

TAPASH SUSTAINABLE FOREST COLLABORATIVE, *Washington*

NORTHWEST FLN

1.8 MILLION ACRES



The Tieton—a rugged wildlands on the eastern spine of the Cascade Mountains © Ken Bevis

THE TAPASH SUSTAINABLE FOREST COLLABORATIVE landscape is located outside Yakima, Washington and extends from the forested flanks of the East Cascades to the arid, sage-dotted hills of the Columbia Basin. These rugged hills and canyons support some of the few remaining mature groves of ponderosa pine in the state and provide habitat for the declining white-headed woodpecker, golden eagles, Rocky Mountain elk and mountain lions. These ponderosa pine ecosystems, including forests, riparian areas and suites of dependent fauna, have changed dramatically in ecological character over the last century.

COLLABORATIVE OBJECTIVES:

- Restore forest health and protect the forested ecosystems of the eastern Cascades from imminent conversion
- Create an interactive, trust-based structure that can work together on the pressing threats to forests on the east slopes of the Cascades
- Support an operational mandate of an “ownership blind” concept
- Restore the use of fire as a tool for achieving ecological objectives

This landscape is part of the forest crisis in western states brought on by the interaction of drought, disease, altered fire regimes and forest conversion. All of these factors are exacerbated by the difficulty of coordination due to the checkerboard land ownership pattern developed in the 19th century. The magnitude of the problem at the scale of the east Cascades has driven stakeholders to agree that it is beyond any one group to work on these threats with any hope of success.

COLLABORATIVE VISION STATEMENT:

The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative is united by a vision of forests, savannas and river systems that support diverse natural and human communities, produce ecologically sustainable goods and services and persist in changing conditions throughout the eastern Cascades.

THE TAPASH SUSTAINABLE FOREST COLLABORATIVE, a coalition of public, non-profit and tribal land managers organized under a Memorandum of Understanding, works cooperatively to overcome the constraints of the checkerboard ownership patterns. It is currently focused on restoring fire-adapted ecosystems to a core area within the Wenatchee National Forest by exploring new implementation tools and opportunities including stewardship contracting, ecosystem services markets, cellulose ethanol production from forest biomass and National Fire Plan funding.

Using a process developed by The Nature Conservancy called Conservation Action Planning, the convening partners structured the scope, overall project vision and desired ecological outcomes and created clear strategies to accomplish the shared vision. The Tapash Collaborative also refined its structure, forming a work group of staff practitioners who work together regularly, an executive committee to set strategic direction and an organizational leadership function for directors. The new work group built a protocol for taking fuels treatment projects across federal and state ownership. In addition, recent timber transport negotiations will make a Department of Natural Resources forest health project possible.



The Tieton offers important outreach and education opportunities © Lee Trivette

PARTNERS:

Forest Restoration Partnership
The Nature Conservancy
USDA Forest Service, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington State Association of Counties
Yakama Nation
Yakima Valley Community Foundation

KEY SUCCESSES

FIRE REGIME CONDITION CLASS TRAINING was delivered as peer learning through the Work Group.

THE TAPASH WORK GROUP CONTRACTED WITH THE YAKAMA NATION to conduct a cultural resources survey, prepare a burn plan and secure necessary permits.

THE COLLABORATIVE SET UP A \$400,000 GRANT to leverage activities with the Yakima Valley Community Foundation.

A NEW FOREST HEALTH MOVEMENT was successfully initiated with the Washington State Association of Counties.

2008–2009 PLANNED ACTIONS

- Implement a multi-agency fuels treatment project at the Tieton project area.
- Complete biomass economic analysis in order to attract new infrastructure investment.
- Determine feasibility of offering future large-scale planned treatments as stewardship contracts rather than traditional timber sales.
- Complete Integrated Mapping and Assessment Project landscape analysis for central Washington to provide a basis for multi-agency landscape management strategies.

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