

Stewardship in the Siuslaw National Forest

Whole watershed restoration for ecological and economic benefit



The end result of stewardship and restoration in the Siuslaw National Forest is healthy forests and restored fish and wildlife habitat.

History of Stewardship on the Siuslaw

Home to Oregon's fastest growing trees and threatened salmon, spotted owls and marbled murrelets, the Siuslaw National Forest on the Oregon coast saw some of the most bitter battles over old-growth logging in the Pacific Northwest twenty years ago.

After the Northwest Forest Plan went into effect in 1994, forest planners were required to preserve more old-growth and riparian habitat for wildlife. Managers at the Siuslaw National Forest saw an opportunity to advance forest stewardship and meet restoration, conservation and economic goals through new "Stewardship Authorities." This provided an opening to pursue a new type of management and to work in cooperation with diverse partners, including local interests.

Today, the Siuslaw is a model for the entire region, working with local collaborative groups designing successful restoration projects, generating funds to accomplish restoration work, and focusing on projects and work that translate into local jobs and economic benefits.

Award-winning partnership

Efforts in the Siuslaw were awarded the 2010 Two Chiefs' Partnership Award, presented by the Chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to recognize exemplary partnership efforts in conservation and forest stewardship.

What is Stewardship Contracting?

Stewardship contracting began in the Siuslaw in 2001 as a "pilot project" for new federal authorities. In 2003, Congress authorized stewardship contracting for 10 more years.

Stewardship contracting is a suite of authorities and contracting tools that are intended to help the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management meet both land management objectives and rural community needs. The blending of these objectives makes stewardship contracting unique.

Stewardship regulations encourage strong collaboration between the federal agencies and a diverse mix of local and regional interests to achieve improved forest health, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and to meet hazardous fuels reduction goals.

Stewardship allows for money generated through stewardship timber sales, called "retained receipts," to be reinvested in forest and watershed restoration projects within the local area - on both public and private* land, taking a whole watershed approach to restoration and forest management.

** Through the Wyden authority, federal funds may be allocated to non-federal projects if those projects benefit National Forest resources.*

Action needed

The success of 10 years of stewardship contracting in the Siuslaw highlights the importance of gaining permanent authorization from Congress before the existing law expires in 2013.

Stewardship: A win-win for forests and communities

Under stewardship authorities, timber harvest contracts can be bundled with other forest and stream restoration activities - such as placing large wood in streams or replacing culverts to benefit fish - allowing for efficiencies and assurance that this important work gets done. These authorities also allow contracts to be awarded based partially on their local job and economic benefits.

On the Siuslaw National Forest, multi-party monitoring is also conducted to evaluate the biophysical accomplishments and economic impacts of stewardship projects. This ensures accountability for stewardship goals, provides measurements for long-term learning, and involves the public in ensuring desired benefits are being accomplished.

Restoring forests, watersheds, and wildlife habitat

From 2001 to 2011, stewardship contracts on the Siuslaw have resulted in more than 2,000 acres of commercial thinning in plantations, yielding 25 million board feet to local mills. "Retained receipts" from these stewardship timber sales* are placed in a dedicated Coast Range Stewardship Fund. Over the past 10 years, more than \$3 million of these retained receipts have been invested in projects that restore threatened fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and build working relationships between rural landowners and the managers of neighboring public land.

Funded projects include non-commercial young stand thinning, noxious weed control, road repair for water quality, meadow restoration, underplanting for diversity, culvert replacement and repair, snag and large woody debris creation, wood placement in streams, native tree planting in riparian areas, and removing trash to improve water quality.

This work includes 48 restoration projects on non-federal land adjacent to the Siuslaw National Forest, where Stewardship Fund dollars have been matched by more than \$1.2 million of non-federal dollars or services to achieve these ends, highlighting the strong public-private partnerships and support that has been developed for such work.

Benefit to local economy

Stewardship contracting, and the forest and watershed restoration work it generates, contributes significantly to the local economy. Provisions in the law allow priority to be given to local contractors, keeping most dollars and jobs closer to home.

Jobs in stewardship range from traditional timber thinning harvests and road improvements to prevent erosion, to tree planting and stream restoration - all contributing to the restoration goals of the Siuslaw National Forest.

For example, in Fiscal Years 2008-2010, an average of 6.942 MMBF (million board feet) was harvested each year under stewardship contracts*. The table below shows the economic impacts of this harvest and associated restoration work.

Stewardship Contracting Economic Impacts: FY 2008-2010

	Forest Service stewardship timber contracts	Forest Service retained receipts projects	Non-federal retained receipts projects	Total
Jobs (FTE)	79.9	2.48	2.75	85.13
State taxes paid	\$347,416	\$8,611	\$8,928	\$364,955

* Only a portion of National Forest timber sales are stewardship contracts.



Restoration at work

In the 20th century, most of the old-growth forests in the Siuslaw were logged, putting fish and wildlife at risk and diminishing other public resources. Dense replanting of clearcuts with a single species led to monocrop tree plantations devoid of ecological diversity.

Now, restoration crews thin the dense forest using stewardship contracts - providing jobs and timber and accomplishing associated watershed restoration tasks. Variable density thin-

ning, road and culvert improvements, native plantings, and other restoration activities add diversity and natural structure back into the forest and gives wildlife habitat a boost.

These restored forests provide clean water, carbon storage, vital wildlife habitat, and improved recreational opportunities.



Stewardship Groups: Collaboration for effective restoration

Founded in 2001, the Siuslaw Stewardship Group has led the nation in using stewardship contracting authorities that promote forest and watershed restoration and local economic benefits.

This group of stakeholders has developed a common vision for restoration within the Siuslaw watershed that improves fish and wildlife habitat *and* the rural economy, and avoids the controversies of the recent past.

This model of management offers a sustainable future for our public lands, and demonstrates what can be accomplished when dedicated agency personnel and community members come together to identify problems and create solutions.

The success of the Siuslaw Stewardship Group has encouraged similar efforts across the region, and led to the formation of three more groups on the Siuslaw National Forest since 2005 - in the Alsea and Marys Peak watersheds, and in the Hebo Ranger District.

Each Stewardship Group brings together diverse organizations and individuals to collaborate with Forest Service staff on the development, prioritization, and monitoring of stewardship and restoration projects. The groups also recommend use of the Coast Range Stewardship Fund for specific projects either on National Forest lands or on non-federal land (as long as they benefit National Forest resources). This work occurs at monthly meetings and through on-the-ground tours of stewardship projects.



Projects championed by stewardship groups include:

- Neighborhood outreach in the Marys Peak Stewardship area, led by Marys River Watershed Council, resulting in restoration of fish habitat and riparian vegetation across multiple ownerships in the Greasy Creek subbasin;

- Stream channel reconstruction, noxious weed control, and native vegetation reestablishment to benefit salmon habitat on private land along Roache Creek, through a partnership of the Siuslaw Soil &

Water Conservation District and the Siuslaw Watershed Council within the Siuslaw Stewardship area;

- Stream stabilization and fish habitat restoration on Canal Creek in conjunction with the Alsea Watershed Council, rural landowners, and the Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife in the Alsea Stewardship area; and
- Improving stream and riparian habitat conditions on Bear Creek with the guidance of the Salmon-Drift Creek Watershed Council in the Hebo Stewardship area.

Diverse groups working together

Participants in stewardship groups include:

- federal and state agencies
- local governments' public works departments
- tribes
- conservation districts
- rural landowners
- conservation organizations
- watershed councils
- timber companies.

Through these cooperative efforts, strong community partnerships and increased trust have been built between the Forest Service, community groups, and private landowners; opportunities for watershed restoration are better understood; and many projects have been successfully implemented.



Restoration work replaces old culverts with ones that allow juvenile and adult salmon to migrate both upstream and down.



Stream restoration includes adding wood to streams and planting riparian vegetation.

Facts & Figures on Stewardship in the Siuslaw National Forest

Much has been achieved through stewardship efforts over the past 10 years:

- The award of 14 stewardship timber sales to accomplish restoration thinning, resulting in more than 3,700 acres treated;
- The approval of 48 private-land restoration projects and 50 projects on National Forest land;
- Over 1,000 acres of riparian areas planted with native vegetation;
- Nearly \$3 million in retained receipts from stewardship timber sales have stayed on the forest, creating family wage jobs
- Generation of \$1.2 million in matching funds for restoration projects
- Strong community partnerships built between diverse groups, including watershed councils, government agencies, tribes, conservation groups, and private landowners.
- Awarded the 2010 Two Chiefs' Partnership Award, by the Chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, recognizing efforts to promote conservation and forest stewardship.
- Monitoring efforts to ensure desired results are achieved.



Members of a Stewardship Group tour a commercial thinning site, done under a stewardship contract, which generated retained receipts for additional restoration projects.

“The strong community partnerships that have been built through the Siuslaw Stewardship Group and among a broad cross section of interests demonstrates that providing jobs, protecting our forests, and ecological diversity are common cause for all Oregonians. I am extremely proud of the work being done in the Siuslaw.” - Senator Ron Wyden, August 2011

For more info

Stewardship Contracting Authorities

- <http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/stewardship/index.shtml>

Stewardship on the Siuslaw National Forest

- <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/siuslaw/stewardship-groups>
- Call the Siuslaw National Forest's Natural Resources Staff at (541) 750-7000

Coast Range Stewardship Fund and multi-party monitoring of stewardship on the Siuslaw

- <http://www.cascadepacificstewardship.org/>
- Call Cascade Pacific RC&D at (541) 248-3094

Impact of stewardship and restoration on jobs and the economy

- Multiparty Monitoring Reports at <http://www.cascadepacificstewardship.org/>
- “Ecosystem Workforce Program: Economic and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon” by Max Nielsen-Pincus and Cassandra Moseley, Spring 2010, available at <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/briefing>

