

Headwaters Economics Welcomes New Executive Director

Founder Ray Rasker, Ph.D., Is Stepping Down After 15 Years.

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Bozeman, Montana.

Headwaters Economics announced today that Ray Rasker, Ph.D., is stepping down as Executive Director after 15 years at the helm. The Board of Directors has appointed Patricia Hernandez as Executive Director. She previously served as the organization's Associate Director. Rasker will stay on as Senior Advisor to work on special projects. Kelly Pohl, the organization's Communications and Policy Director, will become Associate Director.

Rasker cofounded Headwaters Economics in 2006 as an independent, nonprofit research group that works to improve community development and land management decisions. Since its inception, Headwaters Economics has grown from a staff of 3 to a staff of 11 with offices in both Bozeman and Helena, Montana. Its work has supported the designation of nearly 1.7 million acres into national monuments, helped provide data and resources for funding outdoor recreation and conservation programs and national and local levels, helped communities in 14 states build wildfire and flood resilience strategies, and provided hundreds of thousands of customized socioeconomic profiles for communities.

Rasker said, "Headwaters Economics has been my passion since we started in 2006, and in that time, I've had the privilege of working with many people to help develop solutions to some of the most urgent and important issues communities face. I am excited for the future of the organization and to support Patty during this transition."

Hernandez cofounded Headwaters Economics with Rasker and has been Associate Director since 2016. In recent years Hernandez has led the organization's work in climate adaptation and interactive data tool development, including the recent launch of the *Neighborhoods at Risk* and *Wildfire Risk to Communities* tools. Hernandez grew up near Miami, Florida and holds a Master's degree in Ecology.

"I am honored and excited to follow in Ray's footsteps and lead this incredible organization. The work we do has never been more important as communities wrestle with economic transitions in a rapidly changing world," Hernandez said.

Headwaters Economics conducts original economic research, builds data tools to provide customized socioeconomic dashboards and reports, and works directly with communities to address challenges like reducing risks from wildfire and flooding, managing energy transitions, and measuring the role of outdoor recreation and public lands in local economies.

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About Headwaters Economics

Headwaters Economics is an independent, nonprofit research group whose mission is to improve community development and land management decisions. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/>