

# Wallowa Resources

## Promoting Land and Community Stewardship: The Idea, the Practice and the Jobs Strategic Framework for 2008-10

Wallowa Resources is focused on land, knowledge and community stewardship. For Wallowa Resources, *stewardship* signifies our responsibility to manage and respond progressively to the factors affecting the *sustainability* of land and communities. For us, it is synonymous with husbandry, care and conservation.

### Our Mission

We 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.

### Our Vision

We envision a region where all rural communities have *access* to the knowledge, resources, opportunities and services they need to secure their livelihoods and steward their landscapes. For this vision to be realized, people must have good jobs, quality education, decent and affordable housing and health care, access to capital and markets, and influence over the management of natural resources.

### The Challenge

Our work requires the *integration* of social, economic and ecological issues to identify and implement strategies that will conserve cultural and biological diversity, promote sustainable use, and ensure the fair distribution of benefits. It also requires *partnerships* - collaborative relationships that

- (1) Build consensus on the desired future for our County, its resources and people;
- (2) Coordinate effort and leverage resources; and,
- (3) Provide the framework to scale up and address larger regional and national constraints to local sustainability.

Wallowa County, like most rural communities, is in the midst of tremendous social and economic change. Shifts in national and state policy, and increasing global competition in commodity markets, have weakened the traditional sectors of the economy. Americans from cities across the country are fleeing congestion, pollution and crime for a better quality of life in small rural communities in beautiful settings. Private and corporate investors are diversifying portfolios with real estate investments – with many targeting “up-and-coming” places like Wallowa County.





The resulting demographic changes impact land use – with changes in use and management, pressure for development, and, all too often, the loss of hard-won, multi-generational knowledge and experience. Per capita wealth (and the contribution to wealth from rent, interest and dividends rather than wages) tends to increase, bringing additional financial capital while undermining opportunities for government funding and private charitable support. New social capital arrives with its own ideas, knowledge and networks.

These changes impact the management of invasive species (especially noxious weeds), wildfire, wildlife habitat, and water. They create new dynamics - some positive, some not - for local collaboration on resource management across private and public land.

Wallowa Resources is a leader in the midst of this transformation. Wallowa Resources is an innovator, a facilitator, a source of technical expertise and assistance, a channel for local and external funding, and ultimately a “doer”. Wallowa Resources takes pride in our accomplishments – in tangible results on the ground and for our community.

Wallowa Resources and its partners are pursuing new models for sustainability. Our programs seek to catalyze, facilitate and coordinate individuals, organizations and communities in the stewardship of our lands and resources to meet current and future needs. Wallowa Resources recognizes that stewardship is an ongoing process of learning and adaptation, which requires an investment in local research, monitoring and evaluation. This learning and adaptation is best done on the ground with land managers and community members.

### **Past and Future Work**

Over its first ten years of operation (1996-2006), Wallowa Resources focused on the declining access to and benefits from public lands within Wallowa County. These declines resulted in deep and continuing social, economic and ecological impacts. While Wallowa Resources remains committed to the restoration and stewardship of public lands in the County, other issues are mounting that have significant impact on our future.

Wallowa Resources begins its second decade well positioned to grapple with the large forces changing the character, economy and demographics of Wallowa County. Many within the County would like Wallowa Resources to engage more actively on issues of land use planning, open space conservation, community land acquisition, and to increase investments in the generation and dissemination of knowledge on rural community sustainability and land stewardship.

Long-term sustainability within Wallowa County and many other rural communities in the West will depend on coordinated and complementary strategies for public and private land stewardship.

To effectively respond to these needs and opportunities, Wallowa Resources must restructure its operations and organization. Wallowa Resources believes the time is ripe to pursue this restructuring in a manner that continues to respect and prioritize the important role of partnerships and collaboration. Wallowa Resources recognizes that restructuring has the potential to generate new perceptions of conflict and competition. We will manage this change to limit and mitigate any arising concerns from our partners and other community organizations. Priority will be given to those areas for which Wallowa Resources has a distinct operational advantage and can fill a void in service and investments within the community.

## Issues of Concern and Opportunity

- Wallowa County's 2005 average monthly wage of \$2,036 could not fund the basic family budget for a single adult and one child. Over the last decade more than 1,000 people in Wallowa County lived below the poverty level (over 14% of the population) – children under 18 and households headed by single women were especially vulnerable to poverty.
- Oregon has one of the shortest school years in the nation. Wallowa County's schools have been forced to reduce their course offerings to about 40% of the offerings in metro schools. Across the State, the most talented students are a forgotten minority and demonstrate the least gains in student achievement during their K-12 education. Declining budgets and increased emphasis on standardized testing results in less creative instructional programs, and the near elimination of practical and experiential education.
- Between 2001 and 2005, Wallowa County gained 70 non-farm jobs. *Trade, transportation and utilities* – the second largest industry in Wallowa County – gained 90 positions with average annual wages of \$20,818. The largest relative growth came in *natural resources and mining*, which gained 20 positions. The *Federal Government*, the highest paying of all Wallowa County employee sectors, lost 20 positions. *Local Government*, which with average annual wages of \$29,166 is the highest paying of the three largest industries in the County, lost 70 positions. *Leisure and hospitality*, the third largest industry, lost 10 positions. This industry paid an average annual wage of \$10,589 in 2005.
- Significant opportunities to expand the job, employment and income gains in natural resources exist. Wallowa County hosts tremendous natural resource wealth (water, range, forest and wildlife), and has built the institutional capacity and collaborative partnerships for progressive stewardship of these resources. The legacy of past management (including overstory tree removal, grazing practices and fire suppression), declining investments in resource management, ecological trends (including climate change, fire, insect and disease disturbances, etc.), and increased real estate market activity pose a combined threat to the long-term sustenance of this natural capital. Efforts to steward these assets for the benefit of current and future populations, and the country at large, are constrained by obsolete federal policies governing public land management and those affecting rural communities.
- The Pacific Northwest's population is expected to increase more than the national average, expanding by more than 50% by 2050. This poses a threat to forest and rangelands, especially those in proximity to metropolitan areas, major transportation routes, and areas with high recreation value. Wallowa County's median age has increased from 33.5 in 1980 to 47.8 in 2005, the third oldest in Oregon. The most significant economic boom in the County is in real estate sales and construction, responding to the attractiveness of this rugged agrarian community. This trend reflects the long-term decline of rural economic competitiveness with metro areas, as well as increasing wealth and income inequality in America. It is manifested in a rise in the median age of the County, the rapid rise in absentee property ownership, and the rise in per capita wealth statistics despite long-term economic stagnation here. This trend increases the risk of land fragmentation and habitat conversion. It also creates opportunities to diversify the local economy and leverage new resources for investment in the County's future.

Wallowa County faces many challenges to maintaining the agrarian culture valued by many residents and visitors. New opportunities, new markets and new entrepreneurship are needed to

rebuild the stewardship workforce and infrastructure before it is lost in the looming generational transition.

Wallowa Resources is one of several agents working within and for the benefit of the County. Wallowa Resources’ designated role focuses on natural resources and the integration of land and community stewardship. As a 501.c.3 non-profit corporation, with strong links to the residents and local government, Wallowa Resources is well placed to promote economic innovation, research and explore new markets, and promote learning and partnerships to advance stewardship practices.



## **New Strategic Framework**

The critical issue for Wallowa Resources in its second decade is to prioritize and focus on critical leverage points that will generate the deepest and broadest community benefit. The following strategic framework for programmatic development is offered to guide operations in 2008-2010.

### **Our Mission**

We 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.

### **Our Vision**

We envision a region where all rural communities have access to the knowledge, resources, opportunities and services they need to secure their livelihoods and steward their landscapes. For this vision to be realized, people must have good jobs, quality education, decent and affordable housing and health care, access to capital and markets, and influence over the management of natural resource assets.

### **Our Values**

We believe it is possible to build a society committed to and invested in the long-term stewardship of rural communities and lands. These values guide us in working towards this goal.

*Equity* – People who work should not have to live in poverty. Opportunities and training should be available to help each individual contribute to society. People who cannot work should be supported.

*Inclusiveness* – A diverse and inclusive community and economy is essential to realizing opportunity for all people.

*Empowerment* – People must have the tools, resources, and access to create positive change in their own lives and communities.

*Innovation* – Today’s complex economic and social problems require an approach that is multi-disciplinary and integrated. Often this will involve creative problem solving and experimentation.

*Collaboration* – Lasting social, economic and environmental solutions are created when government, businesses, nonprofits, landowners and communities work together.

*Knowledge Sharing* – Sustainable development within rural communities requires building and sharing collective knowledge. More broadly, transparency is critical to collaboration, innovation, inclusiveness and empowerment.

*Integrity* – Personal and professional integrity is essential to long-term success. Organizational integrity demands a strategic, inquiring, and informed perspective that promotes quality and objectivity.

### **Wallowa Resources’ Three-Year Program Priorities**

In order to increase our effectiveness and impact, we have identified the following three areas to concentrate our work.

1. Improve our collective knowledge and practice of land stewardship
  - The Wallowa Mountain Institute
2. Increase investments in the restoration and stewardship of public and private lands
  - Watershed Stewardship Programs
3. Provide capital and services to businesses that generate benefits to the community and environment
  - Community Solutions Inc

We have established priorities within each of these three program areas, and several strategies for supporting those goals. Over the course of the next three years, our program focus and priorities will remain constant while the strategies may change depending on the findings of our applied research, the results of our outcome-based program evaluations, and the changing environment. For

each concentration area, we will annually modify existing goals and create new ones that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific.

### ***1. Improve our collective knowledge and practice of land stewardship***

The Wallowa Mountain Institute (WMI) is dedicated to providing high quality educational experiences that will impact people for their lifetime by pursuing three broad goals.

#### Priority 1:

Make the Wallowa Mountain Institute a learning center and Wallowa County a learning destination with regard to stewardship and natural resource management.

- Develop an integrated and comprehensive education program that promotes community commitment to the stewardship of working landscapes.  
Indicators:    Number of program offerings  
                  Number of participants by age group
- Improve understanding of stewardship practices and larger forces impacting communities, land use and natural resource management in the intermountain west.  
Indicators:    Number of research and monitoring programs in Wallowa County  
                  Number and quality of publications disseminating results
- Develop the staff, faculty, partnerships and facilities to create excellent stewardship teaching capacity.  
Indicators:    Quality of staff and facilities  
                  Partnership programs and activities

#### Priority 2:

Boost Wallowa County's economy by employing local social and educational capital, and establishing place-based, outdoor education as a local economic force.

- Create and sustain family wage jobs associated with the institute and stewardship.  
Indicators:    Number of family wage jobs supported by WMI
- Attract people to Wallowa County year round to access educational opportunities  
Indicators:    Number of participants in all programs by quarter

#### Priority 3:

Contribute directly to public and private land stewardship, the sustenance of local knowledge and the ethic of stewardship.

- Collect, archive, manage and disseminate stewardship knowledge.  
Indicators:    Breadth and depth of research and information archived at WMI  
                  Number of publications available to diverse public interests
- Use stewardship projects (private and public) for experiential learning opportunities.  
Indicators:    Monitoring & evaluation of projects and publication of lessons  
                  Number of participants who visit projects

- Cultivate a community stewardship ethic and the adoption of stewardship practices.  
Indicators: Total investments in private and public stewardship  
Number and diversity of participants in collaborative initiatives

## ***2. Increase investments in the restoration and stewardship of public and private lands.***

The Watershed Programs are dedicated to improving the condition and management of working lands across Wallowa County, and the local benefits from sound management.

### Priority 1:

Conduct collaborative landscape assessments at the watershed, sub-watershed and property scale, and identify priorities for restoration and stewardship.

- Improve knowledge of watershed conditions and trends (including noxious weeds).  
Indicators: Number of assessment and inventory reports and recommendations  
Number of research, M&E reports, and local histories on specific issues
- Maintain and improve local collaborative processes.  
Indicators: Stakeholder participation and investment in assessments and projects  
Increased community benefit (social and economic)

### Priority 2:

Stimulate investments in public and private land restoration and stewardship.

- Assist in the design, development, and implementation of watershed restoration and noxious weed management projects  
Indicators: Acres or number of sites restored and well managed  
Amount of funding received for projects (by source)
- Increase participation and cooperation in restoration and stewardship  
Indicators: Number and acreage of private lands participating in programs  
Number of cooperative “across fence-line” management programs (private-private and public-private)
- Develop new community ownership and land management models  
Indicators: Acreage within new models  
Median age of working land owners / managers

### Priority 3:

Employ local workforce in restoration and stewardship jobs.

- Contract restoration and stewardship jobs to skilled local contractors  
Indicators: Number and dollar amount contracted  
Number of contractors engaged / number available  
Avg. months per year of employment (seasonality issue)
- Promote best value contracting and performance targets for public land management  
Indicators: % of public contracts using best value criteria  
% awarded to local contractors

**3. *Provide capital and services to businesses generating benefits to the community and environment***

Wallowa Resources wholly owned for-profit subsidiary, Community Solutions Inc, seeks to develop and advance the economic relationships and strategies that connect community and ecological well-being.

Priority 1:

Explore and pursue opportunities in renewable energy.

- Conduct feasibility studies for woody and agricultural biomass, solar and micro-hydro
  - Indicators: Number of completed reports
  - Number of new business investments
  - New investment dollars and resulting business investments
- Create opportunities for local investment, ownership and benefits
  - Indicators: Number of new renewable energy businesses started
  - Number of new jobs created
  - Revenue generated from new businesses

Priority 2:

Explore and pursue opportunities in recreation and tourism

- Secure and manage federal assets including facilities, campgrounds and camp sites
  - Indicators: Number of assets under management
  - Gross economic value (revenue for management and from use)
- Expand length of tourist season and total benefit from recreation and tourism
  - Indicators: Number of new shoulder season offerings / attractions
  - Gross revenue from new offerings

Priority 3:

Explore and pursue value-added opportunities for forest and agricultural products and services

- Assess opportunities and structures for USDA certified and locally branded beef
  - Indicators: Report analyzing options
- Assess opportunities to support small scale intensive agriculture
  - Indicators: A Report analyzing options and providing recommendations

***In 2008, Wallowa Resources is employing 8 full time staff and 3 contractors. Community Solutions Inc employs 1 staff, and the company it founded, Community Smallwood Solutions, employs 15 people. Since 2000, Wallowa Resources has been contracting over \$700,000 annually in field restoration and stewardship work. This work supports many local businesses and contractors.***

### **Wallowa Resources Key Programmatic Strategies**

In the first two areas of concentration, we strive to improve knowledge, policies and practices and leverage resources for implementation. We do this by:

- Assessments, research, monitoring, and analysis
- Education, communication and dissemination
- Coordination, collaboration, consensus-building, and conflict-resolution
- Project design, development and contracting

In the third area of concentration, we strive to stimulate new economic relationships and strategies supporting long-term stewardship. We do this by:

- Assessing entrepreneurial potential and business opportunities in Wallowa County
- Providing business services for entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Acting as an entrepreneur or partner
- Managing public assets as opportunities become available

### **Annual Program Outcome Reviews**

Wallowa Resources is pursuing systemic change that improves the land and communities within Wallowa County, and inspires similar action in other rural communities. These ambitious goals demand that our work is high quality and highly effective. Each year we will measure the success of our program efforts using outcome-based evaluation strategies. We will look for both quantitative and qualitative changes to monitor our effectiveness. This annual outcome review process will serve as our internal guide for developing goals and strategies for subsequent years.

### **Organizational Foundation and Systems**

In order to achieve our mission, Wallowa Resources recognizes that we must maintain an effective organizational infrastructure necessary to support our programs. The following five components are critical to our operational effectiveness:

- Strategic communication and outreach
- Appropriate technology
- Sound and successful funding
- Proactive human resource management
- Effective financial management

### ***Communication***

- Wallowa Resources' organizational brand identity (including our name, logo, tagline, graphics, as well as the way we talk and write about our work) will be established and consistently communicated in all mediums.
- Wallowa Resources will strategically use communications to advance our mission, and to raise our profile among key stakeholders including funders, economic development colleagues, policy makers, business leaders, academics and the press.

- Wallowa Resources communication strategies will make full use of the growing technology options that span traditional media and Internet based communication.
- Internal communication among programs, projects and initiatives will be continuous and will strengthen the inter-disciplinary and collaborative approaches we take in our work.

### ***Information Technology***

- Wallowa Resources will maintain technology that supports ease of communication and collaboration internally and externally with our local, state and national partners.
- Wallowa Resources' website will serve as a portal for sharing dynamic, up-to-date information on our programs and research, and provide tools and assistance to our community, landowners and partners.
- Wallowa Resources internal technology systems will be structured to allow staff, management and board members access to secure workspaces to review and edit documents, financials and internal databases.

### ***Organizational Development and Funding***

- Wallowa Resources' development will further the activities and mission of the organization, ensuring financial stability and promoting long-term growth.
- Wallowa Resources will create a coordinated set of diverse fundraising activities, including program related income, which will be updated annually.
- Wallowa Resources board and staff will develop strategic relationships to increase funding.
- Wallowa Resources staff will coordinate efforts to ensure timely report submission and payment by funders.

### ***Human Resources***

- Wallowa Resources will develop and maintain internal policies and procedures to recruit and retain a diverse, highly qualified and motivated staff.
- Employee professional development will promote continuous learning.
- Collaborators, partner organizations, consultants and staff will participate in orientation programs to understand and support Wallowa Resources operational culture, values and vision.

### ***Financial Management***

- Wallowa Resources will develop and maintain an accounting and financial office providing high quality information and services to the staff, management, clients, funders and others.
- Wallowa Resources will maintain sound financial reporting systems, budget monitoring, internal control function, and policies and procedures to ensure financial stability and promote long-term growth.

Wallowa Resources maintains a good reputation with grant-making institutions, state and federal agencies. Wallowa Resources is still highly dependent on annual grants from a small number of private and public grant-makers. Longer-term grants and contracts will be sought. New relationships will be sought with other grant-making entities, including corporate foundations. Effort to expand the contributions of private donations and program-income will continue.

## Long-term Outcome Measures

Wallowa Resources strategic program is designed to help the people of Wallowa County and the Intermountain West sustain and improve their communities and their lands. Ultimately it seeks to contribute to rural community *access* to the knowledge, resources, opportunities and services needed to secure their livelihoods and steward their landscapes.

Many factors relevant attaining this vision and mission are outside of the organization's control or sphere of influence. Measures of the desired long-term outcomes are important to assess progress, and, as necessary, to identify strategic adjustments to optimize our contribution to the larger objective.

The following key metrics provide a higher-level assessment of the effectiveness of our programs in achieving the desired outcomes. They will also help identify programmatic opportunities and alternatives as they emerge.

1. % of owner-operated ranch and forest properties (pattern)
2. Median age of forest and ranch owners (and operators)
3. Total investments in stewardship of public land
4. Total investments in stewardship of private land
5. Number and types of natural resource jobs
6. Median or average wage of natural resource jobs (including tourism)

Wallowa Resources will explore and develop metrics to monitor the quality of land and resource stewardship, the integration of conservation practices, and the application of best management practices. Wallowa Resources will also develop and manage geographic information systems to track land ownership, use and management practices at a landscape scale.

## Organizational Management Measures

1. Financial impact in terms of direct and indirect FTE's created or maintained
2. Cash assets or commitments in core cost months (office and payroll costs).
3. Knowledge shared, partnerships created, funds leveraged while implementing the organization's program of work.

## Wallowa Resources – Organizational Structure in 2008

