

## CHAPTER 2.

# It starts with a partnership

To better understand where we are today in terms of Oregon's fire management policies and practices, it's valuable to acknowledge the perspectives and interests of our history over the past 150 years. Safeguarding forests in Oregon at the state level began its legal journey in 1864, when the first forest protection law was passed. The purpose of this original legislation was to protect the homes, fields, and woodlots of the settlers, not the timber holdings of the newly arrived lumber companies. Although this act made it unlawful to start fires for any reason on lands belonging to another landowner or to allow fire to spread to another landowner from your land, landowners continued to insist they had the right to burn whenever and wherever they wanted.

By 1902, the growing importance of forest lands and the fear of fire began to swing the pendulum toward forest protection through fire prevention. A 1905 law appointed state fire wardens but without organizations to support them. Oregon passed several fire suppression laws in 1907 with provisions to address human-caused ignitions. During this time, William B. Sellers became the president of the first organization in Oregon to begin cooperative efforts for fire protection: the Klamath and Lake counties Forest Fire Association (K&LCFFA). This marked the beginning of cooperative efforts by timber owners and state, federal, and local agencies to work together in fire protection. Their efforts spanned jurisdictional boundaries to include anyone who wanted to join and worked to bring landowners together for fire protection. Forest health and fire protection was a community effort. Through the efforts of the K&LCFFA, people became accountable for their own lands and helped their neighbors when needed.

The problems facing these early timber trailblazers focused on the transportation of goods to markets, the destructive forces of nature, and state regulations for resource protection and protection against fire. Innovative and cooperative ideas about protecting the abundant timber resources grew within the industry. The Klamath Forest Protection Association (KFPA) was formed in 1908 to address the danger of damaging wildfires and the time required to respond to them. The story of the KFPA is evidence of the resourcefulness of people in rural communities to protect forest resources and infrastructure.



Historical logging in Klamath County, 1933

Photo: Harold Weaver



Fire-killed timber, 1959

Photo: Harold Weaver

Moving ahead 85 years, the forested landscape has changed significantly, and issues are shifting towards recognizing the need for forest management, reintroducing fire into the ecosystem, and reducing the risk of wildfire. In 1993, continuing a century-long partnership in Klamath and Lake counties of Oregon, a group of private landowners, forestry consultants, conservation groups, local fire districts, and state and federal agencies organized a partnership to promote forest health and awareness through collaboration, problem-solving, science, and sharing of lessons learned. Cooperative efforts facilitated prescribed fire management on private and public land to the east of Klamath Falls in the 1990s. The group was incredibly forward thinking and developed a publication in 1999 titled *Klamath-Lake Forest Health Management Guide*.

This guide is still relevant today. Progress toward promoting forest health across land boundaries on a small scale continued in 2004 when the group incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization called the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership (KLFHP). The voting members are few, and the bylaws are simple.

On February 17, 2015, the Partnership held a summit titled, “How Can We Partner in Lake and Klamath Counties to Increase the Pace and Scale of Forest Restoration in Klamath and Lake counties.” Over seventy people attended the one-day summit to increase their involvement to meet a shared goal of forest health and fire risk reduction.

Participants identified issues common to the two-county area and at the end of the session voted for KLFHP to take a leadership role. Summit participants recognized the need to pool existing efforts to achieve the common goal of forest health and wildfire risk reduction through accelerated landscape restoration and agreed the KLFHP was in a good position to lead this effort. Summit participants believed that only through this existing Partnership—within which there is mutual respect and sharing of information, expertise, and resources—could the outlined goals be met. At a subsequent monthly meeting, KLFHP partners voted and passed a motion to accept the leadership role for Klamath and Lake counties on behalf of all summit participants. Given the added responsibility, the KLFHP started to build capacity to undertake the task.

The KLFHP hired a professional facilitator in

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***“Working with a conservation group like the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership has been a great experience. Pooling our expertise and resources to assist private landowners and public lands seem to be the key to address the western states’ forest health issues.”***

David F. Ferguson, Natural Resources Conservation Service District conservationist

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2016 to update the mission statement and define an organizational structure to meet the challenges ahead. The identification of KLFHP organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats became the focus of meetings. Priority goals identified included:

- Developing active subcommittees to take the lead on priorities identified by the KLFHP
- Actively engaging key audiences in the KLFHP, including private landowners
- Enhancing organizational capacity by securing funding
- Identifying KLFHP successes and developing a strategy for communicating these with the public
- Establishing a model/pathway for undertaking a cross-boundary, landscape-scale approach

As the process concluded, KLFHP agreed on a shared mission to “facilitate restoration projects on public and private forestland in Klamath and Lake counties through education, outreach, and diverse partnerships.” To meet this goal, KLFHP developed an organizational structure that functioned through three subcommittees: 1) organizational structure and capacity, 2) outreach, and 3) project focus.

As projects were added and developed, new self-directed subcommittees formed to accomplish work efficiently. All of the key agencies (see bullet list, page 11) contributed to the effort by dedicating existing staff. As grant funds have increased, agencies have been able to add capacity through new staff and contracts with external consultants.

Near the end of 2016, KLFHP agreed to move forward with its first landscape management effort, the North Warner Multi-ownership Forest Health Project (see Chapter 11, Case Study 1, page 40). This project started the process of carrying out the results of the 2015 forest summit.

### ***Building relationships and a sustainable partnership***

The current Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership brings guidance and structure to support forest treatments using relevant science, protection laws, and funding. It can be easy to overlook the importance of managing and maintaining the relationships in this kind of partnership. A few local lessons in wildfire have shown us that relationships often heal more slowly than the landscapes we manage. Thoughtful employee succession management, respectful communication among all participants, and large-scale visionary planning for multiple values in complex systems are intrinsic to successful landscape-scale projects.

The Partnership meets in person once a month, with subcommittee meetings scheduled as needed. A web page for the Partnership was designed in 2017 (<https://www.klfhp.org/>). See Appendix A (page 61) for a KLFHP brochure.

KLFHP functions well as a partnership and meets its mission because of a few basic factors. Consider these if you are interested in starting a partnership to work on cross-boundary restoration:

- Gain 501(c)(3) nonprofit status
- Develop bylaws, but keep them simple
- Refine the mission statement through group exercise
- Remain neutral and nonregulatory

- Use existing agencies and organizations with an existing financial structure to manage grant funding, not the partnership
- Focus on results instead of the organization
- Consider functioning through subcommittees
- Recruit leaders from all key agencies such as Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon State University Extension Service, National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Watershed Councils, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)
- Meet regularly (e.g., once per month)

*Tools for Success: Consider starting a partnership that focuses on development and implementation of cross-boundary projects*

Landscape-scale, cross-boundary projects vary in scope and scale (from vast landscapes to neighborhoods), and in the number of partners and landowners involved. While there is no single model, all successful partnerships require deliberate effort. Such partnerships are distinct from the “forest collaborative” groups now common on national forestlands. Forest collaboratives are venues for multistakeholder dialogue to build social agreement around management priorities, typically on public lands. This dialogue is important but not sufficient for the planning and implementation of cross-boundary projects involving multiple partners and landowners. Those wishing to form a cross-boundary, landscape-scale partnership should consider these key elements:



- **A core team of willing participants**, including landowners, agencies, organizations, and funders with relevant expertise, passion, and ability to serve both public and private interests
- Involvement of **contracting, grants, and agreement personnel** at early stages to ensure design feasibility
- **Supportive leadership** from government agency deciding officials and specialists
- **Trusted consulting foresters and Extension Service personnel** to assist family forest landowners in meeting their individual needs



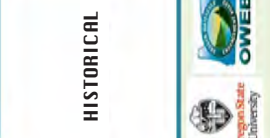
Photo: Leigh Ann Vradenburg

Members of the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership

- **Business engagement**, including operators and local forest products processing facilities to incorporate economic viability and impacts
- A **central entity** to convene partners, bridge organizational differences, and be a flexible intermediary
- Strategies for **maintaining the partnership**, including meetings, communications, and other necessary interactions that sustain momentum

**KLFHP MISSION STATEMENT:**

**To facilitate restoration projects on public and private forestland in Klamath and Lake Counties through education, outreach and diverse partnerships.**



**HISTORICAL**



**EXISTING**



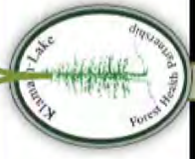
**DESIRED**

**USING THE KLFHP AS THE COMMON, NEUTRAL PLATFORM**

**WORKING TOGETHER WITH A COMMON VISION**

**OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS BETWEEN AND AMONG**

**FORM INNOVATIVE AGREEMENTS OF MOU'S**



**TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON THE GROUND**

**Project Implementation**

**Desired Outcome**

