



**“Working together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West.”**

# RVCC History

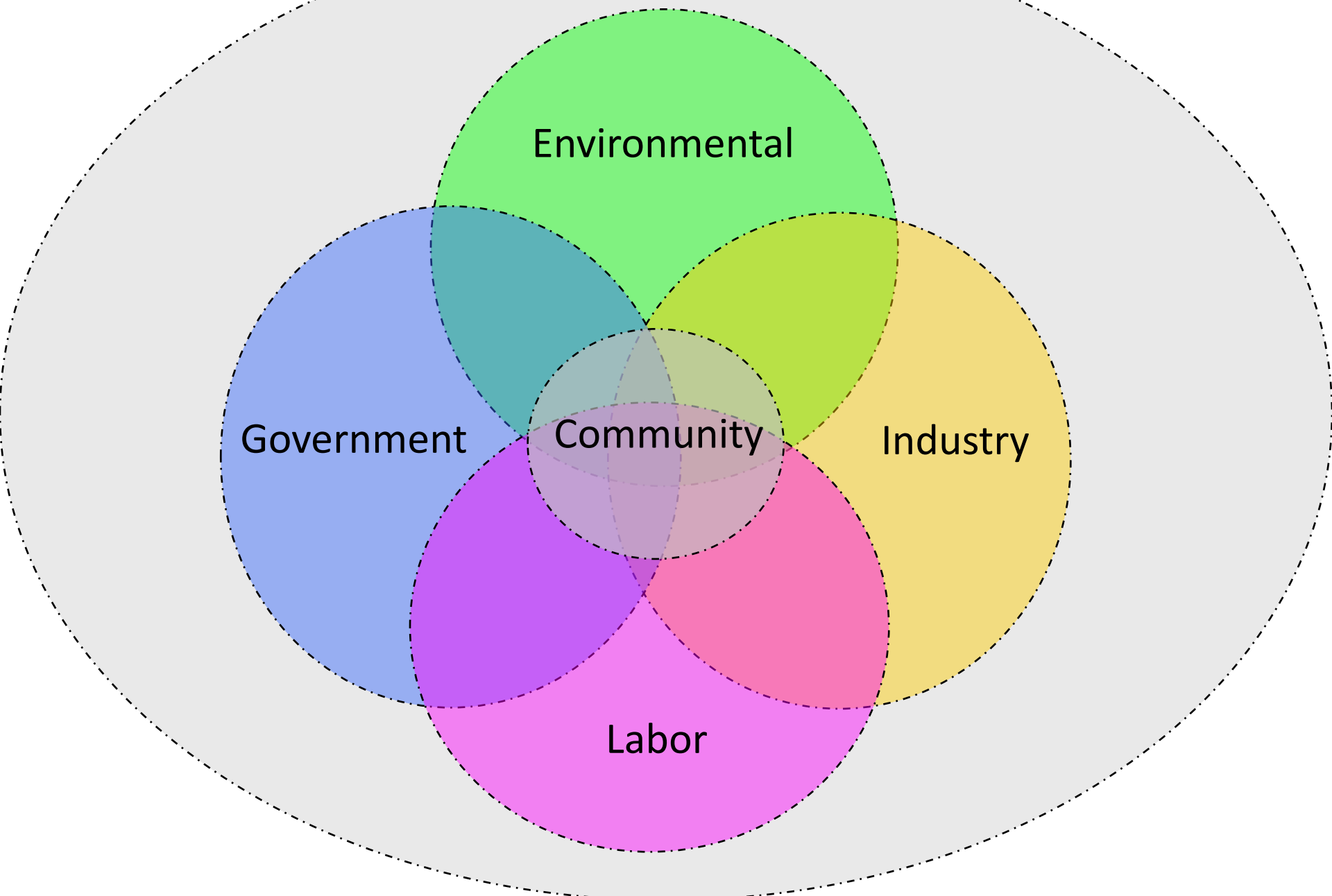
## Why we created ourselves:

- Absence of a coordinated rural voice on policy issues
- Practical, winning solutions were needed to increase political awareness and support
- Rural communities wanted to speak for themselves on forest management issues
- In 2001, the venue that became the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition was created

# RVCC History

- 32 people at first meeting from 7 states
- We were all community-based forestry groups
- We had no funding
- We didn't set out to create an organization; we wanted to get something done

# The Value of Collaboration



# Who is the RVCC Today?

- More than 170 rural, regional and national organizations
- Community-based natural resource advocates, conservationists, business owners, contractors, elected officials, land owners, state and federal government representatives
- Partnership with national coalitions and organizations for nationwide impact



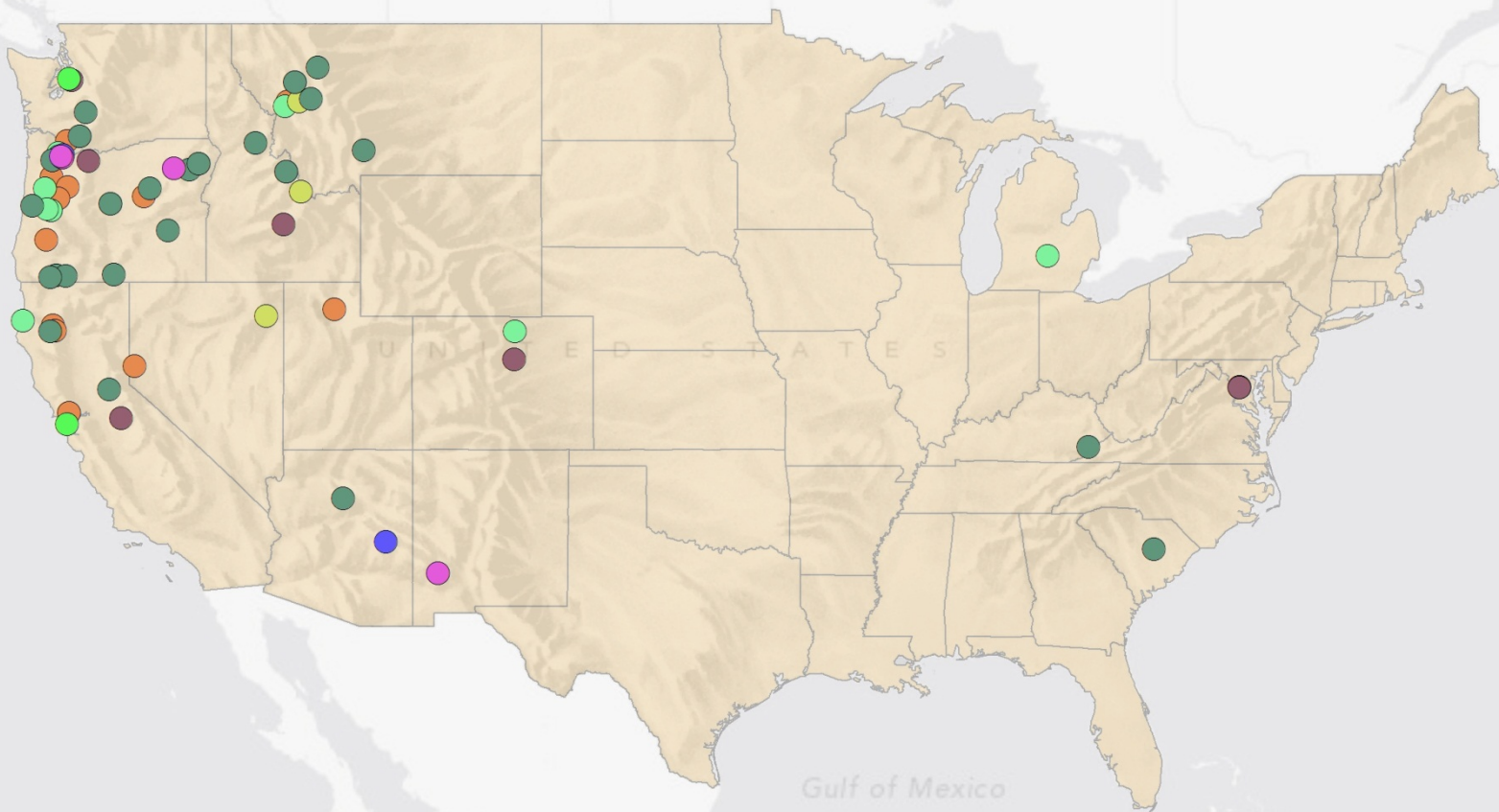
# 2012 APM Participants



## Organization Types

- Community-Based Orgs
- Environmental Groups
- Foundations
- Government

- Independent
- Landowners
- Natl Interest Groups
- Private Businesses
- Universities



# RVCC By the Numbers

Meetings in D.C.

700+

Congressional Testimony

21

Issue Papers

56

Comments Letters

22

# What's the big deal?

## What we are:

- Diverse interests
- 25 years old to...years of wisdom
- Inclusive
- Collaborative
- Solutions-oriented

## Why we're different:

- Opt-in
- Shared responsibility and accountability
- Adaptive
- Ingenious
- Innovative

# FEARLESS!



# RVCC believes:

- That the health of **rural communities and landscapes are interrelated**
- That **resilience and diversity** are key to ecosystem and economic well-being
- That **collaborative decision-making** is vital in resource management and stewardship
- That **cooperation** is inclusive, and based on mutual benefit and respect
- That long-term **sustainability** depends more on reinvestment in ecosystems and rural economies than on generating profits

# We strive to:

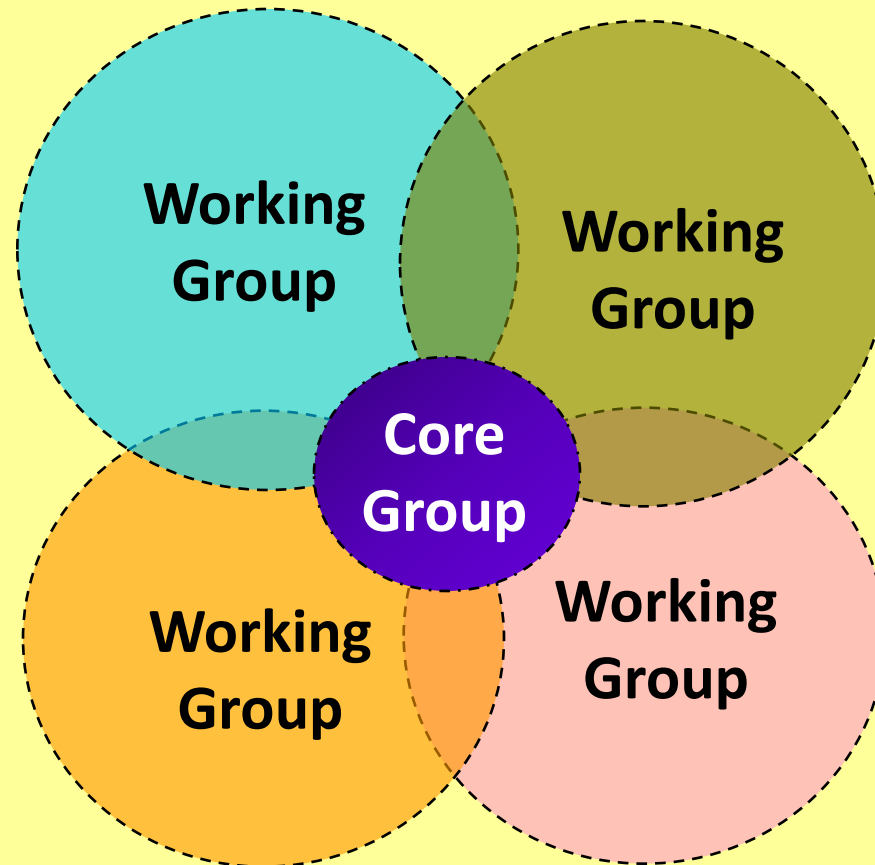
- Promote **ecologically responsible** and **economically equitable** policy solutions
- Increase federal funding for **resource restoration and maintenance** and **rural economic development**
- Strengthen the **voices** of rural leaders



# Changing more than policy

- Change laws and procedures that block community participation in the restoration and stewardship of public and private lands
- Showcase and promote local efforts and innovations
- Network rural leaders to accelerate learning and adoption of best practices
- Build a cadre of rural leaders who can speak for themselves about the impacts of policies on their communities and adjacent landscapes
- Build a national movement of place-based conservation

# RVCC Structure



# Communication and Representation

- No one organization formally speaks for the coalition
- Issue papers
- Sign-on letters



# Annual RVCC Events

- Annual Policy Meeting
- Western Week(s) in Washington
- In-state district office visits
- .....and conference calls galore!





# Priority RVCC Issues



- **Community Capacity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Restoration & Stewardship**
- **Working Landscapes**
- **Contracting Reform**
- **Workforce Issues**
- **Integrated Biomass Utilization**
- **Climate Change**
- **Wildfire Cost Containment**
- **Appropriations**

# Highlighted Accomplishments

- **National Fire Plan (2001)**
  - Community role in 10-year comprehensive wildfire recovery plan
  - Funding for the marketing and utilization of small diameter and underutilized species
  - Best value local benefit criteria and requirements
- **Stewardship Contracting (2003)**
  - Passage and transition from pilot program
  - Best value, collaboration, and multiparty monitoring provisions
- **Healthy Forest Restoration Act (2004)**
  - Collaboration provisions
  - Community Wildfire Protection Plans
  - Multiparty Monitoring
- **Community Wood Energy Program (2007)**
  - Advocated for and ensured passage



# Highlighted Accomplishments

- **Community Forest and Open Space program (2008)**
  - Advocated for and ensured passage
- **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009)**
  - Ensured role and funding for Forest Service economic recovery
  - Best Value direction from the Forest Service
- **Forest Landscape Restoration Act (2009)**
  - Development and passage
  - Integrated ecological and economic requirements
- **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program**
  - Advocated for and secured full funding in FY 2012
  - 16 selected projects in the West
- **Integrated Resource Restoration Line Item (2011)**
  - Advocated for and secured funding for a pilot project in three regions (1,3,4)

# Policy Trends and Opportunities

- Farm Bill
- Energy legislation
- Public lands legislation
- Grazing and ranching issues
- Stewardship Contracting reauthorization
- County payments
- Annual appropriations
- Administrative policy



# Challenges

- We can't please everyone and we can't do everything
- Balancing old and new member interests
- Getting too close to the mainstream
- Funding for coalition management and place-based participation
- Complexity of political process
- Politics thrive on conflict and crisis

# Future Direction

- Maintaining a diverse national rural voice for conservation policy and objectives
- Making the case for federal investment in collaboration and community capacity building
- Collective impact and greater CBO exposure
- New partnerships
- Moving beyond policy....



**RVCC**

Rural Voices for  
Conservation  
COALITION