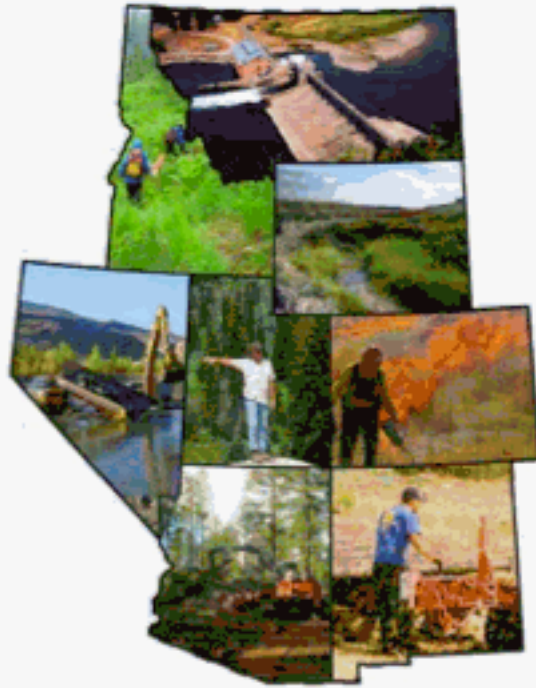


Developing a Restoration Economy: Policy Options for State Legislators



The Progressive States Network aims to transform the political landscape by sparking progressive actions at the state level. Founded in 2005, the group provides coordinated research and strategic advocacy tools to state legislators and their staffs, empowering these decision-makers with everything they need to engineer forward-thinking change on in their states. Our board consists of labor leaders, grassroots and “netroots” groups, and key policy centers. With additional support from these organizations, Progressive States makes it even easier for lawmakers to keep open dialogues with their most savvy constituents. By supporting state legislators and other groups in their efforts to spark progressive actions and get good ideas passed into law, Progressive States proves that state policy matters, and that good policy leads to good politics for all. For more information, visit www.progressivestates.org.

Western Progress envisions a West that honors the ideal of a more just society through opportunity, equity, freedom, independence and our shared love of place.

Our mission is to advance progressive policy solutions across the eight-state Rocky Mountain Region through

- progressive policy initiatives.
- countering conservative rhetoric and policy.
- creating coalitions to develop pragmatic results.
- training and supporting future leaders.

As an independent, non-partisan voice, Western Progress

- expands opportunities that enrich us all, for education, gainful work, personal achievement and a high quality of life.
- encourages individual and collective responsibility for building strong, nurturing communities.
- pushes government at all levels to be open, honest, responsive and humane.

The Progressive States Network and Western Progress are working with state legislators to help develop and introduce legislation to advance a restoration economy. This policy options is one of several tools created to help legislators understand and move the legislation. The Progressive States Network and Western Progress will also work on a more individual level to provide the support and materials necessary to help successfully introduce restoration economy legislation.

In 2006, the Western Governors' Association released a policy resolution recognizing the increasing importance of developing a "Restoration Economy" in the Mountain West. The resolution followed a two day forum held in Montana by the Governor that highlighted the broad-based gains for the region in promoting economic development through projects that create jobs in restoring forests, rangelands, mining areas and water bodies previously scarred by abandoned industrial or extraction activities.

A commitment to a restoration economy will provide not only a stronger environment, but create good, well-paying jobs through both the immediate work involved in restoration and the expansion of recreational and tourist jobs in each state. New funds will flow into local tax bases, further opening up opportunities for local investment. Developing and promoting this economy has the potential to be a multi-billion dollar industry.

- **A number of diverse stakeholders can be brought together to collectively develop a restoration economy due to the many interests that are affected.** Increasingly, business, labor and environmentalists are realizing their overlapping interests. Restoration economy policies can create the well-paying manufacturing and construction jobs that have largely vanished from the U.S. in recent years. Since such programs require a well-trained labor force, they provide the infrastructure and support for those jobs will revitalize high-paying industries in the Mountain West.
- **Instead of letting the land and resources go to waste, restoration programs reclaim their value by bringing the land back,** not only for aesthetic purposes, but because the land and resources are essential to the Rocky Mountain tourist economy. Sportsmen and recreational businesses all have a stake in restoring these lands and can become vital members of the political coalitions supporting restoration economy policies.
- **Politically, a restoration economy is winning political issue.** First, it brings a needed overall economic boost to areas. Second, it creates good, well-paying jobs that can help prevent citizens leaving the state due to a lack of employment opportunities. Third, it reinforces the integral importance of natural resources and the environment. The inner mountain west has a long tradition of protecting natural environments and restoration economy programs continue this tradition.
- **Such programs can inspire enthusiasm especially in young people vital to the future of the region.** A recent poll found that people want their leaders to move boldly to help the environment, but feel pessimistic about the actions taken so far.ⁱ A majority of people also think that job creation is more important than tax cuts.ⁱⁱ Not to mention that a recent study

indicates that 80 percent of young professionals are interested in securing a job that impacts the environment in a positive way.ⁱⁱⁱ Restoration economy programs can create exactly the kinds of economic industries that many young people want to become a part of.

Summary of Key Restoration Economy Policies

Even as states can tap federal funding to strengthen their restoration economy, a number of policies need to be in place to create a successful program. Such policies include:

- **A Designated Restoration Coordinator-** Having a designated office assures that restoration policies are coordinated and results tracked.
- **Encouraging Partnerships and Multiple Stakeholders-** Bringing multiple stakeholders together allows a larger scope and more resources to plan and execute these projects.
- **Educational Institution Support-** Strengthening educational involvement helps train the next generation of qualified workers and brings new research money into the state to develop best practices.
- **Dedicated State Funding Sources-** Creating dedicated in-state funding sources assures long-term commitments to multi-year projects and avoids unfunded mandates for local communities.
- **Regional Coordination-** Multi-state coordination is crucial for restoring shared natural resources and can help maximize use of federal funds.

Examples of Restoration Economy Policies

The following examples illustrate ways in which restoration economy development and promotion have been adopted at the state level. Different states are adopting approaches tailored to the particular needs of their communities, but there are important themes and best practices that can help make each state's program successful.

I. Designated Restoration Coordinator

Establishing a restoration coordinator or a dedicated restoration office helps to coordinate and focus restoration activities. The benefit is that state policies and programs can be better tracked and coordinated, helping to eliminate waste and recreating the wheel.

Last year, the **Montana** state legislature appropriated funding to create a dedicated office within the Governor's office to coordinate and promote restoration economy programs. Besides coordinating restoration programs, the office will create a database of statewide programs. Housing the restoration program within the Governor's office is most ideal because the engaging of the executive will be maximized and can result in increased promotion activities.

Wyoming also coordinates restoration projects through the **State Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund** with funding from legislative appropriations, interest on the trust and direct donations.

When creating a restoration coordinator, some fundamental responsibilities include:

- coordinating state-wide restoration economy programs
- developing new ways to encourage restoration
- assisting with obtaining funding for in-state restoration projects

- promoting success of restoration projects
- increasing state-wide support for restoration
- tracking economic and employment gains from restoration projects

II. Encouraging Partnerships and Multiple Stakeholders

Encouraging partnerships and multiple stakeholders accomplishes several goals. First, it creates a large base of support for restoration projects due to increased participation. Second, it creates a constituency that is invested in restoration and its advancement. Third, it allows for projects of a larger scope because there are more stakeholders and more resources.

The **Five Star Restoration Program** is an excellent example of promoting partnerships. The Five Star Restoration Program promotes partnerships between citizen groups, local businesses, schools, youth corps organization, private landowners, and government agencies that work together to restore local streams and wetlands. The EPA provides major funding with considerable financial support coming from the National Marine Fisheries Service through their Community-Based Restoration Program. The EPA often contributes a modest amount that can be supplemented by state support to create a solid funding source.

Congress passed the **Community Forest Restoration Act** of 2000 to establish a Community Forest Restoration Program in **New Mexico** that provided cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects that are designed through a collaborative process. Initially, the authorization was for \$5 million annually. Projects must include diversity of stakeholders in their design and implementation.

III. Educational Institution Support

Supporting education institutional involvement accomplishes several goals. One, it provides training and leadership for students in restoration programs to create the next generation of qualified workers. Two, it bring research money and students into the state. Three, it helps develop best restoration practices. Finally, it keeps students in state by offering them opportunities for good paying jobs in state.

In **Montana**, for instance, **Montana State University** (MSU) houses several programs devoted to restoration that conduct research and provide restoration resources, such as publications, consultants and policies. The restoration research at MSU is quite developed and is a mix of federal and state partnerships. Some of the programs that are in place are:

- **Ecosystem Restoration** was launched through a partnership formed between Montana State University and the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and the U.S. EPA. It offers ecological restoration tools to designers, managers and practitioners in a web-based information repository.
- **Montana Water Center** was established in 1964 by an act of Congress and advances water research, information, education and problem-solving partnerships throughout the state of Montana and beyond. It is one of 54 centers nationwide that is collectively known as the *Water Resources Research Institutes*.

- **Wildlife Fish Habitat Initiative (WFHI)** is a cooperative effort between the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the Montana Water Center, established in 2002. The Initiative conducts research by the Water Center staff and Montana State University biologists in collaboration with private landowners and private and public agency biologists.
- **Center for Invasive Plant Management (CIPM)** promotes ecologically sound management of invasive plants.

This shows the diversity and potential for research programs in restoration practices.

Southwest Forest Restoration Institutes are a combination of the Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University, the Forest and Watershed Institute at New Mexico Highlands University and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University. The Institutes were established by federal law in 2004, the Southwest Forest Health and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2004.

Education development programs should include:

- Dedicating funding to create restoration programs within educational institutions
- Securing federal research funding
- Securing dedicated state funding
- Encouraging regional educational cooperation
- Tracking statistics of graduates to quantify restoration economic benefit

IV. Dedicated Funding Sources

Perhaps the most important policy to advance is to ensure that there are dedicated funding sources for restoration programs. Giving local communities or councils unfunded mandates should be avoided at all costs. Also, providing dedicated funding gives stability and predictability to the field, both of which are necessary to attract and retain business interests for restoration programs. States should also empower local communities to apply their own funding initiatives.

Examples of dedicated funding sources include:

- **Colorado's Watershed Restoration Fund** to be added to the state individual income tax refund check-off program for voluntary contributions.
- **Colorado** also passed the **Forest Improvement District Act**, which allows more local control by allowing the governing body of a county or municipality
- **Wyoming's** Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund received funding from legislative appropriations, interest on the trust and direct donations.
- **New Mexico's** Habitat Stamp Fund generates almost \$1 million per year in fees from hunters, anglers, and trappers on BLM of Forest Service lands.
- **Nevada's** Abandoned Mine land program is partially funded by fees paid by the minerals industry.

V. Regional Coordination

Regional coordination is vital to a healthy restoration economy, particularly as natural resources, such as forests and watersheds, do not stop at state borders. Regional coordination can also maximize the use of federal funds.

The **Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership**, for example, brought together **New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado** and **Utah** to work together to build healthy forests and communities. Congress appropriated \$500,000 to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow the states to begin implementing their partnership. A steering committee was formed that implemented the objectives of the Partnership.

State legislatures can also pass resolutions in support of regional cooperation. While not binding, resolutions can help bring attention to an issue and generate support among the public.

- Regional partnerships should focus on several elements:
- Rectifying environmental damage done to shared resources
- Sharing of best practices and working knowledge
- Sharing of costs
- Co-promotion of efforts

More Resources

General Resources

The Restoration Economy by Storm Cunningham: <http://www.restorationeconomy.com/>

Clemson University Restoration Institute: <http://restoration.clemson.edu/>

Healthy Communities and Healthy Ecosystems: the Community Development Potential of Ecosystem Restoration Work, University of Oregon Working Paper:
<http://ewp.uoregon.edu/pdfs/wp3.pdf>

Western Governor's Association Policy Resolution:
<http://www.westgov.org/wga/policy/06/restoration.pdf>

Arizona's Guiding Principles for a New Economy Based on Forest Restoration:
<http://www.governor.state.az.us/FHC/documents/RestorationEconomyGuidingPrinciples.pdf>

Five Star Program Resources

More information about the Five Star Restoration Program can be found at:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/02factsheet.html>

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Five Star Restoration Matching Grants Program:
<http://207.42.84.67/nfwf/programs/5star-faq.cfm>

Community Forest Restoration Act Resources

The text of the bill can be found at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/spf/cfrp/pdf/publaw106.pdf>

More information on the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program can be found at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/spf/cfrp/>

Forest Guardian, Southwestern Forests: http://www.fguardians.org/sf/issue_santa-fe-national-forest.asp

Western Governor's Association, Collaborative Forest Restoration Program:
http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/enlibra/collaborative_forest_restoration.htm

Southwest Forest Health and Wildlife Prevention Act of 2004 Resources

The text of the bill can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/partnerships/institutes/pdfs/act.pdf>

Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnership Resources

More information on can be found at: <http://www.littlecolorado.org/fcsfor.htm>

Four Corners Sustainable Forests Partnerships: <http://www.rmrs.nau.edu/fourcornersforests/>

Four Corners Sustainable Forest Partnership Supports Forest Product Businesses:
http://extension.usu.edu/forestry/Business/Profile_4Corners.htm

ⁱ <http://www.physorg.com/news110045482.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.icrsurvey.com/studies/AprilGPPoll.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.pucchronicle.com/channel/index.cfm?event=displayPressRelease&synid=121693>