

Blue Mountains Forest Partners *Declaration of Commitment*

Background: The Blue Mountains Forest Partners

Grant County, Oregon is in the process of redefining the community's role in forest management. Opportunities exist to address ecological restoration and stewardship needs while providing quality jobs for local workers and woody restoration 'byproducts' for local manufacturing. Accomplishing this requires a new approach to natural resource stewardship: one that is locally-supported, incentive-driven, and relies on the power of solutions that integrate the environmental, economic and social needs of communities. Collaboration between diverse interests, and with the land management agencies, is an essential tool in this approach. The trust that is developed through collaboration will also lead to stable, long-term, and landscape-scale solutions.

Formed in April 2006, the *Blue Mountains Forest Partners* (BMFP) is a collaborative of diverse local and regional interests who have come together to address and resolve the impassioned social gridlock and controversy surrounding natural resource management in the region. The members of BMFP are proactively building positive, forward momentum in the pursuit of forest restoration, stewardship, quality jobs, and collaboration.

This *Declaration of Commitment* represents the interest of signed members to advance the mission of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners and to honor the agreements that were collaboratively developed, as defined in the Operations Manual. *Individuals who do not wish or are unable to sign this Declaration of Commitment and be a voting member, yet want to remain informed and involved with BMFP to a lesser-degree, are encouraged to sign up as an Observer.*

Mission of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners

The *Blue Mountains Forest Partners* (BMFP) is committed to enhancing forest ecosystem health, economic opportunities and public safety in Grant County through collaboration.

Our goals and guiding principles

- To promote forest restoration in Grant County, integrating ecological, economic and community needs that have been developed and/or prioritized through collaboration.

- To improve our ability to work collaboratively and participate actively in these issues, finding common ground for our work. Our process will be open, inclusive, and encourage participation of diverse stakeholders; our meetings will provide a 'safe' space for discussion and sharing of ideas.

- To overcome gridlock in forest planning and implementation. The success of our work is tied to long-term sustainability of forests and communities.

We agree to:

- Adhere to the above mission, goals and guiding principles; and, abide by the ground rules, decision-making process, and communications protocol jointly developed in our operations manual.
- Work collaboratively on multiple phases of forest restoration projects, including identification of priority areas, project planning, support to developing contracting mechanisms, and multiparty monitoring.
- Actively participate in the Blue Mountains Forest Partners through its meetings, committees, field tours, and other activities.

Participation Level Descriptions***Voting Members***

- Participate actively, as defined in the Operations Manual.
- Keep themselves well-informed of local forest management issues and of BMFP's activities.
- State whether they are an individual partner or are representing a larger entity (organization or company, for example).
- Provide input from each individual constituency; communicate back to constituents and the organization; resolve internal conflict with other members of the representative's organization (to avoid two opposing opinions from one member organization).
- Suggest ideas or initiatives.
- Offer to take leadership on ideas and initiatives.
- Provide technical resources.
- Abide by BMFP's ground rules, scope, mission, and desired outcomes.
- Attend meetings, as possible; send alternate if necessary; RSVP for all meetings.
- Commit to long-term involvement (by partner or their representative).

Federal Partners

- Serve as non-voting members.
- Are committed to collaborative process.
- Maintain active engagement at meetings, project planning, etc.
- Offer resource information.
- Share historical, ecological and economic data.
- Share contract writing expertise.
- Share experience working with local contractors.
- Conduct environmental review and ensure compliance with federal environmental and other laws.
- Share technical resource and expertise
- Do not facilitate the collaborative group (and thus are not legally bound by what the group decides).
- Participate actively in project discussions; clarify the scope of recommendations acceptable to the agencies early on and consistently.

Observers and Guests

- May fully participate in discussions leading up to votes, but may not vote.
- Offer resource information.
- Share historical and ecological data.
- Abide by BMFP's ground rules.
- Participate, listen actively, and share expertise.

Information will be made available to observers and guests on the background of the collaborative group, and all observers and guests will be introduced at the beginning of each meeting.

Project stakeholders and landowners adjacent to projects will be considered guests at meetings unless they have already established their membership, and will be encouraged to attend and participate in relevant meetings.