

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

TOOLBOX

Developed by the Core Group of the
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
in preparation for the
Ninth Western Annual Policy Meeting

December, 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Frequently Asked Questions about the RVCC 2010 Platform.....	3
Sample Plank of the 2010 Platform.....	4
Sample Plank Diagram.....	5
Working Group Work Plan Template.....	6
Issue Paper Guidance.....	7
Issue Paper Template.....	8
RVCC Calendar.....	9

Frequently Asked Questions: 2010 Policy Platform

What will be in the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform?

The RVCC 2010 Policy Platform contains the RVCC's legislative, administrative, and Presidential policy priorities for 2010. The platform is made up of a number of issue area "planks" that combined, reflect the breadth of issues we work on.

How will the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform be developed?

The 2010 RVCC Policy Platform will begin to be developed during the Annual Policy Meeting (APM) using information from our existing issue papers, the pre-meeting survey results, and ideas generated during APM working sessions. After the APM, working groups will finalize their "planks" of the platform.

How will the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform be used in the next year?

The RVCC 2010 Policy Platform will be an internal and external document. We'll use it to help prioritize our work as a coalition in the coming year, and as a cohesive way of expressing our policy interests to decision-makers and other organizations.

How is the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform different from an issue paper?

The RVCC 2010 Policy Platform combines in one place the main policy issues we will focus on in the coming year based on each issue area and related RVCC issue papers. The Policy Platform is modified each year to reflect the ever changing policy landscape.

Issue papers focus specifically on one topic or issue area, and are a comprehensive exploration of its challenges and our proposed solutions.

Will the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform change? How?

Yes, the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform will change over time. While the basic tenants of what we believe in and work for will stay the same, each year, we will re-evaluate the specific policy priorities in the platform and modify them at the Annual Policy Meeting and through the development of new issue papers or modifications of existing papers.

How do I support the RVCC 2010 Policy Platform?

Everyone who attends the APM or participates in a working group in the months following the APM will have an opportunity to shape the content of the platform. Once it is finalized, everyone in the RVCC network will be given the option of signing on in support of it.

If you decide to sign on, your organization's name will be listed on the document. If you decide not to sign on, you are still welcome to participate in the RVCC and sign on to individual issue papers, rather than the whole platform.

SAMPLE Plank of the 2010 Policy Platform

----- *SAMPLE TEXT: Not a real RVCC Plank* -----

Instructions: Each working group will develop one or more goals; each goal must have at least one specific desired outcome, but can have desired outcomes expressed in three or more categories: 1) Legislative, 2) Administrative and/or 3) Appropriation priorities and 4) other. The Plank is largely about WHAT we want (our asks) and positions we want to take. Positions or “asks” are based on the homework, existing issue papers, the discussions that take place in the round robins, and the platform development breakouts. *On Wednesday during the working group meeting the group will decide the strategies and tactics to achieve these outcomes (i.e. what issue papers to write, identifying congressional champions, talking points, fact sheets, field tours, media coverage, etc.).*

Working Group: Restoration

GOAL: Create and adequately fund new budget line items for comprehensive restoration and maintenance on National Forest System lands.

OUTCOMES:

Legislative:

1. Introduce and pass S.561: The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act (FLAME)
2. Pass the Community Forestry Conservation Act to create tax-exempt revenue bonds to acquire working forests or agriculture land
3. Pass the Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA)
4. Pass authorizing language that allows the National Forest System to administer grants.

Administrative

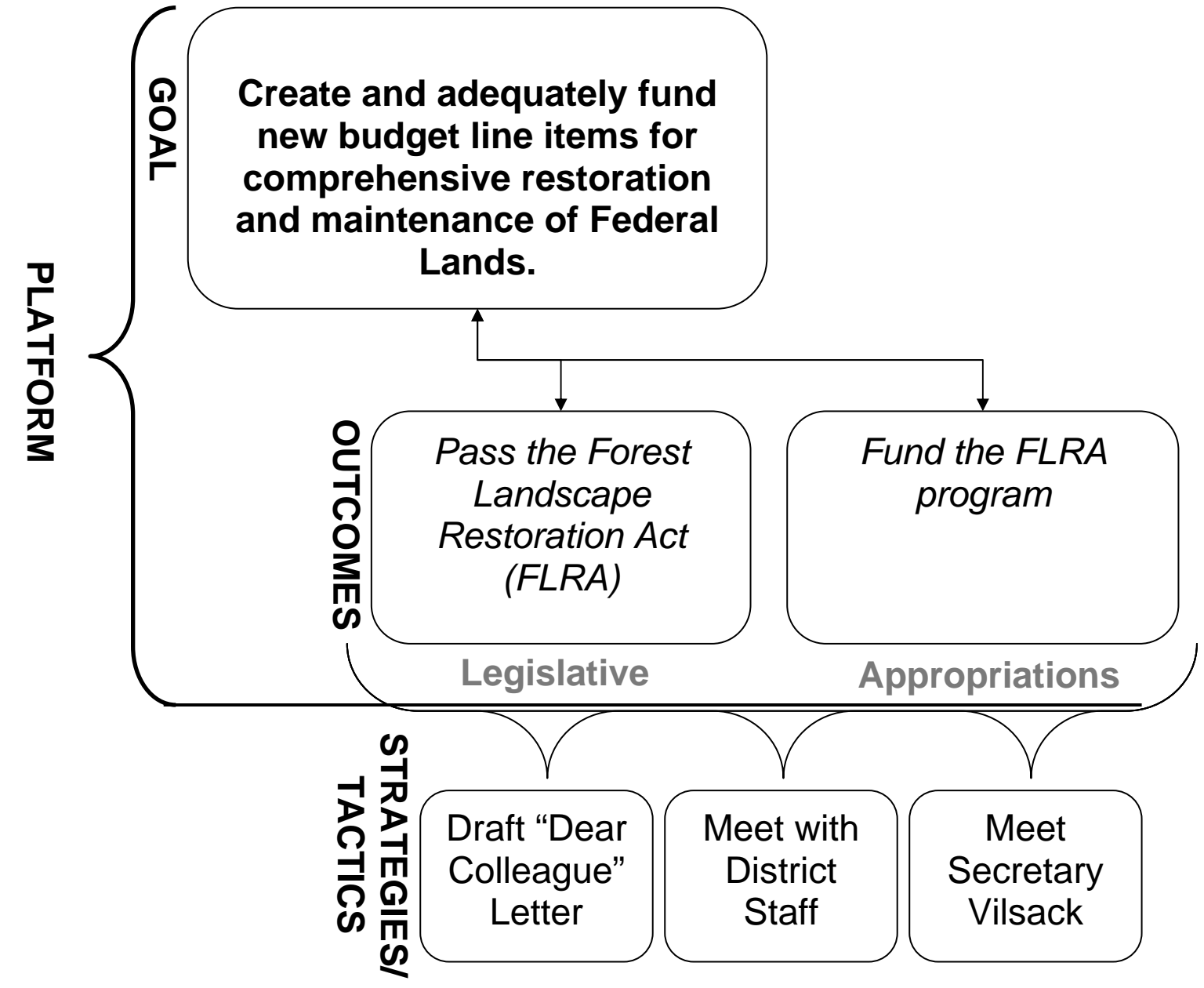
1. Ensure that the rules, regulations, or agency direction related to the implementation of the FLAME bill protect workers and have specific performance measures that support comprehensive restoration.
2. Ensure the Administration requests full funding for the FLRA in their FY 2011 Budget request to Congress.
3. Ensure the Administration supports granting authority for the National Forest System

Appropriation priorities:

1. Ensure the House and Senate Interior appropriations committee fully fund FLAME
2. Ensure the House and Senate Interior appropriations committee fully fund FLRA
3. Request full funding the top line items in the Forest Service and BLM budgets that funding to support forest restoration treatments

Other: Further Research, Ideas, Questions

- Look at how cap and trade legislation might encourage woody biomass utilization – inclusive of energy and wood products (with Climate Change group)



Working Group Work Plan Template

Working Group:

Goal:

Recommendations	Actions, Tactics and Strategies <i>(e.g., WWIW, district outreach, sign-on letters, etc.)</i>	Target audience <i>(Congress, Administration, Agencies, etc.)</i>	Lead	Partners	Timeline

Issue Paper Guidance

Issue papers are the RVCC's primary method of communicating our policy recommendations to congressional and federal agency decision-makers. As such, it's important that they are clear, concise, and informative.

The following guidance delineates the process of writing, gathering participant endorsements, and designing the papers, and outlines the basic structure each paper should have.

Issue Paper Development Process

1. Working group chair (sometimes with assistance of a working group member or two) writes a first draft of the paper using information from, for example, Annual Policy Meeting homework, ideas generated during the APM, previously developed background papers, or working group discussions.
2. Working Group Chair sends first draft to Working Group for edits and comments.
3. Working Group Chair sends first draft to Core Group to ensure inter-group coordination (i.e. appropriations asks match, or any overlapping issue areas are complimentary).
4. Working Group Chairs incorporate feedback from working group and Core Group members and finalize paper. The process of finalizing an issue paper may involve sending multiple drafts to Working Group members.
5. Working Group Chairs send final issue papers to Sustainable Northwest. Please remember to send final version as a Word document with minimal formatting. Denoting headings, subheadings, and bulleted or numbered lists is fine. Please don't include any text boxes – instead, just include a note identifying any information that should appear in a pull out box in the final version. The design software we use to lay the issue papers out does not get along well with Word, so we have to take all the formatting out of the Word version before importing it into InDesign.
6. SNW sends issue papers to the policy email listserv with a request for RVCC participants to endorse the papers by agreeing to sign their organization's names to them.
7. SNW designs layout for final version of each paper.

Issue Paper Template

Title

- I. Introductory paragraph with description of the vision or goal of RVCC for this topic.
- II. A problem statement or description of the barrier(s).
- III. Recommendations:
 - a. A numbered, prioritized list of summary statements (for pull-out text box).
 - b. Descriptions that elaborate on the recommendation summary statements and include, for example, the rationale for the recommendations and who we'd like to take action.
- IV. Contact information for the appropriate Working Group chairs (name, organization, phone, email).
- V. Names of organizations signing on in support of the issue paper.

Optional elements can include:

1. Appendices:
 - a. Charts
 - b. Graphs
 - c. Citations
 - d. List of resources (articles, webpages, etc)
2. Photos
3. Case study examples (no more than 1 column in length).

RVCC Calendar of Events

January	February	March
<p style="text-align: center;">WWiW invitations</p> <p>Invite RVCC individuals to participate in WWiW and begin planning strategy for the event.</p> <p>Pull together the working groups appropriations asks.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Appropriations trip to Washington D.C.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Issue Paper production and sign-on</p> <p>Issue papers are finalized and circulated on the policy list serve for sign-on by the coalition.</p>
April	May	June
<p style="text-align: center;">Western Week in Washington</p> <p>Convey shared messages and solutions directly to members of congress, their staff, and interest groups. Focus on appropriations bills and policy priorities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Delegation and decision maker visits</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Core Group Retreat</p> <p>Evaluate the coalition's effectiveness and develop an overarching strategy for the coming year. Create a rough work plan and schedule for the working groups.</p>
July	August	September
	<p style="text-align: center;">Annual Policy Meeting Recruitment</p> <p>Determine which groups and individuals to invite to the APM and start to recruit participants and speakers.</p>	
October	November	December
<p style="text-align: center;">APM pre-meeting survey synthesis</p> <p>Gather ideas and opinions prior to the APM to help shape the Coalition's platform and identify common ground before the meeting.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Annual Policy Meeting</p> <p>Develop the Coalition's policy platform for the coming year. Develop working group work plans and a strategy to advance RVCC policy asks.</p>