

Collaborative Stewardship Starter & Builder Kit

Examples: Values and Core Tenets from Stewardship-Based Partnerships

The following provides definitions of terms used for partnership vision, mission, values, purpose, etc. followed by examples of these from four different landscape stewardship partnerships within California.

Terms

Vision: Vision statements illustrate what the partnership is seeking to achieve in the future and what the future end state (end game) looks like. These are often bold and inspiring.

Mission: Mission statements highlight what the partnership is currently doing to achieve its vision and for whom. It should capture the heart of the partnership's work and who it is benefiting.

Values: Values provide a foundation for the ways we behave, how we show up, how we do our work, and, importantly, how we make decisions. They should be actionable and represent who we are when we are at our natural best.

Why Statement: Why statements for partnership-based work help clearly identify purpose, provide a sense of shared understanding, underlying motivation, and emotional connection. The why statement also focuses the partnership on its added value, and helps participants make decisions, set priorities, and allocate resources.

Niche: Niche descriptions help center a partnership's value proposition, and coupled with the why statement, help clearly identify purpose and provide a sense of shared understanding and collective direction. Clearly articulating a partnership's niche can help participants describe both the intangible and quantifiable benefits of their shared work.

Purpose: A partnership's purpose pinpoints why the partnership is doing its shared work, specific to the niche it fills.

Focal Areas: Focal areas help prioritize the partnership's work and form the basis for how it will achieve its purpose and how it might structure itself (e.g., working groups, governance structure, etc.).

Guiding Principles: A guiding principle is an action-oriented expression of a core value. While a value is a fundamental belief of the partnership, a guiding principle is a standard for behavior in achieving the partnership's work.

Core Tenets: A core tenet is a principle or belief that guides and shapes a partnership's plans, actions, or policies.

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Golden Gate Biosphere Network

Vision: We envision a healthy biosphere where both people and nature prosper.

Mission: To collaboratively steward our shared land and seascapes, support the sustainable development of our communities, and facilitate knowledge sharing at the regional, national, and international scales.

Why Statement: We take action together because we share a desire to collaborate at large scales for greater impact and more durable outcomes, and because we believe that more diverse hearts, hands, and minds are needed to create a resilient bioregion.

Values:

Relationships: We prioritize and tend to our relationships. We care about and respect each other.

[Is the work strengthening our relationships? Is it building trust? Is it collaborative? Does it bring joy? Are we affording one another the grace that this work demands?]

Multiple-Benefit Results: We seek solutions and results that benefit local communities and economies, improve ecological function, increase biodiversity and equity, and address climate stressors.

[Does the work achieve multiple goals simultaneously? Is the work inclusive? Are we approaching it with humility? Are we acknowledging that there are many ways of knowing? Have we considered who benefits and who is harmed?]

Creativity: We find creative ways to meet our mission and vision. We look at problems from different perspectives.

[Are we stretching ourselves and moving outside of our comfort zones? Have we included diverse world views and lived experiences in decision-making?]

Niche: The GGBN employs a collaborative landscape stewardship approach within a defined geography, and we are connected to an iconic international program, the GGBN offers unique value in the areas below:

- Increasing the collaborative “capacity” and “infrastructure” needed to translate and fund GGBN regional vision into collective action.
- Facilitating emergent and scalable actions that accelerate integrated solutions to critical landscape, seascape, stewardship, and socio-economic challenges throughout the GGBN.
- Weaving individual voices into a sharper, stronger, and further-reaching shared voice in support of landscape stewardship at both a regional and national-scale.
- Connecting local partnerships and networks within the GGBN to exchange learnings and resources, plus amplify shared priorities.

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Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition

Vision: Vigorously growing and climate-resilient giant sequoias and their ecosystems are sustained through collective stewardship, traditional ecological practices, science, and public support.

Mission: To accelerate and sustain the protection, stewardship and long-term persistence of giant sequoias and their ecosystems for current and future generations.

Purpose: (1) To collectively identify, support and advance the highest priority stewardship and other needs throughout the giant sequoia range. (2) To accelerate giant sequoia forest stewardship at a landscape scale in response to a changing climate.

Core Tenets: a core set of science-based and traditional Indigenous knowledge and values surrounding the state of giant sequoia ecosystems, their threats, and basic strategies for mitigating these threats.

1. Giant Sequoias, and their mixed conifer ecosystems, are threatened from numerous stressors, including drought, beetle attack, and especially high-severity fire.
2. High severity fire in Sierra Nevada forests is caused by high accumulations of forest fuels coupled with severe droughts.
3. High accumulations of forest fuels are a result of two main conditions: 1) Unnaturally dense forests with heavy accumulations of dead and live forest fuels resulting from the suppression of naturally occurring wildfires over the past 130 years; and 2) High mixed conifer tree mortality in recent years from drought and increased bark beetle kill.
4. Climate change is causing droughts that are hotter, drier, and more frequent in the Sierra Nevada that causes extremely low fuel moistures in both live and dead vegetation.
5. Successful conservation of giant sequoia groves requires cohesive management action on a landscape scale, including research, education, and resource management action, to understand threats to giant sequoia ecosystems, gain public support, and mitigate threats.
6. Restoring natural cycles of low and moderate severity fire, through managed wildfire and prescribed fire treatments, when and where conditions allow, is needed to make forests more resilient to wildfires that threaten forest health and our mountain communities.
7. Controlled release of smoke into the atmosphere from prescribed fire and managed wildfire is preferable for minimizing unhealthy air quality conditions in the long term, as opposed to uncontrolled releases of smoke that occur during high intensity wildfires.
8. Restorative thinning, through mechanical reductions of fuels, is an acceptable alternate forest treatment to burns, or as an initial treatment to allow for the safe re-introduction of fire, especially given greater difficulties in recent times to safely burn more acres due to drought, non-natural accumulation of forest fuels, availability of firefighters, and other constraints.

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9. Monarch giant sequoias are irreplaceable in our lifetime, but it is our shared responsibility to facilitate giant sequoia regeneration and growth on suitable landscapes for the enjoyment of future generations. This includes reforestation of giant sequoia groves where high mortality density is too great for effective regeneration to occur naturally.
10. Implementing effective resource and fire management action on a large scale has been limited by a lack of funding and personnel, extensive administrative processes, and legal challenges. Efficiencies in environmental compliance and administrative approvals can be improved through coordinated actions of giant sequoia land managers.
11. Conservation of sequoia groves requires an integrated approach that acknowledges the health of the ecosystem and all its component parts, including soils, water, wildlife, and vegetation.

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California Landscape Stewardship Network

Vision: We envision a California where everyone sees and embraces their role in caring for and sustaining the landscapes that are vital to our collective well-being; where we seek deep understanding, effective and equitable systems, and bold collaboration; and where we think, plan, and act beyond our individual boundaries to work at a pace and scale that meets and even exceeds our most pressing challenges.

Mission: Accelerate the pace, scale and quality of collaborative cross-boundary stewardship practices and actions across California to increase ecological, community and economic health to keep pace with the impacts of climate change.

Values: The Network believes that collaborative stewardship is an essential and durable approach to effectively address California's complex social, environmental, and system-level issues in an inclusive and democratic way. By addressing systemic obstacles, increasing capacity, and funding, and fostering inclusive peer learning and exchange, we can increase the pace, scale, quality and durability of landscape stewardship.

Values/guiding principles include:

- **We Are All Connected** – We work beyond our individual boundaries and push on systemic barriers to create opportunities for deep collaboration and resource sharing that meet the multiple scales of the needs we must address together.
- **Listening, Understanding, and Adapting** – Given the rapid rate of change across natural and human systems, we value science, adaptability, cultural connection, and agility to respond to our ever-evolving understanding of land management and community needs—and actively seek to support and amplify the voices and leadership of BIPOC communities in this work.
- **Innovation, Invention, and Creative Problem Solving** – Embracing inspired problem-solving and innovative ways of thinking, we overcome institutional barriers, deepen our partnerships, reimagine our roles, and explore cutting-edge technologies and paradigms.
- **Environmental Health Equals Community Health** – Recognizing that human wellbeing and ecological health are intertwined, we work across geographical, jurisdictional, and social lines to holistically and collaboratively secure thriving landscapes and resilient ecosystems.
- **Sense of Place and Belonging** – We seek to understand the complex historical and emotional connections that bind individuals and communities with their environments, offering ways to help care for these places and listening to a diversity of communities and partners about how best to do that.
- **Inclusivity, Relevance, and Empowerment** – By encouraging diverse perspectives on common challenges, we strive to empower stakeholders from all backgrounds to actively engage in the movement and derive a shared sense of hope and belonging, listening deeply to

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historically marginalized voices so that we can build a more just stewardship movement together.

- **Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow** – While respecting and building on the efforts of those who came before us, we focus a keen eye on the future by crafting solutions that are smart, cost-effective, and sustainable for generations to come.

Niche: The statewide network focuses broadly on systems solutions and a collaborative landscape-scale approach rather than on a specific geography, stewardship practice or landscape restoration project, and has unique value to add in:

- Informing & shaping state-level discourse and systems to facilitate change, action, capacity-building and new thinking.
- Facilitating emergent & collaborative action to accelerate scalable solutions that address critical landscape stewardship challenges.

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One Tam

Vision: One Mountain, One Vision: Together, ensuring a vibrant and healthy future for Mt. Tam

Mission: One Tam is dedicated to transcending boundaries, inspiring deep connections, and mobilizing the skills and resources of our five partners and the community to steward and improve Mt. Tam's long-term health in response to a changing environment.

Values (We are...)

Collaborative: We are united across organizational and jurisdictional lines in a way that reflects the seamless nature of the mountain's landscapes, trails, waterways, plants, wildlife, and of the love of its supporters. Natural systems cross geographic, organizational, and social lines and what happens in one place affects others nearby. One Tam was founded in the ideals of working across boundaries and broadening partnerships to care for the mountain's long-term health and resiliency. As such, we actively collaborate and foster strong, healthy relationships with agency land managers, stakeholder and advocacy groups, the scientific community, natural resource managers, volunteers, schools, and youth.

Landscape Scale: Collaborative, landscape-scale land stewardship is the only way we will be able to meet the rapid pace and vast scope of the challenges before us. Our largest and most pressing collective challenges—such as climate change, invasive species, sudden oak death, and population pressures—are happening at a scale and a pace that demand that we apply our collective resources and experience to meet and even to exceed them. Sharing what we've learned with others in this field across the state is also essential to meet our collective needs. This way of working collaboratively on a landscape scale represents the future of land stewardship.

Community-Based and Inclusive: The support of a diverse range of passionate and dedicated community members is essential to protecting the mountain's long-term health. One Tam builds upon a long local conservation legacy of connecting the community to Mt. Tam's natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources to inspire stewardship, enjoyment, and appreciation of the mountain. People, and their connection to Mt. Tam, are key to the work we do now and also to the future of the mountain. Addressing our common challenges requires an inclusive approach that creates pathways for those with different backgrounds, perspectives, relationships to the land, stewardship practices, and resources to be a part of this work.

Action-Oriented and Adaptable: We innovate and apply best current practices to improve the health of Mt. Tam, and our methods and techniques are refined, reimagined, tested, and adapted as our understanding grows and evolves. We are dedicated to filling data gaps, scaling our work so that it benefits the broader landscape stewardship community, and sharing accessible and actionable results with others. One Tam staff are committed to innovative stewardship, community engagement, fundraising, and partnership practices that will help turn the dial toward a healthier and more resilient mountain. We apply these innovations to our on-the-groundwork to better understand and care for our resources and to connect with new audiences.

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Future-Focused: We recognize the shoulders upon which we stand while empowering a new generation to problem solve for today, and for the challenges that lie ahead. We recognize that inspiring the next generation of stewards is essential to sustaining a healthy and resilient mountain. Our approach is rooted in a fundamental responsibility to the future, while recognizing and appreciating the efforts and foresight of those who came before us. We work with an eye towards the long-term sustainability of our science, stewardship, communications, and fundraising efforts. Each time we engage in this practice, we reaffirm our commitment to healthy landscapes and communities, and in turn renew ourselves.

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PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES AND FACTORS FOR SUCCESS¹

Modified from One Tam & Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition

PARTNERSHIP CULTURE

- Cultivate a sense of belonging, joy, optimism, and inclusion; empower partners equitably.
- Maintain an environment of trust and honor commitments.
- Strive to achieve each partner's interests, while maintaining a collective vision.
- Seek and embrace diverse perspectives and equitable participation; accept the right to disagree; act on a consensus basis.
- Understand each partner's mission and culture, honor individual partner regulations & practices.
- Utilize the strengths of each partner; focus on "how do we get there" Vs "can I do this."
- Leave ego and control at the door.

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH & WORK

- Honor and integrate traditional practices and western science-based approaches.
- Pursue work at a landscape-scale.
- Balance bottom-up and top-down approaches.
- Sustain institutional leadership and capacities.
- Encourage flexibility and adaptability at all levels.
- Strive for increased efficiencies, collaborative solutions and celebrate successes.
- Ensure coordination and communication is transparent, consistent, meaningful, and "two-way."
- Seek neutral coordination capacities (Project Leader/Facilitator).
- Seek out and adopt best practices and sustained funding.
- Put mechanisms and agreements in place to re-enforce and strengthen the partnership.

¹ Adapted from: Brian O'Neill's 21 Partnership Success Factors; Ca. Parks Forward Initiative – Summary of Public Workshop Findings (11-14-13); Landscape Conservation: A Practitioners Guide (Low, 2003), One Tam First Four Years (Mickel & Goldberg, 2019), Pennsylvania Conservation Landscapes (2019) Collaborating for California (Wright, 2020), Interviews (2023)

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