



## **DECLARATION OF COOPERATION**

### **Hands on Lands Watershed Stewardship Work Program**

**June, 2007**

#### **Purpose**

The Hands on Lands Watershed Stewardship Work Program will improve the overall condition of Wallowa county's natural resources, improve the livability and stability of the community, provide income and job skill-building to participants and provide local employers with a better skilled work force.

The Program will address challenges experienced in Wallowa county in two areas: Landscape and Rural Community Needs. Landscape challenges include significant decreases in federal support for forest land maintenance for the past 15 years, such as a reduction in trail maintenance and an increase in dead and dying timber on federal forest lands. Rural Community challenges include the persistent and dramatic seasonal employment cycles, declining real income from farm and forest lands and a lack of inspiring jobs for unemployed and underemployed residents.

Hands on Lands also addresses an emerging need for wood products workers. Oregon Labor Market information forecasts that statewide, 6,000 jobs will open between 2004-2014 due to retirements within the existing labor force. There is no replacement pool of trained workers available to fill these job openings. Replacement workers will be needed for forestry, forestry support and paper manufacturing. Hands on Lands training will prepare underemployed individuals for these replacement jobs in forest-related industries.

In order to move from concept to actual implementation, a variety of partners and funding sources must work together creatively to develop a viable program. We, the undersigned, comprise a diverse group of public and private interests united in our support of this purpose.

#### **Background**

In January 2006, a team of community partners attended an institute targeted at developing "Rural Family Economic Success", funded by national and state

county government associations and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. One of the outcomes of that institute was the development of an action plan to begin work on the Hands on Lands project. The team began the work of securing community support for the idea and for obtaining designation of the project as an Oregon Solutions project. The Oregon Solutions project designation was an important step to gain recognition of the project across state government. The team convened meetings with social service professionals to identify the necessary program elements and worked with the U.S. Forest Service and other natural resource professionals to obtain agreement on the project, as well as financial and in-kind donations. The Oregon Solutions designation was received in June 2006. Representatives of public and private organizations were identified and partnership meetings were convened, beginning in September 2006.

## **Mission**

Hands on Lands is a community partnership bridging natural resource management and human resource development in order to revitalize and sustain the culture and landscape of a working community.

## **Vision**

Hands on Lands supports Wallowa county residents to be independent, self-sufficient and productive through collaboration of social, economic and environmental interests.

## **Meeting Participants**

Building Healthy Families  
City of Joseph  
Community Bank  
Community Connection  
Grande Ronde Model Watershed  
Hells Canyon Preservation Council  
Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon Department of Human Services  
Oregon Economic & Community Development Department  
Oregon Employment Department  
Rural Development Initiatives  
RY Timber  
Nez Perce Tribe  
Northeast Oregon Economic Development District  
Training and Employment Consortium  
U.S. Forest Service

Wallowa County Board of Commissioners  
Wallowa County Commission on Children & Families  
Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness  
Senator Ron Wyden's Office

## **Organizational Structure**

The administrative structure of Hands on Lands will consist of a Steering Committee, an overall program coordinator and two to three agencies that will provide financial and program administrative services. The Steering Committee will coordinate the work contributions from participating agencies, as detailed in this agreement.

## **Program Description**

Hands on Lands Watershed Stewardship Training Program will contract with private forest contractors who are willing to employ, train and supervise the program participants. Training and case management will be provided during the first month by community partners on basic job skills, lifestyle changes necessary to be successful and using the tools and equipment necessary in forest work. In the second month, the U.S. Forest Service will provide on-site training specific to the tasks of clearing trails and removing hazardous dead timber. The goal is to have three contractors who will train two workers each, continuing the basic job skills development and the forest work experience in the field. Training will continue in the field in a structured work environment for 10 months, as the workers continue to learn advanced job skills, such as serving as team leaders. Training and networking will be supported through mentors and monthly dinners with project sponsors and local employers. In the final month, workers will receive classroom training in job search techniques.

Workers will initially be screened for acceptance into the program. Underemployed workers must be physically able to work in the forests. Incentives will exist to retain people in the program for the full duration. Skill development will be coordinated with local employers so that training can focus on the skills that will make the workers immediately employable upon completion. Upon completion, workers will receive a certificate and community recognition.

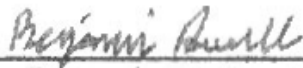
The training curriculum will be a formal curriculum, with design direction provided by the Training and Employment Consortium. The training elements will include both skill-building specific to the work and life-skill building so that people are fully employable upon completion of the program. The outcome will be job-ready individuals who can be productive workers in the year-round local industries. By focusing on underemployed people, annual personal income will increase.

## ***Declaration***

In order to carry out the mission of the Hands on Lands Watershed Work Program, we the undersigned partners agree to work collaboratively in activities that coordinate and support the success of Hands on Lands Watershed Work Program by:

### **Wallowa County**

Wallowa County will provide program coordination and oversight, serve on the Steering Committee, provide ongoing supportive efforts and provide one-time Title II funding.

  
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Ben Boswell, Wallowa County Commissioner

### **City of Joseph**

The City of Joseph, subject to City Council approval, will research and seek funding for Watershed Health, participate in coordinated fire planning activities, continue networking and information sharing with the Wallowa County Economic Action Team/Rural Design Assistance Team, serve on the Steering Committee and continue to carry forth a broader vision of Healthy Communities and Ecosystems.

  
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Peggy Kite-Martin, Mayor

### **Hells Canyon Preservation Council**

Hells Canyon Preservation Council will advise regarding potential work projects and restoration activities; will participate in training as appropriate; will attend meetings as time and resources allow; and will actively review the minutes and other materials related to meetings and other activities of the Hands on Lands Program.

  
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Greg Dyson, Executive Director

## **Wallowa County Commission on Children and Families**

Wallowa County Commission on Children and Families will serve as lead coordinator for the project, convene the Steering Committee and serve on the "Grants" subcommittee to secure program funding.

  
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Anne K. Gill, Director

## **Wallowa Resources**

Wallowa Resources will (1) participate on (but not Chair or lead) the Steering Committee, particularly in the areas of program development, implementation and monitoring; (2) assist with fundraising and grant financial management relevant to our specific role and tasks; and (3) administer, manage and monitor contracts with contractors, including recruitment and selection, monitoring, contractor support, and performance accomplishment reporting. Wallowa Resources is prepared to serve in all three of these roles.

Pending further discussion about project plan, financial plan, and the roles and responsibilities of all parties to this declaration, Wallowa Resources might be willing to provide payroll services to program participants if there is sufficient funds to cover our management and administration costs, as well as the liability of potential future workman's compensation claims or unemployment claims.

  
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Diane Snyder, Executive Director

## **Building Healthy Families**

Building Healthy Families will participate on the Steering Committee; assist with efforts to develop a program model; work with the human services community to develop referrals to the program; and assist with the screening, training, evaluation and monitoring of the clientele.

  
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Amy Johnson, Executive Director

### **Training and Employment Consortium**

The Training and Employment Consortium, subject to available funding under contract, will provide training (classroom); provide case management; serve as the fiscal agent, including reports and other administrative tasks; serve as the link between social services and natural resource agencies; assist with the recruitment, assessment and selection of trainees and contractors; and serve on the Steering Committee.

  
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Teri Simonis, TEC Executive Director

### **Oregon Department of Human Services**

The Department of Human Services, Self-Sufficiency Program, will provide referral and assessment services for agency clientele. DHS representation will serve to provide input and information and act as a liaison between Hands on Lands and DHS Central Office relative to DHS programs. In addition, the ongoing partnership with county Hands on Lands initiatives will provide technical support/data collection for Food Stamps/Temporary Assistance to Needy Families JOBS+ client participants and support in selecting appropriate participants.

  
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Todd Siex, Children, Adults and Families District Manager  
Department of Human Services

### **Oregon Employment Department**

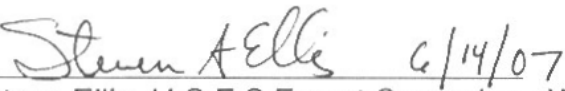
The local Employment Department will make available resources for the screening and referral process, seek employer buy-in for a Job Boot Camp and provide program details from the Veteran's Specialist.

  
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Barb Higinbotham, WorkSource Oregon Employment Department, Regional Manager

### **U.S. Forest Service**

The U.S. Forest Service will provide specific work projects, provide in-kind staff time to design and administer the program/projects, provide training specific to task/project accomplishment and assist in evaluating skills needed for successful outcomes by program participants, assist in searching for short-term and longer-

term funding, assist with physical training and provide tools specific to task accomplishment.

 6/14/07

Steve Ellis, U.S.F.S Forest Supervisor, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

**Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness**

The Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness will assist with efforts to seek program funding, develop a program logic model, provide referrals to the program and will help with screening, training, evaluation and monitoring that relates to the Center's clientele.

  
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Stephen Kliewer, Director

**Oregon Economic & Community Development Department**

Oregon Economic & Community Development Department will participate by finding and assisting in the procurement of state funding for Hands on Lands, and continue to be part of the Advisory Committee.

  
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Jill A. Miles  
Business Development Officer