

WildFly in a Vendor-Neutral Foundation

A stylized landscape illustration featuring a dark green background. In the foreground, there are several layers of jagged, mountain-like shapes in shades of blue and grey. On the left side, a rainbow with orange, red, and yellow bands is partially visible, appearing to rise behind the mountains.

About me



- ▶ Senior Principal Software Engineer @ Red Hat
- ▶ Joined JBoss, Inc in 2005; with Red Hat since 2006
- ▶ Previously I was a lead in the HA clustering, server and domain management and cloud areas
- ▶ WildFly project lead since 2019
- ▶ I'm also principal architect of Red Hat JBoss EAP

tl;dr;



- ▶ The WildFly project (formerly named JBoss AS) has been run under a single-corporation sponsorship model since 2001.
 - IP (trademarks and branding) owned by JBoss LLC, then JBoss Inc, then Red Hat, Inc.
 - Project governance controlled by the sponsor.
- ▶ We've been evaluating moving to a foundation since last year.
- ▶ I asked for community input earlier this year.
- ▶ This month we [applied to join Commonhaus](#).

Foundations 101



- ▶ The foundation acts as the fiscal sponsor for the project.
 - "**Fiscal sponsorship** refers to the practice of **non-profit organizations** offering their **legal** and **tax-exempt** status to groups—typically projects—engaged in activities related to the sponsoring organization's mission."^[1]
- ▶ Foundation owns project's trademarks, logos, domains etc.
- ▶ Foundation controls project governance.
 - What this means varies greatly between foundations.
- ▶ Foundation may provide services and infrastructure.
 - And may require that projects use what's offered.
- ▶ Foundation may bring its own form of community.

[1] Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Desired benefits



- ▶ Being in a vendor-neutral foundation may encourage more external contributions.
- ▶ Increased user comfort from vendor-neutrality.
- ▶ Opportunity to improve our governance and openness.
- ▶ Possible benefit from the "[open source steward](#)" language in the EU [Cyber Resilience Act](#).
 - CRE requirements are very difficult for an open source project absent a steward.

Background



- ▶ Foundation-based upstream projects for products is normal at Red Hat.
 - For example, the Linux kernel!
- ▶ Red Hat uses tons of projects in its offerings and prefers using things based on projects from vendor-neutral foundations.
 - So it's logical users of it's software may feel the same.
- ▶ Over the years a number of Red Hat sponsored enterprise Java projects have gone to foundations
 - Keycloak to CNCF, Drools and friends to Apache, ...

Acceleration



- ▶ A couple years ago Red Hat began encouraging sponsored projects to consider moving to foundations.
- ▶ In 2023, Red Hat Middleware's [Erin Schnabel](#) began working with others on the idea of a new "lighter weight" foundation.
 - This eventually led to the 2024 formation of [Commonhaus](#).
- ▶ This helped spark a general interest in Red Hat sponsored middleware projects in moving to a foundation.
 - Particularly Hibernate and Quarkus.
- ▶ So, the WildFly leadership team started considering it too.

Commonhaus



- ▶ Founded in 2024.
 - Erin Schnabel, Ken Finnigan, Cesar Saavedra
- ▶ Commonhaus guiding principles:
 - Honor project and community identity
 - Offer guidance and support instead of imposing mandates
 - Maintain transparency in all of our actions
 - Encourage long-term thinking for sustained project impact
- ▶ Prioritizes application frameworks and libraries that are critical for developers
- ▶ Supports self-governing, code-centric projects

Commonhaus projects



- ▶ Debezium
- ▶ EasyMock
- ▶ Feign
- ▶ Hibernate
- ▶ Infinispan
- ▶ Jackson
- ▶ JBang
- ▶ JReleaser
- ▶ Kroxylicious
- ▶ Morphia
- ▶ Objenesis
- ▶ Quarkus
- ▶ SDKMAN!
- ▶ SlateDB

Foundations we considered



- ▶ Apache
- ▶ Eclipse
- ▶ CNCF
- ▶ Linux Foundation (standalone)
- ▶ Fiscal Sponsorship Services
 - e.g. [Software in the Public Interest](#), [Software Freedom Collective](#) and [Open Source Collective](#)

Desired Characteristics



- ▶ WildFly is mature project with experienced maintainers. We value
 - Retaining our brand; avoiding project renames.
 - Retaining our existing code repositories.
 - Assistance with improving our governance, but not too many mandates about how we operate.
- ▶ We're generally satisfied with our infrastructure and want to avoid a forced migration.
- ▶ Avoiding blurred lines between us and standards bodies.
- ▶ Ideally, a good number of other projects in the Java space.
- ▶ Commonhaus is the best fit for these criteria.

What would move?



- ▶ What is "WildFly"?
 - It's a very large 'ecosystem'. Core server, tools, images, ancillary projects like feature packs, many component projects
- ▶ Almost certainly moving to the foundation:
 - Projects in the ['wildfly'](#) GitHub organization.
 - We'll move a few repos here from other organizations like 'jboss' and 'jbosscas'.
 - Most things in the ['wildfly-extras'](#) GitHub organization.
- ▶ We're having [discussions](#) about other projects that provide elements of WildFly.

What's next?



- ▶ See if Commonhaus is interested!
 - It's not a given!
- ▶ Rework our governance.
 - Current formal model: Red Hat appoints the lead, who is a "benevolent dictator".
 - How it really works is much more collaborative than that.
 - We need to codify, update and improve some of our informal practices.
 - We need a new mechanism for appointing leaders.
 - Keep an eye on the [wildfly-dev list](#) for discussions.
- ▶ Lots and lots of paperwork.
- ▶ This will certainly take time. We'll keep you informed!



Questions