

Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation



Introducing the Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation's First Annual Report

By Ed Keith, COFSF Board Chair

We are proud to bring you the Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation's (COFSF's) first annual report! This report provides you a snapshot of COFSF's financials along with an overview of our mission and some of our key successes in 2014. As the Board Chair, I thought I would take a moment to explain why—even though COFSF was founded in 2010—this is the first time the Foundation has developed an annual report.

Much has changed since COFSF's inception, just 5 short years ago. (Please read Glen Ardt's article for a detailed history of COFSF and of some of these changes.) Central Oregon is now home to two highly-functioning community-based forest restoration collaborative groups, neither of which existed at the time of COFSF's inception. The Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP) and the Ochoco Forest Restoration Collaborative (OFRC) share similar missions, each focuses on reducing the risk of wildfire and enhancing community economic vitality.

Since formation, the COFSF Board has expanded the Foundation's purpose to reflect Central Oregon's increasing leadership role in the growing collaborative forest restoration movement across the state—and the nation. Our recently revised bylaws formally expand our purpose, which is to provide financial support and resources to Central Oregon's multiple forest restoration collaborative groups, including the DCFP and OFRC.

The COFSF board also recognizes the need to better communicate the role that the Foundation is playing to support the work of forest collaborative groups. This support includes securing funding for facilitation, monitoring, outreach, and the staff time required to coordinate and oversee key collaborative activities. As one small step toward improved communications, the Board committed to producing an annual report and presenting it to the organizations which COFSF serves.

I believe that these changes improve COFSF's ability to support forest collaborative groups in Central Oregon. I hope you find this report informative and it illustrates some of the tremendous behind-the-scenes work that is essential to keeping our forest collaborative efforts successful and heading towards an ever brighter future.



A Brief History of the Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation

By Glen Ardt, Founding COFSF Board Chair

The summer of 2000 marked one of the worst wildfire seasons on record in the U.S. West. Public awareness of wildfire danger heightened, and in 2001, the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) received a \$100,000 National Fire Plan grant to develop a strategy for increasing wildfire fuel removals and utilization in Central Oregon. The purpose of this grant was not just to address wildfire fuels removals from a technical standpoint, but also to work with a broad coalition of Central Oregon stakeholders in order to develop local capacity to implement the strategy.

Coordinated by COIC, the resulting coalition — the Central Oregon Partnership for Wildfire Risk Reduction (COPWRR) — galvanized a diverse and broad suite of organizations in coordinating activities associated with reducing the risk of wildfire in Central Oregon. In this same era, other efforts emerged to address wildfire concerns. These included The Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network (TNC FLN) and Deschutes County's Project Wildfire. Working separately, each of these efforts addressed different challenges that wildfire presents.

When Congress appropriated \$10 million dollars in 2010 for collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forested landscapes, Central Oregon groups with similar goals began discussing the opportunity this presented. The three similar — but distinct — wildfire groups came together to propose the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP). COPWRR and TNC FLN redirected their efforts to the DCFP. Project Wildfire supported the DCFP effort while retaining its core function.

In 2010 the DCFP was selected as a recipient of these Congressional funds and awarded nearly \$1 million annually over 10 years to implement the plan submitted to the Forest Service in May of 2010. The money allocated for this restoration effort provided for project planning and implementation, yet it did not fund the coordination or staffing support functions which are foundational to effective collaborative engagement.

The regional need for funding to support effective collaborative efforts increased even more when the Ochoco Restoration Forest Collaborative (OFRC) was formed in 2012. The OFRC brings together people with different interests and views on management of the Ochoco National Forest with the goal of building trust, transparency, and increasing the pace, scale and



effectiveness of forest restoration work on the ground. Again, there is little available funding to support the coordination and staffing of OFRC.

Aware of the need to provide sustainable funding to support effective collaborative efforts, the Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation (COFSF) was created in 2010. The purpose of the Central Oregon Forest Stewardship Foundation is to provide financial support and resources for Central Oregon forest collaborative groups dedicated to reducing wildfire risks and provide stewardship of forest resources on Central Oregon's public and private lands utilizing ecologically sustainable and economically viable methods.

COFSF was certified as a 501(c)3 nonprofit entity on February 14, 2011. In support of the collaborative groups, COFSF writes grants, disperses funding, solicits and awards contracts, and oversees and reports on finances, among other responsibilities. Essentially COFSF serves as the backbone organization supporting the projects and active restoration of forest collaborative groups in Central Oregon. At this time, Central Oregon is defined as being within Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, and Wheeler counties.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

ATTEND A COFSF MEETING:

Anyone is welcome to attend meetings.
Meeting schedule: 2nd Friday of the month;
8 am – 10 am at the COIC conference room at
334 NE Hawthorne Ave in Bend, OR.

Consider becoming a board member

COFSF board elections will be held in July. We welcome nominations from collaborative group members on the OFRC and DCFP.

Integrating Science and Social Values: Developing New Partnership Models

By Pete Caligiuri, Chair Elect of COFSF



Mixed conifer forests cover roughly 90,000 acres of the 257,000 acre Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project (DCFP) landscape. That's over 1/3 of the restoration landscape that warrants an in-depth discussion that goes beyond talking about the traditionally accepted principles associated with

dry, ponderosa pine-dominated, fire-adapted forest restoration. And given the many values — ecological, economic, and social— that overlap in mixed conifer forests, they are a prime spot to take a deeper collaborative dive.

In early 2014, the DCFP Restoration Planning Subcommittee (RPSC) initiated a new phase of collaboration and shared learning that focused on mixed conifer forest within the DCFP landscape. Drawing on past experience with engaging the research community on the historical conditions and ecology of mixed conifer forests, DCFP stakeholders worked with a researcher from Oregon State University (OSU) and the Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNW) to narrow down a list of their most important research questions. These questions were compiled and fleshed out in the Kew research proposal. The aim of this unique collaborative-researcher partnership was to increase the group's shared understanding of the development and disturbance history of mixed conifer forests that contributed to historically resilient conditions across this important component of the forested DCFP landscape.

But in the world of collaborative forest restoration, in order for the science to be relevant and meaningful it has to be paired with a robust social process. To that end, the RPSC worked with COFSF to identify and secure the necessary funding to contract professional facilitation from The Mary Orton Company. RPSC staff worked with Mary Orton to plan and implement a parallel collaborative process to advance the discussion of stakeholder values and interests in concert with the mixed conifer research process. With discrete engagement opportunities in the field and indoor meetings, DCFP stakeholders were introduced (some for the first time) to ecological research methods, data collection, preparation, and analysis. And as the research team rolls out the results of the research, this innovative partnership between the research and collaborative worlds is already proving itself in the form of greater trust and understanding of the ecological, economic, and social values that underscore lasting agreement on the ground.

This success was made possible in large part because of COFSF's ongoing financial support of the RPSC to hire neutral, outside facilitation. Mary shepherds the process of effective collaboration with an eye towards shared understanding, increasing trust, and identifying and expanding common ground. This critical ingredient provides a seedbed where respectful discussion of stakeholder values and science can blossom into a collaborative vision for restoration of the mixed conifer forests of Central Oregon.

CENTRAL OREGON FOREST STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION

MISSION:

To provide financial support and resources to Central Oregon's multiple forest restoration collaborative groups, including the DCFP, OFRC, and potential future forest restoration collaborative groups sharing a common mission to restore and steward forest resources in Central Oregon.

GOALS:

- Forest resources on public and private lands in Central Oregon are being ecologically and sustainably utilized and generating community economic benefits.
- The Foundation is fully-staffed for the effective and efficient implementation of all core services.
- The Board is actively engaged in fulfilling the Foundation's purpose.

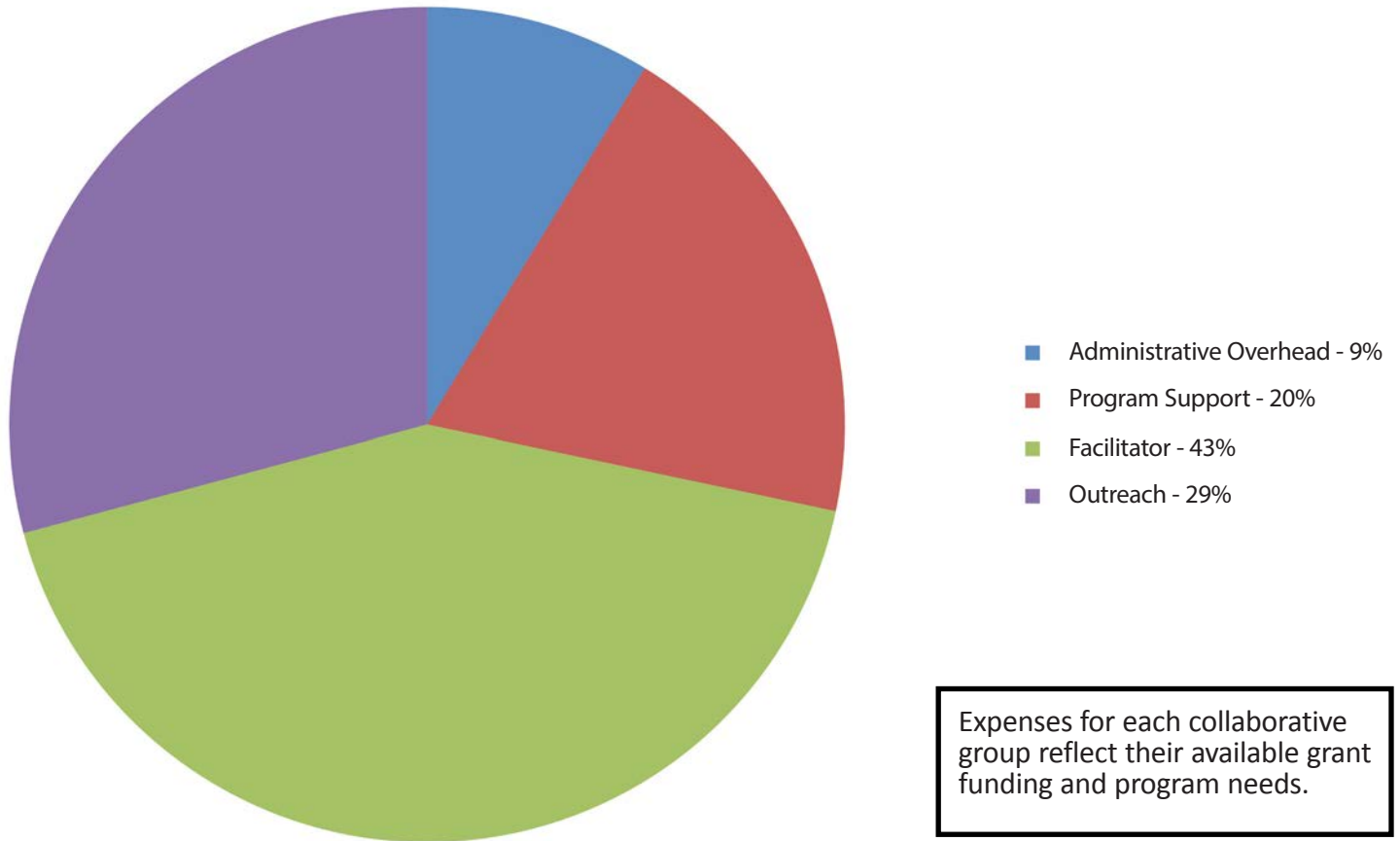
KEY SERVICES:

- Coordinating and implementing foundation, public agency and other philanthropic sources of funding for reduction of wildfire risks, ecosystem restoration, and stewardship of forest resources including, application preparation, project assessment, research, and reporting for applicable projects and activities.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with stakeholder and constituency groups and their representatives involved with active restoration of forest and rangeland ecosystems in Central Oregon.
- Managing investment and distribution of funds.
- Providing fiscal sponsorship/ administrative services to appropriate projects and/or events.

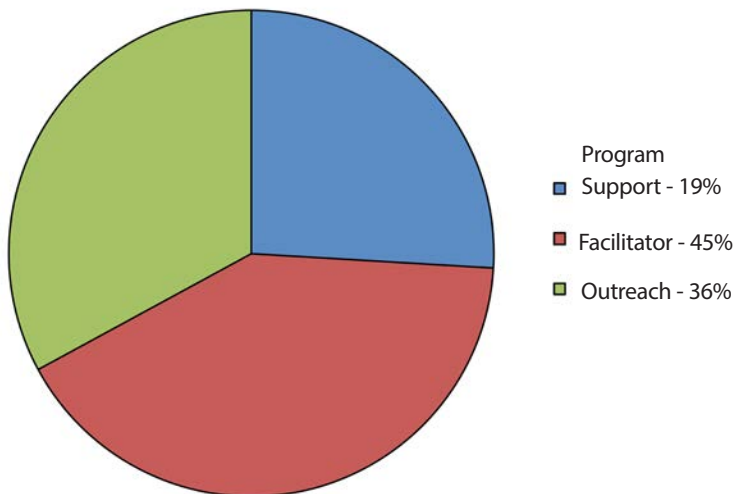
Financials

January 1, 2014 – February 28, 2015

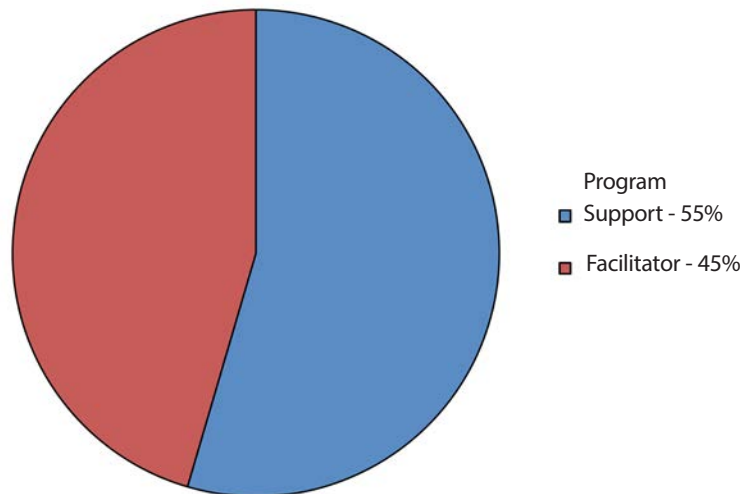
Total COFSF Expenses: \$75,413.40



DCFP Expenses: \$ 66,839.76



OFRC Expenses: \$5,964.86



Strong Facilitation Creates Unity & Direction

By John Jackson, COFSF Board Member

During 2014, US Forest Service staff invited the Ochoco Forest Restoration Collaborative (OFRC) to engage in a process of collaborative learning and recommendation development for the Wolf Planning Area. OFRC accepted that invitation and has since spent a great deal of time learning about and working through the challenges associated with restoration activities within this landscape. This includes: the restoration of aspen, the importance of vegetation management to reduce the severity of wildfire events and priority riparian restoration activities.



OFRC members spent considerable time developing draft recommendations for the Wolf Planning Area. Their recommendations included the removal of some 21 inch shade-tolerant trees under selective conditions. The group agreed to these recommendations under the condition that they be implemented as a pilot project which would be intensively monitored throughout planning and implementation. OFRC recognizes the value of using pilot projects and coupling them with intensive monitoring as a means of gaining trust and trying new approaches.

Members envision that the recommendations which emerged from the work on the Wolf Planning Area will serve as templates for similar treatments on other restoration planning areas. The group is now looking forward to carrying those successes forward to their next challenge, the Gap planning area.

OFRC's successes in 2014 were possible in large part because COFSF secured funding to hire Jack Southworth to facilitate the group. Jack has helped guide the process, coordinating with Ochoco National Forest personnel and leading the consensus building discussions. With Jack's leadership, OFRC participants' vision has become more unified. They share a greater understanding of the outcomes needed to enhance forest health and the trust among those with diverse priorities has increased. Without skilled and adroit facilitation, this process would have been cumbersome at best.

COFSF BOARD

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