

Rural Voices For Conservation Coalition

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



Spontaneously created, growing, and evolving since 2001

RURAL VOICES FOR CONSERVATION COALITION

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

RVCC Mission

- Promote policies that support balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West.
- Committed to finding and promoting policy solutions through collaborative, place-based work
- Recognize the inextricable link between the long-term health of the land and the well-being of rural communities.



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RVCC Goals

1. Promote ecologically responsible and economically equitable policy solutions.
2. Increase for federal funding of restoration and maintenance and rural economic development.
3. Advance legislative ideas and influence legislation proposed by others.
4. Strengthen the voices of rural leaders



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RVCC across the West

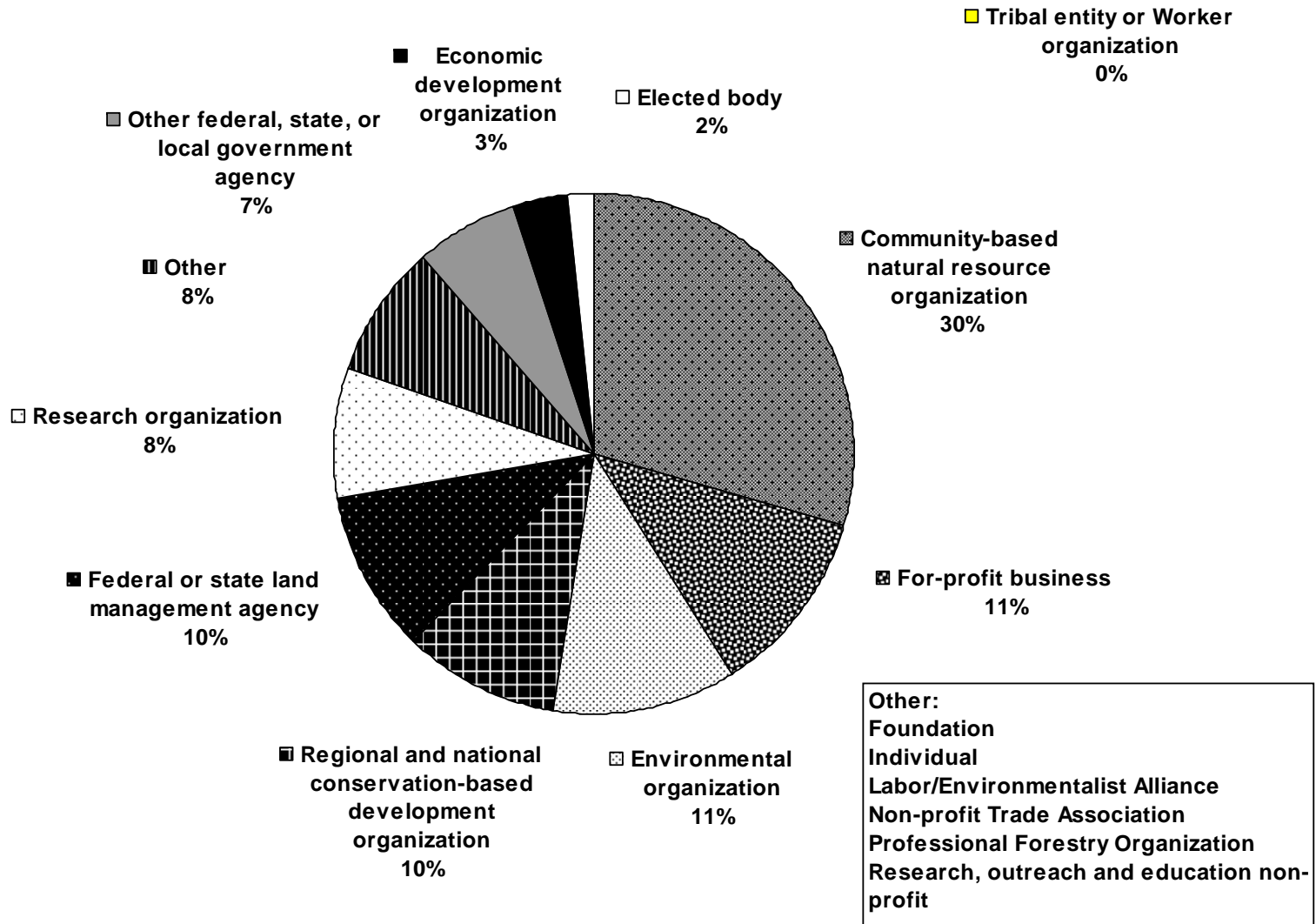
- More than 60 groups
- 8 states
- Western Rural and Local Organizations
- Regional Organizations
- National Organizations



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Types of groups involved



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Policy Priorities



- Appropriations
- Wildfire Cost Containment
- Restoration & Stewardship
- Integrated Biomass Utilization
- Climate Change
- Collaboration
- Community Capacity
- Stewardship Contracting
- Workforce Issues
- Private lands

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Appropriations

- More money is always needed...but we also want:
 - Budget line items for comprehensive restoration, stewardship, and collaboration.
 - Restructured agency allocation and reporting systems
 - Capacity building grant programs
 - Meaningful performance measures
 - Linkage of PM to accountability systems



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Wildfire Cost Containment

- Stop the borrowing and transfer problem
- Create special accounts for emergencies
- Invest in community fire assistance programs
- Fund restoration & stewardship



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Restoration and Stewardship

- Restore and maintain fire-adapted ecosystems
- Restore diversity to forest plantations
- Reduce hazardous fuels
- Restore river, riparian, and range systems
- Restore, close, and maintain roads
- Manage noxious and invasive species



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Integrated Biomass Utilization

- Support integrated biomass utilization strategies
- Invest in appropriately scaled facilities
- Ensure forest restoration needs drive prescriptions, not the need for supply
- Qualify thermal energy for use in the Production Tax Credits and the Renewable Portfolio standards
- Fund grant programs and increase technical assistance to communities and businesses (HFRA, Energy Policy Act)
- Prioritize support to facilities and strategies supported by collaborative groups
- Ensure public lands are treated and invested in equitably in the federal policies, tax and other incentive programs.



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Climate Change

- Protect the poorest and most vulnerable
- Federal and state climate change and land management policies should:
 - Ensure low-income and other vulnerable populations receive assistance
 - Integrate climate change considerations with landscape-scale forest restoration
 - Create technical and financial assistance programs to support implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies
- Markets for forest carbon-offsets and ecosystem services should:
 - Provide access and opportunity for rural communities,
 - Address issues related to project scale, and
 - Support sustainable practices and ensure benefit to rural economies



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Contracting Reform

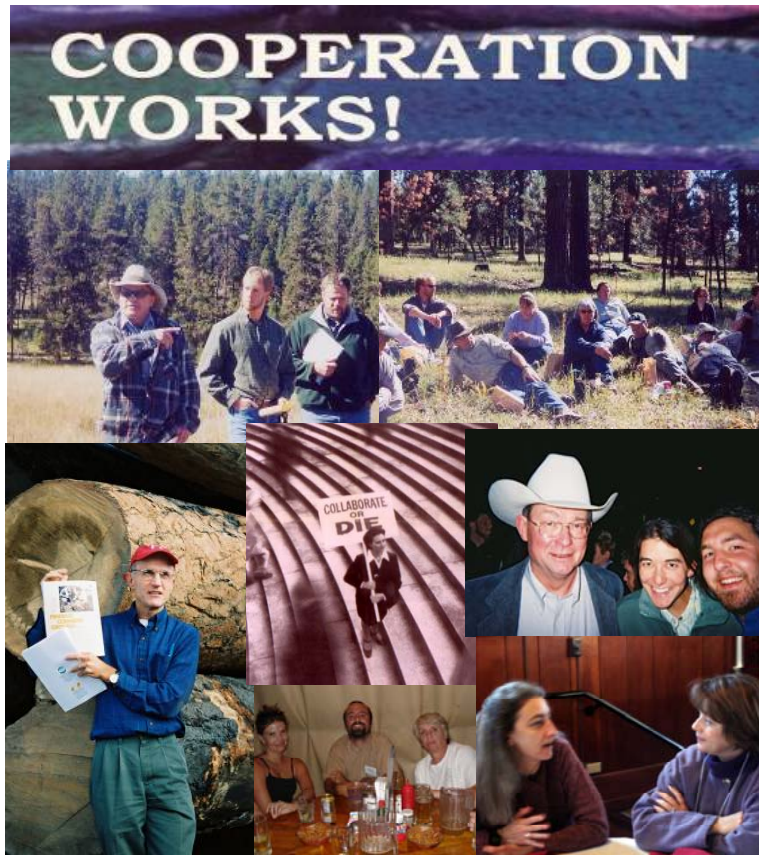


- Ensure best value is achieved
- Devolve authority to approve stewardship projects, contracts, and agreements to the forest level
- Modify timber appraisal systems to respond to small diameter and lower volume sales and restoration projects
- Allow use of retained receipts for project-level multi-party monitoring
- Change accountability from out-puts to outcomes

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Collaboration

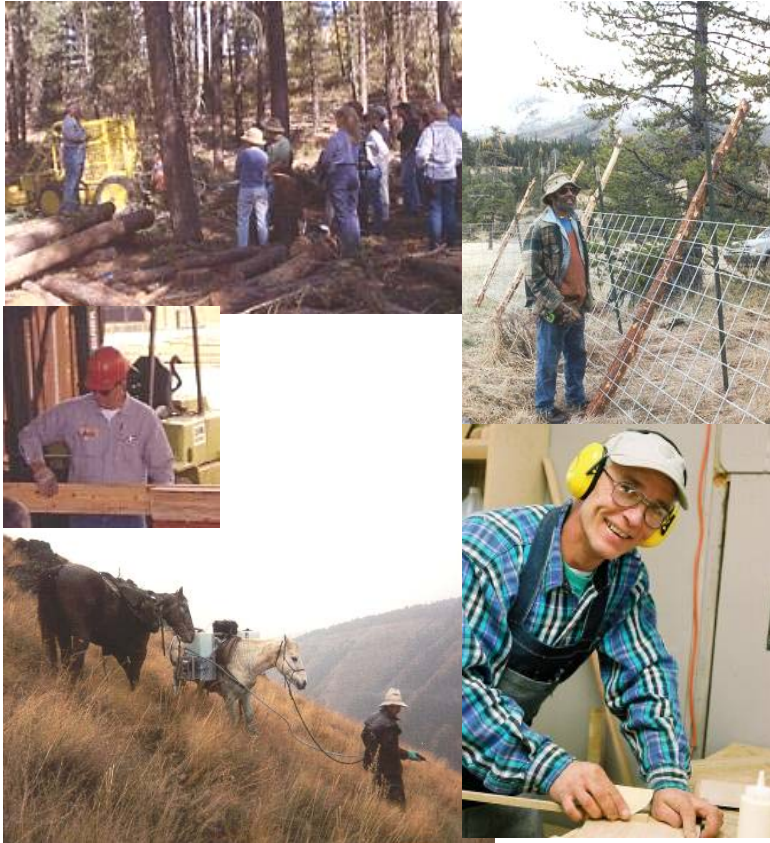


- Prioritize projects that have the support of collaborative groups
- Create performance measures for collaboration
- Issue guidance on the differences between collaboration, partnerships, and traditional public involvement
- Require collaboration, don't prescribe it

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Community Capacity Building



- Establish community capacity building grant and technical assistance programs in the land management agencies
- Provide permanent authorization to the agencies to deliver TA and grants for sustainable development purposes

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Private Lands

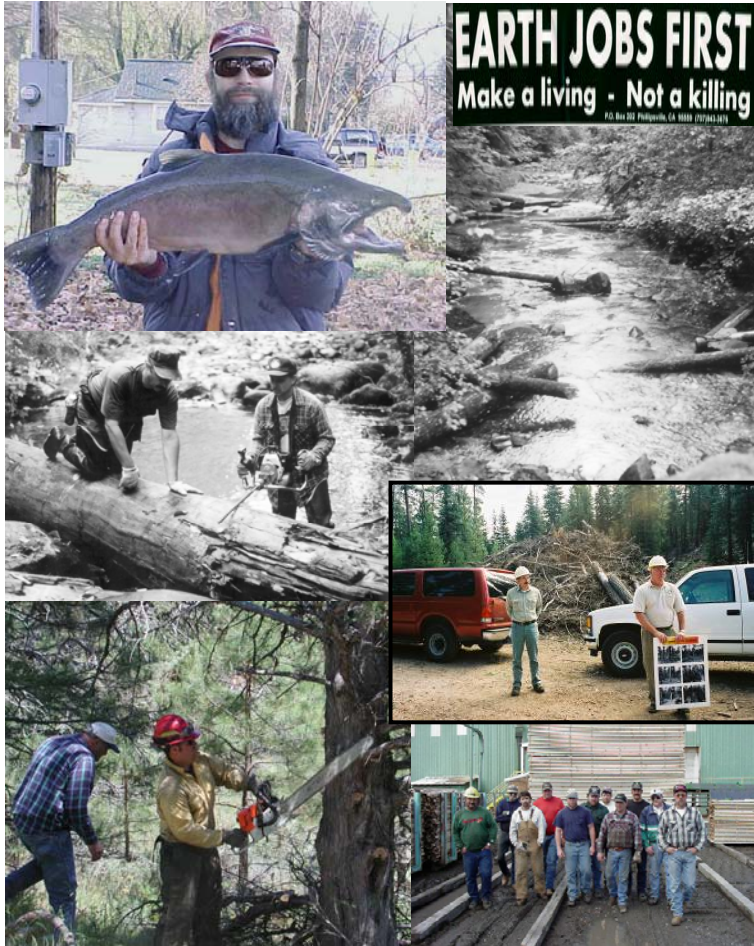
- Protect and invest in working landscapes
- Support incentives and programs for community owned and managed forests
- Fully fund and implement Farm Bill programs



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Workforce and Labor Issues



- Enforce labor laws
- Expand requirements for non-price factors in Best Value criteria to protect workers
- Create performance measures to focus on quality of work rather than out-puts
- Package contracts for longer-duration employment
- Increase training opportunities

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Legislation watch

- Forest Landscape Restoration Act
- Wildfire cost containment
- DeFazio proposal
- Wyden proposal
- Cooperative Watershed Management Act of 2008
- County Payments
- Climate change proposals
- Partnership legislation
- Forest Worker protection legislation



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