



R V C C
Rural Voices for
Conservation
COALITION

Thirteenth Annual Meeting

January 10-12, 2017 • McMenamín's Edgefield, Troutdale, OR

About RVCC

“One cannot be pessimistic about the West. This is the native home of hope. When it fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism, is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery.”

~ Wallace Stegner, The Sound of Mountain Water

Mission

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is comprised of local, regional, and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic challenges facing the rural West. We are committed to finding and promoting solutions through collaborative, place-based work that recognizes the inextricable link between the long-term health of the land and the well-being of rural communities.

Approach

In 2016 the RVCC Leadership Team adopted a new approach to its work, broadening the Coalition’s focus to Policy, Stories, and Learning.

- Policy – Continue to advocate for investment in and inclusion of rural community interests in existing and new policy;
- Stories – Grow the visibility of community based natural resource management through communications and storytelling;
- Learning – Facilitate learning among community based practitioners and institutional entrepreneurs to increase innovation and implementation of landscape-scale restoration projects.

We believe that pragmatism, partnerships, problem solving, and investing in people will help us most effectively achieve our goals.

Meeting Design

The RVCC Annual Meeting connects practitioners from across the West, facilitates peer-to-peer learning, and helps participants identify common challenges and opportunities. We believe that by bringing leaders together and asking critical questions, we can develop comprehensive solutions and – ultimately – be more effective as a whole. We will use the discussions that take place during this meeting to refine and shape RVCC’s strategies for 2017.

We have designed this meeting to be, first and foremost, participatory. RVCC supports cultivating inclusivity, engagement and community. Each session will be geared towards these goals.

The meeting is also a working meeting. Some of the most talented and committed leaders come together at this event – we hope that you will participate by not only listening for new ideas, but by bringing questions and creative proposals (no matter how outlandish) to the table. By working together, we have the ability and power to raise our collective voices in support of rural community health and conservation.

Our hope for this meeting, and RVCC going forward, is that participants find an opportunity to meet new people, learn something new, and offer a new idea. That we all leave with a renewed energy and motivation to work together.

Key Topics and Themes

- **Capacity** – Investing in the people and organizations that support land stewardship and community benefit
- **Community** – Renewing and strengthening our commitment to each other and place
- **Collaboration** – Advancing the evolution of results oriented collaboration
- **Catalyzing Change** – Overcoming obstacles and recognizing new opportunities

Day 1 Tuesday, January 10

11:30 am Registration Open (Lunch not included; Location: Lewis and Clark Ballroom entryway)

1:00 pm Welcome and Introduction to RVCC

Purpose: Overview of RVCC and what to expect during the Annual Meeting.

Speaker: Karen Hardigg, RVCC Coordinator

1:15 pm A Shifting Landscape – Why Rural Matters

Purpose: To emphasize how RVCC's unifying solutions will help us realize both conservation and economic benefits in our communities.

Speakers: Johnny Sundstrom, Siuslaw Institute
Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources

1:45 pm Understanding Systemic Change: A Conversation with Recent USDA Undersecretaries

Purpose: To engage in thoughtful conversation around integrating public and private land management, forest stewardship, and rural community health. Where have we been and where do we need to go? How do we position ourselves with a new administration?

Moderator: Nick Goulette, The Watershed Research & Training Center

Speakers: Mark Rey, Executive in Residence, Michigan State University
Jim Lyons, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals, DOI

3:15 pm Break (snacks and drinks provided)

3:30 pm Strategies for a New Congress and Administration

Purpose: Share RVCC's 2017 transition memo and improve understanding of federal agencies and committees that support our work.

Speakers: Dylan Kruse, Policy Director, Sustainable Northwest
Cecilia Clavet, Senior Policy Advisor, The Nature Conservancy

4:00 pm Elevating the Rural Story and Message

Purpose: How do we better tell the message and story of the work we do? Hear advice and insights from the director of one of the premier publications covering western issues.

Speaker: Paul Larmer, Executive Director, High Country News

5:00 pm Adjourn

6:00 pm Informal Social Gathering (no host, location TBD)



Left image by Mathew Grimm. Right image by Autumn Ellison, Ecosystem Workforce Program.

Day 2 Wednesday, January 11

7:00 am **Breakfast (Lewis and Clark Ballroom)**

8:00 am **Welcome and Review of the Day Ahead**

Speaker: Karen Hardigg, RVCC Coordinator

8:15 am **Transition to Breakout Rooms**

8:30-10 am **Concurrent Round Robin Sessions – Part 1**

Purpose: Round robin sessions provide an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning on key issues. We will also identify success stories, policy barriers and new solutions.

Blackberry Hall - N

USING WHAT WE HAVE TO GET WHAT WE NEED

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program and Joint Chiefs' Restoration Partnership are examples of landscape scale, multi-agency initiatives designed to improve our public and private lands through partnerships. How are these programs being used? What are key outcomes, innovative applications and challenges? What have we learned and what do we need to improve?

Facilitators: Nick Goulette, The Watershed Research & Training Center; Johnny Sundstrom, Siuslaw Institute

Discussants: Astor Boozer, Regional Conservationist West, NRCS; Bill Gamble, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Blackberry Hall - S

NEW TOOLS FOR NEW OUTCOMES

The 2014 Farm Bill supports working across all lands through new tools and permanent authorization of others. How are these new authorities being used? What have we learned and what do we need to improve? Hear from agency leaders and practitioners in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana on the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and Stewardship Contracting.

Facilitators: Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest; Cass Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Program

Discussants: Katie Morrison, Oregon Department of Forestry; Jon Songster, Idaho Department of Lands

Barley Room

LEADING IN TIMES OF CHANGE

What does it take to get to innovation? How do we foster better understanding of organizational culture, and build the leadership capacity across our respective organizations and institutions? Hear from leaders in the Pacific NW Region who have pioneered a new approach to communicating the agency's work, "Valuing People and Place."

Facilitators: Karen Hardigg, RVCC; Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources

Discussants: Rachel LaMedica, Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region

10:00 am **Break**

10:30-noon **Concurrent Round Robin Sessions – Part 2**

Blackberry Hall - N

IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE TO GET WHAT WE NEED

Building on the first discussion, how can we improve and supplement existing programs, going beyond working across public and private lands to address more specific goals like integrated management of water and forest resources, integration of Cohesive Wildfire Strategy goals, or conservation of aquatic species?

Facilitator: Nick Goulette, The Watershed Research & Training Center

Discussants: Zander Evans, The Forest Stewards Guild; Jonathan Bruno, Coalition for the Upper South Platte

Blackberry Hall - S

COLLABORATION THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION

Collaboration grew out of a shared interest in overcoming controversy, fostering innovation, and getting more done by working together for mutual benefit. Now that collaboration has become common, what policies, strategies, and capacities do we need to ensure the implementation of all components of collaborative agreements?

Facilitators: Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest; Heidi Huber-Stearns, Ecosystem Workforce Program

Discussants: Mark Stern, The Nature Conservancy; Cass Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Program

Barley Room

BROADENING OUR TENT

Historically, RVCC has strong expertise and experience in public lands and forest issues. As the Coalition grows, how might we integrate a broader suite of issues, whether ranching and rangelands, sportsmen and recreation interests, private lands, or address issues like equity and diversity? An exploratory discussion about how the Coalition can strengthen its alliances and network in 2017.

Facilitators: Karen Hardigg, RVCC; Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources

Discussants: Kathleen Williams, Western Landowners Alliance; Toni Ruth, Salmon Valley Stewardship

Noon-1 pm Lunch (Lewis and Clark Ballroom)

1:00 pm Life After Secure Rural Schools - Building a New Endowment for Rural Communities

Speaker: Mark Haggerty, Headwaters Economics

1:30 pm Depart for afternoon sessions

1:45-4:30 pm Afternoon Workshops

Purpose: These sessions are intended to provide opportunity for deeper conversation following the round robin conversations. The topics will inform RVCC's three strategic priorities – policy, storytelling, and learning.

Blackberry Hall - N

FROM IDEAS TO ACTION — All Lands Peer-Assist Session

The RVCC Annual Meeting brings together a diversity of practitioners, researchers, community and agency leaders who are implementing innovative ideas and solutions in place. This session will provide space for participants to bring their particular project or challenge and take home new ideas to improve their work.

Facilitators: Nick Goulette, The Watershed Research & Training Center; Karen Hardigg, RVCC

Blackberry Hall - S

WHAT'S OUR RURAL VOICE?

We know now, more than ever, that we must improve the ability to tell our rural stories. There's a richer breadth of rural life out there than the dominant narrative in the media today. How will we tell the story of the good work that is happening? What will our key messages be? What is our shared identity?

Facilitators: Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources; Ashley Rood, RVCC

Speakers: Paul Larmer, High Country News; Maia Enzer, USFS Region 6; Jay McLaughlin, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards

Barley Room

POLICY AND PRACTICE — RVCC's Transition Memo and a New Administration

Review of RVCC's priorities and recommendations from 2016, with an eye toward upcoming opportunities in a new administration. In this session participants will capture key points and ideas from the morning sessions, and address topics such as the next Farm Bill, county payments, and the future of programs like the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program and Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR). Small group conversations.

Facilitators: Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest; Cass Moseley, Ecosystem Workforce Program

4:30 pm Adjourn until reception

5:30-7:30 pm Evening Reception (Heavy appetizers, Lewis and Clark Ballroom)

6:15 pm Movie — Sustainable Southeast Partnership

6:30 pm Keynote speaker — Vicki Christiansen, Deputy Chief, State & Private Forestry

Day 3 Thursday, January 12

7:15 am Breakfast (Blackberry Hall)

8:30 am Investing in Communities and the Land

Purpose: Experience the diversity of RVCC's participants through new videos that evoke the spirit and depth of what we do for communities and the land.

Videos: The High Divide
Stewardship with Vision, Western Landowners Alliance
Rural Reinvention: The Watershed Center, Ecosystem Workforce Program

9:15 am Integrating Research to Improve Stories and Catalyze Change

Purpose: Bridging the practitioner and academic divide. What research questions have been raised during the meeting? Where does research intersect with policy and practice?

Panelists: Tony Cheng, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Susan Charnley, Pacific Northwest Research Station
Courtney Schultz, Colorado State University
Hannah Gosnell, Oregon State University

Moderator: Emily Jane Davis, Oregon State University

10:15 am Break (Snacks and drinks provided)

10:30 am Next steps: Identifying Actions Items and Commitments

Purpose: Taking stock of what we learned, considering where our interests might best be leveraged, and identifying strategies for collective action.

11:30 am Closing Remarks

Speaker: Zander Evans, Forest Stewards Guild

————— **Adjourn by noon** —————



Thank you for your tireless work and dedication to rural communities!



Top left image by Bob Christensen, Sustainable Southeast Partnership. Top right image by Karen Hardigg, RVCC. Bottom image by Sustainable Northwest.

Featured Speakers

Tuesday, January 10

JOHNNY SUNDSTROM, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, SIUSLAW INSTITUTE, INC.

Johnny Sundstrom has lived most of his life in the American West, and has crossed the continent overland many times. He is part-owner and manager of a livestock, forestland, and garden operation in western Oregon. As founder and Director of the Siuslaw Institute (since 1994), he provides natural resources consulting and administers/supervises watershed restoration and education projects. After 16 years, he recently retired as head track and field coach at the local high school. For more than 40 years he has spent part of every summer visiting his Arapaho relations in Wyoming. He graduated from Williams College with a degree in English Literature, and has published several novels about the settlement of the American frontier. He is currently helping to organize a trip for a multi-interest Team going to Kenya to carry on his son Shiloh's research, and continuing to build bridges between pastoralism and ranching in Maasailand and the US West.

NILS CHRISTOFFERSEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WALLOWA RESOURCES

Nils is the Executive Director of Wallowa Resources, based in Enterprise, Oregon. Nils has diverse experience in place-based natural resource management from working around the world, including ranching in Australia, farming in Israel, fishing and forestry in Norway, and forestry and wildlife in southern Africa. He is passionate about working landscapes and the role of rural communities in their stewardship. He is a graduate of both Williams College (B.A. Economics) and Oxford University (M.S. Forestry), and has served on many local and national boards - including the National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry. He currently serves on the Oregon Board of Forestry, World Forest Center's Board of Directors, and Enterprise School District Board.

MARK REY, THE LIVINGSTON GROUP, WASHINGTON DC AND EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Mark serves as a consultant in public affairs practice in agriculture and natural resources and technology. He also serves as an Executive in Residence at Michigan State University, teaching natural resources policy. Rey was the USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment from 2001-2009 during the George W. Bush administration. Prior to his role as Undersecretary he served as a staff member with the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. He was the lead staff person for the committee's work on national forest policy and Forest Service administration.

In the private sector, Mark held the position of Vice President for the American Forest and Paper Association and the Executive Director of the American Forest Resource Alliance. Rey earned several degrees from the University of Michigan, including a Masters of Science in Natural Resources and Administration; Bachelor of Science in Forestry; and Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Management.

JIM LYONS, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LAND AND MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Jim Lyons joined the Department of the Interior in 2013 as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. In his current role as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management he focuses on public lands, energy, forestry, and landscape-level conservation. In addition, Lyons was directed by the Secretary to help with development of a strategy to conserve the Greater Sage-Grouse.

Lyons was USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment during the Clinton administration. He played a key role in developing the 2001 Roadless Rule, the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, and new rules to guide national forest management. In 2000, he worked with Interior Deputy Secretary David Hayes to develop a new strategy for addressing wildfires following the devastating fires that summer. Prior to joining the Clinton Administration, Lyons was senior staff on the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives. He has a Master's degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where he has taught since 2000.

Featured Speakers

PAUL LARMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PUBLISHER, HIGH COUNTRY NEWS

High Country News is an award-winning non-profit that has reported the stories that shape the American West for 45 years. Paul's journalism career started as an editorial intern at HCN in 1984. After earning a Master's degree in Natural Resource Policy at the University of Michigan, and working as a freelance writer and media representative for the national Sierra Club, he returned to HCN as an editor in 1992. Since 2002, he has been the Executive Director, dividing his time between editorial projects, drumming up funding, and generally making sure the magazine and website are sailing in the right direction. Every summer he and his wife, Lisa Cook, irrigate a hay crop and grow a few vegetables on their small ranch in Western Colorado.



Left image by Marcus Kauffman, Oregon Department of Forestry. Right image by Emily Jane Davis, Oregon State University.

Wednesday, January 11

MARK HAGGERTY, ECONOMIST, HEADWATERS ECONOMICS

Mark applies economic and fiscal data to real-world land-use and development challenges. He is currently on staff at Headwaters Economics an independent, nonprofit research group in Bozeman, Mont., that works to improve community development and land management decisions in the West. Haggerty has experience as a researcher, trainer, and facilitator in western communities with an emphasis on land use and community planning. Mark holds a B.A. in Economics and M.A. in Geography from the University of Colorado.

VICKI CHRISTIANSEN, DEPUTY CHIEF STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY, USDA FOREST SERVICE

Vicki has more than 36 years of wildland fire and natural resource leadership experience, including six years with the Forest Service and nearly 30 years of service in Arizona and Washington. Recently named Deputy Chief of State and Private Forestry with the Forest Service, she served as Associate Deputy Chief since 2012. She previously worked as Deputy Director of Fire and Aviation Management. Prior to her Forest Service career, Christiansen served as Arizona State Forester where she oversaw protection of 22 million acres of state and private lands in Arizona. In addition, she served as Washington State Forester as a part of her 26-year career with the state's Department of Natural Resources. She launched her career as a wildland firefighter while in college and later accepted a permanent position in Washington as a forester. In addition to credentials in wildland fire management and specialized expertise as a fire line-blasting advisor, Christiansen earned a bachelor's degree in forest management at the University of Washington.

Supporters

We would like to thank the USDA Forest Service, the Northwest Fire Science Consortium, and the RVCC Leadership Team members (see opposite page) for their support of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition and the 2017 RVCC Annual Meeting.



The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition and the 2017 RVCC Annual Meeting are also supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior —Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—through a subaward to the Watershed Research and Training Center. For more information, contact Michelle Medley-Daniel at michelle@thewatershedcenter.com or (530) 628-4206.



**FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES**
LEARNING NETWORK

Support RVCC!

While we are energized and empowered by the contributions from Leadership Team and agency partners, support from RVCC participants will be critical to sustaining our momentum and broadening our impact as a coalition. If you or your organization would like to donate to RVCC, please contact Karen Hardigg (karen@wallowaresources.org) or Ashley Rood (ashley@wallowaresources.org) or call (541) 426-8053 x 24. For more information about RVCC, visit our website: www.ruralvoicescoalition.org

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

RVCC Leadership Team



Wallowa Resources is a local non-profit organization in northeast Oregon whose mission is to develop, promote, and implement innovative solutions to help the people of Wallowa County and the Intermountain West sustain and improve their communities and their lands. Since its formation in 1996, Wallowa Resources has worked to bring people together in a common goal: to blend the ecological needs of the land with the economic needs of the community. The organization strives to balance Wallowa County's economic well-being with the stewardship and conservation of its resources, preserving the area's heritage of making a living from the land. www.wallowaresources.org



The Ecosystem Workforce Program is in the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon. Founded in 1994, EWP undertakes applied research, policy education, and technical assistance to foster ecological health, economic prosperity, and democratic governance. ewp.uoregon.edu



Sustainable Northwest helps people and communities restore and maintain ecological health, balance diverse interests, and promote economic opportunities. Through collaboration, we bridge rural and urban interests, encourage entrepreneurship, and build trust in sustainable natural resource management and utilization in the western U.S. www.sustainablenorthwest.org



The Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), a community-based nonprofit organization, was started in 1993 to promote healthy communities and sustainable forests through research, education, training, and economic development. This work centers around the belief that the relationship between local communities and the public forest must change so that the economy can rebuild itself based on an ethic of land stewardship. www.thewatershedcenter.com



The Forest Guild practices and promotes ecologically, economically, and socially responsible forestry as a means of sustaining the integrity of forest ecosystems and the human communities dependent upon them. The Guild engages in education, training, policy analysis, research, and advocacy to foster excellence in stewardship, support practicing foresters and allied professionals, and engage a broader community in the challenges of forest conservation and management. www.forestguild.org



Salmon Valley Stewardship works to promote a sustainable economy and healthy environment in the Salmon River Region. SVS coordinates the collaborative Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group and also leads community local foods initiatives and many other projects that help connect people with the land. www.salmonvalley.org



The Siuslaw Institute, Inc. was founded in 1994 as a locally-based, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to the "sustainable improvement of community and habitat." We engage in programs of research, education, project management, monitoring and outreach communications designed to restore, enhance and utilize the watersheds of the Pacific Northwest. We are also involved in similar work in the Russian Pacific regions, and with the International Riverfoundation, based in Australia. www.siuslawinstitute.org



Mt. Adams Resource Stewards mission is to promote sustainable connections between the land, local economies, and rural communities in the Mt. Adams Region. Their efforts seek to grow more vibrant rural communities by: maintaining and creating reliable, living wage jobs; facilitating and demonstrating land stewardship that supports resilient, functional ecosystems across ownerships; and providing opportunities for youth to engage in rural issues and traditions. www.mtadamsstewards.org



The Blackfoot Challenge is a landowner-based group that coordinates management of Montana's Blackfoot River, its tributaries, and adjacent lands. It is organized locally and known nationally as a model for preserving the rural character and natural beauty of a watershed. The Mission of The Blackfoot Challenge is to coordinate efforts that will enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyles of the Blackfoot River Watershed for present and future generations. www.blackfootchallenge.org



The Sustainable Southeast Partnership (SSP) is a diverse network of organizations working together to meet the challenge of sustainable community development in Southeast Alaska. SSP's mission is to empower rural Alaskan communities to reach cultural, ecological and economic prosperity. The partnership includes international, regional and community-based organizations who collectively support locally-identified priorities. www.sustainablesealaska.net



401 NE First St. Suite A
Enterprise, OR 97828

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition is a special initiative of Wallowa Resources.
For more information about RVCC visit www.ruralvoicescoalition.org.