:***

The Core Group works together to plan and facilitate working groups, meetings, and media work, and strategically guides the RVCC. Comprised of working group chairs and other RVCC leaders, the Core Group identifies cross-cutting challenges and opportunities faced by RVCC working groups, and develops and coordinates the coalition's legislative strategies.<sup>1</sup>

In alphabetical order the following organizations make up the RVCC Core Group: American Forests ([www.americanforests.org](http://www.americanforests.org)), Ecosystem Workforce Program ([www.ewp.uoregon.edu](http://www.ewp.uoregon.edu)), Forest Guild ([www.forestguild.org](http://www.forestguild.org)), Northwest Connections ([www.northwestconnections.org](http://www.northwestconnections.org)), Resource Innovations ([www.uoregon.edu/~cwch](http://www.uoregon.edu/~cwch)), Sustainable Northwest ([www.sustainablenorthwest.org](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org)), the Siuslaw Institute ([www.siuslawinstitute.org](http://www.siuslawinstitute.org)), Wallowa Resources ([www.wallowaresources.org](http://www.wallowaresources.org)) and the Watershed Research and Training Center ([www.thewatershedcenter.com](http://www.thewatershedcenter.com)).

### **2009 WORKING GROUPS**

#### ***Biomass***

The Biomass Working Group is attempting to promote diverse utilization of woody biomass as a means of supporting hazardous fuels reduction and restoration of fire adapted ecosystems, while providing social and economic benefits to the communities of the rural West. Our work focuses

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<sup>1</sup> The Legislative Strategies and Appropriations and Accountability working group has been dissolved. In 2009, the Core Group will coordinate legislative strategies and the Restoration and Appropriations working group will compile and develop the coalition's appropriations asks.

on developing incentives for appropriately scaled biomass utilization efforts, enabling the federal agencies to provide a sustainable supply of woody biomass derived from the stewardship of federal forest lands, and promoting traditional and innovative uses of woody biomass that focus on adding value and creating jobs in rural communities. In 2009 we will be working to raise the stature of thermal (heat) energy within the renewable energy dialogue and policy discussions. Utilizing woody biomass to generate thermal energy can function as a source of wealth capture for rural communities. We will strive to ensure that the Community Wood to Energy Program in the 2008 Farm Bill is appropriated and that other renewable energy legislation contains appropriate provisions for woody biomass and recognizes thermal energy. We will engage with other networks and alliances focused on renewable energy to assemble a larger voice to the new administration regarding woody biomass utilization for energy generation. *Chairs: Mike DeBonis, The Forest Guild; Chad Davis, Sustainable Northwest*

### ***Climate Change***

The newly-formed Climate Change working group will help the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition understand the potential impacts of climate change on rural communities, including their surrounding natural landscapes, and the roles that rural communities and community-based forestry organizations can play in developing and implementing policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Our work will focus on articulating the relationships between forests, rangelands, and climate change, the relationships between the social and economic well-being of rural communities and climate change, and the opportunities for RVCC to shape management choices related to climate change on public and private land. In 2008, the Climate Change working group will focus on developing an issue paper on the role of forests in climate change and related economic structures and incentives. The working group will also develop recommendations for RVCC about the role of rural communities and our coalition in climate change policy that will ultimately lead to the development of the RVCC platform and policy recommendations on climate change. *Chairs: Gerry Gray, American Forests; Kathy Lynn, Resource Innovations*

### ***Private Lands***

The RVCC Private Lands working group formed in response to the rapid conversion, fragmentation, and development of open space, and the increasing pressures on owners and managers of private working lands nationwide; lands that are important to the long-term health of our western landscapes and communities. The group's goals are to support integrated approaches to private and public lands management, to create and improve the delivery of incentives for private landowners to maintain working forest, agricultural and ranch lands, and to illustrate and demonstrate public benefits derived from these private lands. These benefits include ecological, economic, social, watershed health, habitat connectivity, and benefits to rural communities. *Chairs: Laura Schweitzer, American Forests; Maureen Hartmann, Northwest Connections*

### ***Restoration and Appropriations***

The Restoration and Appropriations working group promotes an integrated approach to forest management that directs investments to rural communities to stimulate local economies and build capacity for long-term public lands stewardship. The group also provides insight and ideas regarding how federal agencies can include measurements relevant to rural forest dependent communities and workers in performance measures used to monitor agency effectiveness.

Specifically, the group focuses on increasing investment and new authorities needed to promote restoration, rural conservation-based economic development, access to work and supply on public lands, collaboration and partnerships, capacity building, wildfire policy, and related legislative and appropriations proposals.

Each year, the group responds to the Administration's budget proposal by producing a comprehensive Community-based Restoration Funding Package. The group also works to clarify and emphasize the importance of monitoring at several different levels (local, regional, national) in agency activities, and the ways in which monitoring can/should feed into decision-making processes. In 2009, the group will create the RVCC's first Core Values document and issue papers on the Rural Green Economy Initiative and agency performance measures. The group will update the Community Capacity Building issue paper. *Chairs: Maia Enzer, Sustainable Northwest; Wendy Gerlitz, Sustainable Northwest; Alden Boetsch, Sustainable Northwest*

### ***Workforce and Labor***

The Workforce and Labor working group envisions a well-trained workforce with the capacity to support the high-value and skilled work needed to restore and maintain our public lands. This workforce requires fair wages, durable employment, and a diversity of jobs, training opportunities, and safe work environments. During 2006-2008 the working group developed an RVCC Workforce and Labor issue paper and talking points, prepared testimony for hearings on Capitol Hill, and forwarded concerns about job quality and quantity to agency and congressional staff in Washington, D.C. In 2007, member groups co-hosted a forum on the Working Conditions of Forest Workers in Eugene, Oregon and will be continuing its work with Forest Service, BLM, Department of Labor, and congressional staff to improve business and employment conditions. In 2008, two working group members provided testimony to the House Committee on Natural Resources regarding the welfare of workers on public lands. The 2009 work plan includes commenting on FSC indicators regarding workers and communities, monitoring and enforcement of labor laws and the rules and use of H2B workers, and championing the need for a skilled forest stewardship workforce. The group will work closely with the Stewardship Contracting and Restoration working groups to promote shared goals. *Chair: Lynn Jungwirth, Watershed Research and Training Center*

### ***Contracting***

The Contracting working group aims to improve the quality and quantity of business and employment opportunities for forest workers and contractors. The group approaches this goal in a number of ways including: working to increase the functioning of Forest Service and BLM stewardship, timber sale, and service contracting for rural communities and workers. During 2006-2008 the group developed an RVCC Stewardship Contracting issue paper and talking points and forwarded concerns about the implementation of stewardship contracting to agency and congressional staffers. The working group has also produced a briefing paper on best value contracting, and monitored the New Business Model process. In 2008, the working group chair provided senate testimony regarding the opportunities for economic stimulus through Forest Service and BLM. The 2009 work plan includes providing economic stimulus ideas, developing a multi-party monitoring sign-on letter, and promoting re-authorization of Stewardship

Contracting authorities in 2013. The group will work closely with the Workforce and Labor and Restoration working groups to promote shared goals. *Chair: Cassandra Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Program*

## **HOW TO GET INVOLVED:**

There are many ways to participate in Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition involving different levels of commitment and participation. We discourage joining more than two working groups in a year because of the time commitment involved. Feel free to join groups as an FYI member so that you can stay informed about the working group's actions, but not participate directly in the working group throughout the year. Below is a description of the responsibilities of the different working group members:

### **Working Group Chairs:**

- Primary drafter, editor and/or synthesizer of issue papers and other written materials
- Identify areas of common ground
- Initiate, facilitate and schedules calls and meetings

### **Working Group Members:**

- Work collaboratively
- Provide perspective, data, and/or information
- Help write, review, and edit issue papers and other materials
- Attend the Annual Policy Meeting and Western Weeks in Washington
- Share local experiences with their working group
- Communicate the work of their working group to others
- Initiate ideas and take leadership

### **Working Group FYI Members:**

- Stay informed of working group activities
- Provide perspective, ideas, and information
- Communicate the work, goals, message of their working group to others
- Attend the Annual Policy Meeting

## 2009 WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

### Biomass Working Group Members

*Working Group Chairs: Mike DeBonis and Chad Davis*

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## **Climate Change Working Group Members**

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