

## Eighth Western Annual Policy Meeting **Meeting Summary Report**

### **Who We Are:**

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is comprised of western rural and local, regional and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West. The RVCC is committed to finding and promoting solutions through collaborative, place based work that recognizes the inextricable link between the long-term health of the land and the well-being of rural communities.

### **Purpose of this Report:**

This report conveys the outcomes of the Eighth Western Annual Policy Meeting held December 9-12, 2008 in Troutdale, Oregon.

### **Meeting Goals and Objectives:**

The primary goals for this meeting were to develop an RVCC policy platform to focus the coalition's work, and to prepare the coalition to influence the incoming Administration. This year the meeting was structured so that all of the break-out sessions and discussions would lead to the prioritization of our policy asks and the development of a policy platform to tie the coalition together and highlight these asks. Participants identified legislative, administrative and appropriations recommendations for each of the RVCC working groups and were able to discuss and coordinate issues that crossed groups. The meeting was a venue to learn about the opportunities and challenges of a new Administration from panelists, including congressional and agency staff that have experience in the policy realm.

RVCC participants come from all across the West. The majority of working groups communicate throughout the year on conference calls and the APM provides a much needed chance for participants to come together in person and discuss what they'd like to accomplish in the coming year. As the RVCC grows, the APM allows new people to learn about the coalition and keeps old participants inspired and engaged. The meeting is a venue to learn from policy experts, but it is also a place to network and learn from peers facing similar challenges across the rural West.

### **Pre-Meeting Homework Survey**

A requirement for attending the APM is the completion of a pre-meeting homework online survey. The purpose of the pre-meeting homework is: 1) to help shape the meeting agenda; 2) to frame a baseline of the issues for the coming year and new administration, 3) to enable participants to have meaningful discussions about the issues and opportunities they face, and 4) to begin the collaborative process of problem solving cross-cutting issues. Prior to the meeting, 66 participating groups completed the homework. The homework responses were synthesized by the Core Group to identify priority issues which helped to inform discussions throughout the meeting.

All meeting participants received a copy of the homework synthesis and used the information to inform strategic discussions about working group activities during the meeting. Following the APM, working groups will also use the homework synthesis as a starting point for drafting any issue papers the group decides are necessary.

### ***Results of the Pre-Meeting Homework***

The 2008 Homework Synthesis revealed that RVCC participants believe the following should be legislative priorities for RVCC in 2009:

- Authorizing land management agencies to focus on restoration

- Fixing emergency fire suppression budget issues
- Promoting thinning of fire-adapted ecosystems and plantations
- Increasing congressional appropriations for priority natural resource management issues
- Creating and funding community capacity building programs

Emerging priorities for the next administration highlighted in the homework include:

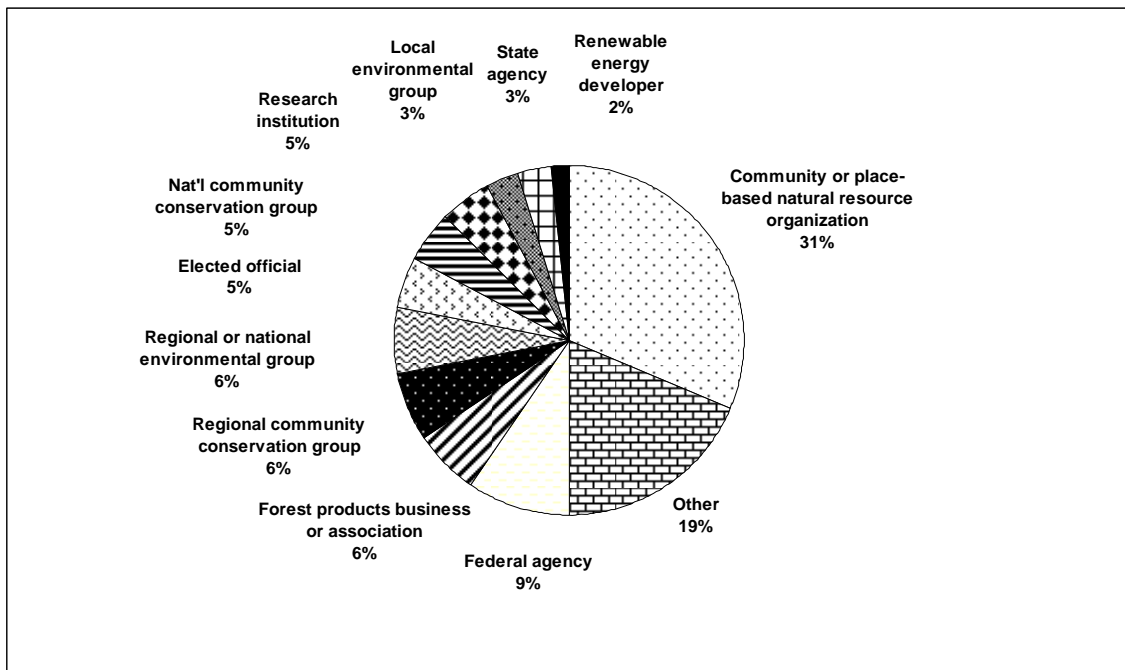
- Alternative energy development
- Building capacity for stewardship
- Landscape scale restoration
- Increasing investment in federal land management
- Climate change

### Participants

Approximately 120 people attended the APM and approximately 75 organizations were represented. The meeting was held at McMenamins Edgefield in Troutdale, Oregon.

### Types of Groups

The pre-meeting homework revealed that there was a large diversity of groups at the meeting. Types of groups represented at the meeting included the following:



The “Other” category (19% of participants) included: foundations, individuals, economic development organizations, and research and education non-profit organizations.

The participants represented both urban and rural areas from 11 different states. Community-based natural resource organizations comprised the largest group at the meeting and made up 31% of the homework respondents.<sup>1</sup> None of the homework respondents identified themselves solely as a forest worker and/or contractor, rancher or ranching association, or as Tribal representatives.

<sup>1</sup> “RVCC Homework Synthesis,” 2008, 4.

### ***Level of Prior Involvement with RVCC***

This year's meeting was the largest to date, and with this increase in attendance came an increase of first-time attendees (24.2% of the participants were new and 12.1% had only attended one other APM). New participants are crucial to the RVCC's growth, and bring many new ideas as well as additional networking opportunities to the meeting.

### **Meeting Structure**

This year, coalition leadership strove to create a clear meeting logic and stronger newcomer orientation to increase participant understanding of the coalition in general, meeting processes and political strategy.

This year we experimented with a new meeting format that allowed for a more interdisciplinary experience and gave participants the opportunity to discuss and make strategic connections between the multiple issues the RVCC addresses. A copy of the meeting agenda is included in Appendix A of this report.

The meeting consisted of large plenary sessions and smaller break out sessions. Prior to the meeting, the Core Group attended a facilitator training to strengthen and standardize the facilitation of working groups and round robin break out sessions.

### ***Day 1***

The APM began with a plenary session describing the history of the RVCC and giving a brief orientation about the coalition. This was followed by a panel of three high school seniors from Enterprise, Oregon, a rural community in northeast Oregon. The students shared a video they made about important natural resource and rural community issues faced in Wallowa County. (Video is available at <http://sustainablenorthwest.org/rvcc/apm/2008APM>).

The first day closed with a group dinner where participants heard from two keynote speakers. Marvin Brown, Oregon State Forester, spoke about state and federal land management and collaboration opportunities. Mary Wagner, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Forest Service, gave an enthusiastic speech about restoration, stewardship and community collaboration that got the group excited about the work ahead.

### ***Day 2***

Sally Collins, the Associate Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, opened the day with a keynote speech over breakfast describing new opportunities in federal land certification, climate change and ecosystem services. Participants then heard two panel discussions; a *Political Realities Roundtable* and *Building Effective Political Strategies and Actions to Support Community Conservation*. Panelists discussed policy opportunities under the new Administration and used their expertise to give projections about the lay of the land.

In the afternoon, participants broke into four round robin groups to learn about five different issue areas: forest and range restoration, private lands, contracting and workforce, biomass and climate change. Working group chairs visited each of the breakout groups, giving a brief presentation about the RVCC's previous engagement in the issue and the coalition's key recommendations. The groups focused on exploring the following questions: 1) What is your organization's vision or goals for this issue? 2) Why is this issue important to your community or the communities you work with? 3) What are the biggest policy challenges your community faces in regard to this issue? 4) What would fix it? What are the policy opportunities and solutions that would help your community achieve your vision on this issue?

### ***Day 3***

Working group chairs kicked off the day Thursday with report outs from the Round Robin sessions, highlighting areas of agreement, integration and cross cutting issues that were brought up in the previous day's discussions. After this debrief, the *Rural Compact* panelists presented possible ways for the RVCC to collaborate with the National Rural Assembly and policy opportunities in areas such as rural health care, education, natural resource stewardship and youth development.

In the afternoon, working groups developed drafts of their planks for the 2009 RVCC platform. When finalized, the platform will contain RVCC's legislative, administrative, and appropriations policy priorities for 2009. The platform will reflect the breadth of issues the coalition works on and will highlight our priority policy recommendations for each issue area.

Later, the full group came together to caucus about the draft planks. Participants had the opportunity to discuss and comment on the priorities of other groups. Despite the plethora of flip charts, tape and markers scattered throughout the room, this process resulted in valuable discussion of priorities and helped to shed light on emerging cross-cutting issues.

The highlight of the day was an impromptu talent show after dinner where participants showed off their diverse skills including singing, poetry recitation, and story telling and the group joined together to sing a rousing campfire song.

### ***Day 4***

After participating in the caucusing the day before, meeting participants were eager to cast their vote on the priority issues that should be included in RVCC's 2009 platform. Each working group's plank included the legislative, administrative, and appropriations issues the group had come up with over the last couple of days. To vote, each participant used a color coded dot to indicate the three items within each of the six planks they thought were: 1) most needed, 2) ripe for collective action, and 3) politically achievable or worth spending collective resources on. This new process of prioritization and "initial" ratification of the planks was an exciting exercise which allowed all participants to weigh-in on each working group's proposed plank.

After voting, the large group broke out into smaller working groups to briefly discuss a work plan for the coming year. They used the information from the dotting exercise to help develop and prioritize their work plan.

## **Meeting Content**

### ***What Came out of the Meeting?***

Overall, the RVCC working groups indicated a strong interest in making the rural West a contender in the burgeoning green economy sector, whether it is through green job development, renewable energy or restoration efforts. Many working groups identified the promotion, creation and funding of rural green jobs as their highest priority issue in the coming year. The working groups took diverse approaches to this cross-cutting issue. The Restoration working group will focus on attaining economic stimulus money for the creation of a Rural Green Economy Initiative for the West. The Stewardship Contracting working group will advocate for tools that will create local green jobs from economic stimulus funds. The Climate Change working group wants to develop legislative recommendations that show how climate change mitigation and adaptation policies can support a restoration economy and green jobs. The Workforce and Labor working group will ensure that green jobs legislation includes language to promote best-value contracting and community benefit. Other cross-cutting issues include climate change, and securing stimulus money for the rural West.

The Private Lands working group's top priority is private working lands restoration and maintenance. The group identified federal tax credits and private landowner incentives for fuels reduction, restoration activities and local energy products as key needs. The Biomass working group's priority focus is to bring biomass on par with other renewable energy sources in existing incentives.

At the end of the meeting, participants identified their roles within the working groups, and indicated whether they wanted to be active or FYI members of their groups. Each of the working groups left the meeting with a rough work plan, and an idea of the working group's goals and strategies for the year ahead. The working groups will use the information from the prioritization and ratification process to determine which priority issues to focus on in 2009. Working group members will continue to communicate throughout the year through emails, conference calls, and additional meetings. They will refine their objectives through the development and implementation of their work plans.

Working groups develop new and/or updated Issue Papers and Talking Points throughout the year. RVCC Issue Papers create an opportunity for the coalition to display a unified voice, because every organization has the opportunity to sign-on to the papers prior to their dissemination. Issue Papers are a valuable tool and help RVCC participants to bring their issues and solutions to the attention of policy makers in meetings with congressional staffers and other policy makers at the Western-Week-in-Washington.

### ***Participant Comments and Feedback<sup>2</sup>***

Changes to the meeting structure were effective at engaging participants in the meeting and provided a space for participants to learn about the broad spectrum of RVCC issues:

*“[I liked] that there was a lot of open time for introductions, networking and discussions. Very important to get to know and trust folks before you open your mouth and stick your foot in it.”*

*“The round robins gave everyone a chance to engage and to learn about the cross section of issues we work on. I like the way the information from the round robin flowed into the working group meetings. I thought the round robins and working group meetings gave us a way to use the meeting homework substantively for the first time. It felt good to be able to use that information in the actual meeting structure.”*

*“I thought the round robins helped to find common threads within RVCC issue areas and to better help new participants understand the issues we work on. I truly felt that this year there was more time for networking... and more improv getting to know each other time.”*

A productive meeting was the result of improved facilitation:

*“From my point of view, the meeting induced productivity among all who attended. All aspects of the meeting's facilitation were geared toward the maximization of results from the limited time that participants could be together. The intensive preparation made by SNW staff was obvious and appreciated.”*

*“I liked learning about what the different working groups have been up to. The facilitation was very good - kept us moving forward.”*

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<sup>2</sup> All of the following comments were taken verbatim from Participant Evaluations of the Eighth Western Annual Policy Meeting.

*“The facilitation was superb. To pack so much content into so few hours is a feat in itself. And there was still ample opportunity for the expression of personal opinions concerning specific policy issues. I think you all did a great job!”*

Some offered their constructive thoughts on the process:

*“I think we needed more time for working groups to strategize for the coming year.”*

*“I found myself a less-than-active member in some of the roundtables, due to my lack of detailed policy understanding regarding the issue being discussed. It might have been good to have more review of the evolution of the policy frameworks for newer participants.”*

## **Conclusions**

At the Eighth Western Annual Policy Meeting participants made significant progress towards the creation of an integrated RVCC policy platform for 2009.

In the working group sessions participants had an opportunity to get into the nitty-gritty about the issues that they are actively engaged in, drafted work plans for the coming year and started to prioritize their policy recommendations. Participants were also able to learn about the issues faced by other working groups and offered their perspectives and fresh ideas in the Round Robin break out sessions.

The APM also provided a venue for a diverse group of organizations committed to identifying policy solutions and positive change in land and resource management, and in rural communities throughout the West to come together and network and learn from each other.

As new issues arise, such as the rural green economy, RVCC evolves to ensure that rural communities will be able to sit at the table with other political actors to effectively advance solutions that will improve the health of the rural landscapes and communities.

This was a successful APM with an unprecedented level of enthusiasm and productivity. It was the best APM yet!

## APPENDIX A.

EIGHTH WESTERN ANNUAL POLICY MEETING  
December 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Edgefield McMenamins, 2126 SW Halsey St., Troutdale, OR 97060

### AGENDA

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008** - *Location: All sessions this afternoon will take place in Blackberry Hall*

- 12:30pm**      **Registration opens** – *registration table and display tables for materials in Blackberry Hall*
- 2:00pm**      **Welcome and introductions**  
Objectives: To provide an overview of the meeting purpose and begin the networking process for meeting participants.
- 2:15pm**      **Plenary session: History and orientation to RVCC**  
Objectives: To build a common understanding of who the RVCC is, what we believe in, and what we've accomplished in the past. This session is critical for all RVCC participants, especially those who are new or recently participating.
- 3:30pm**      **Break** (*coffee, tea and light snacks*)
- 3:45pm**      **Keynote panel: Messages for the Next President: Video Presentation from Enterprise, Oregon High School Seniors**  
Objectives: To hear from rural youth about the concerns and solutions they have regarding natural resource policy and how they believe the next President should solve these issues.
- Enterprise High School Seniors, Enterprise, Oregon
- *Patrick Baird*
  - *Andrea Schaeffer*
  - *Chris Stauffer*
- 5:00pm**      **Break**
- 5:30 pm**      **No host bar opens** - *Location: The Ballroom*
- 6:00pm**      **Keynote presentation: State forestry and federal lands management: Collaboration opportunities for communities and state foresters.** - *Location: The Ballroom*
- *Marvin Brown, State Forester, Oregon Department of Forestry*
- 6:30pm**      **Keynote presentation: Restoration, stewardship, and community collaboration in the West.**
- *Mary Wagner, Regional Forester, Pacific Northwest Region, USDA Forest Service*
- 7:00pm**      **Catered plated dinner** - *Location: The Ballroom*

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2008

- 7:00am**      **Catered breakfast** – *Location: Ballroom in Main Lodge, 2nd Floor*
- 8:00am**      **Keynote presentation: The future of the Forest Service: Opportunities and new directions in federal land certification, climate change, and ecosystem services.**  
*Location: All morning plenaries will take place in the Ballroom*
- *Sally D. Collins, Associate Chief, USDA Forest Service*
- 8:30am**      **Overview of Annual Policy Meeting Process**  
Objectives: To build an understanding among meeting participants of how the meeting is structured and what we hope to accomplish at the end of it.
- 9:00 am**      **Political realities roundtable: What’s new? What’s the same? What opportunities does RVCC have in the post-election landscape?**  
Objectives: To assess the political opportunities in a post election landscape to advance issues of concern for the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition and to incorporate these into the 2009 platform and strategies. Key issues to be addressed by panelists will include: forest restoration, climate change, water and power issues, rural economic development, worker protection and other related issues.
- Moderator: Maia Enzer, Policy Program Director, Sustainable Northwest  
Roundtable participants:
- *Mike Carrier, Natural Resource Policy Director, Office of Governor Ted Kulongoski*
  - *Mary Gautreaux, Office of Senator Ron Wyden*
  - *Jon Isaacs, Office of Senator-elect Jeff Merkley*
  - *Colby Marshall, Director of Eastern Oregon Offices, Office of Congressman Greg Walden*
  - *Willie Smith, Campaign Manager and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Congressman Earl Blumenauer*
  - *Leslie Weldon, External Affairs Officer, Office of the Chief, US Forest Service*
- 10:15am**      **Break**
- 10:30am**      **Building effective political strategies and actions to support community conservation**  
Objectives: To hear from top political strategists on what approaches and tools are most effective for diverse coalitions to effectively influence the federal legislative and administrative decision-making process.
- Moderator: *Niel Ritchie, Executive Director, League of Rural Voters*  
Panelist:
- *Working to build effective relationships between Governors and the Federal Government, Lori Faeth, Natural Resources Advisor, Office of Governor Janet Napolitano*
  - *Components of building an effective strategy for influencing the executive branches in the transition, first year, and beyond, Juliette A. Falkner, Senior Policy Advisor-BLM, The Nature Conservancy*

- The role of communications and political strategy in framing policy; opportunities for rural communities to influence the dialogue, *Steve Bella, Senior Advisor to the Center for State Innovation*
- Effective political strategies for multi-state, multi-issue coalitions: A Case Study of the Northern Forest Alliance, *Andrea Colnes, Carsey Institute*

**Noon Lunch**

**12:45pm Break** (*walk to Round Robin sessions*)

**1:00pm Round Robin #1: RVCC Issue Development**

Objectives: Participants will be divided into four groups comprised of diverse perspectives. Issue discussion leaders will do short presentations to kick off dialogue. Discussion items will generate ideas and identify priority and common ground issues to develop the 2009 RVCC Platform. (All participants will participate in 4 different round robin sessions).

Group 1: Forest and Range Restoration	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Group 2: Private Lands	<i>Barley Room, ground floor in Main Lodge</i>
Group 3: Contracting and Workforce	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>
Group 4: Biomass	<i>Theater room, Power House Station</i>

**2:05pm Session change over**

**2:15pm Round Robin #2: RVCC Issue Development**

Group 1: Climate Change	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Group 2: Forest and Range Restoration	<i>Barley Room, ground floor in Main Lodge</i>
Group 3: Private Lands	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>
Group 4: Contracting and Workforce	<i>Theater room, Power House Station</i>

**3:05pm Session change over**

**3:15pm Round Robin #3: RVCC Issue Development**

Group 1: Biomass	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Group 2: Climate Change	<i>Barley Room, ground floor in Main Lodge</i>
Group 3: Forest and Range Restoration	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>
Group 4: Private Lands	<i>Theater room, Power House Station</i>

**4:05pm Session change over**

**4:15pm Round Robin #4: RVCC Issue Development**

Group 1: Contracting and Workforce	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Group 2: Biomass	<i>Barley Room, ground floor in Main Lodge</i>
Group 3: Climate Change	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>
Group 4: Forest and Range	<i>Theater room, Power House Station</i>

Restoration	
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**5:05pm**      **Adjourn for the day**  
  
**Dinner** is on your own this evening.

**7:00 pm**      **Optional viewing of “Are We Safe from Fire: Protecting Idaho Communities” and “Keeping Energy Dollars Local: Using Wood to Heat the Enterprise School”–**  
*Location: Barley Room*

“Keeping Energy Dollars Local” showcases the first woody biomass heat project in Oregon. The video highlights the use of a local fuel source, community support, and the energy savings performance contract mechanism to fund similar projects. Resource Innovation, Wallowa Resources, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, Sustainable Northwest, and the McKinstry Company, among others made the video possible. (12 minutes)

“Are We Safe From Fire” is a compelling video about wildland fire and creating defensible space. Produced by Framing Our Community in Elk City, Idaho and their partners. (45 minutes)

**Notes: Between 5:15pm and 6:00pm all facilitators will meet to refine and summarize the notes from the Round Robin Sessions.** Objectives: To synthesize the “issue” areas so that 1) They can be reported out, 2) Every working group will be able to use the information to develop their plank of the platform, 3) Areas of congruence can be highlighted, and 4) Areas needing more dialogue can be identified.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2008**

**7:00am**      **Catered breakfast -** *Location: Ballroom in Main Lodge, 2nd Floor*

**8:15am**      **Plenary session: Issue Report Out -** *Location: Ballroom*  
Objectives: To report on major areas of agreement, integration, and cross cutting issues.

**9:00am**      **Plenary session: The Rural Compact -** *Location: Ballroom*  
Objectives: To learn about and identify ways to collaborate with the National Rural Assembly and others and integrate messages with the RVCC 2009 Platform.  
Moderator: *Whitney Kimball Coe, Rural Strategies*

- Why and what is a Rural Compact? *Niel Ritchie, League of Rural Voters*
- Rural Health Care: Policy Opportunities, *Marcie McLaughlin, Rural Policy Research Institute*
- Rural Education: Policy Opportunities, *Delia Perez, Llano Grande*
- Stewardship of Natural Resources, *Maia Enzer, Sustainable Northwest*
- Investment in Rural Communities, *Tim Marema, Rural Strategies*

**10:30am**      **Break** (*Light snack in the Ballroom, then walk to working group sessions*)

**11:00am**      **Platform Development 1: Legislative, administrative, and other policy priorities.**  
Objectives: Working Groups will meet and review the survey results, outcomes from the Round Robins, and panel information to select the policy initiatives they want to focus on

in 2009. These recommendations will be presented at the end of the day for discussion and ratified by the full group on Friday morning.

Biomass Working Group	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Private Lands Working Group	<i>Theater room, Power House Station</i>
Restoration Working Group	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>

**12:30pm**      **Break** (*walk to the Ballroom for lunch*)

**12:45pm**      **Catered lunch** – Location: Ballroom

**1:30pm**      **Break** (*walk to working group sessions*)

**1:45pm**      **Platform Development 2: Legislative, administrative, and other policies priorities.**  
Objectives: Working Groups will meet and review the survey results, outcomes from the Round Robins, and panel information to select the policy initiatives they want to focus on in 2009. These recommendations will be presented at the end of the day for discussion and ratified by the full group on Friday morning.

Climate Change Working Group	<i>Blackberry Hall North</i>
Stewardship Contracting Working Group	<i>Blackberry Hall South</i>
Workforce and Labor Working Group	<i>Barley Room, ground floor Main Lodge</i>

**3:15pm**      **Break** (*Walk to Ballroom for coffee, tea and light snacks*)

**3:30pm**      **Plenary session: Platform Previews** – Location: Ballroom  
Objectives: Each Working Group will provide an overview of what they propose for inclusion in their plank of the 2009 Platform, including legislative, administrative, appropriations, and other “asks” for the first year of the new administration, and to provide an opportunity for discussion, coordination and integration between working groups. 10 minutes for each group.

- Biomass
- Climate Change
- Private Lands
- Restoration
- Stewardship Contracting
- Workforce and labor

**4:45pm**      **Working group caucuses** – Location: Ballroom  
Objectives: To provide time for participants to informally review and ask questions of the working groups to increase understanding and opportunities for discussion, refinement, and coordination of their platforms. The room will have round table stations for each working group, flip charts, and other materials to assist the groups in coordinating with each other. Participants will approach working groups with ideas to improve and coordinate messages, priorities, and activities.

**5:30pm**      **Break**

**Note:** Between 5:30 and 6:15 the Core Group will meet to incorporate suggestions for each plank generated during the working group caucus session and prepare the most current version of their issue area plank to present to the full group on Friday morning.

**6:30pm**      **Keynote presentation -- Location: Ballroom**  
**Rural Communities and Natural Resource Stewardship: What does the future offer?** *The Honorable Peter DeFazio, United States House of Representatives, Oregon (D-4<sup>th</sup>) (Invited)*

**7:00pm**      **Catered buffet dinner and no host bar – Location: Ballroom**

**FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2008** - *Location: All sessions will take place in Blackberry Hall*

**7:00am**      **Catered breakfast**

**8:30am**      **Platform presentations and discussion**  
Objectives: Each group will present the framework for their proposed 2009 platform and “asks” for the first year of the new administration. Platform components will include: Legislative, Administrative, Appropriations, and/or priority “issues” to target for change. Discussion and Q&A of the full group will take place.

**9:45am**      **Platform prioritization and “initial” ratification**  
Objectives: To identify the areas of broadest agreement on issues that RVCC should tackle in 2009. Each participant will be able to ‘vote’ by placing a dot on up to three items within each plank of the platform that they think are: 1) Most needed, 2) Ripe for collective action, and 3) Politically achievable or worth spending collective resources on.

**10:30am**      **Working Group Meeting**  
Objectives: Each Working Group will identify how they will advance their portion of the platform in 2009, with specific attention to: issue paper development, recommendations for the first year, priorities for Western Week in Washington, media events and outreach, policy trainings, and connections to the National Rural Assembly and Rural Compact.

**10:30am to 11:00am**

- Biomass Working Group
- Climate Change Working Group
- Appropriations and Accountability Working Group
- Private Lands Working Group

**11:00am to 11:30am**

- Contracting working group
- Workforce and labor working group
- Community Restoration and Stewardship Working Group

**11:30am**      **Closing Ceremony**  
Objectives: To communicate the next steps for platform finalization and identify upcoming opportunities to work together again.

**Noon**      **Adjourn till next conference call!**

\*Invited speakers

## APPENDIX B.

### 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>3</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)), 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 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 Climate Change working group is helping the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition understand the potential impacts of climate change on rural communities and surrounding landscapes, and the roles that rural communities and community-based forestry organizations can play in climate change policy and mitigation. Our work focuses 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 developed an issue paper on the role of forests in climate change and related economic structures and incentives. In 2009, the working group will host a climate change policy training and will continue to develop policy recommendations on

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<sup>3</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.

climate change to be incorporated in the RVCC platform. *Chairs: Kathy Lynn, Resource Innovations; Gerry Gray, American Forests*

### ***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*

### ***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: 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*

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