



**Northwest Community Forest Coalition
Operating Framework
Updated September 30, 2020**

1. Overview

This document describes the Northwest Community Forest Coalition, herein referred to as the “coalition.” The document will be a living document and can be revisited by the coalition at any time.

2. Background

The first Pacific Northwest Community Forest Forum was hosted in May 2014 at Skamania Lodge in Washington. The conference was the first of its kind to bring together community organizations, land trusts, legal advisors, experts in conservation finance, state and federal agency representatives, and local leaders to discuss current examples of successful community forests, the essential elements of a community forest, and the technical resources necessary to pursue acquisition of community forestland in the Pacific Northwest. The Forum signified a shift from a dispersed and disconnected approach to a more cohesive, deliberate, and coordinated strategy to growing and strengthening community-owned forests in Oregon and Washington.

The second Northwest Community Forest Forum convened at the World Forestry Center in Portland, Oregon in May 2015. One outcome of the Forum was a Call to Action document outlining a series of recommended activities for the partners to undertake in order to advance the outcomes of the annual forums. Out of this document and strategic discussion, the Northwest Community Forest Coalition was born.

3. Function, Purpose, and Vision

The function and purpose of the coalition is to connect existing and potential community forest managers with technical and financial resources, facilitate sharing of strategies and lessons learned, and educate the public about the benefits of community forests.

VISION: The Northwest Community Forest Coalition believes that long-term, community-based management of local forests leads to enhanced stewardship and multiple public benefits.

4. Coalition Activities

- **FINANCE AND FUNDING:** Enhance and develop acquisition and stewardship funding mechanisms that support ownership by local governments and community-based organizations that align with community forest long-term management goals.
- **NETWORK AND CAPACITY BUILDING:** Build a regional network of communities and a web-based forum to facilitate sharing of strategies, experience, and resources.
- **PROJECT SUPPORT:** Provide technical and financial support to projects in the Pacific Northwest that demonstrates the potential of community forests.
- **MARKETING AND OUTREACH:** Develop and implement a marketing and education strategy promoting community forests and their products, including publications that detail experiences with pilot projects.

5. Governance

The Coalition is organized and directed by an executive committee. In 2020, the steering committee voted to expand executive committee representation and convert the steering committee to general membership.

Executive Committee

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE is responsible for driving the work of the coalition and is, in general, the decision-making body of the coalition. Participation in the Executive Committee is not exclusive, and any member may be admitted upon majority vote of the Executive Committee. Executive committee members are expected to serve in increments of three year terms and serve at least one full term. After two terms, we recommend that Executive Committee members cycle off of the committee for at least 1 year.

At minimum, there must be 5 members serving on the Executive Committee. We hope to have a diverse representation of stakeholders and geography on the Executive Committee. A maximum of 15 participants is recommended, though this number could be expanded if needed. Representation should include:

- Washington Land Trusts
- Oregon Land Trusts
- Tribal Representatives
- Timber Interests
- Local/City/County Government Representatives
- Community Forest Organizations
- At large position

- Non Profit Organizations
- State and Federal Agency staff (non voting)

The Executive Committee decision-making authority includes, but is not limited to, overall coalition strategy, engagement in policy issues, and procurement of funding. Executive Committee responsibilities include:

- Outreach and recruitment of new Executive Committee members;
- Approval of and changes to the coalition Operating Framework will require a vote by the Executive Committee;
- Approving policy platform and sign on letters;
- Participating in monthly NWCFC Executive Committee meetings;
- Participating in NWCFC field trips;
- Doing outreach about Coalition activities;
- Fundraising for the NWCFC;
- Providing feedback and content for NWCFC communications, guides, workshops, and other activities.

The Executive Committee is entrusted with making decisions for the coalition, unless all members of the Executive Committee determine that a vote or input from the Membership is necessary to take action. In such a case, the Executive Committee will determine the appropriate level of approval (consensus, majority, super-majority, etc.) and seek input from Membership.

Coalition Membership

Any person who is interested in advancing the concept of community forests and is committed to identifying and addressing challenges and barriers to expanding community forests is considered a coalition MEMBER AT-LARGE. Members include, but are not limited to, past and present attendees of the Annual Community Forest Forum and signatories to official coalition policy comment letters. Members of the coalition are asked to sign on to the principles that the NWCFC have advanced.

Working Groups and Committees

The coalition may create and utilize AD HOC WORKING GROUPS, such as a Planning Team for the Annual Community Forest Forum, or a Policy Platform Working Group. Said working groups may engage participants from the Executive Committee as well as members at-large. Working Groups will define their purpose, timelines, and work plans as needs arise.

Sign-on Procedure

The Executive Committee is responsible for determining which sign-on opportunities the coalition will pursue. Sign-on opportunities will always be opt-in. Therefore, letters and other documents that express support from the coalition shall only reflect the support of

the undersigned person(s) and/or organizations. Signatures will be solicited via email and may be given in writing or through explicit verbal consent.

Community Forest Forum and Coalition Meetings

The COMMUNITY FOREST FORUM will be held annually in the Pacific Northwest. The Steering Committee will advise on forum strategy, size, and content.

The MEMBERSHIP will meet quarterly. Any Member may propose agenda items for discussion at Quarterly meetings. The Executive Committee and Membership will actively participate in initiatives of the coalition to the extent possible.

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE will engage in regular phone calls (biweekly or monthly as appropriate).

Participation in Quarterly meetings and Working Groups meetings is encouraged, but not required, in order to be considered a part of the coalition.

Business Model

The Executive Committee will be responsible for fundraising for the coalition's operations. Members are encouraged to provide input on funding opportunities and make connections between funders and the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee will retain one or more administrative organizations to provide the following services: fiscal sponsorship, logistical support, strategic planning, financial support, event planning, meeting space, agenda development, and others as requested.

Policy and Communications

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: The coalition will develop and implement a marketing and education strategy promoting community forests and their benefits. Tools may include, but are not limited to, a coalition website, printed materials about community forests, and a coalition logo.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: Internal documents, such as sign-on opportunities for the Steering Committee or meeting agendas, will be shared via email.