

# High Divide Collaborative 6th Annual Workshop



Ag, Water, & Sage – Ecological Connectivity - Aspen

April 24-25, 2019

Idaho Falls, Idaho

What can we do today to leave a legacy of vibrant communities and healthy lands and resources?

When: April 24, 2019 9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
April 25, 2019 8:30 am - 2:00 pm

Where: Hilton Garden Inn 700 Lindsay Blvd  
Idaho Falls, Idaho

**Purpose:** The annual High Divide Collaborative Workshop brings together people working on and concerned about land and communities across the region. The workshop framework encourages peer-to-peer communication and learning, and helps identify shared opportunities and challenges. Expected outcomes from this 6th Annual Workshop include: identification of potential action within the High Divide related to meeting priorities, and how the Collaborative can help foster communication around those priorities between annual workshops.

**The High Divide Collaborative's eight primary conservation goals, as established by Collaborative stakeholders, are to conserve:**

- **ECOLOGICAL LINKAGE** among core habitat areas to conserve wide-ranging fish and wildlife populations that are resilient to climate change
- A **CULTURAL LEGACY** of traditional food sources, tribal treaty lands, and travel ways such as the Nez Perce, Continental Divide, and Lewis & Clark Trails
- **WORKING RANGLANDS** that are central to communities, economy and way of life
- Nationally important dispersed **RECREATION** lands and waterways where people enjoy nature
- **CLEAN AND ABUNDANT WATER** for headwaters fisheries, wildlife, healthy riparian communities, and human uses.
- Intact, resilient **SAGEBRUSH STEPPE ECOSYSTEMS** that support sustainable ranching communities and are critical for many wildlife species, including the greater sage grouse
- **HEALTHY FOREST LANDS** managed for sustained economic, social and ecological values
- Open land in the **WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE** to protect life and property, reduce fire costs, and allow wildfire to play its natural role.

## Agenda Draft

Wednesday, April 24

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### Introduction

- 9:00 – 9:30 Welcome, Brief History of the Collaborative, Workshop Goals**  
Merrill Beyeler - Lemhi Rancher, Gary Burnett - Heart of the Rockies Initiative  
Purpose: Share the history of the collaborative, our values and shared priorities, expectations for the workshop, and what we hope to accomplish.
- 9:30 – 10:00 Role of Collaboration**  
Shawn Johnson - Network for Landscape Conservation  
Sean Finn – US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Purpose: Provide national perspective on collaborative conservation, placing the High Divide Collaborative among other efforts across the nation. There will be a discussion of strengths and challenges.

### Rural Development

- 10:00 – 10:30 Pilot Project: Increasing access to USDA Programs - Meryl Harrell (via Zoom)**  
Purpose: Many USDA Rural Development Programs are under-utilized. What opportunities are available in Rural Development, how do they relate to High Divide Collaborative priorities? A Montana pilot project is in development. If it is successful, extension to Idaho can be explored.

10:30 – 10:45 *Break*

### Session 1: Intersection of Working Lands, Water Management, & Sagebrush Habitat

Purpose of session: Updates to inform tomorrow's break-out groups.

- 10:45 – 11:15 Invited: Rebekah Levine, University of Montana Western** New tool to help identify how, when, and where snowpack turns into flow
- 11:15 - 12:00 Panel: Partnerships in Sagebrush Country**
- Sean Claffey, The Nature Conservancy – Southwest Montana
  - Jake Northius, NRCS/Pheasants Forever – East Idaho

12:00 - 1:00 *Networking Lunch (provided on site)*  
*An opportunity to connect with colleagues and new partners.*

- 1:00 – 2:30 Panel: Working Lands & Water Management**  
Purpose: To assess opportunities and challenges related to shared priorities of working lands and water. Panelist will examine trends in partnerships and implementation.
- Central Idaho Rangeland Network - Jenny Gonyer, Salmon Valley Stewardship
  - Landowner-Led Conflict Reduction Project - Gary Burnett, Heart of the Rockies
  - Upper Snake River Working Group - Brandon Hoffner, Henry's Fork Foundation
  - Outcome-based Grazing Pilot Project - BLM Dillon staff

2:30 - 2:45 *Break*

### Session 2 -- Habitat & the Places in Between: Securing Ecological Connectivity

Purpose of Session: Provide and discuss information to inform tomorrow's break-out groups

- 2:45 - 3:00 Partnerships, Coordination, & Understanding: Key Elements to Conserving**

*Connectivity David Diamond, Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee*

**3:00 - 3:10 Introduction to Ecological Connectivity – Rotating Conversations**  
Panel introduction of session framework and topic tables, objectives, and expected outcomes of this session.

**3:10 - 4:50 Ecological Connectivity – Rotating Conversations**  
*Session Format & Purpose: The rotating conversation format (also known as a “World Café”) fosters small group discussion and amplifies the depth, scope, and quality of collaboration. In these 30-minute sessions, we will share information and create conversation around the many elements of connectivity and how they relate to our work in the High Divide. These discussions will inform the breakout session work to be done at the close of the workshop tomorrow. Tables will be organized by the topics listed below. Participants will rotate to topic tables of their choosing every 30 minutes, allowing individuals to attend three small group discussions.*

**Connectivity Table Topics:**

**1 - Big Game Migration (SO 3362) - Idaho** -- These state strategies to respond to DOI Secretarial Order 3362 involve elements of research, land protection, fence modification, habitat restoration, and local partnership/community support

**2 - Big Game Migration (SO 3362) - Montana** -- These state strategies to respond to DOI Secretarial Order 3362 involve elements of research, land protection, fence modification, habitat restoration, and local partnership/community support

**3 - Bird Migrations** - Importance of the High Divide for many species of birds and the connection between working lands and public lands

**4 - Fences** - Opportunities and challenges that fencing has created for movement

**5 - Wildlife Conflict Reduction** – Success, challenges, and communities’ and landowners’ needs

**6 - Transportation** - Opportunities and challenges mitigating wildlife mortality on highways

**4:50 - 5:00 Closing and Wrap-up for the Day**

*5:00-7:00 Informal Social - an opportunity to network with peers and continue the days’ discussions*

**Thursday, April 25**

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**Session 3: Aspen Ecology and Restoration**

*Purpose of Session: Provide information for break-out group discussion*

**8:30 – 8:45 Welcome** - Mel Bolling, Caribou-Targhee Forest Supervisor

**8:45 – 9:20 Aspen Presentation** - Paul Rogers, Western Aspen Alliance

- Ecological importance and restoration needs for working at a landscape scale
- Historic versus current aspen cover in the Idaho/Montana area
- Success stories that highlight other collaborative aspen recovery efforts in the Intermountain West and what elements led to that success

**9:20 – 9:50 Updates from working groups**

**9:50 – 10:10 Conservation Economics on Western Working Lands**  
– Cole Mannix, Western Landowners Association (WLA)

A new report by WLA explores conservation as a form of economics. What are the challenges for working lands conservation, and what principles and leverage points exist to improve conservation economics?

10:10 - 10:20 *Break*

**Session 4: Break-out Groups -- Advancing Action in the High Divide**

*Purpose of Session: Create a space for groups to discuss solutions and identify potential for action within the High Divide related to their project interests, and determine how the Collaborative can help foster communication around that topic between annual workshops.*

**10:20 – 12:20 Breakout Discussions on Advancing Action**

- Aspen Working Group
- Upper Snake River Pilot Project
- Ecological Connectivity
- Capacity Building

**12:20 – 12:50 Report back to Group about Breakouts**

**12:50 – 1:00 Closing Remarks**

1:00 *Lunch – provided on-site with option to take food with you*