



# WALLOWA RESOURCES & THE STEWARDSHIP ECONOMY

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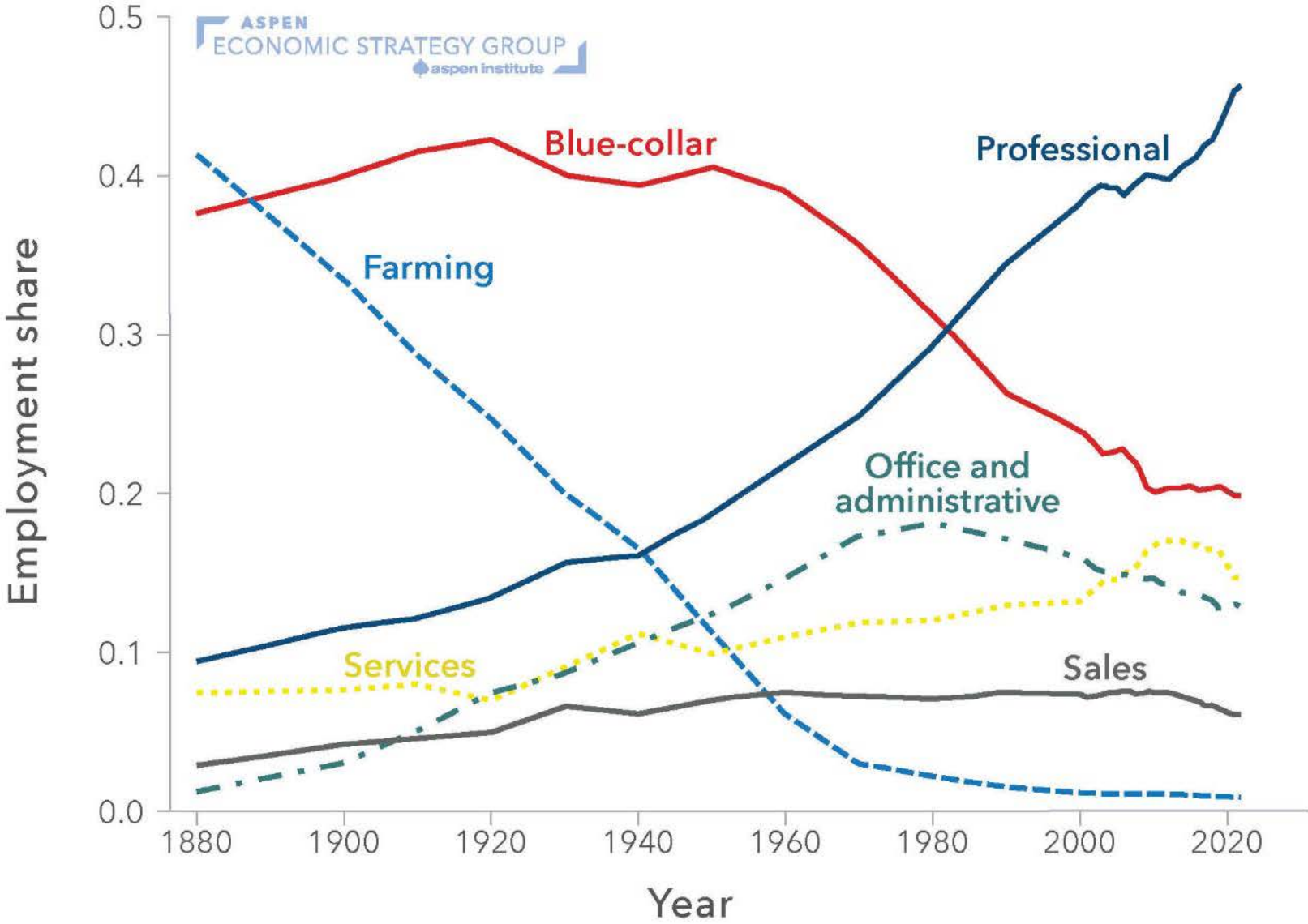
National trends driven in part by domestic and international economic and trade policies.

Automation and innovation have created efficiencies and reduced labor required in the farming / manufacturing sector

Farming / NR today produces massive surpluses that allow professional class to specialize.  
***Value of this specialization to that class, and to the country more broadly, is not returned to land stewardship.***

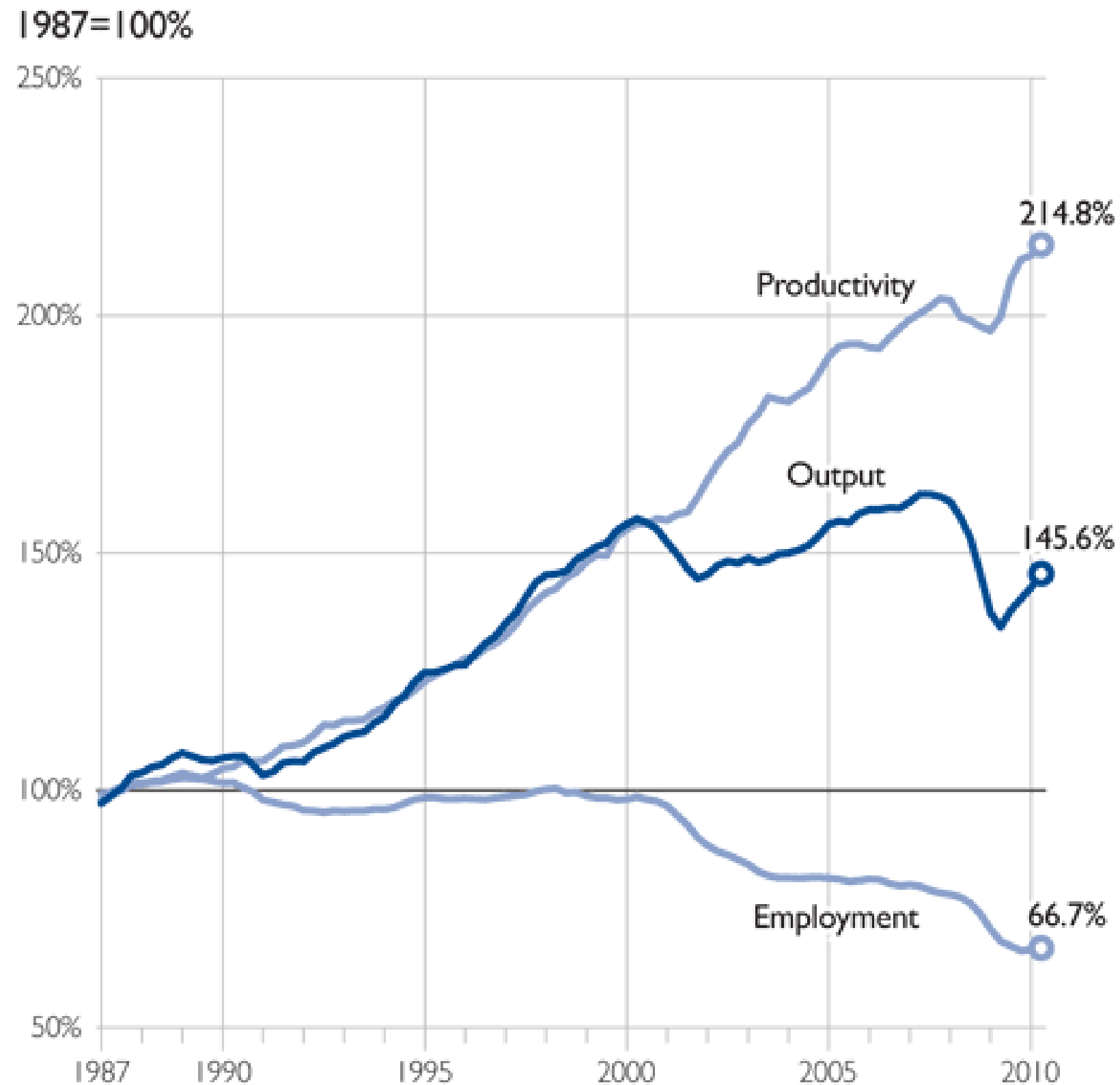
Vast majority of farm profits are captured by a minority of farms (less than 15%). Most farms struggle to break even as farm policy, consolidation, and supply chains choke margins – and input costs continue to rise.

Figure 1. Changes in the occupation structure of the US labor market, 1880-2024



**NOTES:** Calculations are based on decadal US census data from 1880 to 2000 (except for 1890) and 2001- 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) samples (except for 2020), sourced via the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Ruggles et al. 2024). Occupations are harmonized across decades to two-digit SOC codes using the IPUMS occ1950 encoding and methodology used in Autor and Dorn 2013; a detailed methodology is described in the data appendix. Samples are restricted to workers aged 18 to 64 in noninstitutional quarters who provide nonmilitary occupational responses. See the appendix for exhaustive definitions of each category.

# Jobs In Traditional Sectors Are Declining



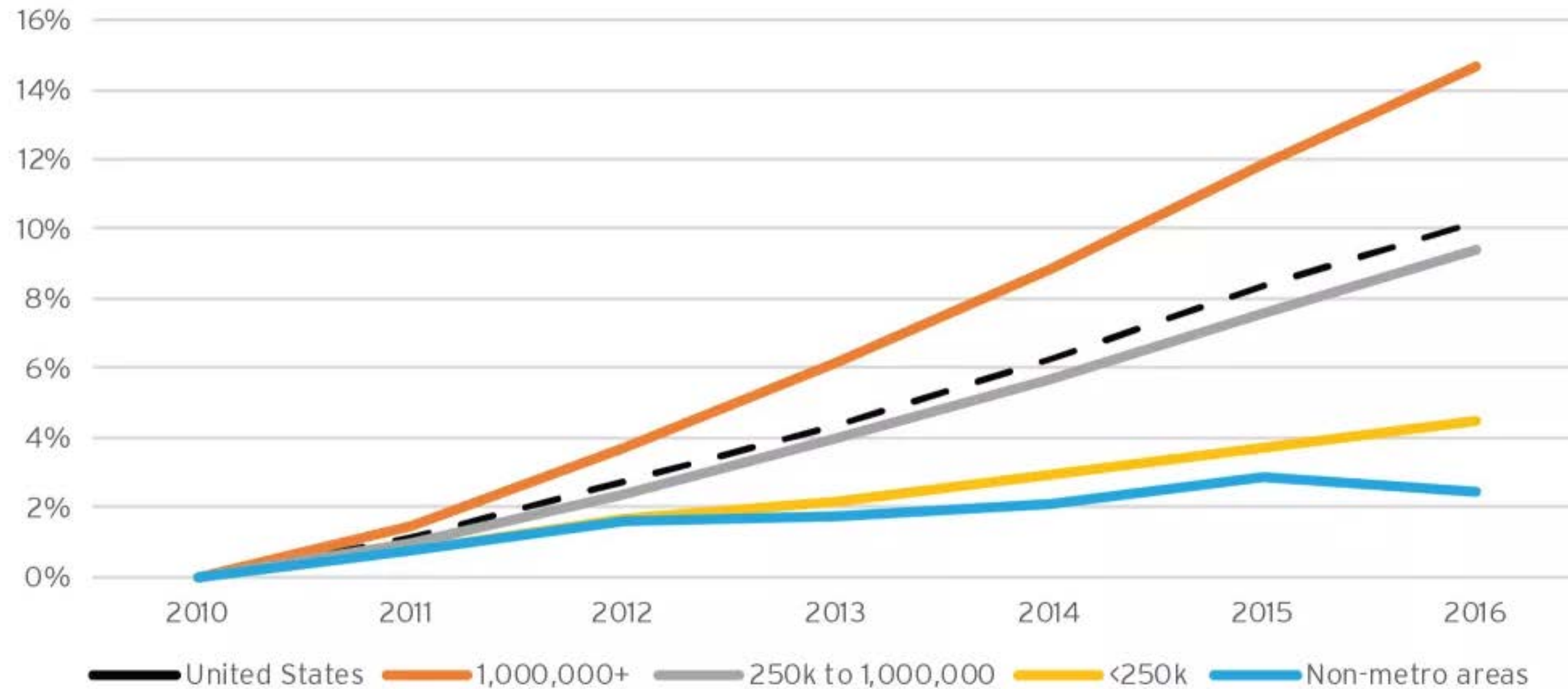
Productivity gains in traditional sectors no longer translate to more jobs or higher wages

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Productivity and Costs: Manufacturing Sector," 1987–2010, in Data Link Express, Haver Analytics.

# “Innovation” Jobs Locating In Cities

## Employment by size tier

Percent growth from 2010

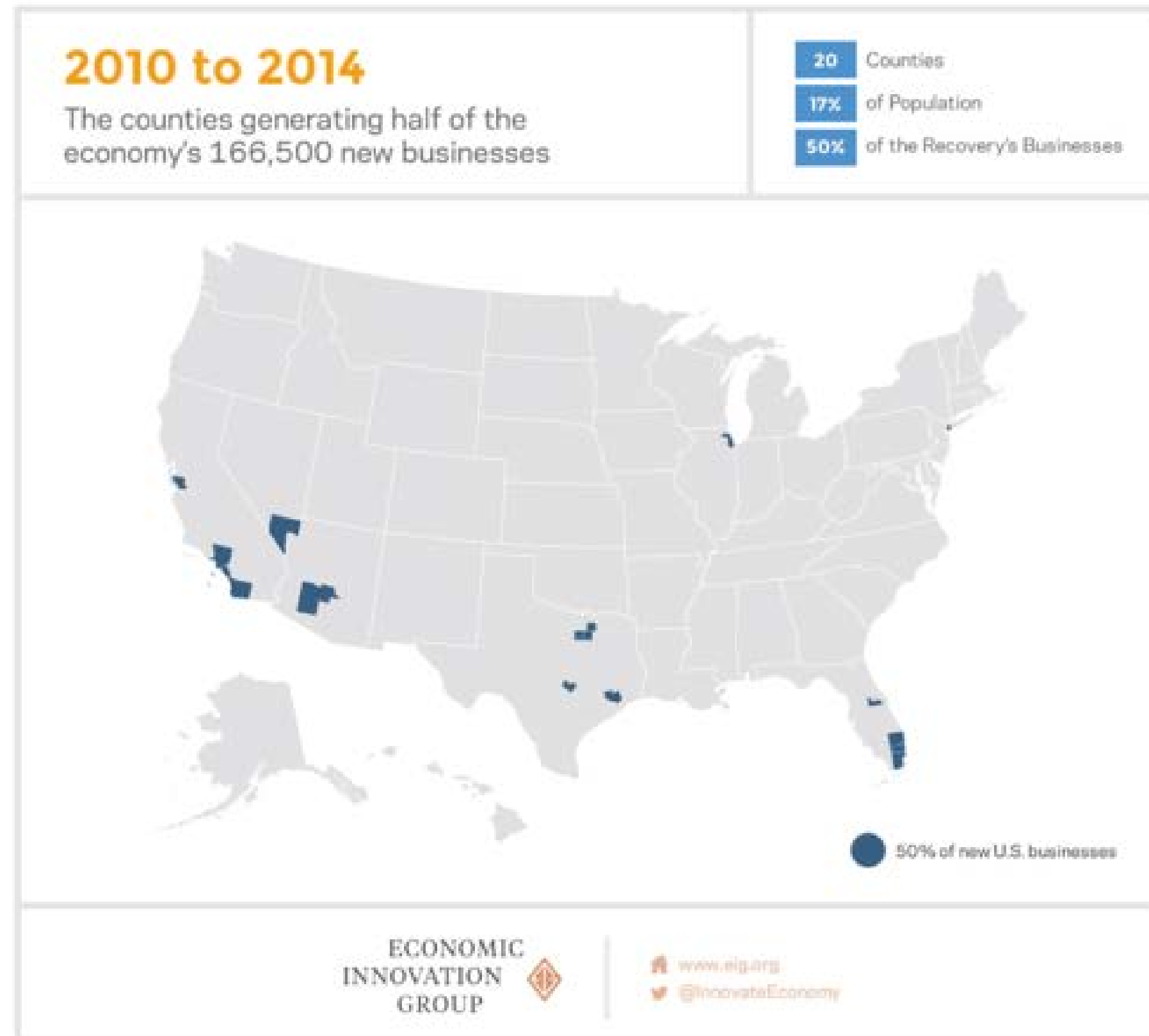


Source: Brookings analysis of Moody's Analytics data



Metropolitan Policy Program  
at BROOKINGS

# Growth is Uneven and Unequal



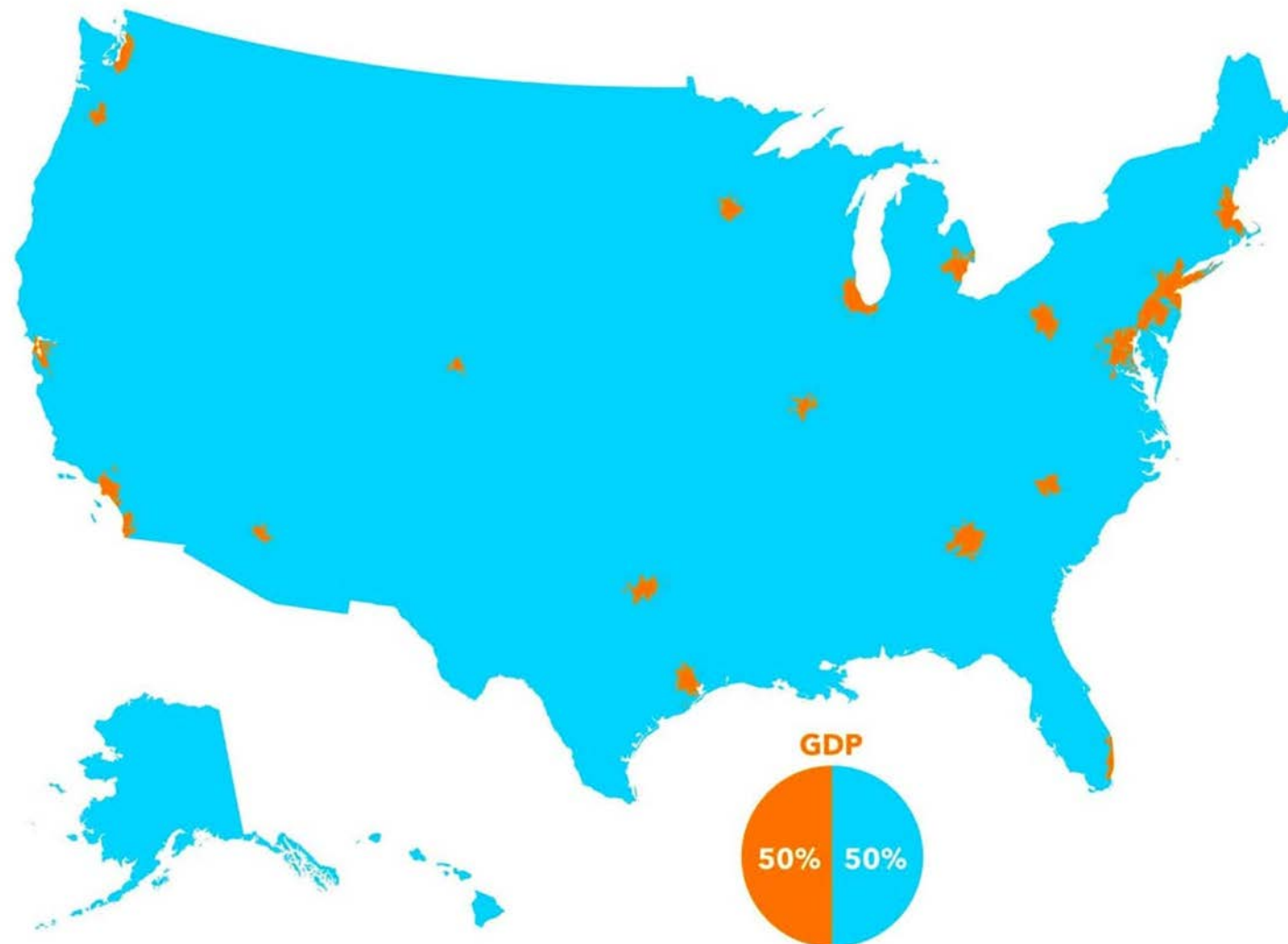
20 cities are responsible for 50% of all new business formations since the Great Recession

While this slide is dated – it speaks to a broader, longer trend in the western states where population and wealth has become increasingly consolidated in larger urban areas. The west is now the most urbanized region in the country.



# Continued Inequity in Economic Well-Being

- Geographic Distribution of GDP (2024)



## DAILY YONDER

WEED IT DOWN

ECONOMY

### Fed Report: Non-Metro Financial Conditions Are Worsening

*According to the Fed's survey, the gap between metro and non-metro residents' economic well-being continues to widen.*

by Joe Belden  
June 25, 2025



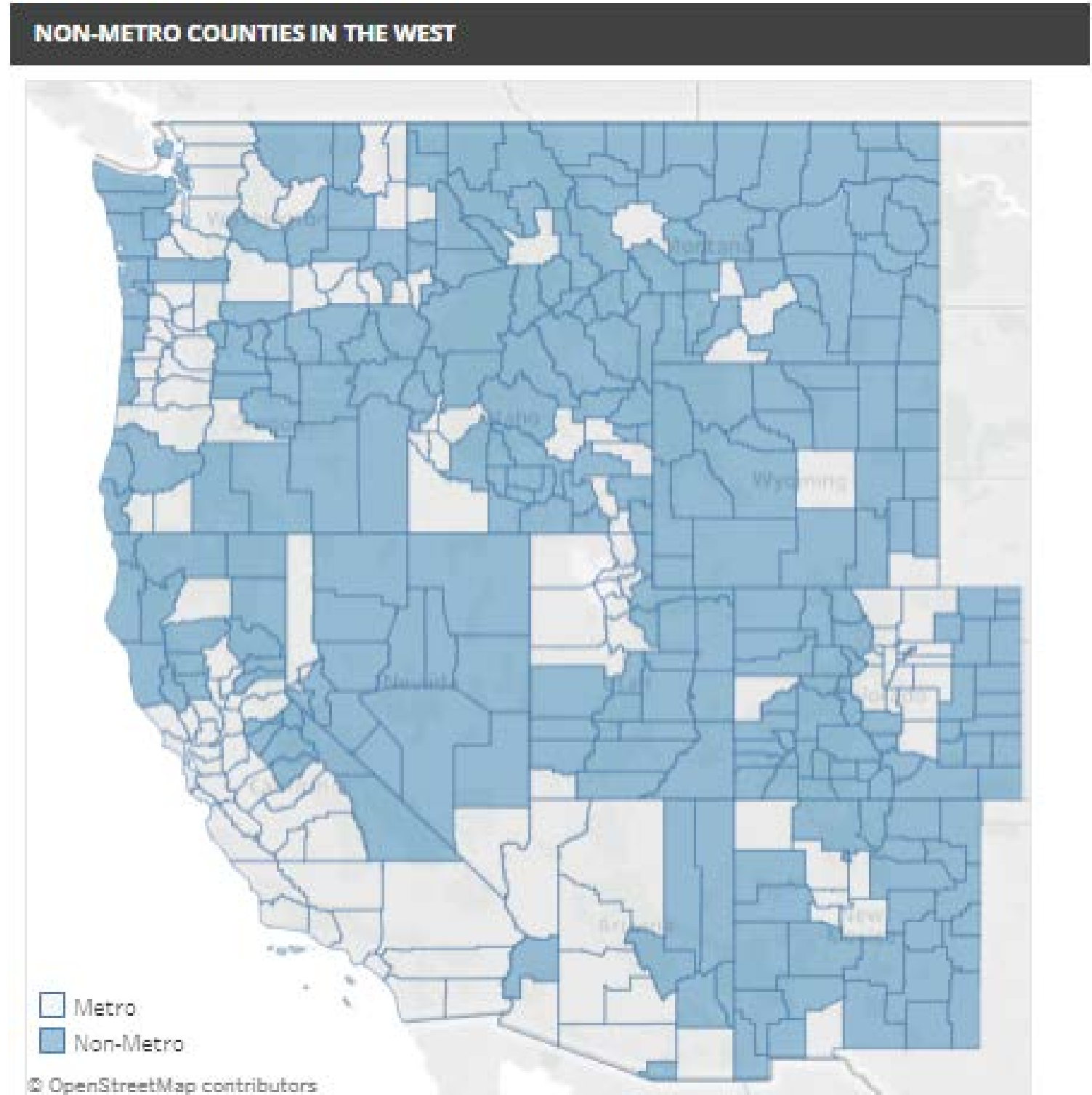
Nonmetro areas continue to be worse off financially than metros, according to a report released May 28 by the Federal Reserve Board. Based on the Fed's latest annual survey of consumer economic well-being, the report says that in 2024 “[p]eople living in non-metro areas had lower levels of financial well-being than those living in metro areas.”

**The difference is stark.**

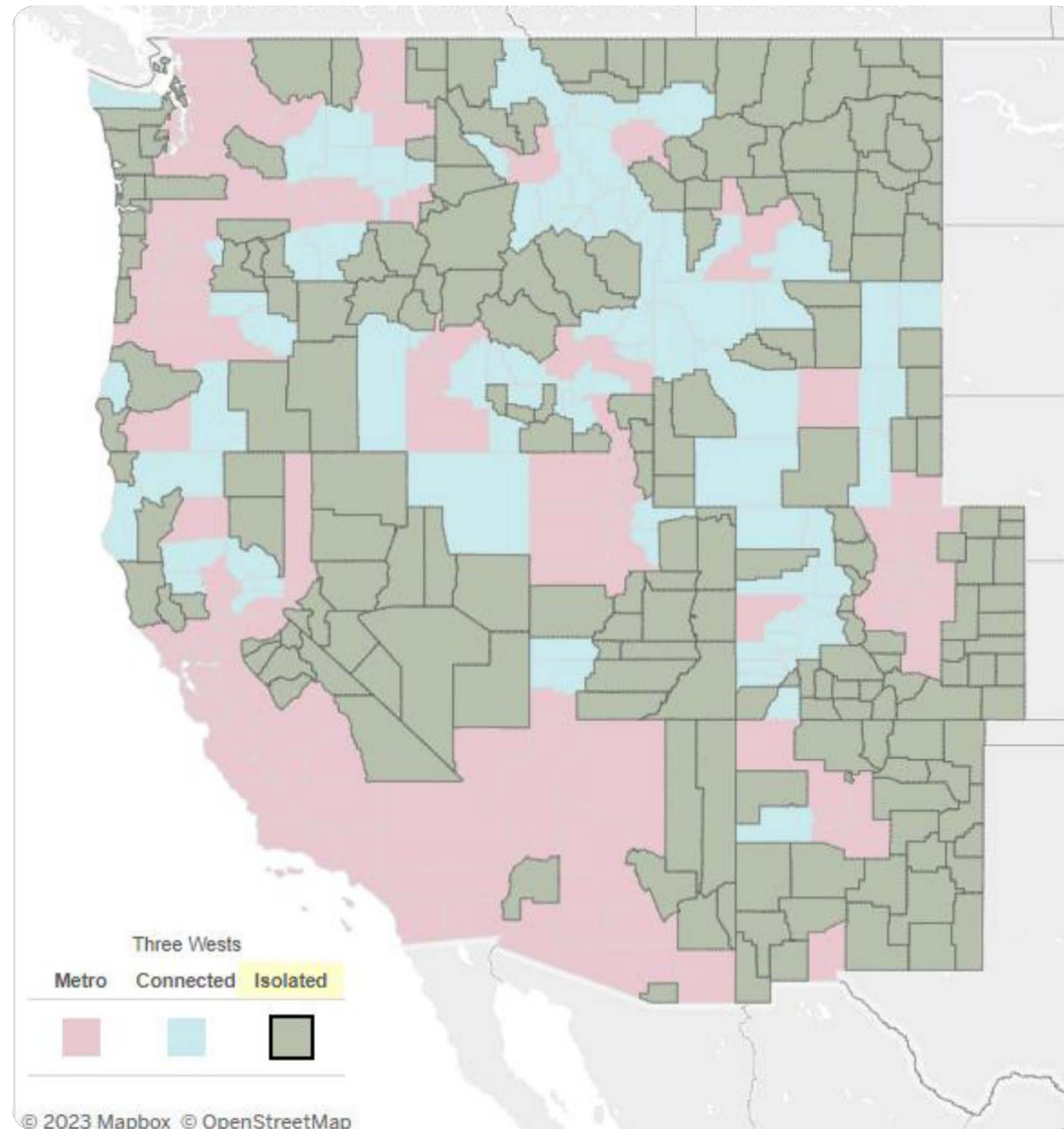
# Why the Rural West Matters

## The Rural West matters for three important reasons:

- the vitality of the region's landscape, including its contribution to:
  - Healthy food, sustainable wood products, renewable energy
  - Freshwater resources
  - Public land, wildlife habitat and recreation opportunity
  - Carbon sequestration and storage
- the prosperity of the area's people and communities, and
- its impact on local, state, and national politics.



# Rural Counties across West in Long-term Recession

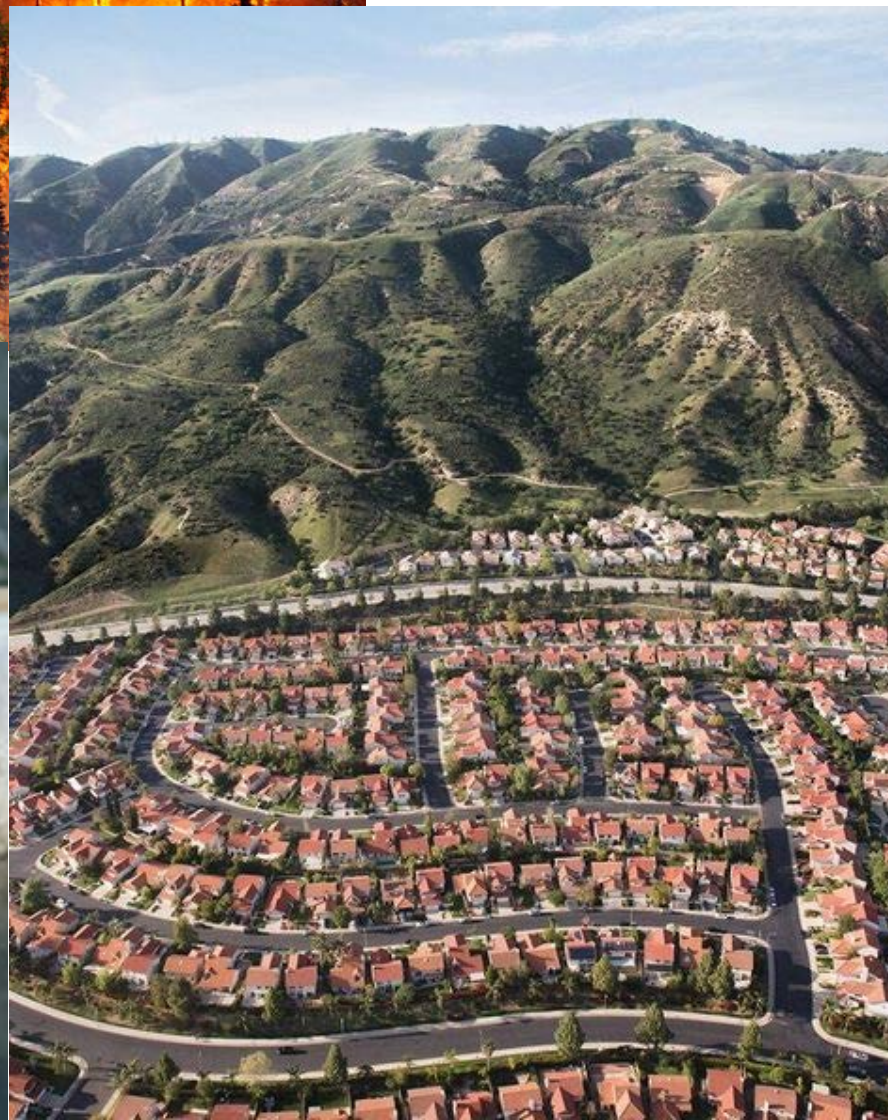


- Nearly 50% of all western counties – are **isolated** from urban markets and sparsely populated.
- Characterized by:
  - Higher unemployment,
  - increasing median age,
  - low wage jobs, and
  - more volatile income
- Significant opportunities to boost productivity, community well being, and conservation.



# Landscape Conservation – New Threats and Opportunities

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## Conservation Threats

- Climate Change
- Land Use Change
- Pollution / Invasive Species

## Opportunities

- Regenerative Agriculture
- Forest and Watershed Restoration
- Renewable Energy
- Community Forests
- Recreation Infrastructure





## *Stewardship Economy:*

**an economy shaped by the need, and responsibility, to manage for the sustainability of both land and communities.**

**an economy that invests in its most valuable assets – its lands and the people who steward them.**



# The Stewardship Economy Economy model

An integration and synthesis  
of rural economic  
development models centered  
on the unique attributes of  
place and aligning investment  
with opportunities that deliver  
triple-bottom-line results.

## THE STEWARDSHIP ECONOMY

*At work in Wallowa County*



innovation

Agrarian

Recreation

restoration



# cornerstones of a stewardship economy

Land & Water  
Stewardship

Value-Added  
Business

Access to  
Capital

Education,  
Training, & R&D

Legislative Policy  
Framework





# examples of SE activities

Forest Restoration



Value-Added Manufacturing



Renewable Energy



Community Ownership of Lands



Regenerative Agriculture



Investment, Training, & Development

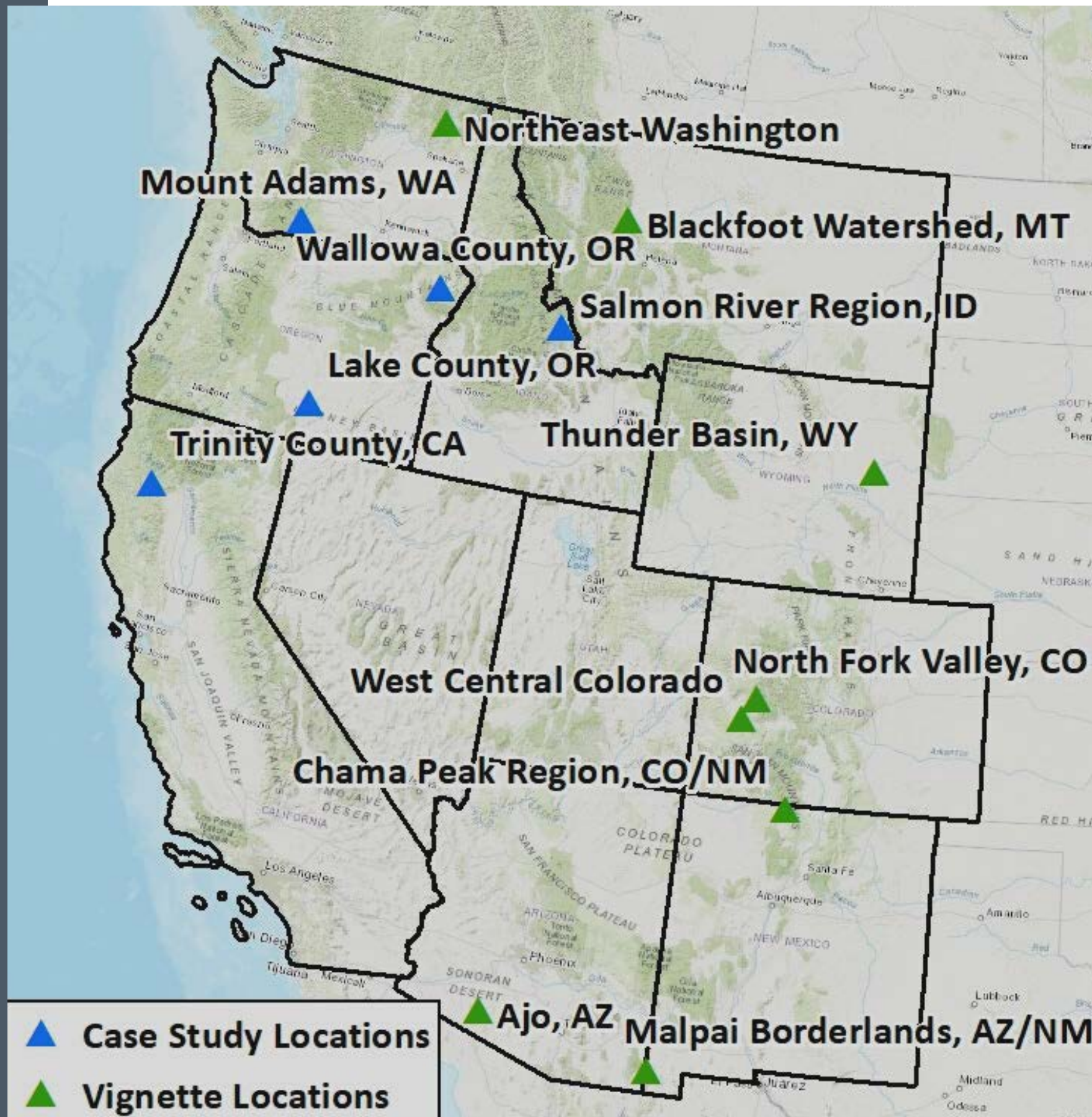




# EXAMPLES ACROSS THE WEST

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Building a Stewardship Economy -  
Insights from Community Innovation in  
the Rural American West





# Rural Revitalization around Stewardship Economies

## **Sustainable Agriculture and Forest Stewardship:**

Implementing practices like regenerative farming, cover crops, and local seed banks, as well as forest and watershed restoration and long-term stewardship to support healthy ecosystems, food and fiber security, and reduce climate risks.

## **Local / Regional production and consumption:**

Prioritizing local / regional production and consumption of goods and services, returning more value to land stewardship, minimizing reliance on external markets, and building resilience to external shocks or supply chains disruption.

## **Renewable energy sources:**

Utilizing locally available renewable energy sources like solar, wind, biomass and hydro power to improve reliability, contain costs, build resilience and reduce carbon footprint.

## **Circular economy:**

Designing systems to minimize waste by reusing and recycling materials within the bioregion.

## **Community-based decision making:**

Empowering local communities to participate in economic planning and governance related to resource management.

## **Ecological stewardship and valuing ecosystem services:**

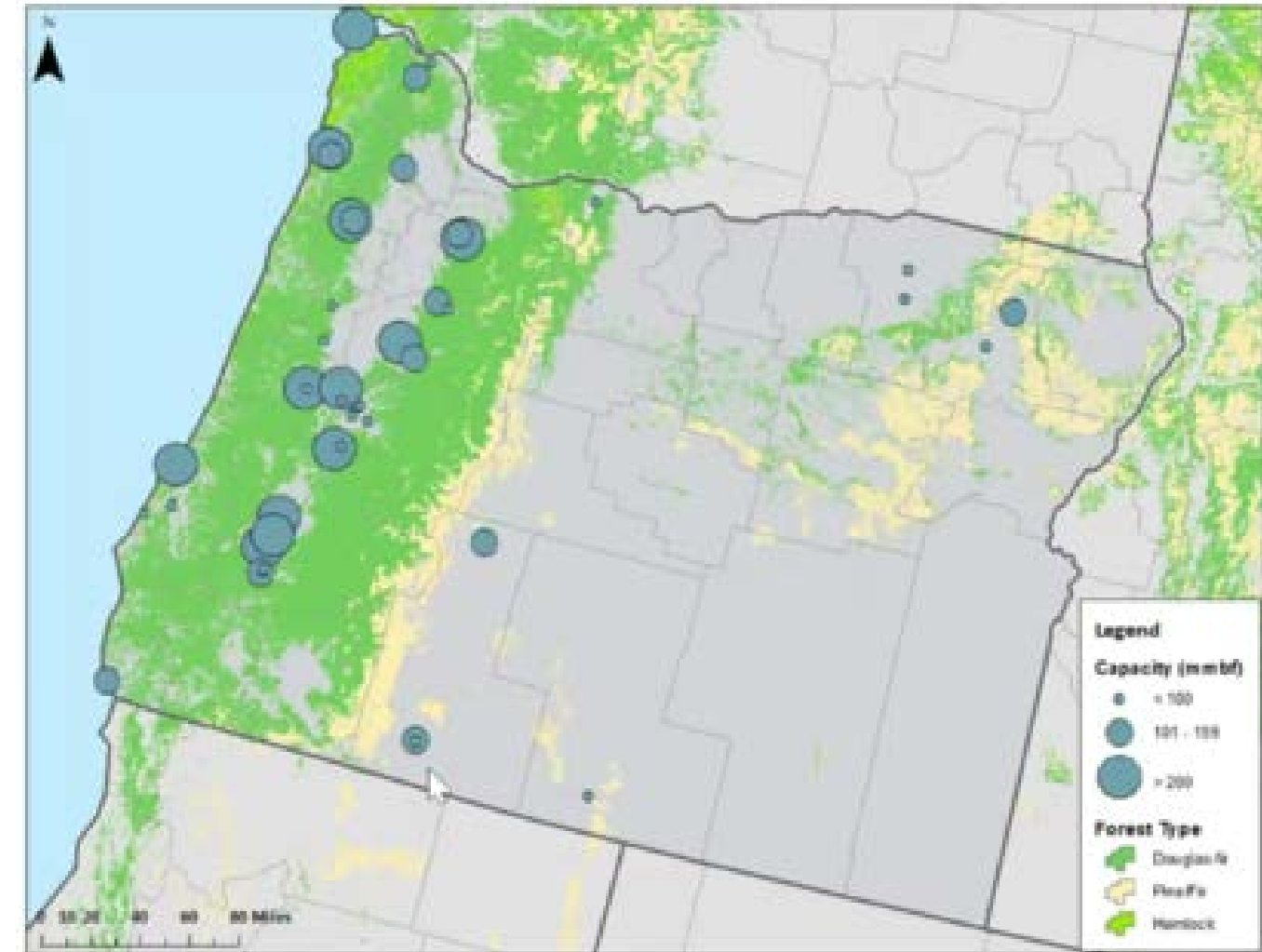
Recognizing the interdependence between human activities and the natural environment, actively working to restore and steward ecosystems and return value to land stewardship for this public benefit.

## **Education and awareness:**

Promoting understanding of the bioregion's unique ecological characteristics and the importance of sustainable practices.

# Forest Challenges and Opportunities in Eastern Oregon

- Thanks to Gordon Culbertson Today
  - Reduction in management and harvest of federal forest lands
  - Loss of Mill Infrastructure
  - Lack of Workforce
- Long Term Problem – Need Sustained Commitment
  - Eastside Forest Advisory Panel (2004)
  - “The reduction in timber supply combined with modernization has caused an rapid decline in the number of mills in the region. The total numbers of mills has declined from 65 in 1968 to 15 in 2004, and another 5 mills are forecasted to be closed by 2013.”
  - **“Many areas of eastern Oregon may become untreatable because of a combination of low timber value and high log hauling costs.”**
  - EFAP was concerned these market conditions would drive:
    - Further reductions in management of federal lands
    - Potential conversion of NIPF lands to other uses
      - Thanks here to Jeff Gersh and his presentation (loss of 1 million acres)



Oregon mills have a log capacity of 3.5 BBF (90% westside)

Today Wildfire creating additional risks and liabilities to forest ownership and management, as well as local, state and federal budgets and personnel, and our rural communities.



# Partnerships Driving Renewed Investment and Action

## My Blue Mountains Woodlands Partnership

a partnership of private landowners, public and non-profit organizations working to help woodland owners in northeastern Oregon.



- Education and Training
- Basic Forest Management Plans
- Cost-Share for Operations
- Large landscape and cross-boundary analysis and planning

## Northern Blues Restoration Partnership

a diverse coalition of partners working together to coordinate action to achieve landscape resilience on public, private and tribal forestland across the Washington-Oregon Northern Blue Mountains landscape.



# Partnerships in Action – Significant Impact

## Our Strategies

The Partnership uses **core strategies** to accomplish its goals and objectives, including but not limited to:



Robust monitoring and adaptive management



Development of local workforce capacity and community benefit



Support Community Wildfire Protection Plans and fire-adapted communities



Landscape scale, cross-boundary treatments and managed fire



Public education, dialogue, engagement and storytelling



Restoration of special habitats and resources

OUR 10 YEAR GOAL:

**901,600** ACRES OF RESTORATION

FOUR YEARS INTO THE PARTNERSHIP, WE HAVE COMPLETED

**445,081**

**ACRES OF RESTORATION**

OR 49% OF OUR GOAL

INCLUDING BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RESTORATION

**110,773** ACRES OF MANAGED FIRE

**333,553** ACRES OF ACTIVE RESTORATION TREATMENTS

## 4 Year Accomplishments

- 387 Basic Forest Management Plans
- 641 NIPF Forest Management Restoration Projects
- 134 Miles of Riparian Restoration
- 333,553 Acres of Forest Treatment
- 110,774 Acres of Managed Wildfire
- 22 Firewise Communities

## \$32.3 Million Invested in 2024

\$20 M from Tribes / Partners

- 72% Awarded to Local Contractors
- Supporting equivalent of 691 Jobs



# Needs

- Sustained investment and support for these partnerships to ensure long-term sustained land stewardship with benefits to land, environment, communities, and broader economy.
- Investment and support for R&D supporting wood products manufacturing
  - Utilization of non-saw logs
  - Design and feasibility of small to mid-size mills
- Investment in Workforce development – including more opportunities for high school and college practical experience, exposure and training

# Thank you

[www.wallowaresources.org](http://www.wallowaresources.org)

