

SUPPORTING EASTERN OREGON'S NEW NATURAL RESOURCE ECONOMY: SUMMARY OF WORKSHOPS ON NEXT STEPS

Workshop 1: Ontario – Monday, September 18, 2017, 10am – 1pm

Workshop 2: Pendleton – Tuesday, September 19, 2017, 10am – 1pm

Workshop 3: John Day – Wednesday, September 20, 2017, 10am – 1pm

Workshop 4: La Grande – Thursday, September 21, 2017, 10am – 1pm

This summary of four “next step” workshops presents key ideas generated by workshop participants about opportunities and potential follow-up projects aimed at supporting Eastern Oregon’s New Natural Resource Economy (NNRE). Each workshop followed the same format:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
10:00 am	Introduction and project summary <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of NNRE in Eastern Oregon• Introductions• Key issues from interviews and survey• Recommendations from CSC team
10:30 am	Discussion of key opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which recommendations have the greatest impact?• Which recommendations are low effort?• Which opportunities can become projects?
11:00 am	Small group discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are project outcomes?• What are key milestones (steps/phases of the project)?• How do we determine success?• What resources are needed?
12:00 pm	Lunch and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share what was discussed in the small groups (starts at 12:30)• Provide feedback and ideas
1:00 pm	Closing and next steps

As the Community Service Center (CSC) team presented findings and recommendations, workshop participants were asked to think about which recommendations particularly stood out to them as having strong potential for follow-up and implementation. The group then brainstormed several topics of interest for follow-up before splitting into small groups to expand on each opportunity identified during the brainstorm. The small groups each worked to answer a series of prompts for their “Opportunity Project”:

Description of the opportunity project:

- What are the desired outcomes?
- How will you reach these outcomes? (What are some major steps for this project?)
- Who needs to be involved?

Resources needed:

- What would you need to make this opportunity project happen?

Here, we present the key topics and opportunities identified during each workshop’s brainstorm, as well as the more specific descriptions of opportunities and next steps developed by each small group.

Ontario Workshop Summary

Group Brainstorm

Prompt: What are some recommendations/key opportunities that resonate with you? Think about things that you think are particularly important, that are already happening and could be expanded upon, or that you have a lot of interest in pursuing through your work.

- Workforce training
 - There is an existing effort to incorporate Career Technical Education (CTE) into schools:
 - Could CTE begin before high school? In middle and elementary school?
 - It will be important to get parents buy-in
 - It is important to make this affordable
 - Entrepreneurship training in K-12
 - Kids need to build an entrepreneurial mindset early on
- Networking
 - Networking events need to be targeted and specific – businesses won’t come out for general topics (low attendance has been a problem)
 - Go out and visit NNRE businesses (model after Snake River Economic Development Alliance business retention and expansion program)
 - It’s important to meet businesses on their turf
 - Opportunity to develop a volunteer business retention and expansion team
 - Opportunity to engage civic groups in business retention and expansion efforts (for example, Lyons club members might be a good source of volunteers for business retention and expansion teams)
- Marketing
 - Businesses really need help with marketing themselves, especially through social media and websites
 - Opportunity for cost-sharing: hire one marketing person to support several businesses

- Key issue: GEODC is not known in the region – there has not been much of a presence other than when it comes to annual reporting

Small Group Opportunities

Opportunity 1: CTE/Entrepreneurship in Schools. Expand on the program for CTE that is being led by the Malheur Poverty to Prosperity (MP2P) group (<http://malheurp2p.org/>).

- Economic developers could be more involved with supporting this effort:
 - Need to be more engaged with the P2P board
 - Could provide grantwriting support – is this something GEODC could help with?
 - Could help with identifying additional facilities/space for the CTE project
 - Eventually it would be nice to see the program expand beyond the existing areas (welding, nursing, automation for agriculture, and network security) – in particular, this could be an opportunity to support skills NNRE businesses want to see in the workforce
- Who is involved with this:
 - MP2P
 - Educators
 - School Districts
 - Businesses
 - Hospital

Opportunity 2: Better reaching NNRE businesses to understand their needs and support them.

Economic developers could do a better job of identifying what’s out there and giving businesses more individualized support.

- Identify who is out there: there are a lot of hidden businesses
- Leverage existing civic groups (ex. Chambers, Lyons Club, etc.) to reach businesses (once identified) through a business retention and expansion program
 - Create volunteer teams (no more than 3 people per team) to do direct visits with businesses
 - Other locations to meet up with businesses could be the County Fair and during school events
- Who should be involved with this:
 - GEODC?
 - Local representatives: city/county staff, elected officials, citizen volunteers

Pendleton Workshop Summary

Group Brainstorm

Prompt: What are some recommendations/key opportunities that resonate with you? Think about things that you think are particularly important, that are already happening and could be expanded upon, or that you have a lot of interest in pursuing through your work.

- Stronger partnerships between economic development organizations
 - GEODC sending people to NEOEDD businesses management classes
 - NEOEDD sending people to GEODC for help with regulatory issues

- Create a centralized list of resources so economic development organizations know what's out there and who to refer people to
- *Good examples of partnerships/collaborative efforts that are working well:*
 - Economic developers in Pendleton working with schools, BMCC, and businesses to create training programs for kids/college students around UAVs and precision agriculture
 - Union County water planning collaborative (ask Donna Beverage for details)
- Workforce
 - Expanding CTE and certification programs (especially at the Community Colleges)
 - Fostering entrepreneurship through K-12 education
 - Mentorships, internships, job shadowing opportunities (give kids access to real world experiences)
 - Kids need to understand the job opportunities in natural resources from an early age
 - We need to sell work in natural resources as a cool and desirable field
 - Develop Lemonade Day program in schools: <https://lemonadeday.org/>
 - Look into the BlueGreen Alliance to see if there are any good ways to leverage this effort to promote job training for skills needed by NNRE businesses: <https://www.bluegreenalliance.org/>
- Incubator/Accelerator for NNRE businesses
- Expanding/facilitating Eastern Oregon and Western Oregon connections
 - How can economic developers help facilitate access to Western Oregon markets and encourage investment in Eastern Oregon businesses?
- Trust-building between economic development entities and businesses – bridging the disconnect
- Key issue for the region: Housing!
 - There are housing shortages in many towns, which is preventing economic growth because towns can't attract the appropriate workforce

Small Group Opportunities

Opportunity 1: Economic development/workforce information and resource clearinghouse. Develop a comprehensive list of services offered and publish online in an accessible location.

- We need a gatekeeper for compiling and maintaining a list of the resources available to people in the economic development field
 - This could be spearheaded by GEODC and NEOEDD
- Support services come at many levels, including:
 - City
 - County
 - Tribes
 - Chambers
 - Local nonprofits
 - State agencies (there are lots of these that might be relevant)
 - Federal: USDA, Forest Service, EDA
 - Education sector: K-12, Community Colleges, Universities
- Someone could work with all these groups to gather information and links to the key resources they provide

- House the comprehensive list on GEODC's and/or NEOEDD's websites
- Ask for yearly updates from the organizations represented on the list
- Could GEODC and partners hire a RARE to help with the initial compilation of data and resources?

Opportunity 2: Building trust between service providers and businesses.

- Desired outcomes
 - Multiple forms of trust
 - Trust in the process
 - Trust in the vision (long range)
 - Agency trust (with public, with each other)
 - Inclusion
 - Cultural and historical retention
- How to reach outcomes:
 - Small projects, gradually building trust over time (for example, working on K-12 entrepreneurship)
 - Do more outreach and communication with clients
- Who to involve:
 - A collaborative facilitator similar to the High Desert Partnership (someone to help move efforts forward)
 - Many economic development organizations
- Resources needed:
 - Better communication tools

Opportunity 3: Engaging K-12 in entrepreneurship, science, and natural resources.

- Desired outcome: Kids are excited about the opportunities that exist in their community and know that there are more possibilities for them besides a four-year college.
- Potential project steps:
 - Preliminary conversations with educators and economic development folks: understand what is currently happening and how economic developers can support the educators' efforts
 - Talking to Blue Mountain ESD might be a good place to start – would they be interested in being a convenor for getting people organized around this idea?
 - Develop a series of pilots in different communities that have interest, energy, and capacity
 - Have some kind of venue for sharing ideas between the different pilots
 - Host a large workshop or conference where different pilots can share ideas and update on progress
- Important note: youth should be involved in developing programs
- Next steps:
 - Everyone will go off and present this idea to their organizations to determine what interest exists
 - We will keep updated on the progress in Burns (check-in with Melissa from the High Desert Partnership to see how this pilot effort is going)

John Day Workshop Summary

Group Brainstorm

Prompt: What are some recommendations/key opportunities that resonate with you? Think about things that you think are particularly important, that are already happening and could be expanded upon, or that you have a lot of interest in pursuing through your work.

- Youth entrepreneurship
 - This would take a lot of effort at first
 - Should involve: schools, government agencies, tribes, community colleges, forest service, local experts to volunteer to participate in the curriculum/program
 - Good example that could maybe be expanded/assisted: [Oregon Youth Conservation Corps](#)
 - In Grant County, the North Fork John Day Watershed Council manages this program
 - Provides a year-long experience of hands-on learning
 - Could this opportunity be connected to the Workforce Investment Board?
 - A key goal of youth entrepreneurship programs should be *exposure*: showing kids what job opportunities there are and giving them first-hand experience
 - Could there be city programs or projects that could involve kids?
 - Needed resources: support for doing outreach for and marketing of existing programs
- Assistance with finding experts to teach skills and expose youth to natural resource jobs
 - The Burns Paiute Tribe has been developing youth programs, but has had difficulty in finding professionals to teach kids agricultural/natural resource skills
 - It would be helpful to identify a collection of local people who are dedicated to teaching the next generation
 - It would be helpful to gather resources related to training youth, so that those doing the training would have something to draw from
- Resource list of existing services and program, all the way up to the state level
 - It is particularly difficult to know what resources exist at the state level
 - Economic Development organizations would benefit from having funding to create a resource list
- Connecting businesses to each other and to collective resources
 - Are there more opportunities for service-sharing between businesses?
 - For example, marketing businesses help other businesses publicize their services in exchanges for products/services from these businesses
 - What should economic developers be doing?
 - Taking a flexible approach
 - Be willing to go to businesses (meet them where they are comfortable)
 - Hand out flyers and resources/have a presence at community events (for example, sports and fairs)
 - It will be important to find existing forums that businesses might use for getting resources, and then work to connect other businesses to these forums
 - Chambers and other groups should work on making connections between businesses
 - Having a case manager to help with connecting businesses might be useful
 - Needs: resources/money for bringing businesses together

- It is important to keep up with regulations

Small Group Opportunities

Opportunity 1: Networking and consolidating/sharing resources. Develop a resource database that will help economic developers know where to direct people who come to them for assistance.

- Outcomes: A resource database, including links to useful online forums (particularly those that might be useful to natural resource-based businesses)
- Potential project steps:
 - Find existing online forums that natural resource-based businesses might use to get help
 - Develop a list of experts that can answer questions
- Who should be involved?
 - GEODC, federal/state/county/local agencies, tribes, chambers, colleges and universities (especially OSU Extension)
- Roles
 - GEODC could house the information – could they use a RARE to help develop the database?
 - Partners need to help with providing information to put in the database
- Resources needed:
 - A RARE to help get the process started
 - Funding could come from all 7 counties and chambers to help support the effort

Opportunity 2: Workforce development through engaging K-12 in natural resource related activities. It is important to start engaging youth in natural resources early on so they see the potential of careers in this field.

- How will we accomplish this?
 - Leverage existing programs, including:
 - Library
 - Existing requirements for community service/internships at the high school level
 - Outdoor school
 - 4-H and OSU Extension
 - OYCC watershed council program
- What does this group need to do?
 - Learn more about what exists already
 - Talk with schools and ESDs
 - Learn more about and/or partner with the effort around youth engagement/education in Burns
 - High Desert Partnership to see how this pilot effort is going)

La Grande Workshop Summary

Feedback on the Report & Findings

- Regulations: it is not just that they are too complex, they are also too extensive and/or too cumbersome – businesses have expressed to the meeting attendees that certain regulations make it very difficult to do business (in particular in tourism)

- The “new” in New Natural Resource Economy: many of the business types described are not necessarily new – some businesses that have been around for a very long time have the same values around stewarding the land
- Don’t under-represent the importance of local level organizations: for example, the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association works in close partnership with Travel Oregon to promote local businesses

Group Brainstorm

Prompt: What are some recommendations/key opportunities that resonate with you? Think about things that you think are particularly important, that are already happening and could be expanded upon, or that you have a lot of interest in pursuing through your work.

- Building a career ladder
 - Identify businesses’ needs (in this case, NNRE businesses’ needs)
 - Understand the market for different skills/training
 - Develop and provide training for 16-24 year olds
 - Work with the Workforce Investment Board to connect program graduates with appropriate jobs
 - Baker County/Baker Technical Institute are a great example of how this can work
 - Current focus areas include: welding, fire/fuel suppression, machine operators
 - Potential opportunity: translate the Baker model to other communities
 - In the past, this has been a partnership with larger businesses
 - How could this model be adapted to help smaller scale businesses?
- Improving communication and collaboration
 - Resource mapping could help so that more people/organizations have a better idea of what exists
 - It is important to bring all the important parties together: economic developers, businesses, workforce, and education
 - What scale should communication/collaboration happen on?
 - Need for some regional, but also some county
 - How can we develop a system of constant communication?
 - There used to be a problem-solving group that met regularly: businesses were the convenors and identified issues, then a group of businesses and service providers met to try to tackle the issues identified
 - Is there an opportunity to revive this group?

Small Group Opportunities

Opportunity 1: Building more connections between economic developers, businesses, and education.

- We need to recognize that everyone has limited resources, then build from what we’ve already got
- We need to identify how we can better use underutilized resources
- How can we keep communication open and flowing so everyone know what everyone else is doing?
- It is really important to give students access to **authentic** learning experiences
- We need to focus on fostering a **mentoring culture** among businesses
 - Are there opportunities to leverage granges to bring businesses together?

- There are some regulatory barriers to engaging with students:
 - Minimum wage laws

Opportunity 2: Improving communication between service providers and businesses.

- County economic development can act as a catalyst and convenor to bring many critical partners together
- There is interest in reviving the project-based problem-solving group:
 - This should be led by businesses and workforce representatives
 - There may need to be multiple groups that operate at different scales:
 - County
 - Sub-region
 - Full Workforce Investment Board region

APPENDIX: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED TO WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

Concerns and Recommendations

Regulations		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Regulations are too complex.	Provide “case manager” capacity to explain and navigate regulations.	Regional Solutions is an organization that may have this capacity. If so, economic development organizations can highlight its existence and refer interested businesses to it.
		Find funding for a dedicated case manager role and determine which economic development entity should host it. NEOEDD and GEODC are likely candidates.
		Build on existing relationships with regulatory agencies, and identify a point of contact that the case manager can use to answer regulatory questions for clients.
		Collaborate with government agencies to provide easily accessible information online. Oregon Business Xpress already has substantial online options; identify any NNRE or rural business needs that aren’t already included.
Government priorities change.	Advocate for consistent spending on NNRE projects and share the important role these businesses have in the local community.	Partner with advocacy groups and trade organizations in NNRE-related sectors. These groups provide lobbying power to effectively establish the benefit of natural resource work to Eastern Oregon communities and the importance of consistent government funding and support. Initially, this will be most effective at the local or state level, though there is the potential that positive outcomes in Oregon can be used to influence federal funding priorities as well.

Workforce

Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Lack of reliable skilled workers.	Incorporate entrepreneurship into K-12 education.	Work with local school districts to create and promote age-appropriate entrepreneurship content throughout K-12.
		Incorporate knowledge of NNRE and entrepreneurship into the outdoor school programs in all Eastern Oregon school districts.
	Build entrepreneurship and professionalism skills in college.	Eastern Oregon University offers both business and natural resource classes. There is an opportunity to incorporate business skills and professional development skills in natural resource programs to produce well-rounded graduates that are ready to enter the labor force or start their own natural resource business.
	Create job training programs that focus on skills needed by NNRE businesses.	Create a job shadow or internship program for high school students that would pair them with NNRE businesses to build skills and gain work experience. Depending on the needs of the business owner, this program could provide short-term or long-term work.
		Find funding for a job training program, potentially through Business Oregon and/or the Oregon Employment Department.
		Create a phone survey for NNRE businesses to determine their most needed job skills.
		Establish a partnership with the Workforce Investment Board and Business Oregon's Rural Opportunity Initiative to set up and run this program.
	Host local job fairs for NNRE businesses.	Partner with cities across the region and develop a job fair that cycles through each location. Local chambers of commerce can help organize and promote these events.
Offer employer-employee mediation services to resolve conflicts before the employee needs to be fired.	Find a host organization for a mediation program, likely the Oregon Employment Department.	

Networking		
Peer Support Networks		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Lack of physical networking space and events.	Sponsor or host NNRE networking events.	GEODC or NEOEDD can partner with chambers of commerce, cities, and county economic developers to host networking events.
		Events could be part of a larger business accelerator or incubator program modeled after the Regional Accelerator and Incubation Network (RAIN) in the Willamette Valley.
		Publicize networking events and maintain a consistent event schedule to encourage attendance and foster a community feeling.
Lack of online networking space.	Create online networking spaces, or facilitate access to existing networks.	Partner with local, regional, and national trade organizations to create a list of existing online networks. This list should be displayed on the website of all economic development entities so it is easily visible to businesses. Economic developers should also have a working knowledge of the list so they can recommend the relevant online network to businesses when asked.
		If online networks do not exist, facilitate their creation in partnership with trade organizations.
Professional Support Networks		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Economic development support services are underutilized.	Increase awareness of available services and build stronger relationships with NNRE businesses.	Create a marketing campaign for economic development organizations highlighting the benefits to NNRE businesses. Marketing can take the form of local ads and brochures to display at chamber of commerce offices, banks, and other business support providers.
		Economic development staff should emphasize making personal connections with business owners. It was suggested by one economic development organization's employee that workers spend more time "in the field" and less time in the office.
		Economic development staff can attend networking events, chamber of commerce meetings, and other local business events to become friendly and familiar faces representing their organization.
	Better coordinate the efforts of economic development entities serving the region.	Coordinate among economic development entities to share ideas and approaches to determine what strategies appear to be most effective.
		Provide information on services offered by other economic development entities to businesses.
	Create an inventory of specialized support organizations and services.	Business Oregon can create and host an inventory of support organizations with assistance from other economic developers. The inventory should include hyperlinks to each support organization and include a description of the services each provides. Each economic development entity can display or link to the inventory on their own websites.

Technical Assistance		
Marketing and Online Presence		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Businesses need assistance with marketing.	Create a marketing assistance program.	Partner with Eastern Oregon University's College of Business to establish an internship program or class projects for NNRE business marketing.
		Create marketing templates for specific audiences modeled after Travel Oregon's resources for tourism businesses.
Businesses need assistance with branding.	Create a branding assistance program.	Add branding classes to economic development organizations' suite of business development classes.
		Establish partnerships with journalists, marketers, or other communication professionals that can assist NNRE businesses with developing their brand and telling their story.
Businesses need assistance with developing a stronger online presence.	Determine specific needs of NNRE businesses for their online presence.	Conduct outreach with NNRE businesses to determine what they currently struggle with in their online presence.
		Based on outreach, create classes to teach desired skills.
	Assist with website development.	Partner with Squarespace or other website hosting service to provide resources on website development to business owners.
Business Management		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Businesses need assistance learning specific business management skills.	Continue and expand existing business management classes.	NEOEDD hosts business management classes. Other economic development entities should recommend these classes when they complement the business's needs. For example, if SBDC asks the business to write a business plan, SBDC should recommend NEOEDD's business plan class.
		Find funding to offer classes more frequently and in more locations.
		Offer classes online through webinars to increase access to NNRE businesses that are often based outside of town. GEOEDC can partner with NEOEDD to promote these online classes to businesses within their jurisdiction.
Production Assistance		
Concern	Potential Solution	Action Items
Businesses need assistance with specific production issues.	Facilitate connections with other businesses and technical experts.	Increase networking among peer businesses, following the recommendations in the Networking section above.
		Partner with trade organizations, universities, and extension services to connect businesses with experts that can answer their questions. A business retention and expansion program focused on NNRE businesses could provide a framework for this type of partnership.
		Establish a Manufacturing Extension partnership in the region.

Personal Notes

Study Findings

CSC Recommendations

Opportunities

Opportunity Projects

Group brainstorm notes

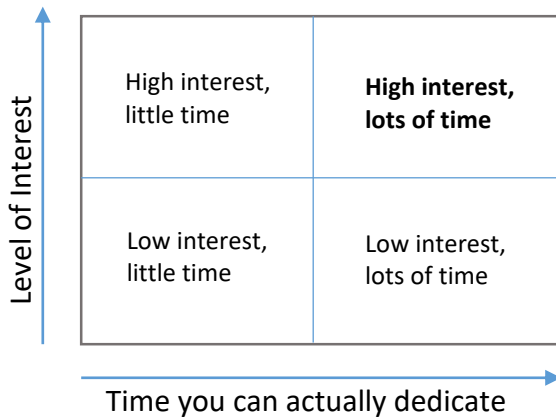
Most interesting recommendations

How much effort would these recommendations require to implement?

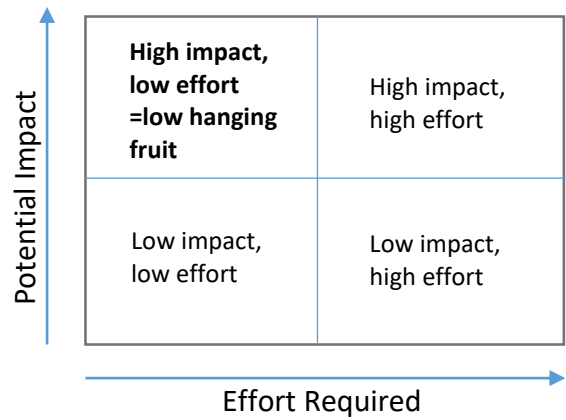
What resources might be needed?

Priority Matrices

For myself:



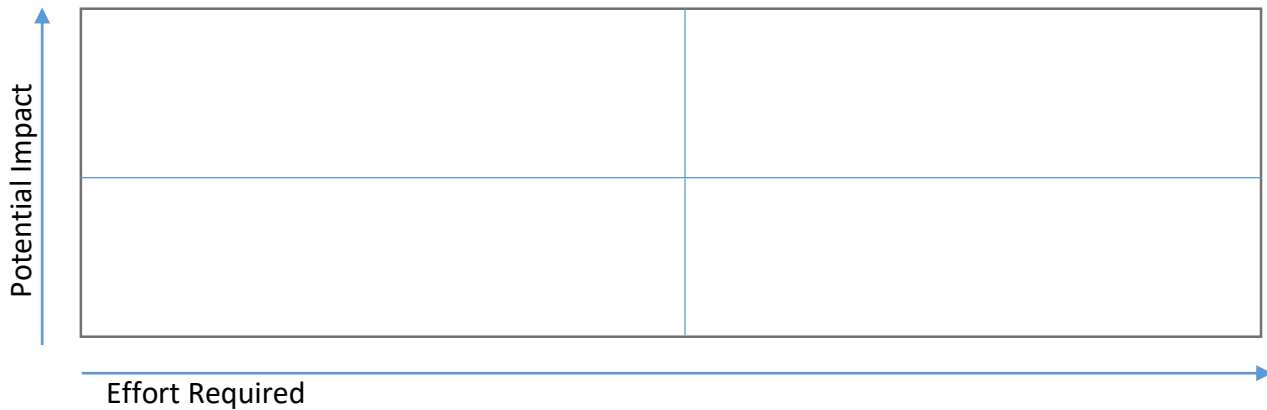
For my organization:



Fill in: Individual:



Fill in: Organization:



Opportunity Project Worksheet

Opportunity Project Name: _____

Brainstorm:

What are the outcomes we're hoping to achieve?

How will we define success?

What are the project milestones?

What resources are needed to make this happen?

What could be our potential roles?