



Oregon

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Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

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August 25, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Tom Byler, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item O: Rural Compact**
September 16-17, 2008 OWEB Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This report provides some background on The Rural Compact and invites discussion to consider Board endorsement of the document.

II. Background

The Rural Compact is a statement of principles about the future of rural America. (Attachment A) The Rural Compact is one of the activities from the National Rural Assembly, which is a movement of people and organizations devoted to building a stronger, more vibrant rural America. The goal of the Assembly is to make the country stronger by improving the outlook for rural communities. The guiding principle is that an inclusive, prospering, and sustainable rural America improves prospects for us all.

The organizations serving on the current Rural Compact steering committee are listed below. The steering committee is asking individuals and organizations to endorse the Compact in a nationwide campaign to build support for positive change for rural communities.

The University of New Hampshire Carsey Institute, Durham, New Hampshire
Center for Rural Strategies, Whitesburg, Kentucky
National Congress of American Indians, Washington, D.C.
Quitman County Community Development Organization, Marks, Mississippi
Llano Grande Center for Research and Development, Edcouch/Elsa, Texas
Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI)
Stand Up for Rural America, Washington, D.C.
Sustainable Northwest, Portland, Oregon
League of Rural Voters, Minneapolis, Minnesota

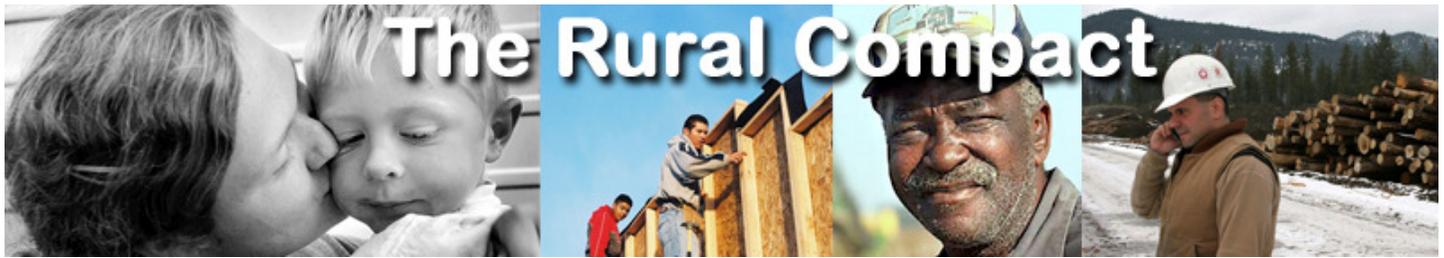
III. Board Endorsement

Co-Chair Diane Snyder has asked for the Board to consider endorsement of the Compact. While the principles of the Compact are broader than a natural resources focus, key aspects are fundamentally compatible with the Board's mission. Endorsement of the Compact could underscore the Board's investment in thriving rural communities. Rural communities play a key role in helping to implement restoration actions that carry out OWEB's watershed enhancement program. At the same time, rural communities benefit from and are strengthened by those actions.

IV. Recommendation

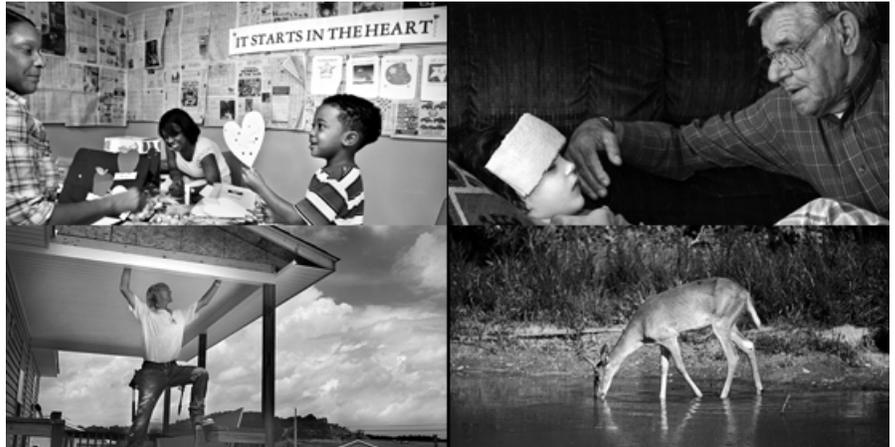
Staff recommend that the Board endorse the Rural Compact as outlined in Attachment A.

Attachment: A. The Rural Compact



A set of principles for building stronger rural communities and a stronger nation.

Rural America is more than the land. It is a way we are connected in culture, heritage, and national enterprise. While it may be vast, it is far from empty. Sixty million of us live in the American countryside, and far more grew up there. Rural Americans reflect the full diversity of the country in who we are, what we do, and what we want to achieve.



When rural communities succeed, the nation does better, and cities and suburbs have more resources on which to build. Conversely, when rural communities falter, it drains the nation's prosperity and limits what we can accomplish together.

We now face the challenges of how we sustainably fuel, feed, and nurture both ourselves and a fragile world. A vital rural America has a contribution to make in this effort and the responsibility to take on that endeavor.

We offer this compact as a set of principles on which to build the kind of rural America that is needed now and a rural America that is ready to face the challenges to come.

Quality in Education

Every child should have an equal chance to learn, excel, and help lead America to a better, brighter future. Education policy should recognize the distinctive challenges and opportunities for rural schools and reflect the unique needs of those students, families, and educators.

Stewardship of Natural Resources

Eighty percent of our country's land is rural. It is a heritage and a trust. We all have a responsibility to protect the environment and develop and sustain our natural resources in ways that strengthen rural communities for the long haul. Good environmental practices and responsive public land management provide the opportunity to promote energy independence, grow healthy food in a sustainable manner, mitigate climate change, and develop stronger natural-resource-based economies.

Health of Our People

All Americans deserve access to good, affordable healthcare. If we want small towns and rural communities to contribute to the well-being of the nation, we need rural healthcare systems that work. These should include preventive care, health education, and both community-based and high-tech delivery systems.

Investment in Our Communities

To fight poverty, create wealth, and build sustainable communities, all Americans need access to a safe and equitable system for saving, borrowing, and building capital. To fully participate in and contribute to the American economy, rural communities need public and private investment, access to philanthropic resources, and the tools to develop their own community-controlled assets.

**The Rural Compact is a statement of principle for The National Rural Assembly.
More information at www.ruralassembly.org**

The Rural Compact

Making a difference in rural America

Endorse the Rural Compact

The Rural Compact is a statement of principle about the future of rural America. We are asking individuals and organizations to endorse the Compact in a nationwide campaign to build support for positive change for rural communities. We'll present the Compact and the endorsement list to those who are in a position to help rural communities, including federal and state policy makers, journalists, corporate leaders, philanthropists, community leaders, and others.

When you endorse the Rural Compact, you're saying you want all Americans have a chance to succeed and to do their part to make our nation stronger. You're saying that when rural communities thrive, we're all better off.

To see who has endorsed the Rural Compact, visit www.ruralcompact.org.

Yes, I endorse the Rural Compact. By registering in the form below, I am adding my support for people working for a stronger rural America and a stronger nation.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone #: (____) _____ Fax: (____) _____

Organization/Company: _____

Email Address: _____ Website: _____

Please Check One:

I am endorsing the Compact on behalf of my organization.

I am endorsing the Compact as an individual.

Statement of Support (Optional): _____

Please Mail or Fax this form to:

Center for Rural Strategies 2927 Essary Drive, Suite 201

Knoxville, TN 37918 Fax #: (865) 688-9596

Or endorse online at www.ruralcompact.org