



About the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative

The North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC) is comprised of a diverse group of interests, including conservation groups, state agencies, conservation districts, timber industry, regional tribes, community groups, and others (see full membership list at end). While the northern portion of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF) in Chelan and Okanogan Counties is our primary focus, the NCWFHC employs an all-lands approach, inclusive of a range of partners working across a checkerboard of landownership. ***We support any purpose that 1) enables our vision of resilient forest landscapes that can live on in perpetuity, 2) supports healthy ecosystems where plants, fish, and wildlife thrive, and 3) provides sustainable community, cultural, and economic uses of the land.***

Since 2013, we have come together with the mission of obtaining community support and leveraging partner resources to increase implementation of landscape-scale forest and aquatic restoration. We harness the power of diverse member perspectives and cultures to find innovative solutions and resources that are science-based, environmentally, ecologically, economically, and culturally sound. The success of this diverse group has been proven over time, by members coming together, staying together, adapting, and doing the work to move the mission forward through a number of challenges.

Although the NCWFHC has no authority to make decisions for the OWNF, including project decisions, we offer informed recommendations and provide support and expertise. Successful support includes acquisition of federal, state, and private funding for project planning and implementation, adding resources that move project timelines forward. Our internal decisions, including our recommendations, are made via consensus. This means that our work sometimes moves slowly, but it results in durable outcomes that represent the shared values of our membership and advance locally led, cross-boundary, forest restoration and management for the benefit of our public lands.

The collaborative membership works toward shared understanding of quality forest and aquatic health treatments, presenting innovative opportunities and making collaborative decisions consistent with our vision. NCWFHC also has several committees that plan, coordinate, and facilitate aspects of the collaborative work. The Outreach Work Group is chartered to conduct targeted outreach and education to assist the NCWFHC in fulfilling its functions and achieving its goals. Through these efforts, the NCWFHC has assisted with community field trips and public meetings that are designed to engage target audiences within key geographic areas about the key issues and current threats to the forests in that specific landscape. These events create a space for shared learning and additional means to connect with community members on technical discussions and questions, programs, and resources to support healthy forests and thriving forest-dependent communities. The Projects Work Group was created to actively engage with the OWNF on restoration projects that will assist the NCWFHC in fulfilling its support functions and achieving its common ground goals. It considers needs at all stages of project development, from public scoping and pre-NEPA survey capacity, to environmental analysis, monitoring, lessons learned and adaptive management.

Diversity of stakeholder involvement is the cornerstone of the collaborative and its structure maintains a balance of representation of forest interests. Members share leadership roles to ensure minimal conflict

Working together to obtain resources and community support to increase the implementation of landscape-scale forest restoration since 2013.



of interest through a balance of interests. Over time, these roles have been held by conservation and industry representatives as well as elected officials and agency staff. Further, we encourage input from groups and individuals aligned with our mission and vision. NCWFHC meetings are open to the public, with occasional closed sessions for internal consensus-building intended to reduce public and Forest Service partner confusion. This “sausage-making” space allows individuals to bounce thoughts and ideas freely before consensus agreement is reached. All notes resulting from these meetings are made public.

As with any group of passionate, well-informed people who have varied interests and backgrounds, there are challenges. While ***we do share a common agreement on the why, as reflected in our mission statement***, members do not always agree on the how, the what, or the where. Individual members voice their ideas, and we do our best to navigate these difficult conversations to find the points of agreement that become our shared springboard for action. We can then issue collaborative common ground comments and statements; we can then partner together to build implementation capacity. Ensuring this diversity of thought makes us robust and more effective over the long term.

NCWFHC recently underwent a comprehensive governance revision process, including an extensive stakeholder assessment, updated vision and mission, revised operating protocols, and a recommitment process, inviting each member group to reaffirm their dedication to our collaborative's work. All members chose to recommit, demonstrating a unified, long-term dedication to our shared vision for North Central Washington's forests and communities through effective collaboration.

Recently, both our state and federal partners have faced funding challenges, the full impacts of which are still in flux. Within this uncertainty, NCWFHC is well-positioned to assist. We have laid the groundwork for leveraging partner efforts through our network of relationships and trust as a foundation of our collaborative efforts. Our member network has the capacity to bridge partner resources and help fill capacity and funding gaps. For example, the OWNF has limited resources for monitoring critical to the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. These efforts are needed to both measure forest restoration projects' outcomes and inform future management. Through effective communication and coordination within the collaborative, several members who meet the required qualifications and already use the same standardized monitoring protocol leveraged their individual organizations' staff and resources to fill this critical need. This is merely one example of how the collaborative can be nimble in the midst of shifting political, social, and economic climates to continue the important work consistent with our shared vision.

By creating this culture of forest stewardship grounded in best available science and executed through a shared vision, the NCWFHC garners community support to accelerate landscape-scale forest restoration in Chelan and Okanogan counties.

Sincerely,

Tiana Luke
The Wilderness Society
NCWFHC Co-Chair

Anjolene Ngari
Hampton Lumber
NCWFHC Co- Chair



Membership List:

American Forest Resource Council
Boise Cascade
Cascade Fisheries
Cascadia Conservation District
Chelan County
Chelan-Douglas Land Trust
Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
Conservation Northwest
Hampton Lumber
Lake Wenatchee Fire Adapted Community
Methow Valley Citizens' Council
Okanogan Conservation District
Okanogan County
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
Trout Unlimited
Vaagen Bros. Lumber Co
WA Department of Fish & Wildlife
WA Department of Natural Resources
Wenatchee CAFE
Yakama Nation