

# Collaborative Restoration Workshop

## National Forest Foundation | April 2016

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### Implementation | Innovative Funding Mechanisms for Restoration

#### Key Topics: Cross-Boundary Partnership

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#### Speakers

- **Chad Davis**, Senior Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Forestry
- **Dana Coelho**, Program Manager, Urban & Community Forestry, Region 2, U.S. Forest Service
- **Claire Harper**, Program Manager, Water Partnerships & Forest Legacy Programs, Region 2, U.S. Forest Service
- **Marcus Selig**, Director, Southern Rockies Region, National Forest Foundation

#### Overview

This session provided examples of innovative approaches to funding the implementation of restoration projects.

#### **Chad Davis – Oregon’s Federal Forest Health Program**

In 2013, the Oregon State Legislature took an innovative step to allocate state resources to increase the pace, scale, and quality of forest restoration on Oregon’s federal forests. This initial investment was included in the Oregon Department of Forestry’s 2015 budget as the Federal Forest Health Program (FFH). The program was allocated \$5 million for funding projects from 2015-2017.

The FFH Program provides grants and technical assistance for the state’s 25 place-based collaborative groups and partners with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to complete data collection for environmental analysis and conduct pre-sale activities to increase the pace of implementation.

The underlying premise of state funds is to evaluate new business practices to find efficiencies while meeting existing environmental laws and procedures. The efforts of the FFH Program have positioned Oregon well to springboard into implementation with the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA).

#### **Dana Coelho and Claire Harper – Collaborative Fundraising on the South Platte Watershed, Colorado**

The Rocky Mountain Region is working collaboratively with partners and communities in the South Platte watershed. This watershed supplies approximately 80% of the drinking water to the 2.5 million residents of the Denver metropolitan area and comprises national forest, state, private, and municipal/county owned landscapes. The impetus for innovative partnerships came from wildfires burning close to Denver’s drinking water reservoir and the consequent flooding. The flooding deposited forty years’ worth of sediment into the reservoir.

Two significant partnership groups have created funding opportunities for restoration work on the Upper Platte watershed, the Coalition for the Upper South Platte and the South Platte Urban Waters Partnership. With many overlapping partners, these groups encompass more than 60 organizations, including government agencies, businesses, and national, regional, and local non-profit organizations. Direct partnerships with water providers created some of this funding. Water rates in the Denver area were slightly raised to support many projects.



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These partnership groups were pivotal in reaching out to raise funds for project implementation. Showing the importance of watershed restoration for a sustainable water supply motivated private funding. The National Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy also helped secure funding.

### **Marcus Selig – The Northern Arizona Forest Fund**

Developed by National Forest Foundation, in partnership with the Salt River Project, the Northern Arizona Forest Fund (NAFF) provides an easy way for businesses and residents of Arizona to invest in the lands and watersheds they depend on. Like the South Platte Watershed, the Northern Arizona Forest Fund stresses the importance of forest health and the need for forest restoration in order to keep water clean and available for residents and businesses. With declining forest health and tighter federal budgets, local partnerships and active stewardship are more critical than ever.

The NAFF's projects reduce wildfire risk, improve streams and wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, restore native plants, and limit erosion and sediment into Arizona streams, rivers, and reservoirs. The NAFF's projects also create jobs and provide volunteer opportunities in local communities through partnerships with local conservation and stewardship groups.

The NAFF works in four steps:

- NAFF partners identify priority projects.
- Downstream beneficiaries invest in projects. Many corporations donate, but also individuals, cities, and other organizations.
- The NFF and partners organize project implementation. This implementation also provides opportunities for volunteerism and in-kind contributions.
- NFF coordinates monitoring and reports monitoring findings and accomplishments to partners and supporters.

### **Lessons**

- The Urban Waters Federal Partnership is not taking applications any longer. The EPA has a small waters grant program. There is an Urban Waters Network (listed in Resources below) to offer lessons learned and advice.
- An avoided cost analysis wasn't necessary to pitch the Northern Arizona Forest Fund to businesses. There are examples where the cost of post-fire work is clear from past fires.
- Increasing the water rates for Denver water users required outreach and public communication, but not a lot of process. The board approved it without a public process and it was part of a larger rate increase.
- The Northern Arizona Forest Fund is still very early in its lifespan, and will hopefully continue indefinitely. It is still early for the municipalities. Monitoring and communication is key to inform and increase the support. *Participants also asked exploratory questions about the State of Arizona and Forest Service potentially providing matching funds.*

### **Resources**

- [Oregon's Federal Forest Health Program – 2015 summary document](#)
- [Northern Arizona Forest Fund – NFF webpage](#)
- [Northern Arizona Forest Fund – informational video and webpage](#)
- [Northern Arizona Forest Fund – Tap to Top video promotion](#)
- [Coalition for the Upper South Platte webpage](#)
- [South Platte Urban Waters Partnership webpage](#)
- [Urban Waters Learning Network](#)



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