

Potential New Tools for Financing Conservation in the Rocky Mountain West and Northern Great Plains

Capacity Building Working Session Notes

Presentations:

Travis Brammer – University of Wyoming Rangeland Conservation Fund

- There is opportunity here, given further research.
- The big picture is to create an organizational model for land trusts to utilize to be able to purchase properties in fee simple and then lease to young or beginning farmers or ranchers.
- There is demand and interest from land trusts for a model like this.
- This model works best paired with other conservation funding mechanisms (ie carbon credits, public access, buy protect sell transactions, etc.).

Claire Hood – World Wildlife Fund Environmental Impact Model

- WWF has decided not to pursue this model any further.
- The model relies on third party purchasers to generate near market rate returns for investors.
- Third party purchasers pay for the resultant benefits of improved rangeland management.

Galen Guerrero-Murphy, The Nature Conservancy Grassland Carbon in Colorado and the Southern High Plains

- Carbon credits are only available in areas with high conversion to non-rangeland agriculture.
- Individual returns are small, but when combined, can create positive cashflows for producers.
- TNC is focusing on voluntary markets driven by industries.

Group Discussions:

University of Wyoming Rangeland Conservation Fund

- Focus on community to get better results.
- Cannot move into an area and start taking over ranches without making locals uncomfortable.
- The vetting process for lessees will have to be thorough to ensure that the land trust, and the land are protected.
- Many aspects of the model are reliant on land trusts to determine, the model should have solid sideboard for the land trust to stay within.

World Wildlife Fund Environmental Impact Model

The Nature Conservancy Grassland Carbon in Colorado and the Southern High Plains

References:

Travis Brammer tbrammer@uwyo.edu 970-580-9314

- PPT – WRCF_Confluence

Claire Hood Claire.Hood@wwfus.org

- PPT

Galen Guerrero-Murphy galen.guerrero-murphy@TNC.ORG

- PPT

Key Points of Discussion:

- **Need to be sure to focus on landowner needs and wants.**
- **Communities need to be kept in the loop in any and all collaborative conservation efforts.**
- **There are plenty of opportunities to fund and move forward on these new tools.**
- All groups need to keep a close eye on new opportunities coming down the road.
- Funding “pie” for conservation needs to grow.

Key Next Steps:

- **Create forum for shared learning (e.g., carbon credits).**
- **Continue with financial analyses to understand viability.**
- **Better understand how changes in Farm Bill create new opportunities.**
- Keep an ear to the ground on all new opportunities.
- Watch for new legislation in all western states regarding conservation.