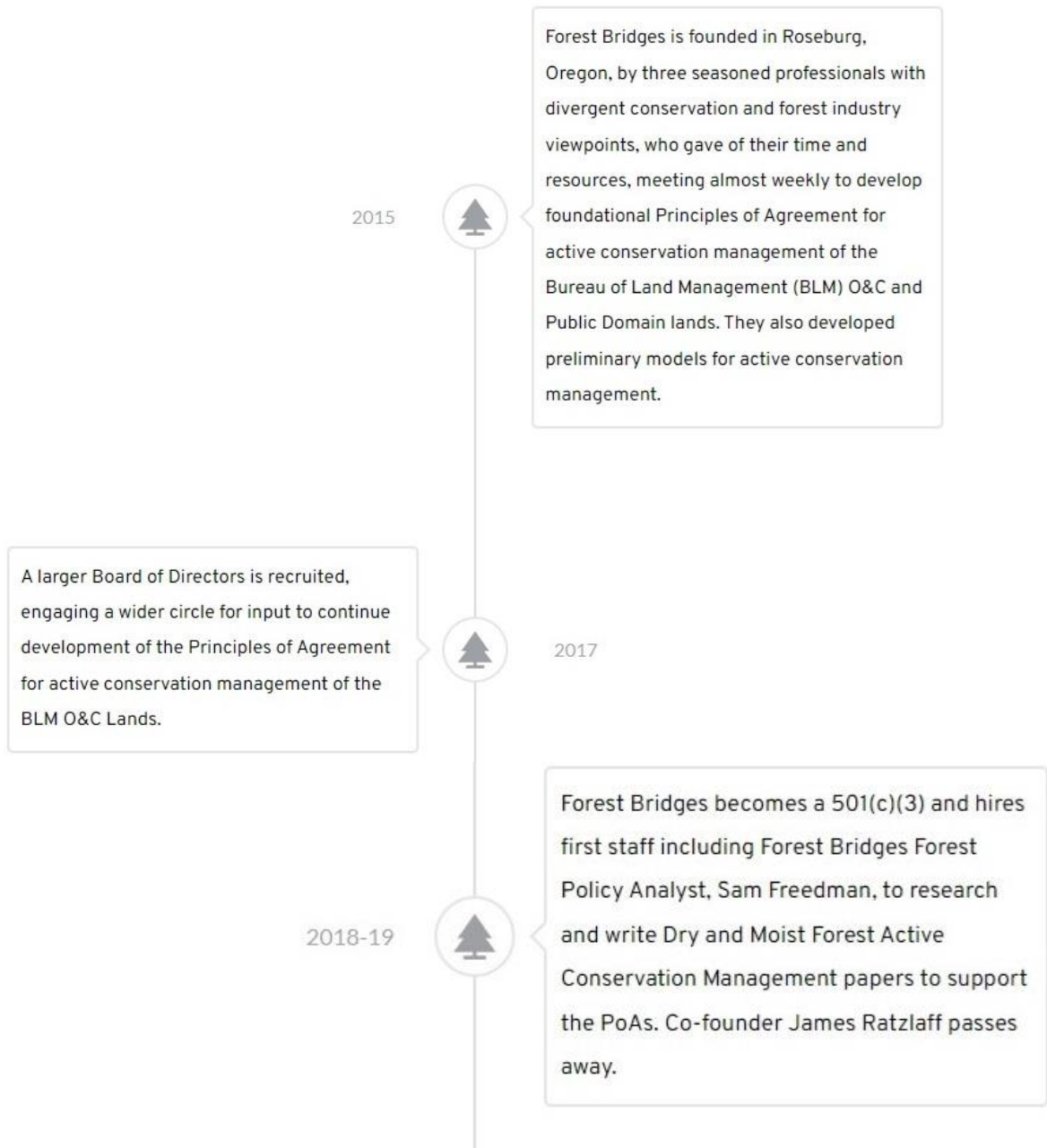


How Forest Bridges: The O&C Forest Habitat Project, Inc., was Built:
A Brief History of a Grassroots, Solution-Driven Forest Policy Collaborative Focused on the Public O&C Lands of Western Oregon
[In Three Parts]

By Rick Sohn, Co-Founder

PART I: TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS IN FOREST BRIDGES' HISTORY



Rick Sohn volunteers to serve as Acting Forest Bridges Executive Director. Key, diverse funds – balanced across conservation and forest industry interests - are raised from individuals, companies, two counties, one Tribe, and several private foundations. Website is launched and policy papers continue to be drafted.



2020-22

Mid-2022



Denise Barrett is hired as Executive Director, bringing 30 years of collaborative leadership and management experience. Forest Bridges scope is broadened to include the 500,000 acres of Controverted lands managed by the US Forest Service.

Forest Bridges becomes active working on barriers to prescribed fire use. Substantive comments are submitted to the BLM in the form of a proposed Active Conservation Management Alternative for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Public meetings commence in Roseburg to gain public feedback on the Principles of Agreement and Dry and Moist O&C forest Active Conservation Management proposals. Social networking is launched as a supplement to public meetings.



Summer and Fall
2023

Winter 2023-
Summer 2024



Forest Bridges submits an Active Conservation Management Proposal for the USDA Forest Service's O&C Controversial Lands of western Oregon as part of the Northwest Forest Plan update process. Forest Bridges also provides substantive feedback to the Bureau of Land Management in response to their draft RMP/EIS for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, stating a case for a more intensive active management approach. Networking with US Congressional staff becomes active on several fronts.

PART II: Building Forest Bridges – A brief History of Drivers and Concepts

Executive Summary

The combination of the Northwest Forest Plan of 1994 and the ensuing legal battles that pitted new and older advocacy groups against each other created a near-paralysis in the management of federal forest lands. Between 2011 and 2013, two attempts at federal legislative fixes for the O&C lands were drafted. Proposed and sponsored by Oregon Congressional delegation members and formulated for them by individual experts -- not collaboratives -- these proposals failed to gain traction due to multiple group opposition. Starting in 2015, Forest Bridges: The O&C Forest Habitat Project emerged when three Roseburg-based co-founders developed a collaborative group of people with divergent viewpoints interested in working together to develop principles for the management of those O&C lands managed by the BLM.

With broad-based support from the start, Forest Bridges collaboratively developed a model and proposal for revitalized active conservation forestry for the O&C lands, built on sustaining forest habitats and supported by funding and policies. This effort grew into a nonprofit in 2018-2019, with paid staff, including an Executive Director hired in 2022. Driven by the severity of the Labor Day fires of 2020, Forest Bridges broadened its scope in 2022 to include the Controversial lands managed by the US Forest Service. Forest Bridges is now moving forward in its efforts to offer proposals to the agencies to help shift the management paradigm on the 2.9 million acres of O&C Lands in western Oregon. Included in this figure are 2.1 million acres of BLM O&C lands, 75,000 acres of Coos Bay Wagon Road lands, 239,000 acres of interspersed Public Domain lands, and nearly 500,000 acres of Controversial lands managed by the US Forest Service near the margins of 7 National Forests.

The Drivers and Origins of Forest Bridges

Starting during and after World War II, federal forest land management expanded with increasing demand for lumber products and manufacturing infrastructure development. Counties benefitted from a share of harvest receipts from the 1940's to the 1990's, a period of significant prosperity in western Oregon counties. A principal driver was the O&C Act of 1937, which recognized the relationship between the counties and these once-private lands of western Oregon.

Significant changes in forest management have occurred over the years. For private forest lands in western Oregon, The Oregon Forest Practices Act that addressed intensive management of privately held forest lands in Oregon became law in 1971. In 1987, Oregon's smoke management rules took effect, driven by the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act. These rules significantly impacted forestry in general by changing the practices of burning on all western Oregon lands.

By the 1980's, our federal forests still experienced intensive agency multiple use with harvest levels 10 or more times higher than today. Significant numbers of people worked in the woods. That all changed on the federal lands starting in the 1990's when federal lands management was called into question. This

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN

“On April 2, 1993, President Clinton fulfilled a campaign promise by convening a forest conference in Portland, OR, to address the gridlock over management of the Federal forestlands of the Pacific Northwest and the resulting effects on communities and the regional economy. Many interests and ideas were heard by the President, Vice President Gore, numerous Cabinet Members and other Presidential advisors. At the close of the conference, the President committed to preparing a plan within 60 days to address the problems. . . . The proposal released by the White House on July 1, 1993: The Forest Plan for a Sustainable Economy and a Sustainable Environment. . . . [is] composed of three major pieces; forest management, economic development and agency coordination.”

- Taken from *Document 55: A Summary of Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, 1993, Center for the study of the Pacific Northwest, University of Washington.*

was driven by both the Endangered Species Act, which targeted management and designation of critical habitat aimed at individual threatened or endangered species, and the public input approaches of the National Environmental Policy Act. The latter diminished the role of professionals and increased the role of the public and the courts. While all of these are important, we reap the implications of a system now out of balance in the opinion of the Forest Bridges collaborators. In 1990, the spotted owl was listed as threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1992, the marbled murrelet was listed as threatened.

For the federal lands of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), this was the beginning of dramatic protracted transformations in forest, timber and habitat management; the forest economy and county revenues; and increased wildfire amplified by a warming climate. (See box at left for a brief NWFP background statement.) Through a

combination of the NWFP and legal opinions after new forest plans were drawn up, federal forest management largely stopped in western Oregon. This led to a dramatic protracted transformation of how westside Pacific Northwest forests are managed, including the O&C lands. Management at this time could be described as inactivity. In the case of the O&C lands, this inactivity has had major unintended consequences including a major effect on western Oregon communities because of the strong connection between O&C harvest receipts from these once-private lands and the western Oregon counties. Solutions were needed.

By the year 2000, after years of declining agency revenues, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act to help stabilize the funds available to rural counties. Payments are divided into three distinct categories, or Titles: Title I for roads and schools, Title II for projects on Federal lands, and Title III for county projects. It was recognized that the Secure Rural Schools Act could not continue forever. At the time, Senators Wyden and Merkley, and Congressmen DeFazio, Walden and Schrader were leaders in the US Senate and House on natural resources issues,. From 2011 – 2013, each proposed legislation to fix the problem related to O&C lands management. The development of each piece of legislation was led by different individuals, not collaboratives. In the end, both legislative proposals had strong factions of public opposition and did not become law.

Around that time, in the Roseburg area, Penny Tannlund, a newly retired resident of Douglas County moved to the Glide area and began holding “Soups On” social gatherings of friends and acquaintances, which brought together in an informal setting people of all different viewpoints to meet and socialize. That is where Rick Sohn, Karl Konecny, and Jim Ratzlaff became acquainted among many other people of diverse viewpoints on how to manage forests.

Jim Ratzlaff and Karl Konecny were environmental activists whose backgrounds included strong ties to Pacific Rivers Council, the North Umpqua Foundation, Wild Salmon Center, Umpqua Forestry Coalition and numerous other affiliations (see bios below for more information). Jim was also an accomplished attorney, and Karl an accomplished engineer. Rick Sohn retired as CEO from Lone Rock Resources Company. As a specialist in forest ecology and silviculture, his career that included activism in pro-industry affairs (e.g., Oregon Forest Industries Council, Oregonians for Food and Shelter). His extended family’s manufacturing business, Sun Studs, Inc., manufactured stud and veneer commodities using innovative computer and sensor-driven technology until its sale in 2001. Lone Rock Timber Co. (now Lone Rock Resources) managed and continues to manage private forest lands. The manufacturing side of the business depended in large part not only on private lands but on the Federal timber sale program for the supply of logs.

At one of the Soups On events in 2014, Rick asked Jim Ratzlaff if he could support management of the Umpqua National Forest on a 400-year rotation. And Jim’s response, to Rick’s surprise, was yes, of course. Karl Konecny, at that time, had written a thoughtful op ed in the News Review. Rick approached Karl and Jim and asked them if they would be interested in looking for common ground in forest management, in a collaborative format. If it had not been for these Soups On gatherings, Jim, Karl, and Rick would not have met and had the opportunity for the seeds of formation of Forest Bridges to develop.

The three gentlemen began to meet almost weekly for nearly two years and focused on things they could agree on. The Book “Old Growth in a New World” (2009, Tom Spies, Sally Duncan) provided a number of topics for discussion, and out of these discussions and early analytical work emerged a set of Principles of Agreement that each of them could embrace. At the same time, modeling spreadsheets for forest harvests (in moist O&C forests) were developed initially by Chris Cadwell (who had recently retired from the State Office BLM as a senior forest management analyst) and refined by Karl Konecny. The now outdated 2006 information was received through a Freedom of Information Act request from the BLM. Since nearly 20 years of management and major fires have occurred since this information was provided, the utility of the modeling at this time is of limited reliability for outputs but serves well to illustrate important general forest management goals and principles for management of the O&C Lands.

Importantly, all three, along with others who joined later, were interested in working together collaboratively, to bridge the historical divides and develop sustainable forests and habitats for all the native biological species of the forest. In 2015, there was no other known collaborative focused on the western Oregon O&C lands managed by the BLM. As Forest Bridges has developed we are currently the only collaborative at this scale, focused on the policy of the O&C Lands throughout western Oregon. [See next page for more on Forest Bridges' perspective: "Consensus through Collaboration as the Way Forward on the O&C Lands."]

In the years that followed, the collaborative took its initial Principles of Agreement on the road and began meeting with various interests, in aligned groups (e.g., conservation or timber, but not together). Ironically, each group said they were comfortable with the Principles, recognizing that the "devil would be in the details," but each group also insisted that the other side would not agree with these Principles.

The O&C Lands present a special case of federal forest management, driven by the O&C Act of 1937, which recognizes the historic private ownership of these lands and their ties to the counties where they are located. Further, Forest Bridges seeks to partner with recognized Tribes whose homelands overlap these lands in western Oregon. Federal land management is also guided by the National Forest Management Act (applies to US Forest Service lands, managed by the US Department of Agriculture), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act that guides BLM lands (managed through the US Department of the Interior). In addition, the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and other laws guide the management of the O&C forest lands of western Oregon.

A Personal View from Rick Sohn:

"I saw Forest Bridges as a chance to give back after seeing the benefits of public timber in Western Oregon. As co-founders, Jim, Karl and I saw a vacuum of truly diversely developed, collaboratively driven policy around a goal of forest management. This was the opportunity that the O&C lands provided because timber harvest was fundamental to the O&C Act. Starting with a purpose was key to the collaboration. Then testing the ideas with others, finding receptivity, and putting our commonly held views on paper, became formalized as Principles of Agreement."

CONSENSUS THROUGH COLLABORATION AS THE WAY FORWARD ON THE O&C LANDS

The practice of “collaboration” in Northwest forestry is viewed in some circles as having a checkered past. It has been interpreted as a win-lose process where the outcomes hurt some collaborators while promoting the interests of others. Forest Bridges operates differently with a purposeful grassroots win-win consensus approach, grounded in our Principles of Agreement to achieve “wins” for all interests and partners.

Forest Bridges rests on consensus through collaboration: a place and process where divergent and diverse viewpoints can come together safely, where those interested in working together and developing a way forward in active conservation can come together through meeting, deliberation, sharing, and consensus agreement. Each of us listen and speak only for ourselves in a trusting environment. The Forest Bridges bridge is there for participants to promote the views they believe in, and a large majority of people can support. Our efforts are guided by the experience of forest professionals, scientists, and partnerships with Indigenous Tribes who have shared their knowledge and lived with our forests over the millennia.

Any two of us can agree on something. Forest Bridges provides a place for people to find those points of agreement and build on them. What are they? This collaboration begins with trust, but in the future will depend on verification of outcomes and adaptations -- adaptive management -- based on monitoring and further results. In short: trust, verify and adapt. There will be those who support our principles. There will be others who support principles that do not align with Forest Bridges. Seek the alignments, build understanding and respect. Recognize the various sets of principles underlying different viewpoints of principles apart from Forest Bridges. Understand that we can only address our set of Principles of Agreement and ideas that come from them. When we start with diverse viewpoints and refine them over the years, experience shows that a broad base of people can and do support the Forest Bridges Principles of Agreement as a win-win proposition.

PART III: KEY PEOPLE WHO SHAPED FOREST BRIDGES

Over the years, the Forest Bridges Board has changed, but the constant is to retain a diversity of views and backgrounds on the Board and staff. While the existing Board makes the final decisions, the work of past Boards is honored and all have had a hand in shaping the Principles of Agreement, writings about policy in papers and agency input, and content of the website. The website, Forestbridges.org offers a complete, transparent repository for our work. More recently and through Covid, the format changed from intense frequent meetings to staff work with review by the Forest Bridges Council of Advisors and Independent Scientific and Ecocultural/Tribal experts, with final review and deliberation by the Board of Directors. All work products are published/submitted/completed through consensus of the Board. While the Council of Advisors and Scientific and Ecocultural experts contribute, it is the Board who sets the final direction and collaboration around Forest Bridges policies.

The following pages include the backgrounds of our co-founders and all former Board Members.

Co-Founders

Jim Ratzlaff (1936-2018, *In Memoriam*) attended the University of Kansas on a Navy scholarship and earned a bachelor's degree in petroleum geology. He proudly served as an officer in the Marine Corps and attended George Washington University Law School at night, earning his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree and becoming a member of the Virginia Bar. After working for the National Association of Securities Dealers in Washington, DC, Jim was hired by Capital Research and Management Company in Los Angeles, a specialist in private equity, real estate and entrepreneurial startups, where he worked as an attorney for 35 years until retirement.



Jim's love of nature and fly fishing led him to Roseburg, Oregon, where in 1989 he and his wife, Jane, bought property, built a home and operated a cattle/sheep ranch, a vineyard, and planted a hazelnut orchard on the banks of the North Umpqua River. His passion became philanthropy, particularly protecting the environment and helping those less fortunate in the communities where he lived. He served long tenures in Board leadership of Pacific Rivers, was a founding member of the Wild Salmon Center and an active supporter of Sustainable Northwest, the North Umpqua Foundation and other similar groups.

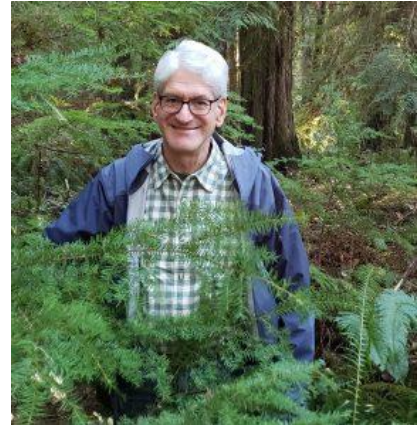
A hungry reader and lifelong learner, Jim was also an avid golfer and fly fisher (he had a beautiful Spey cast), a skilled pilot, an excellent winemaker (though he would never admit it), a fledgling hazelnut and truffle farmer, and a grand fan of the cocktail hour. Jim enthusiastically engaged in the early years of Forest Bridges. He was a skilled writer who could express ideas efficiently, and provided excellent syntheses of Forest Bridges early versions of the Principles of Agreement.



Karl Konecny grew up in the Tillamook forest, camping and fly fishing the abundant streams. He moved to the Glide area and lives on the beautiful North Umpqua River. Karl graduated from Harvey Mudd College and Stanford with MS degrees in engineering. His company, Northwest Motion Products, designs and builds underwater independent sensory machines (drones) for the U.S. government. Karl has been an active chair and board member of several organizations over the past 30 years, including Pacific Rivers, Steamboaters, North Umpqua Foundation, Umpqua Forestry Coalition, and others. Karl offered an informed conservation perspective to Forest Bridges discussions of forest management and the development of the Principles of Agreement. He further helped develop the preliminary models of forest management and shared his deep understanding of important conservation practices.

Rick Sohn, Co-Founder, Former Acting Executive Director, and Former Secretary (Still Active as a Board Member)

Rick holds a BA in Biology, an MS in Tree Physiology, and a PhD in Forest Pathology and Mycorrhizae, with a minor in soils. Rick is a Roseburg native, with a strong passion for the forests of the northwestern United States, and he trained and worked in the fields of reforestation, silviculture and forest biology for over five decades. He retired as CEO of Lone Rock Resources Company in 2008.



He has served and often chaired the boards of various organizations including Oregonians for Food and Shelter, the Watershed Council of the Umpqua Basin, Oregon Forest Industry Council, Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, Western Resources Legal Center and the Douglas County Museum Foundation.

Rick initiated the Forest Bridges concept by inviting the collaborators together in 2015. He envisions that through this process, O&C and other BLM forests can be managed in a more holistic, viable manner, ensuring that they will continue to thrive for generations to come. Rick and his wife Jacky live in Roseburg, raised three children, and now have four grandchildren.

Former Board Members



Paul Beck served on the Forest Bridges Board from 2017-2021, including Chair of the Board. He is proud to be a fourth-generation member of a family that depended on the forests of Oregon for livelihood, recreation and personal renewal.

Paul loves the public lands and landscape of southwest Oregon. He spent most of his career as a procurement forester and timber manager of a small family-owned Douglas County sawmill. Paul has

extensive experience with appraisal, bidding and operating timber sales. He has served as board member and chairman of numerous timber and forest associations, as well as the board chair of the Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby, a non-profit devoted to stream enhancement projects within the Umpqua River system.

Paul resigned from the Forest Bridges Board and retired from Mountain Western Log Scaling and Grading Bureau in Roseburg, Oregon, in August 2021. He was a member of the Elliott State Research Forest Advisory Committee before its decommissioning in 2023.

Arielle Reid served on Forest Bridges Board from June 2020 to September 2021. Arielle is honored to continue her board tenure in her new position as Researcher for the British Columbia Federation of Students (BCFS). Before joining the BCFS, she had the pleasure of living in Douglas County and working to serve the communities of Southwestern Oregon for five years. Arielle brought her broad world view to the Forest Bridges Board. As Forest Bridges communicated with the broader public, this perspective was very useful.



Arielle is multilingual and holds a Master of Arts in Political Science from the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, as well as a Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia. As a Peace Corps Volunteer from 2013-2015, she organized trainings for over 100 community health workers in the rural district of Monapo, Mozambique. While interning with the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, she conducted research on human rights issues in Hungary and Central Europe from 2008 to 2010. Arielle is active in the fields

of human rights advocacy and grassroots mobilization. She is passionate about bringing community organizations together for greater collective impact. She consistently looks for opportunities to foster community resiliency throughout Southwestern Oregon, and beyond. When Arielle joined the Board she brought issues of comfort and safety in the woods to Forest Bridges' attention, as well as lessons in access and the role of power, how it is wielded and how it impacts people.

Caroline Randall was voted onto the Board in July 2020 and served until April 2021. Caroline is a fifth generation Oregonian who counts among her friends people in the timber industry and in the conservation community. She served on the Board while she was the Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer at Neighborworks Umpqua.



She holds a Master's degree in education from Portland State University. She has years of experience in the nonprofit and educational sectors, with an emphasis on social justice activism. Prior to joining Neighborworks Umpqua, Randall was the Finance and Operations Coordinator for the Rural Organizing Project. From 2012 to 2017, Randall served in the Student Support Services Program at Umpqua Community College in various capacities, including Director of TRIO. As an advisor, project manager and grant writer, she was integral in securing largescale funds to benefit students, including those in underserved populations.

Caroline is an active volunteer in the community and is passionate about preserving our local environment as well as helping the rising generation. She is a member of Umpqua Watersheds and is a career mentor for rural and first-generation college students. In 2011, she received the Umpqua Community College Leadership Award. Randall believes in strengthening underrepresented communities and is a strong proponent of the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in all facets and industries.

Caroline’s changing job responsibilities prohibited her from continuing on the Board. While on the Board she brought a greater appreciation of the labor issues in the forest, as well as deep experience in DEI work. She led Forest Bridges early DEI training sessions, played a role in grantwriting and focused the board on messages in Bob Heilman’s book, “Overstory Zero.”

Dean Finnerty, former Vice Chair



Dean Finnerty, served on the Forest Bridges Board from 2019- until 2022. Dean is the NW Director of the Sportsmen’s Conservation Project and Wild Steelhead Initiative manager for Trout Unlimited. He’s been working as a national staff member for Trout Unlimited for the past five years. During his tenure with TU, Dean was responsible for working on a previous O&C lands bill in Congress as well as the most recent management plan from the BLM for the O&C Lands.

Dean believes that, if properly managed, the 2.5 million acres of O&C lands have the potential of providing not only a reliable source of timber for industry and western Oregon counties, but also provide some of the best public lands for hunting and fishing opportunities for sportsmen anywhere in the northwest.

Dean is a passionate outdoorsman and has been a licensed Oregon fishing and hunting guide for the past two decades. He also served for 26 years in law enforcement, including 8 years as an undercover narcotics detective during the heat of the drug wars in the 1980’s and 1990’s as well as a patrol shift supervisor for 14 years.

He lives with his wife Jennifer near Scottsburg on the Umpqua River. He has five sons and spends as much time as possible hunting and fishing with them and many others. Dean brought conservation and recreation perspectives to the Board of Forest Bridges as a representative of Trout Unlimited. His time in law enforcement provided insightful perspective on public safety capacity.

Tim Vredenburg, former Board of Directors member

Tim served on the Board of Forest Bridges from 2016- December 2021. He is also from the Roseburg area. He graduated from Georgetown College with a B.S. degree in Environmental Science. He went to graduate school at Oregon State where his area of emphasis was wildlife management and silviculture.

In 2000 he joined Biological Information Specialists as a wildlife specialist becoming president of the Company in 2004. Through B.I.S, Inc., Tim has planned, coordinated, conducted, and offered quality control for a variety of aspects of biological assessments, including, but not limited to Coho Salmon, Eulachon, Green Sturgeon, Southern Oregon Coho Salmon, Lower and Middle Columbia Steelhead, Spotted owl, Marbled Murrelet, and Bald Eagle. He has consulted with state, federal, private, and tribal landowners



on issues involving threatened, endangered, and special status species, and advises landowners on management related activities. He has conducted ESA section 7 consultation on projects ranging in scale from small bridge replacements and local timber sales to large scale developments on the Columbia River. Tim has consulted on ESA "Take-Avoidance" strategies and planning related to timber harvest with various private timber landowners.

From 2006 to 2012, as a Director of Land, Resources and Environmental Services, he represented tribal interests on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service Level 1 teams. He served as a member of the Governor's Federal Forest Advisory Committee and continues working on the Federal Forest Advisory Ad hoc Workgroup. During the development of the BLM's Western Oregon Plan Revision, he worked with the Cooperator's Work Group and was the only "non-federal" member of the BLM State Director's steering committee. In the fall of 2012, he went to work for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians as their Director of Forest Management. In his current capacity he is working to develop and expand the timber land base that will provide for the cultural and economic well-being for many generations to come. He manages the tribe's forest management program and is an active participant in the Cow Creek Tribe's work on forest policy. He currently lives west of Roseburg with his wife, Darcy. They have three children, Owen, Emma and Asher.

Tim contributed valuable perspective as a tribal forest manager and representative of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians. Tim also contributed from his wildlife biologist perspective from experience in critical habitat designation, consultation and other policy level perspectives on the Endangered Species Act. Tim continues as a local liaison for Forest Bridges to the Cow Creek Tribe.

NOTE: To learn about our Current Board Members, Council of Advisors, Independent Scientists and Ecocultural Reviewers and staff, please [CLICK HERE](#).