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EPA on NPDES Permits

In a [notice](#) scheduled for publication in the Federal Register May 23, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will announce its intention to revise its regulations to clarify that National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits are not required for logging roads. EPA proposes to revise its Phase I stormwater regulations to state that discharges from logging roads are not “stormwater discharges associated with industrial activity,” a key finding in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion in *NEDC v. Brown*. (See AFRC’s [website](#) for a full history of the case.)

In the same notice, EPA invites public comment on the water quality impacts from forest road discharges, saying “EPA intends to study the water quality impacts of forest roads and existing federal, state, tribal, and voluntary programs designed to address them to determine if additional Agency action is necessary.” Essentially, there will be three opportunities for public comment. Comments will be due 30 days following the date of the Federal Register notice (approximately June 22) on the “notice of intent.” There will be another comment period once a proposed regulation is issued. Finally, EPA will hold “listening sessions” this summer.

Under the approach proposed by EPA, the federal agency would have substantially increased oversight of federal, state and tribal level best management practices (BMPs) and forest practices rules than was the case under the “silvicultural exemption” to the nonpoint source rules, a system that worked well for over 35 years prior to being overturned by the Ninth Circuit.

The timing on EPA’s notice is presumed to coincide with the May 25 deadline for the Solicitor General to submit his views to the Supreme Court on whether it should grant certiorari on *NEDC v. Brown* and to permit him to recommend against review by the Court because the Administration is acting to resolve the issue via rulemaking. It will also make it more difficult for Congressional proponents of maintaining the silvicultural exemption to obtain passage of the [Silvicultural Regulatory Consistency Act](#).

AFRC is not optimistic that EPA’s proposed solution to the issue will satisfy environmental opponents of logging. Unless Congress acts to codify the silvicultural exemption, we anticipate future litigation under the citizen’s suit provision of the Clean Water Act leading to gridlock, particularly on federal forest lands. /*Ann Forest Burns*

Congressional Hearing on Federal Forests

On May 21, the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held an oversight field hearing in Longview, Washington entitled “*Failed Federal Forest Policies: Endangering Jobs, Forests and Species.*” Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (R-WA) chaired the hearing. Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA), whose district includes Longview, joined him. The

hearing examined the impact and efficacy of the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) on local economies, forest health and the survival of the Northern Spotted Owl.

In his introduction, Chairman Hastings noted that under the NWFP, which has been in effect for 20 years, the health of the forests and the economic health of the communities have suffered, mills and jobs have been lost, and the spotted owl is experiencing drastic declines. He noted that the State of Washington trust forest lands produce seven times the revenue on one-quarter of the acreage of Forest Service lands in the state. He termed the draft Northern Spotted Owl Critical Habitat Designation (See, [AFRC Newsletter March 23, 2012](#)) a land grab based on faulty information from the 1990's that ignores economic impacts and the effects of the barred owl.

Representative Herrera Beutler noted that we have known for a long time the NWFP is not fulfilling its objectives. She lamented current flawed federal forest management policies and criticized the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS') concentration on a single species at the expense of others.

The Subcommittee heard from nine invited witnesses. Hastings noted that additional testimony can be submitted anytime before June 1.

Skamania County Commissioner Paul Pearce spoke about the economic plight of his county resulting from spotted owl listing. He said that there should be no more Wilderness designations without an accompanying solution to the overriding problems of management of the federal forests.

Dr. Hal Salwasser, speaking as a private citizen, talked about the dysfunctional nature of federal land management caused by conflicting federal laws. He said that the federal forest lands should to be managed on an ecological basis, rather than for the benefit of a single species.

Steve Mealey, speaking on behalf the Boone and Crockett Club, decried the failure of federal policies which result in management for a single species at the expense of other species, such as the black-tailed deer. He noted that NWFP policies like Survey and Manage have derailed two projects aimed at forest restoration on the Willamette National Forest.

Tom Nelson, Sierra Pacific Industries, urged that the FWS current critical habitat proposal be abandoned. He noted that a drastic reduction in federal timber harvests hasn't helped the owl, which has declined at 2.8 percent annually since 1995. He called the current proposal "doubling down on a risky proposal" which has had a severe, but never examined economic impact.

Also testifying were Tom Fox, Family Forest Foundation; Kent Connaughton, Region Six Regional Forester; Ernie Neimi, EcoNorthwest; Mitch Freidman, Conservation Northwest; and Kelly Krepps, Klickitat County rancher.

In closing, Representative Hastings asked each panel member to respond "yes or no" to the question, "Has the Northwest Forest Plan accomplished its objectives?" Pearce, Fox, Mealey, Krepps and Nelson gave a resounding "no." Salwasser qualified his response by saying some good has been accomplished, but overall it has not been a success; he was joined by Connaughton, Friedman and Neimi.

AFRC [agrees](#) with those testifying that current federal forest policies are failing our forests and our communities. We hope that the FWS will withdraw the draft northern spotted owl critical habitat designation until it can demonstrably show that barred owl populations can be controlled and that spotted owl populations will benefit from any habitat designated as critical. /*Ann Forest Burns*

SRS Reauthorization and Forestry Legislation

The debate on whether or not to extend payments to counties under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) has moved into negotiations over the surface transportation bill reauthorization (S. 1813). An amendment was attached to the bill in the Senate that would reauthorize the SRS payments for one year at 95% of the 2011 payments and provide one additional year of full funding for Payment in lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. The House opted for passing a 90-day extension of the existing transportation bill to conference with the Senate bill however, the House bill did not include the one-year extension of county payments.

Currently there are 47 bipartisan conferees (33 from the House and 14 from the Senate) negotiating a possible transportation bill before the current extension expires June 30. Besides the SRS extension, other key provisions include passage of the Keystone XL Canada-to-U.S. oil pipeline, a provision to prevent EPA from regulating coal ash as a hazardous substance, and House-passed language that would speed environmental reviews of new construction projects.

On May 8, Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) along with 15 other House Republican members, many of which represent federally forested communities, sent a letter to the all of the Republican House conferees asking that they retain the one-year extension of the SRS and PILT payments that was included in the Senate bill. The letter also stated that “we agree that the status quo in our national forests doesn’t work and won’t work going forward. That is why we continue to work with leaders in the House Natural Resources Committee on a meaningful long-term solution that transitions these counties back to the resource-based economies that provided jobs in our forests and mills, and the self-reliance these communities had before Uncle Sam locked up most of the resources and land around them.” On May 10, Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) spearheaded another letter to Senate conferees with 26 other Republican and Democrat Senators supporting the inclusion of the SRS and PILT extension. That letter did not include any references to forest management or the original purpose of the SRS program.

Currently the two efforts that would restore active management on national forests nationwide and the O&C BLM lands in Oregon remain stalled in the House. H.R. 4019, The County, Schools, and Revenue Trust for National Forest System Land sponsored by Representative Doc Hastings (R-WA) has been passed in the House Natural Resources Committee, but has not been taken up by the full House. The O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act discussion draft sponsored by Representatives Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Greg Walden and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) has not yet been included in H.R. 4019 and has not received a hearing in Committee. At this point, it appears that groundhog’s day may be here again with politicians in both parties poised to extend this program while avoiding solutions to the underlying problem. /*Tom Partin*

2013 Interior Appropriations

Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID), Chairman of the House Appropriation Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, recently stated that he does not see his committee's spending bill being taken up by the full House before summer due to the limited amount of floor time left on the calendar before the August recess. Instead, some of the less controversial spending bills will be taken up. This will likely mean that the bill will be negotiated directly with Senate appropriators as part of a final fiscal year 2013 spending package after the November election. To date, only one bill (the Commerce, Justice and Science bill) has been passed.

Simpson has also stated that the funding levels in his subcommittee bill will likely be well below the amounts enacted for Fiscal Year 2012. Under the budget adopted by the House earlier this year, the 2013 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill must be at least \$1.2 billion below 2012 levels; however, Simpson outlined his beliefs that the cuts could be closer to \$2.0 billion because of the need to cover spending elsewhere. The Senate, which is holding closer to numbers adopted as part of last year's debt deal, would provide as much as \$400 million more for the Interior bill compared with FY12 levels. Only time will tell which approach will win and we will be working hard to keep the Forest Service and BLM forest management budgets intact. / *Tom Partin*

DNR Murrelet Interim Strategy

At its May 1 meeting, the Washington State Board of Natural Resources adopted a minor amendment to the State Lands Habitat Conservation Plan. The amendment modifies how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages in the vicinity of marbled murrelet occupied stands in southwest Washington.

The revision to the interim strategy responds to a June 7, 2011 letter from the FWS expressing concern over the continued delays in devising a long-term conservation strategy for murrelets as required by the HCP which was adopted in 1997.

In a unanimous vote, the Board notified FWS that, pending adoption of the long-term strategy, expected in late 2013, DNR will shift timber harvest to areas outside marbled murrelet management areas, conduct only thinning sales within a half mile of occupied sites, buffer marbled murrelet habitat with 165 foot no-entry zones, and select leave trees in stand replacement sales to favor the marbled murrelet.

The Board's action gives clear direction which will allow DNR to proceed with timber sales in southwest Washington under terms agreed to by the FWS. / *Jacob Groves*

DNR Murrelet Long Term Strategy

AFRC staff and member representatives attended each of the four meetings held between April 30 and May 9 by DNR and FWS which began the initial scoping phase for the long-term conservation strategy for the marbled murrelet. (See, [AFRC April 20 newsletter](#).) AFRC submitted written [comments](#) on May 21.

DNR will now compile the information received and begin the process of formulating alternative proposals for the long-term strategy. A second public scoping phase is expected this fall. More detailed information on the process can be found on [DNR's marbled murrelet website](#). / *Ann Forest Burns*

Another Thinning Project Challenged

Environmental groups profess to support thinning projects as opposed to regeneration harvest under the Northwest Forest Plan. However, since the Forest Service and BLM have essentially abandoned the use of regeneration harvests, increasingly the only timber sales that remain to be litigated are thinning projects. Thinning sales that have already been challenged include the North Fork Overlook Sale on the BLM Salem District (*Cascadia Wildlands v. BLM*), the Beaverslide Sale on the Six Rivers National Forest (*Conservation Congress v. Finley*), and the Mudflow Sale on the Shasta Trinity National Forest (*Conservation Congress v. Forest Service*).

Most recently the Goose Project on the Willamette National Forest, a 38 million board foot sale, has been challenged (*Cascadia Wildlands v. Forest Service*). The Forest Service explains that the Goose Project is a multi-purpose project intended to reduce fire risk adjacent to the community of McKenzie Bridge, provide timber and family-wage jobs for Oregonians, and improve wildlife forage for deer, elk and other species.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/willamette/landmanagement/resourcemanagement/?cid=stelprdb5121962>.

The plaintiffs, Cascadia Wildlands and Oregon Wild argue that the Forest Service violated NEPA when it failed to prepare an EIS for the timber sale. Specifically, they argue that the EA failed to disclose any information about barred owls, information on barred owl - spotted owl interactions, and how thinning will allegedly increase the risk to spotted owls from barred owls. They also argue that thinning in dense riparian reserves to produce large trees is unnecessary and there is no information supporting the decision to thin in riparian reserves. They also argue that pools can be created in riparian reserves by five and six inch trees and that large trees do not have to be grown within the reserves. Plaintiffs are seeking to recover their attorney fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act.

Injunction Sought on Mudflow Project

A motion for preliminary injunction has been filed on the Mudflow Project which is located in the McCloud Flats area of Shasta-Trinity National Forest. (*Conservation Congress v. Forest Service*). The Project is designed to reduce the risk of wildfire, reduce the spread of root rot, and improve habitat for the northern spotted owl while producing about 15 million board feet of timber.

The plaintiffs claim that the FWS, which reinitiated consultation, should have used the 2012 draft critical habitat rule; however it has not yet been finalized. They also argue that the Mudflow Project does not conform to the spotted owl recovery plan despite its design to protect and restore spotted owl suitable habitat. Another claim is that there will be adverse modification of critical habitat from repetitive timber sale projects, even if designed to benefit the owl over the long-term. However, the Ninth Circuit has held that adverse modification of critical habitat occurs only when there is a direct or indirect alteration that *appreciably diminishes* the value of critical habitat to either the survival or recovery of a species.

Defendants argue that the Mudflow Project does not adversely modify critical habitat because there will be no entry into nesting and roosting habitat and the harvest in foraging habitat will retain foraging habitat attributes following harvest.

A hearing was held on May 21 before Judge Karlton in Sacramento on the motion for injunction. The Forest Service and intervenor Sierra Pacific Industries highlighted the fact that no spotted owls have nested in the Project area *since 1992* so plaintiff cannot demonstrate a likelihood of irreparable harm. Judge Karlton stated that point should have been emphasized even more strongly and suggested that maybe the Project area should not even be critical habitat anymore (coincidentally, the 2012 draft critical habitat rule would remove the Project area from critical habitat). Judge Karlton also acknowledged the deference owed to expert agencies in cases like Mudflow that involve a high degree of scientific and technical knowledge. However, he did note that the FWS characterized thinning the habitat as “degradation” and took the motion under advisement. /*Scott Horngren*

Stewardship Contract Reauthorization

On April 26, the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee passed by a vote of 16-5 the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012 (Farm bill) out of the Committee and sent it to the full Senate for consideration. Included in the bill by Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) was a permanent reauthorization authority for stewardship contracting. Prior to the vote, over 90 organizations had signed and delivered a letter to the Committee asking for the permanent reauthorization.

On a parallel path on the House side, Representatives Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) have introduced H.R. 4396 which would extend stewardship contracting authority for 10 years, while amending the purposes of the program to include “restoration work, fire fuels reduction, and clearing overgrowth on snowpack watersheds.” It remains to be seen whether any Congressional Committee will conduct a meaningful review of the stewardship contracting authority to see if any changes might be needed before making it permanent.

It is unclear which path may be taken to get the stewardship contracting authority, which expires in 2013, reauthorized. There are no guarantees that the Farm bill will be passed by either the full Senate and or House, and it’s not certain how much traction the House bill will get. What is certain is the stewardship authority has been widely used by the Forest Service and will likely get extended in one form or another. /*Tom Partin*

BLM Planning

On April 30, the BLM [announced](#) a series of public meetings as part of the reinitiation of resource management planning for western Oregon. Meetings have already taken place in Medford and Grants Pass. Future meetings will be:

Klamath Falls: Shilo Inn, May 23, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Salem: BLM District Office, May 24, 4:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Springfield: Public Library, May 29, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Coos Bay: Public Library, May 30, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Roseburg: BLM District Office, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Portland: 333 SW First Ave., 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

The BLM “would like to brainstorm with everyone in western Oregon about the direction these plans should take, the issues that the plans should address and the geographic scope that is most appropriate for these plans.”

These plans will replace the Western Oregon Plan Revisions which were completed in 2008 at the cost tens of millions of dollars after five years of work by the agency and thousands of hours of public participation and input. Those plans have never been fully implemented. Since the only deficiency identified by the Obama Administration, which attempted to abandon the 2008 Plans shortly after coming into office, has been the lack of formal consultation under the Endangered Species Act, AFRC suggests that the agencies proceed with consultation and full implementation of the 2008 plans, rather than undertaking a costly new process which will divert personnel from duties mandated by the O&C Act.

The deadline for comments is July 5. Following the end of the comment period, BLM will “formulate alternatives.” The planning process is expected to be completed in September, 2015, nearly seven years after the rejection of the 2008 plans.

Further information is available at <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/> /*Ann Forest Burns*

Owl Comment Period Extended

On May 8, the FWS [announced](#) it is extending the public comment period on the proposed Spotted Owl Critical Habitat (See, [AFRC Newsletter March 23, 2012](#)) to July 6. It also announced a series of public meetings and a public hearing:

Redding, CA: Monday, June 4
3:00 - 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Redding Convention Center, 700 Auditorium Drive

Tacoma, WA: Tuesday, June 12
3:00 - 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
University of Washington Tacoma Campus, 1900 Commerce St, Jane Russell Commons

Portland, OR, Wednesday, June 20
Meeting: 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Public hearing: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Oregon Convention Center, Room C-120, 777 NE Martin Luther King Blvd.

The original 90-day comment period has been extended to run concurrently with the 30-day public comment period on an economic analysis and environmental assessment expected to be published in the Federal Register in late May. Documents for review and other information is available at <http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/>

A [critique of the modeling method](#) used by FWS in coming up with the proposed rule, which would double the acreage under designation, is available on AFRC’s website.

The final critical habitat designation is expected to be completed by November 15. /*Ann Forest Burns*

FS Issues Interim Directives

The Forest Service Washington Office has issued two interim directives regarding Minimum Rates and direction on Appraisal Points.

ID 2430-2012-1 updates direction on Minimum Rates to clarify that Minimum Rates can be increased to the amount of essential reforestation costs. This appears to be simply re-stating existing direction from elsewhere in the FS directives.

ID 2409.18-2012-1 updates direction on Appraisal Points. The significant changes are new directions to use split appraisal points when appraising multi-product sales, deletion of direction on selecting an appraisal "location" if a suitable processing plant is unavailable, and new direction on how to determine the appraisal point in the event of a mill closure. These look like helpful changes. Also, the ID retains current direction that in order to be an appraisal point, a manufacturing facility must be capable of processing the end product that is being appraised. /Ross Mickey

National FTPC Meets in Denver

Industry representative from all over the country attended the April 24-25 semi-annual meeting of the Federal Timber Purchasers Committee (FTPC). Historically, FTPC has focused on issues that affect the implementation of timber sale targets set in each year's Appropriations Bills. With Congress' effort to decrease federal spending, FTPC has developed a strategy which would allow the Forest Service to increase their timber sale outputs from 2.6 billion board feet to 3 billion board feet without increases in federal spending. FTPC's umbrella organization, the Federal Forest Resource Coalition, had secured the commitment from the Secretary of Agriculture that the Forest Service would meet the target this year.

The main topics of the meeting were:

- Review of FY12 timber sales
- FY13 timber program planning
- Forest Service efforts to deal with bark beetle and other forest pests
- Whether IRR and CFLRP are leading to greater efficiencies (or even to greater outputs)
- Concerns about the message of doing more with less not making it to the field
- Fire liability in Stewardship contracts
- Cruise Standards
- Implementation of the 2006 KV changes
- Appraisal Re-engineering
- Additional sale cancellation authority
- Expanded use of Designation by Description
- Forest roads decommissioning policy
- The use of sealed vs. oral bidding

On the second day, Forest Service representatives from all of the regions as well as Forest Service and BLM representatives from Washington, D.C. joined the meeting. Cal Joyner, National Forest Service Director of Forest Management, informed the group that they are planning on reaching the 3 billion board feet number by 2014, not 2012. He also clarified that the additional funds forests are receiving to implement the CFLRP projects do not come with additional timber targets. Each region reported on

their progress in meeting the 2.6 billion foot national target this fiscal year. The biggest obstacle is continued litigation by environmental groups. The BLM reported that their funding for public domain lands has been severely reduced which will result in a reduction in that program and the termination of many of their forestry positions. /*Ross Mickey*

Idaho Panhandle Forest Plan Comments

In what has to be one of the most collaborative efforts undertaken regarding moving forward with a new forest plan, a coalition of eight groups including the forest products industry, and wilderness advocates filed joint comments on the Idaho Panhandle forest plan revision and their suggested approach to forest management moving forward.

The eight very diverse groups signed a twelve page comment letter supporting a revision for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest plan that calls for regular logging operations on 38 percent (900,000 acres) of the forest, increased certainty of timber harvests; proposes new Wilderness areas and wild and scenic river designations; recommends better inventories of old growth stands and monitoring of species such as pileated woodpeckers, flammulated owls and goshawks; and supports leaving buffers of trees and shrubs around streams to shade the water and keep it cool for fish.

AFRC members Bob Boeh, Idaho Forest Group; and Josh Anderson, Vaagen Brother Lumber both were signatories on the letter. Other parties signing onto the letter included Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Priest Community Forest Connection; Phil Hough, Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness; Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League; Mike Petersen, The Lands Council, Paul Sieracki, GIS Analyst/Wildlife Biologist; and Jeff Connolly, with Mike Reynolds Logging.

AFRC also submitted comments for both the Kootenai and Panhandle plan revisions. The final forest plan should be out by the end of the year. /*Tom Partin*

Consequences of No-Action Alternatives

Gary J. Roloff, Stephen P. Mealey, and John D. Bailey have published a paper in *Forest Ecology and Management* 277 (2012) 1–10 entitled [*Comparative hazard assessment for protected species in a fire-prone landscape*](#). This paper is a landmark in the development of assessment tools to quantify the consequences of the “no-action” alternatives required in NEPA documents. The current framework that the Forest Service and BLM use is to assume that the no-action alternative has no negative consequences or if they do are not able to quantify them.

This paper describes how the authors conducted a comparative hazard assessment for 325,000 hectare in a fire-prone area of southwest Oregon. They evaluated the effects of two management strategies on crown fire potential and northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) conservation: (1) no action, and (2) active manipulation of hazardous fuels. The results support the contention that “short term risks to protected species from active management can be less than longer term risk of no management in fire-prone landscapes. Thus, a short term, risk averse strategy for protected species in fire-prone landscapes may not be the best long term alternative for conservation.” /*Ross Mickey*

Green Building Certification Reviewed

In what has to be some very good news for the wood products industry, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) released on May 3, its evaluation of green building certification systems and identified three that fulfilled its screening criteria. One of those was the “Green Globes” systems supported by the Green Building Initiative which touts the benefits of building with wood. Another approved system, “LEED” (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) has long been thought of as the leading certification system, however, the forest products industry believes that system doesn’t give enough green credits for using wood products and actually favors concrete and steel which uses tremendously more energy to produce.

The selected certifications were chosen from more than 180 different building standards, tools and systems, but none were able to meet every requirement set forth by the government; however, Green Globes and LEED came closest.

From these studies and recommendations, GSA will work with the Secretary of Energy to choose the best systems for constructing sustainable and energy-efficient buildings within the federal government system. For once, we believe that wood and wood products will be given a fair shake to incorporate more of our products into federal building construction. / *Tom Partin*

McNitt New OFIC Executive Director

Kristina McNitt has been named the new Executive Director for the Oregon Forest Industries Council (OFIC). She will replace Ray Wilkeson who retires June 30.

McNitt, a contract lobbyist for the last 12 years, has served OFIC in that capacity for the last three years. Wilkeson praised McNitt for her knowledge of the legislature, her dedication to natural resource issues and her work ethic. McNitt grew up east of Salem in a timber family, and has a degree in economics from the University of Oregon.

Wilkeson retires after 26 years with OFIC, the last three as its Executive Director. Among his accomplishments are his involvement in fending off federal regulation of salmon on Oregon’s private timberlands, the elimination of Oregon’s severance tax and preventing a ban on clearcutting.

AFRC looks forward to working with Kristina in her new role. We will miss Ray, who has been a valuable team player and a cooperater in many of our efforts on behalf of the timber industry. / *Tom Partin*

Bob Abbey to Retire

BLM Director Bob Abbey has announced that he will retire on May 31. Abbey was confirmed in July of 2009 to lead the agency where much of his focus has been to implement a suite of oil and gas leasing reforms designed to reduce environmental protests, he also had to deal with the Gulf oil spill in 2010. Abbey drew fire for his controversial “wild lands” order which could have potentially set aside millions of acres of BLM lands in the west from any kind of further development.

While Abbey has been a popular and respected BLM Director, his legacy in western timber issues is not that impressive. He leaves behind a broken BLM timber program on the O&C BLM lands since Secretary Salazar withdrew the 2008 Western Oregon Plan Revisions a month before his confirmation.

His agency has struggled to define its land management mission for the BLM O&C lands since that time. Just recently however, the BLM announced that it is going to begin yet another five-year planning process that will cost as much as \$17 million. In the meantime, BLM is selling timber at a level far below the minimum called for under the original 1937 O&C Act. BLM Deputy Director Mike Pool will serve as acting director. / *Tom Partin*