



Wallowa Resources Sustainable Forest and Wood Products Project

The Problem

Past management practices and climatic conditions in the forested landscapes of the Northwest have contributed to a decline in forest health. A majority of small diameter trees are easily subject to catastrophic fire, disease and insect infestation. Over the past decade, the change in forest management activities on public lands has resulted in the loss of nearly 400 jobs in the wood and lumber manufacturing sector of Wallowa County's economy. Unemployment has continued to increase over the past decade with recent figures nearing 20%.

Yet, in the midst of the declining economic and ecosystem health surrounding residents of Wallowa County, they have created a non-profit organization to provide leadership in sustainability by promoting community, forest and watershed health and creating and maintaining family wage jobs and businesses. The residents of the community remain strongly in support of a natural resource-based economy based on sustainable land management practices

that provide economic benefits to the community, both in terms of forest management activities and value-added manufacturing opportunities. These people are passionately committed to enhancing the County's economy, creating community viability and restoring the environment. This work requires unprecedented, committed, multi-party partnerships between federal, state, local, non-profit, business entities and landowners.



Dense thickets of growth reduce health of forested stands in Northeast Oregon.

Oregon Solutions brings people together...

The Opportunity

Wallowa Resources asked for designation as an Oregon Solutions Project in 2001. Oregon Solutions, designed by Governor Kitzhaber, provides assistance for community-based projects in Oregon that simultaneously support the economy, environment and community and are developed through the collaborative efforts of business, government agencies and citizen organizations. This particular project demonstrates how local and external partners can help landowners and managers achieve sustainably managed and restored forests and local manufacturers find niche market opportunities. Governor Kitzhaber's desire for solutions to be community-driven and place-based was clear. He appointed Diane Snyder, Executive Director of Wallowa Resources, as the convener of this Oregon Solutions Project.

The Partners

Diversity is key—three non-profits, 2 private businesses, local government, 6 state agencies, 2 federal agencies and the Governor's office participated in this project.



Discussions with a local operator.

The Process

Creation of the Declaration of Cooperation started early in the process with parties to the agreement gathering to discuss the issues and bring collective ideas to the table. Much of the discussion surrounded certification of privately owned forested stands under FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) guidelines, with corresponding certification of the Joseph Timber Company lumber milling operation. Focus was also placed on building urban and rural bridges in the marketplace with the underlying premise that

the story of this rural community and the unique product to be provided should blend well with the desires of the urban marketplace. The key to this process was the willingness of the signers of the Declaration to make commitments on behalf of their agency, organization or business. Once the problem was understood, a draft Declaration was circulated for the appropriate signatures. This process worked well and was effective in getting agreement that included accountability through the Declaration process.

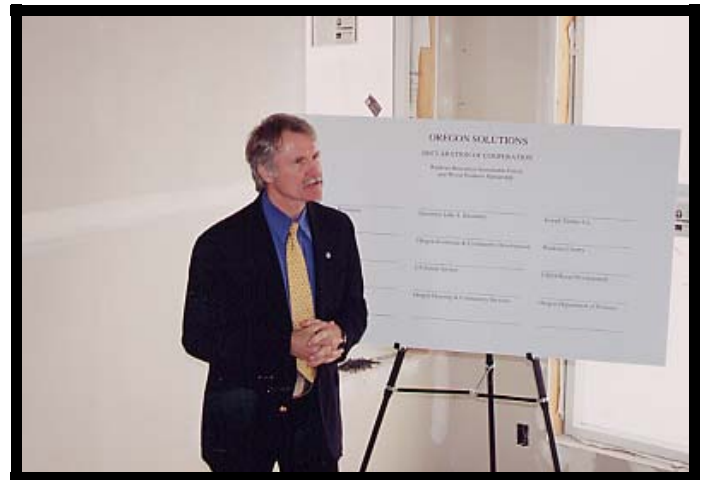
"I was astounded and very pleased that so many agencies, organizations and individuals were working so hard to help us." Diane Snyder, Executive Director of Wallowa Resources

The Progress and Outcomes

Wallowa Resources assisted private landowners in learning about forest certification under the FSC standards. An association of private landowners is being developed: Joseph Timber Company completed "chain of custody" certification for milling the raw product. Connections with the urban marketplace were made through Sustainable Northwest's Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership of Portland and Built E, an environmental building products supply company from Seattle. As a result, lumber milled by Joseph Timber Company was shipped to Bend, Oregon and used to construct a demonstration "green" house. These connections are critical. To celebrate this innovation, Governor Kitzhaber joined other signers to the Declaration of Cooperation in the Bend house.

Unfortunately, the Joseph Timber Company curtailed operations early last year. However, work with local landowners is targeted to continue with alternative milling sites being identified and hope for a re-opening of the Joseph facility is still in the offing, hoped for later in 2003.

For more information about Wallowa Resources, visit the website: www.wallowaresources.org



Governor Kitzhaber addresses the partners in a signing ceremony for the Declaration of Cooperation in the Bend house constructed as part of the initiative.



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