



COLLABORATION AND STEWARDSHIP AUTHORITY

THE ASHLAND FOREST RESILIENCY PROJECT

FACT SHEET 9 • SUMMER 2015

Forest collaborative groups in Oregon integrate ecological, economic, and social objectives in their missions. While they spend much of their time on vegetation, aquatic, and other natural resource issues, they have less direct experience with dialogue and data about social and economic issues. This fact sheet and its companion (Fact Sheet 8: Collaboration and the Malheur 10-year Stewardship Contract) illustrate how collaboratives and stakeholders have engaged in innovative contracting to increase outcomes such as local jobs, business health, and community wildfire risk reduction.

CONTEXT

The Ashland Forest Resiliency project (AFR) is a partnership between the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and three other entities (see box) to implement hazardous fuels and restoration treatments on public lands in and around the City of Ashland municipal watershed. The project has recently been expanded to include adjacent private lands. Forest Service planning for the AFR project was finalized in 2009, and a 10-year stewardship agreement for AFR was signed in 2010, codifying a “partnership” among co-investors, rather than a contract for services. AFR has mutual benefits to all of the parties. A contract, in contrast, focuses solely on services performed, typically by a for-profit entity, for the agency. AFR has produced notable economic outcomes while demonstrating the innovative approaches for generating important social outcomes.

Anatomy of the agreement:

Type: Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA).

Structure: The MSA sets out the overarching terms of agreement between partners and the agency. Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs) and attached Technical Proposals are used to obligate federal and other matching funds for specific projects.

Evaluation criteria: percent of the FS record of decision project footprint accomplished, growth in public support, additional match and leveraged support

Entered into with: Lomakatsi Restoration Project, The Nature Conservancy, and the City of Ashland.

COLLABORATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Developing a “community alternative”: In response to a Forest Service proposed action for the AFR project, the City of Ashland and others, under authority of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, helped organize workshops and other community engagement and collaboratively developed an alternative plan. The “community alternative” articulated wildfire protection interests and other community values for residents of Ashland. Collaboratives active at the alternatives development stage of Forest Service project planning may likewise consider actively developing an alternative for consideration by the For-

est Service. Additionally, collaborative groups could offer a proactive statement of their interests, if needed, about their desires rather than endorsing the proposed action or pitting one offered alternative against another. Drawing on local NGO and other partners for scientific guidance and other resources in alternative development or statement of interests may also be a good way to build partnerships for a future stewardship agreement.

Building functional partnerships: To implement the AFR project in line with the community alternative and ensure it met the social agreement that had been estab-



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Economic impacts from restoration projects:

Hazardous fuels reduction and restoration work supports jobs in the woods and in local communities, and stimulates business activity. The work done by AFR since fall of 2013 to thin stands, pile and burn leftover material, and layout and mark treatment project areas had a value of nearly \$900,000. That restoration activity supported 17 jobs of one-year's worth of work for 4 years. Because restoration work is often completed seasonally in intense bouts, over one hundred people were employed during some parts of the year;. About half of the jobs supported by AFR restoration work were in the woods and the other half were in local communities. As other companies provided supplies and employees spent money locally other indirect and induces jobs were supported. Further, the work of AFR since fall of 2013 supported about \$1.8 million in business sales including the value of the initial work. The majority of those business sales came about as supplies were purchased to do the restoration work and workers spent a portion of their income in local communities.

lished, three leading partners with complementary skills in ecological analysis and monitoring (The Nature Conservancy), workforce development and on-the-ground work (Lomakatsi Restoration Project), and community engagement (City of Ashland) united to enter into the master stewardship agreement with the Forest Service. Other partners, such as the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative, Oregon State University Forestry and Natural Resources Extension, and Klamath-Siskiyou Wild were enlisted to perform other functions such as monitoring, education/outreach in the community, and general review and advising on implementation. Stewardship agreements enable partners with appropriate skills to can carry out these kinds of work, adding capacity to the Forest Service. This is one way for collaborative stakeholders to take their relationships and investment to a new level beyond dialogue, and recognize specific partners for their contributions. Whereas the AFR engaged Lomakatsi to perform the on-the-ground work, other groups may be able to contract a local organization like a watershed council that hires crews, and even create a youth work opportunity if desired; or they may contract with a private sector business if no suitable organization

is available in the area. Lomakatsi often subcontracts with Grayback Forestry and other for-profit contractors when needed. The project has also yielded timber sales, which have been purchased by for-profit, mills.

Building off the agreement: The AFR partners used accomplishment within the agreement to successfully compete for a Joint Chiefs award from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service. The Ashland Forest All-Lands Restoration Project (AFAR) expands from the AFR foundation to enable work across public-private land boundaries for a more comprehensive effect on hazardous fuels reduction and forest and watershed restoration. Other collaboratives may be interested in using an agreement as a stepping stone to future work in this way, as having an agreement can help demonstrate the ability of partners to work together and leverage funds.

COLLABORATIVE CHALLENGES

Finding the right project: The AFR project has been able to leverage partners and resources in part because it takes place in a socially-valued watershed adjacent to a community. Water supply and community wildfire protection are real and important concerns for many in the region, creating a common ground and focus where forest restoration practices can be tried out. Collaboratives who wish to engage partners in a stewardship agreement might want to seek a planning area or other landscape that has these or other values of social importance for diverse stakeholders and organizations. This is likely easier for collaboratives operating on national forests that are immediately adjacent to communities.

Capacity to administer and complete agreement: Agreements allow nonprofit organizations and governments to perform work of mutual benefit for an agency. Most collaboratives themselves would not be eligible to enter directly into an agreement because they are not registered organizations, and would need a fiscal sponsor. The Forest Service also typically require parties to a Stewardship Agreements to provide match of 20 percent, which the fiscal sponsor and other stakeholder organizations would have to contribute and document. This significantly enhances the capacity of the agreement, but can pose challenges to smaller organizations that may have less resources to contribute.

For more information about collaboration and stewardship contracting:

<http://ewp.uoregon.edu/resources/contracting-stewardship/>