

# **Upper Deschutes River Coalition Strategic Planning Retreat Summary by Don Harker, Facilitator**

**November 17, 2007**

The Upper Deschutes River Natural Resources Coalition (UDRNRC) board participated in a one-day strategic planning retreat in Sun River. The retreat took place on November 10, 2007. Attachment one is the agenda for the day. The retreat was structured to achieve the following goals which were identified by the Coalition board prior to the meeting.

- 1) Develop a new mission statement
- 2) Identify long-term strategies
- 3) Identify 2008 initiatives and projects that will form a work plan
- 4) Examine committee structure
- 5) Identify fundraising ideas

## **Mission**

In pre-meeting discussions the group felt the old mission statement was long, misleading and cumbersome. The first exercise for the group was to brainstorm words and phrases that should be part of the mission statement. These were then turned into a new mission statement.

### ***Old Mission Statement***

To maintain a watershed with healthy fire resistant forests, pure and abundant river flows, restored and protected wildlife habitat with appropriately segregated ATV use and recreational shooting; sustained by the effective stewardship of residents, visitors, conservation groups, federal, state, and local agencies.

### ***New Mission Statement***

To protect Upper Deschutes River communities by restoring and sustaining healthy, fire-resistant forests, pure and abundant river flows and wildlife habitat.

## **Driving Forces**

A hard vision of the future can be derived from looking at the certain and uncertain forces operating in a community. A review of driving forces in the STEEP categories (social, technological, environmental, economic and political), allows a broad cross section of citizens thinking together to identify the dominant forces affecting their community. Knowing these driving forces can help us understand how the future may unfold so businesses, government and individuals might be prepared. Understanding driving forces leads to the creation of more robust strategies to be developed for addressing particular issues.

### ***Driving forces that impact the work of the Coalition***

- Cost of fighting fires
- Economic condition of local governments

- Upper Deschutes Coalition
- Conservation of water as a necessary and acceptable idea
- Forest pest cycles and impact
- Snow pack
- Wildlife management
- Water availability and quality
- Recreational activity
- Cost of energy
- Rapid growth
- Desire to restore original forest
- Percentage of fixed income residents
- Fire
- Spirit of individualism
- Pool of retirees
- Old irrigation system
- Public policy
- Individual action is cumulative
- Climate change
- Quality of life
- Part-time resident's attitudes including gap between urban view and rural reality and expectations of services and who will take care of things
- Fire consequences are predictable
- Availability of resources
- Enforcement of laws
- Laws that prevent necessary and preventative actions
- County action and inaction
- Need to redo old decisions
- Zoning laws
- Agency resources have been reduced (including the Forest Service and BLM)

### **Issues identification**

The group worked as a whole to identify issues of concern to them. The issues were expressed as “how” questions for the most part. The reason for this approach is in the power of how. For example, a Harvard professor showed a picture of a woman in a wheel chair to a class of fourth grade students and asked the question “Can this woman drive a car, why or why not?” What she got was a long list of all the reasons the woman could not drive a car. She showed the same photo to another fourth grade class and asked the question “how can this woman drive a car?” With that question she got a long list of all the creative ideas for how the woman could possibly drive a car.

The committee structure was discussed and the current structure was deemed suitable to meet the needs of the Coalition. Those committees are: 1) Public lands, 2) Private lands, 3) Watershed, 4) Education/outreach, and 5) Financial/fundraising.

*Issues identified* (numbers in parentheses refer to the responsible committee see numbers above)

1. How do we involve non-resident owners? (2,4)
2. How do we engage/promote effective legislative support? (1,4)
3. How do we work with diverse interests? (all)
4. How can we educate neighborhoods? (4)
5. How do we get involvement? (4)
6. How do we overcome complacency? (4)
7. How do we protect homes and neighborhoods from fire? (1,2)
8. How do we protect and restore water quality and flows? (1,3)
9. How do we protect habitat? (1,2,3)
10. How do we ensure public safety? (1,2,4)
11. How do we measure success? (all)
12. How do we fund our work? (5)
13. How do we support volunteers? (4)
14. How do we sustain this group? (executive committee)
15. What habitat and wildlife are we protecting? (3)
16. How do we improve collaboration? (4)
17. How do we improve partnerships? (1,2,4)
18. How do we promote responsible recreation? (1,2,4)
19. How do we grow and develop relationships with public agencies? (1,3)
20. How do we increase regional awareness? (4)

## **Strategies**

The group broke into four committees and divided up the issues of concern for strategic planning purposes. The Financial/fundraising committee depended upon the fundraising brainstorm which came later with the results reported in the fundraising section below. The group identified a major goal to fire-proof all homes in the WUI in five years.

After each group worked on their assigned issues a designated group member presented the work back to the whole group for comments and discussion. Additional notes were made from the discussion and incorporated into the strategy summary below. The groups used the attached worksheet to identify strategies, initiatives and measures to pursue.

### **Strategy one**

Protect homes and neighborhoods from fire

#### ***Strategy one 2008 initiatives***

1. Develop accurate survey information identifying which landowners have fire proof parcels (SB 360 assessments)
2. Fire proof one-fifth of homes in Coalition neighborhoods by completing current grant funded work and securing funding for additional work (need to calculate funding needs to accomplish this).
3. Continue program of certifying inspectors (this initiative could be made more specific if the Coalition included a specific number to be trained and how many the Coalition needs).

### ***Strategy one indicators of success***

Percentage of fire proof homes (since the goal is to fire-proof all homes over five years it is important to know what percentage of homes are currently fire-proof and divide the remaining number of houses by 5 for the annual target and include a growth rate in projecting totals)

Number of inspectors (could be reported as a percentage of the target number of inspectors the Coalition believes is necessary to do the job)

## **Strategy two**

Improve water flows

### ***Strategy two 2008 initiatives***

1. Meet with Deschutes River Conservancy to discuss partnering in their work.
2. Convene Deschutes River partners to examine useful and necessary policy changes that will advance the Coalition's mission.
3. Insure Coalition members participate in relevant water meetings and forums.

### ***Strategy two indicators of success***

Deschutes River winter flows are maintained between 200-300 cfs (Coalition needs to decide where this is measured and show historic trends and track, will be best to choose a gage where measurement is occurring now)

## **Strategy three**

Protect wildlife and fish habitat

### ***Strategy three 2008 initiatives***

1. Committee will convene a group to define which fish and wildlife habitats the Coalition is interested in protecting.
2. Committee will convene a group to define what habitat protection is compatible with fire safe treatments.
3. Committee members will meet with ODF&W officials to discuss wildlife issues and involve them in the committee work outlined above.
4. Educate contractors about protecting wildlife habitat during fire proofing treatments.
5. Identify the riparian areas that need restoration and develop a land owner's guide to riparian restoration and where they might find assistance.

### ***Strategy three indicators of success***

Percentage of restored riparian area

ODFW may be collecting information on a particular species that could be used as an indicator of wildlife habitat condition overall

## **Strategy four**

Improve and protect water quality

### ***Strategy four 2008 initiatives***

1. Convene a group to review DEQ and USGS studies, confer with experts and produce a simplified report for the Coalition members and home owners.
2. Develop a process to insure informed coalition members attend all water quality meetings.

### ***Strategy four indicators of success***

When the coalition is informed and becomes a reliable source of information for neighborhoods (an indicator might be number of requests for your simplified report and hits to your website for that same report).

## **Strategy five**

Promote legislative support for the Coalition's work

### ***Strategy five 2008 initiatives***

1. Create a contact list of state legislators and county commissioners and provide it to all Coalition members and encourage contact with elected officials in various venues and using various methods to increase awareness of the Coalition and its work.
2. Identify and promote appropriate CC&R changes and county ordinance changes that will facilitate the Coalition's work.
3. Formalize and communicate the Coalition's position on public issues.

### ***Strategy five indicators of success***

The Deschutes County comprehensive plan considers and positively addresses issues affecting the Coalition communities.

## **Strategy Six**

Increase awareness and involvement of individuals, schools, organizations and neighborhoods in the Coalition's work.

### ***Strategy six 2008 initiatives***

1. Develop and maintain a comprehensive list of resident and non-resident land owners in our 18 coalition communities (contact UDRNRC members who already have a list intact and provide these lists to a professional to develop a comprehensive database for the Coalition).
2. Issue at least one informational/fundraising mailing to the comprehensive mailing list. Include information about responsibilities and benefits for homeowners (including property value increases) and assistance available to homeowners.

3. Contact organizations about partnerships related to the Coalition's mission, including Deschutes River Conservancy, 3 Rivers school, High Desert Museum, Sun River Nature Center, Deschutes River anglers, SROA
4. Coordinate a speaker's series in the schools involving speakers from other organizations whose mission is supportive of the coalition's work.
5. Promote a high school writing competition (with a \$500 first prize) focusing on some aspect of the Coalitions work.
6. Help schools/teachers obtain grants that will support the Coalition's work and involve students (e.g. water monitoring kits and program, riparian habitat survey)
7. Expand website to include a calendar of events including those of other organizations that coincide with the Coalition's mission, list books and other resources that will educate all ages about issues of concern to the Coalition.
8. Create a DVD about the Coalition's work.

***Strategy six indicators of success***

A mailing to land owners with less than 5% return

Involvement of schools

When people recognize who the Coalition is and what they stand for (a measure might be a particular percentage of homeowners who make a donation)

**Strategy seven**

Develop and improve relationships and partnerships with government agencies and other organizations

***Strategy seven 2008 initiatives***

1. Schedule regular (quarterly) working meetings with partner agencies.
2. Distribute information on behalf of public agencies.
3. Participate and advocate Coalition's interests on public working groups.

***Strategy seven indicators of success***

Agency meetings scheduled and held

Project list is created, maintained and communicated

**Fundraising brainstorm**

The group is interested in overall fundraising including grants from public agencies and foundations, but is very interested in ways to engage the community and private donors who live in the area and benefit from the Coalition's work. The group brainstorm of fundraising ideas produced the following list which will be provided to the fundraising committee for further

consideration and development. The Coalition has also engaged the services of a professional fundraiser who attended the strategic planning workshop.

### *Fundraising Ideas*

- Small events in communities
- Real estate agents and sellers who benefit from land treatments donate and/or provide a percentage of sale price
- Coalition store on website
- Make an ask for donations to any land owner whose land is treated
- Seek federal funding at the previous 8 million dollar level
- Join Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition to increase support for policy work
- Save money through a better bidding process to get treatments done
- Partner with agencies on work to be performed
- Grants
- Annual meeting with a picnic
- Annual giving campaign, identify 10 - \$1,000 donors the first year and build on that
- Raise awareness at public events with a booth
- Have a fundraising Blues festival
- Do an auction at the annual event
- All coalition members should donate
- Track in-kind work of coalition members for matching grants
- Do an end of year mailing for donations to landowners
- Home tours
- Make tangible the value created for homeowners
- Form a taxing district for fire prevention work
- Seek donations from local small corporations
- Invite contributors to treated parcels to see how their money is spent
- Seek charitable donations from high wealth individuals using various approaches
- Coalition members should do individual asks

