Conserving Working Landscapes: Why Collaboration Matters

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Working landscapes

• Places where people make a living by turning natural resources into products
  – grass → meat, wool
  – trees → wood products
Working landscapes are important because they help provide:

- Biodiversity conservation
- Ecosystem services
- Products most people use
- Connections between people and nature
- Livelihoods
- Open space, recreation
- Social and cultural values
The Problem

• Private working lands
  – sold to new owners (amenity values)
  – converted to other land uses (development)

• Public lands
  – productive uses declining
• Why is collaboration critical for conserving the economic and ecological health of working forests and rangelands in the American West?
Reason 1: The West is comprised of many mixed-ownership landscapes

Lake & Klamath Counties, OR
Reason 2: Public, private, and tribal lands in the West are ecologically interdependent.
Natural disturbances cross land ownership boundaries
• Plant & animal species and habitat span public and private ownerships
  – Over half of the species on the federal endangered species list have more than 80% of their habitat on nonfederal lands
Location, location, location

- ~ 50% of western lands are in private ownership
- These lands are often at lower elevations in places having higher biodiversity, better water, more fertile & productive soils
# Ecological heterogeneity → ecological resilience
## Oregon Coast Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Forest cover type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal (25%)</td>
<td>Mature forest dominant, low diversity, large forest patches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State (12%)</td>
<td>Moderate diversity, moderate connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private industrial (41%)</td>
<td>Young forest dominant, low diversity, large forest patches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private nonindustrial (22%)</td>
<td>High diversity, high fragmentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spies et al. 2007*
Reason 3: Public, private, and tribal lands in the West are economically interdependent
Number of western mills, 1972-2007

Richard Haynes
Wood products industry employment

Thousands of persons

Year
Mill location

- Remaining mills are concentrated along major transportation corridors
### Mill infrastructure in E OR & E WA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Saw-mills</th>
<th>Ply-wood</th>
<th>Chipping</th>
<th>Post &amp; pole</th>
<th>Pulp</th>
<th>Residuals</th>
<th>Other whole log</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E OR (2012)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E WA (2010)</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Timberland ownership & supply in E OR & E WA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USFS Timberland</th>
<th>Private Timberland</th>
<th>% Supply, Federal</th>
<th>% Supply, nonfederal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern OR (2012)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern WA (2010)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29% private 19% tribal 10% state</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>48% private 21% tribal 17% state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When local mill infrastructure fails...

- Federal agencies are challenged to achieve forest restoration goals
- Private corporate owners may sell timberlands
- Family forest owners lose access to markets for timber produced from their lands
- Forest-based jobs disappear
Ranching

• Many ranchers practice transhumance between biomes and land ownerships
• Over 5,000 ranchers in the West depend on summer range that is managed by the government
• Southern Rocky Mountains
  – 48 counties in CO, WY, NM
  – 1,456 ranches on 4.69 million acres of private ranchlands, associated with
  – 2,217 federal grazing allotments on 14.1 million acres of USFS and BLM lands
So now what?

• What did we learn from local-level collaborative groups about what made working landscape conservation work?
No cookie-cutter approach

• Conservation happens through trial and error; there is no cookie cutter approach
• Different strategies work in different places
Common characteristics

• Individuals who have long-term vision and commitment to process and place
• Innovation, flexibility, experimentation
• Persistence despite setbacks
• Ability to combine multiple funding sources or diversify revenue streams
• Strategic alliances from the local to the national level
Multiple conservation tools and strategies may be needed

Swan Valley, MT

• Tried, with no success
  – Land exchange
  – Land use planning regs

• Tried, with some success
  – Create community forest
  – Conservation easements

• Tried, with major success
  – Land acquisition
Collaboration across boundaries is important for working landscape conservation and landscape-scale natural resource management!
Thank you!

- Contact information
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