



## Reimagining the Rural West - Concluding Workshop

By Karen Schumacher | December 15, 2019

The final Western Governors Association (WGA) [workshop](#) on Reimagining the Rural West (RRW) was held December 3, 2019 in Post Falls, with host Governor Brad Little providing the opening [remarks](#). Idaho is all in on [funding](#) this U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rural [program](#), disguised as RRW.



In his opening [remarks](#), Gov. Little emphasized themes from previous workshops, including energy, agriculture, tourism, recreation and connectivity, and acceptance of his Idaho Broadband Task Force [recommendations](#), which led to his referencing internet access, affordable housing, arts and culture, education, and leadership. Yep, all bases covered for implementation of United Nations (UN) Agenda [2030](#) Sustainable Development Goals ([SDG](#)). While he stated he liked "stealing good ideas from other states", he is really stealing, rather adopting, ideas from the UN, this is their agenda, and the [USDA](#).

Once again there were several panels on different issues, however the information is too exhaustive to cover them in depth, so a very brief description is provided at the end of this article with a link to the relevant video.

It is the second [panel](#), **Natural Resource Management and Infrastructure Challenges**, that should be watched by anyone who lives in a rural resource extraction area. All foresters and those who really understand forestry should listen to this panel, the plan for forests, and who the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) really works with to achieve the objectives. It isn't citizens.



Tom Schultz, VP of Government Affairs, Idaho Forest Group ([IFG](#)) talked about the "impact" forest "threats" have on communities, and why federal "partnerships" are heavily depended upon. With 65% of federal forest land "off limits" to timber production, Mr. Schultz acknowledged that lack of forest management has resulted in more forest mortality than growth, along with a drastic increase in forest fires. He also promoted the "collaboratives" throughout Idaho and the

need for partnering with them. To further this agenda, Mr. Schultz commented that states should not take over federal land, but rather the state participate in "cooperative [federalism](#)" which is the antithesis of how our government is structured. [Federalism](#) is the **division** of powers between the states and national government, with the federal government having limited powers and the remaining delegated to the state. It is not a shared or "cooperative" relationship.



But it was panel member Matt Krumenauer, Vice President Special Projects, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities ([USEFC](#)) that really provoked further scrutiny. Mr. Krumenauer spoke to the market development of new forest "products" such as [biomass](#) production. This theme fits previous WGA workshops that centered around clean energy, and the need to change rural communities for that purpose.

An "[endowment](#)" is an investment fund that "makes consistent withdrawals from invested capital" which is then donated. In the USEFC 2018 Annual [Report](#), statements on financial activity, page 19, show just how much of what they do is really investments with a high return. As President Trump would say, millions and millions of dollars. It has been conveniently arranged that none of this money is taxed.

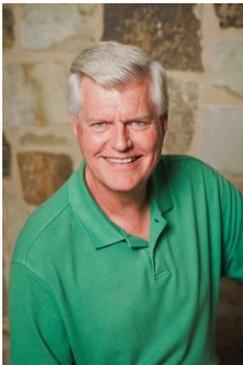
USEFC, based in S. Carolina and whose [partners](#) include the USFS, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA, US Economic Development, and Department of Defense (DOD), was [created](#) as a non-profit according to the terms in a 2006 Soft Lumber Agreement between Canada and the United States. As part of a trade settlement, \$200 million dollars was distributed to start the endowment. It states in the 06' tax [form](#) that the USEFC purpose is "To operate through the two care programs of sustainable forestry and support to timer-reliant communities by providing grants to qualified not-for-profits, local governments, universities, or other appropriate institutions to address our core purposes." and "...support education and charitable causes in timer-reliant communities and educational and public-interest projects addressing forest management issues that affect timer-reliant communities, or the sustainability of forests as sources of building materials, wildlife habitat, bio-energy, recreation, and other values." Oddly, there are three [companies](#) with this same name.

According to the 2017 tax [form](#), beginning on page 49, there is a much lengthier explanation of what they do in partnership with the USFS, including advancing watershed health, green energy production, [torrefaction](#), research, innovation, and wood-to-[energy](#), now known as the USFS Wood Innovations Grant [Program](#). These goals are explained as "aid in retention and restoration of health working forests" and growing markets for wood-to-energy. Several wood-to-energy [facilities](#) are located in Idaho. However, USEFC created, and directly controls, a for-profit corporation named Community Wealth through Forestry (CWF) which is identified as taxable on page 58. Apparently [legal](#), an example of how this relationship works is outlined in [Georgia](#). USEFC also [works](#) with the Aspen Institute on rural economic development.

Among the funding of multiple organizations beginning on page 33, USEFC also funded the USFS in the amount of \$90,028 after receiving \$4,036,920 in government grants! USEFC

started the National Conservation Easement [Database](#), providing information that is "essential...in effective planning of wildlife migration corridors or prioritizing critical lands and waters to protect", and [works](#) with non-governmental organizations (NGO) to track forest conservation easements. In 2013, through a partnership with the USFS, USEFC prepared a [report](#) on financing biomass clusters via the Woody Biomass Joint [Venture](#).

Through the USEFC, and their government partners, the Rockefeller [Foundation](#) supports the Blue Forest [Conservation](#) forest resilience bond (FRB), which "allows investors to pay for critical forest restoration activities at scale." The [FRB](#), a public-private-partnership (P3), works with the USFS to choose a restoration project. The USFS and other "beneficiaries sign contracts with the FRB to repay investors over time", a "[collective](#)" action. Besides the foundation, other [partners](#) are involved, including the World Resources [Institute](#). "The Rockefeller Foundation's Zero Gap portfolio supports the R&D and piloting of new financing mechanisms to mobilize private sector capital towards the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." In their commitment to educating us, USEFC created a cutesy [website](#), The State of America's Forests, which is nothing more than a promotion of NGO and Agenda 2030 ideology.



In 2014, Carlton [Owen](#), USEFC President & CEO, gave an [interview](#) that explains the intention for shifting from traditional forest management and use to green energy production, using the government, investors, and non-profits to accomplish this, a [P3](#). This alters our jurisdictional authority by turning decisions over to third parties in partnership with the government, however, private sector investment has always been a UN [goal](#) for a corporate run world.

Mr. Owen described USEFC as a "public charity...with a small pot of money", whose purpose was keeping forests healthy and focusing on "systemic and transformative changes". To do this the market would need to be shifted towards different forest products in order to draw investors in while putting some of that money back into rural communities, such as educating young people towards this new market. He [validated](#) investor [funding](#) of forest programs over the last five years. With the USFS and USDA blessings, our forests are being turned over for investor profits, out of the hands of communities, while taking control over the local economy and way of life. While Mr. Owen claimed those who were involved did so "voluntarily", and not compensated for their work, the 2014 tax [form](#) clearly shows that he, the CFO, and the vice presidents were compensated with over \$100,000, receiving significant increases by [2017](#). For current information on USEFC activities here is their 2018 annual [report](#), including their agenda for protecting land in partnership with DOD and Nature Conservancy, page 9. More of Mr. Owen's thoughts on USEFC can be found in his [testimony](#) to the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in 2015.

During the panel discussion, Cheryl Probert, Forest Supervisor, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, USFS, validated this agenda by reflecting on the forest "infrastructure" and drastic reduction in forest timber production resulting in the need for "partnerships" which create a "more diverse industry", "success in crossing boundaries" using Good Neighbor Authority ([GNA](#))

and shared stewardship [agreements](#), and creating the need to bring in new "investors" as partners. She also spoke to joining the universities to work on workforce needs, growing a "cohort" for an interdisciplinary team, and basically "have the university manage chunks of national forest system lands". She pretty much validated the implementation of this plan for our forests.

One note about [biomass](#), it isn't as [efficient](#) as claimed, in itself takes energy to create, and also produces harmful waste to the environment. This grand scheme has already been tried, and [failed](#). The RRW project will not only force rural communities into renewable energy through solar and wind, but includes how they will do the same with forests.

If this weren't enough there is one more issue Idahoans need to be aware of, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region ([PNWER](#)), a [non-profit](#) "collaborative region-wide organization". Idaho participates in PNWER along with other states and Canada, as well as the Regional working [groups](#), all of which coincide with the RRW project.

Several Idaho [legislators](#) belong to these working groups including Rick Youngblood, Economic Development; Terry Gestrin, Invasive Species; and Chuck Winder; Transportation. However, other legislators, Sen. Bert Brackett, Rep. Robert Anderst, Rep. John Rusche, Rep. Marc Gibbs, Rep. Don Johnson, Rep. Matt Erpelding. Rep. Elaine Smith, Sen. Lee Heider, and Rep. Sage Dixon all served on the host [committee](#) at the Economic Leadership [Forum](#) in 2016. Other PNWER members include corporations, universities, cities, and the federal government. Idaho [Statute](#) 67-7802 provides the law for this involvement.

In the PNWER 2018 [report](#), it is also revealed that former Governor Otter and Sen. Stennett participate in PNWER. Often referred to as the "North American" and regional group, PNWER also communicates and works with federal legislators providing input on issues. As they jaunt around to different areas for their meetings, they decide on the direction for citizens in the "region". This is an un-elected body of individuals who represent their interests with governments. That is regionalism. Even though there are a few Idaho legislators in this group, your representation is up against the federal government, other states, corporations, and even a foreign country.

The RRW forest panel and PNWER both provide a clear picture of how federal and state governments operate as they placate us with phony involvement and distract us from their true agenda. It is USEFC and others that the USFS works with, not citizens. [PNWER](#) also has a program, Legislative Energy Horizon Institute ([LEHI](#)) that educates legislators, rather than legislators listening to constituents. Legislation is created for the regional body, not citizens. As lengthy as this information is, it is only a small fractional slice of everything they are doing.

This is the way it will continue, [dismantling](#) our government structure as designed by our Constitution, advancing authority and control over our lives, regional [collaboration](#) rather than elected representation, and continued [enmeshment](#) between the state and federal governments.



**Rural Energy for the Future** - This [panel](#) covered economic development and energy programs through the USDA and providing information on how the USDA helps with all other subjects of this project. Newsradio 1310, KLIX [interviewed](#) Todd Meyers with the Washington Policy Center about how wind and solar power cannot meet our energy needs compared to hydro power, the impact removing dams would have on the agricultural sector in Idaho, and would be ineffective in salmon recovery. To see the corruption and fallacy of renewable energy one only has to look at [California](#).

**Rural Entrepreneurship: A Conversation with SBA** - It was explained in this [panel](#) rural businesses are physically isolated from connectivity and have limited access to capital. HUB [Zones](#), investment in small businesses, are also part of the Department of [Defense](#). Half of Idaho qualifies as a HUB [zone](#)

**Community Collaboration and Revitalization in North Idaho** - This [panel](#) focused on north Idaho, the International Selkirk Loop ([ISL](#)) and the North Idaho Tourism Alliance ([NITA](#)).

**Broadening the Outdoor Recreation Economy** - This [panel](#) discussed tourism, education & workforce development, public health & wellness, conservation and stewardship, spending money to get kids in the outdoors, and creating education for outdoor work. There was also a discussion on creating recreation agreements similar to stewardship agreements, broadband, and healthcare partnerships, "Collectivism" was a primary theme of these panel members.

**Cooperative Models Across the Rural West** - This [panel](#) spoke on rural electric cooperatives, and converting both housing and workforce housing to cooperatives in a co-opt [model](#). [Cooperatives](#) are difficult to develop and can cross jurisdictional boundaries. Cooperatives "solve your problem".

**Expanding Telehealth Services** - The final [panel](#) covered the use of broadband for electronic health records data collection, examining patients by video, dispensing medicine via telehealth, and how the non-profit, Oregon Community Health Information Network ([OCHIN](#)) operates their organization to achieve these goals.