

Conclusion

Wildfires today are larger and more severe, starting earlier and ending later, and resulting in loss of homes, forests, and other resources. Forests are stressed from drought, overstocking, and insect and disease outbreaks. Ecological, social, and economic damage is occurring at a faster, more intense rate due to high severity wildland fire and forest health issues. Across the Intermountain West, these are the issues many are challenged to address. This paper describes a scientific process for planning and implementing cross-boundary projects to address these issues and meet the goals of the Cohesive Strategy. Ultimately, managing for wildfire risk is a shared responsibility between federal, state, county, cooperative extension, city, local fire districts, fire protection areas, emergency management authorities, local NGOs, communities, and private landowners.

A partnership designed to meet these objectives is an organization that focuses on cross-boundary projects. Individuals and agencies work together to build the relationships needed to accomplish a lofty goal. Individuals are not involved for personal gain or recognition but because they have a deep understanding and passion for restoring and protecting the forest resources that are so important to the people in our communities. Their commitment becomes apparent when each person is focused on getting acres restored, regardless of whether it is private or federal land, for the betterment of the community and the forest.

The tools are available; now it is up to all necessary agencies and organizations to focus on action by following these five steps:

1. It starts with a partnership.

If you don't have a partnership that focuses on cross-boundary restoration of public and private lands, provide the leadership and form one.

2. Understand the issues and challenges.

Read and understand these two publications: *Western Water Threatened by Wildfire: It's not Just a Public Land Issue* and *How do We Accomplish All-Lands Management? Direct Insights from a Survey of Practitioners*. These publications clearly

explain common challenges and outline attainable recommendations.

3. Become fully aware of all authorities and funding sources available to complete cross-boundary restoration.

The guidebook *From Ideas to Actions: A Guide to Funding and Authorities for Collaborative Forestry* is an excellent resource.

4. Use this guide as a reference to plan and implement cross-boundary, landscape-scale restoration projects, where applicable and appropriate.

5. Keep the focus on getting acres restored on public and private lands.

The KLFHP started as a small group of concerned practitioners and landowners in the mid-1990s. The Partnership now has a monthly attendance of 30 to 40 members and interested parties. Projects have transitioned from concepts to implementation as legislative changes and funding sources have been acquired. The forest health issues in Klamath and Lake counties took nearly a century to evolve; it is likely to take at least as much time to correct them.

“Early efforts at implementing landscape-scale management started in the late 1980s. In 1992, a new wave of ecosystem management planning on national forests began. Since then, various efforts—focusing on historic adaptations, ecologic integrity, forest health improvement, fuels reduction, fire risk abatement, economic return to communities hit hardest by declines in timber processing, and a social need to live in and around all the benefits of a healthy forest—have risen, but none have succeeded at a scale and style of management to make a difference. Over that time, private land (especially adjacent to public land) has been managed separately from its land neighbors—public and private—using a full range of management quality. It’s taken 30-plus years to be a part of a landscape-scale, ecosystem restoration project that truly meets the intent of public/private land. The Partnership’s focus is ridge-to-ridge, top-to-bottom management that is beneficial to the ecology, local landowners, public stakeholders, and the social/economic needs of a local community. The KLFHP partners have succeeded. The individual partners have focused on the strengths and shored up the weaknesses of their agencies and entities, overcoming barriers to work together for the greater public and private good. They have succeeded and should be proud. I’m proud to be part of it.”

Daniel Leavell, OSU Extension Service Forester

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