

# 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

Wednesday, April 24

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**8:30 – 9:00** *Registration with Continental Breakfast and Coffee*

### Introduction

**9:00 – 9:30** **Welcome, Brief History of the Collaborative, Workshop Goals**

*Merrill Beyeler - Lemhi Rancher, High Divide Coordinating Committee*

*Gary Burnett - Heart of the Rockies Initiative*

Purpose: Share the history of the collaborative, our stated values and shared priorities, expectations for the workshop, and what we hope to accomplish.

**9:30 – 10:00** **Role of Collaboration**

*Shawn Johnson – University of Montana*

*Sean Finn – US Fish and Wildlife Service, High Divide Coordinating Committee*

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) – Private Consultant*

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 – 12:00** **Panel: Partnerships in Sagebrush Country – Moderated by High Divide Coordinating Committee member Zak Miller of the Idaho Farm Bureau**

- **Jeremy Casterson** – *Field Manager, Upper Snake BLM*. Jeremy will talk about the proposed fire-break project on the Sand Hills Desert.
- **Sean Claffey** – *Southwest MT Sagebrush Conservation Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy*. Sean is going to update us on the Southwest Montana Sagebrush Partnership
- **Jacob Northius** - *Range and Wildlife Conservationist, Pheasants Forever and the Sage Grouse Initiative*. Jacob will give a general overview of the Sage Grouse Initiative including partnerships, ongoing projects, and general priorities of the initiative. Feel free to question him about how the SGI can help you on your land!
- **Pat Fosse** – *Assistant Field Manager, Dillon BLM office*. Pat will talk about outcome-based grazing and their partnership with livestock producers.
- **Brenda Richards** – *Idaho Rangelands Conservation Partnership, Owyhee, Idaho*
- **Wendy Pratt** – *Pratt Cattle, Blackfoot, 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 - Moderated by High Divide Coordinating Committee member Zak Miller of the Idaho Farm Bureau**

Purpose: To assess opportunities and challenges related to shared priorities of working lands and water. Panelist will examine trends in partnerships and implementation.

- **Jenny Gonyer** – *Natural Resources Program Manager, Salmon Valley Stewardship*. Jenny will provide updates from the Central Idaho Rangelands Network: inherding, conservation riders, and Folklife.
- **Gary Burnett** – *Executive Director, Heart of the Rockies*. Gary will give an update on the landowner-led conflict reduction project.
- **Brandon Hoffner** – *Executive Director, Henry’s Fork Foundation; High Divide Coordinating Committee*. Brandon will introduce the Upper Snake Collaborative’s ‘Farms and Fish’ program.
- **Rebekah Levine Ph.D** – *Geomorphologist and Assistant Professor at UMW*. Rebekah will talk about her research and findings on snowpack as a tool to predict water flow.
- **Pedro Marques** – *Executive Director, Big Hole Watershed Committee*. Pedro will talk about the Big Hole Watershed Committee's Incentive Program, an ecosystem service payments pilot project to promote landowner stewardship of riparian forests.

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*

Purpose: Cover key elements of success in conserving connectivity across a broad landscape like the High Divide, with specific recognition of the challenges to landowners.

### **3:00 - 3:10      Introduction to Ecological Connectivity – Rotating Conversations**

*Shawn Johnson – University of Montana*

Purpose: Provide an introduction of table topics and leaders, plus an overview of session framework and expected outcomes of the 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

*Topic Leads: Matt Pieron (IDFG), Gregg Servheen (IDFG), Josh Holmes (TRLT)*

**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.

*Topic Leads: David Diamond (GYCC), Jim Berkey (TNC – invited)*

**3 - Bird Migrations** - Importance of the High Divide for many species of birds and the connection between working lands and public lands. *Topic Leads: Rob Cavallaro (IDFG, High Divide Coordinating Committee), Tamara Sperber (TRLT)*

**4 - Fences** - Opportunities and challenges that fencing has created for movement  
*Topic Leads: Simon Buzzard (UM), Landowner (invited)*

**5 - Wildlife Conflict Reduction** – Success, challenges, and communities’ and landowners’ needs. *Topic Leads: Kim Johnston (People and Carnivores), Steve Primm (Private Consultant)*

**6 - Transportation** - Opportunities and challenges mitigating wildlife mortality on highways. *Topic Leads: Renee Seidler (IDFG), Wendy Terlizzi (ITD)*

**4:50 - 5:00**      **Closing and Wrap-up for the Day**  
*Shawn Johnson – University of Montana*

**5:00 - 7:00**      **Informal Social** - *an opportunity to network with peers and continue the days’ discussions, located just outside the conference in the foyer/deck. Appetizers and a cash bar will be available.*

## **Thursday, April 25**

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**7:30-8:30**      **Breakfast Buffet** (*egg scramble, potatoes, bacon, sausage, muffins, fruit, and juice*)

### **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 – 9:30**      **Aspen as a Keystone Community: Science, Monitoring, Management**  
*Paul Rogers - Director, Western Aspen Alliance*  
Along the Rocky Mountain cordillera, aspen forests provide oases of biodiversity and connectivity. The uniqueness of aspen’s ecology begs for a new paradigm in cross-boundary conservation, one that fully understands process, linkage, and collaboration at multiple scales.

**9:30 – 9:40**      **Update from HDC Forestry and Fire Working Group**  
*Jim Roscoe - Lemhi Regional Land Trust, High Divide Coordinating Committee*

### **Economics Presentation**

**9:40 – 10:10**      **Conservation Economics on Western Working Lands**  
*Cole Mannix – Associate Director, Western Landowners Alliance*  
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**

*Introduction by High Divide Coordinating Committee members Kim Trotter of Yellowstone to Yukon Initiative and Brandon Hoffner of Henry’s Fork Foundation*

*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**

**1. Aspen Restoration in the High Divide**

*Topic Leads: Paul Rogers (Western Aspen Alliance) and current Forestry and Fire Working Group members*

This session will build on existing conversations around aspen restoration within the HDC Forestry and Fire Working Group. The group is addressing a cross-boundary approach to restoring healthy aspen communities in the High Divide. This session is open to everyone.

**2. Upper Snake Collaborative “Farms and Fish”**

*Topic Leads: Brandon Hoffner (Henry’s Fork Foundation, High Divide Coordinating Committee) and Max Ludington (Legacy Works)*

During this session Brandon and Max will share more about the Farms and Fish initiative, and have a group discussion about potential replicability in other areas of the High Divide.

**3. Ecological Connectivity**

*Topic Leads: Nick Clarke (Y2Y) and Hannah Jaicks (Future West)*

The objective of this session is to have a discussion around connectivity in the High Divide that addresses potential gaps/barriers, and identifies next steps for collective action.

**4. Capacity Building in the High Divide**

**5. Topic Leads: Dennis Glick (Future West) and Randy Carpenter (Future West)**

During this session, we will discuss strategies for engaging High Divide communities in a dialogue about the challenges related to growth and change affecting their towns and their vision for the future (if they have one). And explore the potential role that conservationists can play in helping them to craft and achieve that vision. We will also talk about the top priority capacity building needs of High Divide Collaborative members and strategies for helping to meet those needs.

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

*Moderated by Shawn Johnson, University of Montana*

**12:50 – 1:00 Closing Remarks**

*Toni Ruth - Salmon Valley Stewardship*

**1:00**

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