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President Signs Fire Borrowing “Fix,” Management Reforms

On March 23, President Trump signed a \$1.3 trillion Consolidated Omnibus Appropriations Act (HR 1625) that funds federal agencies for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2018 and enacts a handful of legislative changes, including a package of federal forest management reforms, a wildfire suppression funding fix, and (yet) another two-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools program. These reforms, particularly the funding fix, have been an AFRC priority for several years, and we are very pleased that Congress has taken meaningful action.

The two-year budget agreement Congress reached in February opened the door for increases in defense and non-defense spending, which will result in additional increases to a national debt that recently crossed the \$20 trillion mark. The increased spending limits did allow Congress to avoid reductions to the Forest Service and Department of the Interior programs important to the federal timber sale programs, for which cuts had been proposed by the Trump Administration. The Omnibus also largely spared many programs that had been targeted by conservatives for reductions, including federal land acquisition, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Forest Service’s Forest Products program will receive a minor reduction and the Construction, Infrastructure & Maintenance- Roads budget will see a modest increase when other budget maneuvers are accounted for. These were our industry’s highest priorities in the Appropriations process, so we had hoped to see more. The biggest winner among the Forest Service’s management-related accounts was the Hazardous Fuels line item, which will see an \$80 million increase (25 percent). Meanwhile, wildfire-related programs were increased by nearly \$550 million, which put significant downward pressure on non-fire accounts elsewhere in the Interior Appropriations area.

The BLM Western Oregon account funding O&C forest management activities received \$107 million, which is even with FY17 and \$17 million above the Trump Administration’s FY18 budget request of \$90 million. The Administration’s FY18 request proposed offering 205 million board feet of timber at this reduced budget level. We will be working with the Administration and Congress to understand how much additional timber will be offered with the additional \$17 million.

The final appropriations numbers were outshined by the inclusion of a long-stalled package of forest management reforms and a long-term solution to the practice of “fire borrowing” that forces the Forest Service to redirect money from non-fire accounts when the agency has

exhausted its fire suppression budget. In addition to addressing wildfire funding issues, the omnibus spending package includes a new tool to expedite hazardous fuels reduction projects in at-risk forests. The package significantly improves the federal Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) law that allows state agencies to perform forest management activities on federal land by making it easier to repair and rebuild forest roads on some areas of national forests. The package also offers a fix to the so-called “*Cottonwood*” decision that threatens forest projects throughout the West. Given the dysfunction of Congress and the current political climate, we are pleased to see the passage of these important reforms and will continue advocating for additional reforms in future legislative vehicles, including the Farm Bill. A summary of key sections is provided below:

Title I: Wildfire and Disaster Funding: Amends Budget Control Act of 2011 to adjust budget cap for wildfire suppression. Freezes ten-year average at the FY15 level (\$1.395 billion) and increases amount available for firefighting from \$2.25 billion to \$2.95 billion from FY20 to FY27.

Title II: Forest Management Activities:

Section 202, Wildfire Resilience Projects: Establishes a new Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the Forest Service as Section 605 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). The CE must use a collaborative process, consider best available science, and maximize retention of old-growth and large trees. Projects must be located within landscapes designated under the Farm Bill as of March 23, 2018. Projects may also be within the WUI, or within Condition Class 2 or 3, or Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III that contain very high wildfire hazard potential. Size limit of 3,000 acres. Before using this CE, the Forest Service is required to apply its “extraordinary circumstances” regulation to ensure no significant effects.

Section 203, Fuel Breaks and Firebreaks: Establishes new HFRA categories for fuel breaks and firebreaks. Under HFRA, these projects are eligible for expedited procedures including action/no-action analysis and waiver of the administrative objection process.

Section 207, 20-Year Stewardship Contracting: Authorizes USDA/DOI to award 20-year stewardship contracts or agreements in areas where the majority of Federal lands are in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III. Permits agency to give a preference to a contractor that would, as part of the contract, promote an innovative use of forest products, including cross-laminated timber. The legislation also includes fixes to address the cancellation ceiling excess value, and annual reporting issues associated with Stewardship Contracting.

Section 208, Forest Plan Consultation: Addresses Ninth Circuit “*Cottonwood*” decision. Lifts any requirement to reinitiate Endangered Species Act consultation at the Forest Plan level when a new species is listed or new critical habitat designated. The fix does not apply to forests where the Forest Plan is 15 years old and five years have passed since listing/critical habitat designation or March 23, 2018, whichever is later. Does not affect any existing requirement to consult on projects or Forest Plan Amendments/Revisions.

Section 209, O&C Lands: Applies section 208 “*Cottonwood*” fix to the O&C and Coos Bay Wagon Road lands. Other lands managed by DOI are not covered by the fix.

Section 212: GNA Road Fix: Permits GNA projects to include reconstruction, repair, or restoration of National Forest System Roads. /Heath Heikkila

Washington Legislative Recap

The Washington Legislature adjourned sine die on March 8, concluding a very busy 60-day session for AFRC staff on a myriad of issues. Overall, it was a positive session for building greater awareness within the Legislature on key trust land management issues and positions us well for future legislative oversight of the management of state trust lands.

Marbled Murrelet Legislation. As previously reported, the highest profile development of the legislative session was an hour-plus debate on the floor of the House of Representatives regarding the proposed Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy (MMLTCS) and [House Bill 2285](#), which sought to codify Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz’s “solutions table” to mitigate likely losses to jobs and trust revenues due to the MMLTCS.

The legislation and amendment effort spearheaded by Rep. Jim Walsh (R-Aberdeen) set off a lively floor debate – perhaps the longest over a natural resource issue in decades. Numerous Republicans made impassioned floor speeches in support of the amendments and urged the Legislature to step up to its fiduciary responsibility to the beneficiaries. The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles), largely led the Democrat effort against the amendments, which were both voted down by straight party-line votes - 49-48. In case you missed it, you can view the debate by visiting [TVW.org](#) and proceeding to the 24-minute mark. You can also watch a 4-minute [highlight video](#) prepared by Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities.

HB 2285 ultimately passed the House by a 54-43 vote and received similar partisan votes in two Senate committees and on the floor of the Senate before being sent to Governor Inslee, who signed the legislation into law on March 23. DNR, which was already moving forward with the “solutions table” process, will now begin implementing the legislation.

Murrelet Budget Proviso. The [February Newsletter](#) reported on a [budget proviso amendment](#) that was added to the Senate Supplemental Operating Budget by Senator Kevin Van De Wege (D-Sequim), which would have required the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to submit “Alternative B” as a second alternative for the MMLTCS to be evaluated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). DNR has claimed Alternative B does not comply with the Endangered Species Act, but has never provided any basis for that claim. Instead, on November 7, 2017 the Board of Natural Resources selected a DNR staff proposal that set aside over 30,000 acres of trust lands beyond Alternative B - valued at over \$400 million for the beneficiaries.

DNR opposed the budget proviso language and threatened it would cost months and as much as \$1 million to submit Alternative B to the USFWS. Ultimately, AFRC staff worked with Senators Van De Wege and Kevin Ranker (D-Orcas Island) to negotiate compromise proviso language with DNR that requires the agency to honor its trust mandate in developing a MMLTCS that is consistent with the requirements of the 1997 state lands HCP and ESA. This language was included in the final supplemental operating budget and provides our industry an opportunity to continue providing oversight over the MMLTCS.

Trust Valuation. AFRC also made requiring a trust valuation and review of the management of state trust lands a high priority for this legislative session. Ultimately, a budget proviso and \$550,000 in state funding was added to the House Supplemental Operating Budget to move this important initiative forward – a major victory for the trust beneficiaries. AFRC worked with the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) and DNR to secure the language with the help of Senator Van De Wege and Representative Steve Tharinger (D-Port Angeles).

Good Neighbor Revolving Account. The Legislature did pass Senate Bill 6211, which was introduced by Senator Brad Hawkins (R-East Wenatchee), and creates an off-budget account for revenues and expenditures from project income (timber sales, etc.) DNR receives from Good Neighbor Authority projects on federal lands. This account is a key step towards ramping up the use of Good Neighbor Authority by DNR and will complement the \$13 million in Capital Budget funding DNR received for forest health efforts earlier in the session and about \$800,000 of Supplemental Operating Budget funding. /Heath Heikkila

Oregon Legislative Recap

Recently, AFRC has increased its presence in Salem on federal forest management issues that intersect with Oregon state government. Those efforts are beginning to produce meaningful results.

Through participation in the Oregon Department of Forestry's (ODF) Federal Forest Working Group, AFRC and its members have spent considerable time urging the state agency to increase its efforts to utilize Good Neighbor Authority and increase active management on federal lands. Since last year's session, AFRC has been urging the Legislature to provide oversight of current state investments in federal forest management, and to encourage ODF toward expanded use of the GNA tool. In AFRC's view, GNA is a win-win situation for diverse stakeholders since this tool can increase the amount of restoration work on federal lands, thereby improving forest health and resiliency, and increase outputs of commercially-viable forest products.

In January, AFRC found a state legislative champion – the newly-appointed State Rep. Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles), whose district touches six national forests and was impacted by last year's Eagle Creek Fire. Rep. Bonham has a strong interest in our issues and introduced legislation (HB 4118) to prioritize the use of GNA. As mentioned in the [February Newsletter](#), AFRC Staff Attorney Sara Ghafouri testified in support of the bill and worked closely with the Representative and his staff on the development of the bill.

Amendments to the bill weakened it somewhat. But the final version that passed on the session's final hours establishes a new state policy to pursue projects under the GNA Master Agreement that increase timber harvest volume, contribute to job creation, reduce wildfire risks to all lands, improve wildlife habitat and watershed health, and stimulate local economies. The bill also provides \$500,000 in Lottery Funds to the Oregon Department of Forestry to support the development, planning or implementation of GNA projects.

The bill would have passed unanimously if not for one no vote from State Rep. Paul Holvey (D-Eugene). We thank Rep. Bonham for his efforts, and we thank the Oregon Wildfire Caucus, a bipartisan group of legislators, for helping get the bill through the Ways and Means Committee.

Nick Smith met with Oregon Wildfire Caucus throughout the legislative session, keeping them informed of developments in Washington D.C. and how they can make an impact.

Finally, the Legislature did not pass a punitive “Cap and Invest” tax scheme, largely due to the lack of votes in the Senate. State Rep. David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford) was vocal in calling attention to the role of catastrophic wildfires in emitting carbon and other greenhouse gasses. Nick worked with Rep. Smith on this issue and testified in support of his bipartisan bill to promote carbon sequestration through better forest management and wood products. */Nick Smith*

Westside Fire Recovery Litigation Settles

Concluding two years of litigation, the challengers to the Westside project on the Klamath National Forest dismissed their case on February 7, 2018.

The Westside fire burned over 183,000 acres in 2014, with close to half of the fire in late successional reserves (LSRs) and nearly 18,000 acres of high-quality spotted owl habitat (nesting-roosting and foraging) burned at high severity. The project’s proposed treatments include risk reduction salvage - within and outside of LSRs - roadside hazard treatments, fuels treatments, and reforestation. The total salvage covers 5,570 acres, with about 3,680 acres in LSRs (or 2% of the burned LSR area).

On March 3, 2016, the Karuk Tribe, Environmental Protection Information Center, Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center, and Center for Biological Diversity filed suit against NMFS and the Forest Service, alleging violation of the Northwest Forest Plan standards for snag retention and work in riparian reserves. Represented by Julie Weis of Haglund & Kelley, AFRC intervened as a defendant on behalf of itself, Siskiyou County, and two local landowners. AFRC members South Coast Lumber, Timber Products Co. and Siskiyou Cascade Resources have purchased sales from the project, and Oregon Overseas Timber, also an AFRC member, was also receiving logs.

Plaintiffs moved for a temporary restraining order/preliminary injunction on April 18, 2016. After a two-hour hearing on April 25, Judge Maxine Chesney (U.S. District Court, Northern District of California-San Francisco) denied the motions. Plaintiffs then appealed to the Ninth Circuit and sought an emergency injunction. A two-judge panel, consisting of Obama appointee Mary Murguia and Carter appointee, and prominent timber skeptic, Steven Reinhardt, denied the request, finding that plaintiffs “made an insufficient showing of likelihood of success on the merits.” On plaintiffs’ preliminary injunction appeal, the Ninth Circuit, affirmed the district court decision in an unpublished decision. By this time, project implementation was nearly completed with over 67 million board feet sold.

After losing on appeal, plaintiffs sought to amend their complaint in district court in order to pursue a claim regarding the availability of funds for sediment treatments. The court denied this motion, and plaintiffs moved for leave to file another amended complaint, attaching documents received through the Freedom of Information Act, which they claimed bolstered the argument about funding availability. AFRC opposed this motion and, after the hearing, Judge Chesney denied plaintiffs’ motion for leave to file a third supplemental and amended complaint.

AFRC would like to thank Julie Weis for her hard work throughout this litigation. /Sara Ghafouri

Remainder of Tower/Grizzly Case Dismissed After 9th Circuit Win

On March 8, an environmental group dropped its suit against two post-fire projects on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF), after both the district court and Ninth Circuit denied its requests for an injunction. The group attempted to stop work on both the Tower Fire Salvage Project and Grizzly Fire Salvage Restoration Project, which the Forest Service brought to implementation within nine months after wildfires in 2016 burned 47,500 acres in the IPNF. The agency expedited the projects after obtaining Emergency Situation Determinations (ESDs) from the Chief of the Forest Service.

A serial litigant group filed a lawsuit claiming that the ESDs for the projects violated federal regulations, the Forest Service took insufficient public comment, and the Forest Service improperly failed to prepare an EIS due to controversy about post-fire logging.

During the case, AFRC submitted *amicus* briefs, in both the District of Idaho and the Ninth Circuit, on behalf of the Panhandle Forest Collaborative, Bonner County (ID), Mineral County (MT), Pend Oreille County (WA), and AFRC. These briefs highlighted the collaborative support behind the projects that is unusual for salvage projects. Diverse interests including industry, local government, and conservationists worked together to develop the projects and support their implementation. Judge Winmill denied the litigant's request for a preliminary injunction in May 2017 ([May 2017 Newsletter](#)), and the Ninth Circuit [affirmed](#) in January 2018. After oral argument in the Ninth Circuit, AFRC worked with the Collaborative to prepare a letter educating the Court about the role of forest collaboratives and defending the process from attacks by the group bringing suit.

The Ninth Circuit opinion acknowledged the strong public support for the projects, determined that carefully-designed post-fire projects are an important tool for the Forest Service, and the court recognized the body of science suggesting post-fire treatment is needed to restore forested conditions and prevent future fires. The Ninth Circuit also approved the use of ESDs to quickly move the projects forward.

The post-fire projects were designed to produce up to 55 million board feet in 10 timber sales. The sales were purchased by AFRC members Idaho Forest Group, Tricon Timber, and Vaagen Bros. Lumber. AFRC argued the timber volume is essential to AFRC member operations and to support the economies of northwest Montana, northern Idaho, and northeast Washington. In a [press release](#), AFRC stated the Tower and Grizzly projects “are great examples of how land managers should respond to increasingly common fire events.”

AFRC appreciates the support of our coalition partners in supporting these projects, including Pend Oreille County, Bonner County, Mineral County, and the members of the Panhandle Forest Collaborative. /Lawson Fite

AFRC Lends Support in Moonlight Fire Petition to Supreme Court

After the 2007 Moonlight Fire burned 65,000 acres in northeast California, including 45,000 acres of National Forest land, federal and state officials investigated the cause of the fire and concluded it started on private land. This investigation led to civil suits by the Federal government and CalFire against the logger, landowner, and contractor, Sierra Pacific Industries. The parties settled the federal suit to avoid crushing liability. However, in the state suit, numerous irregularities came to light. These led the state court judge to label the investigation and state prosecution as “tainted” and to dismiss the suit.

After the end of the state court proceedings, the parties sought to unwind the federal settlement due to irregularities that were not known at the time of settlement. The district court denied relief, and the Ninth Circuit [affirmed](#). The landowner, logger, and contractor all filed a petition for *certiorari* with the Supreme Court seeking review of questions of prosecutorial and judicial integrity.

With support from AFRC, nine CalFire Retirees filed an [amicus brief](#) urging the Supreme Court to take the case. The retirees have a strong interest in the case because of their long tenures as CalFire professionals working diligently as honorable public servants and sworn peace officers in the area of wildland fires, like California’s 2007 Moonlight Fire. The CalFire Retirees understand the critical importance of instilling and maintaining public confidence in the fire prevention and fire investigation processes, and the related law enforcement and judicial proceedings.

AFRC shares these interests and believes the public interest is well served by transparency in the investigative and judicial processes. Other *amicus* briefs in this case have been filed by [industry groups](#) and a coalition of Attorney Generals of [ten states](#). /*Lawson Fite*

Forest Service Use of Pod or Zone Concept

A new approach to the allocation of resources for vegetation, fuels management, and other resource considerations is being developed in Forest Service Regions 1, 4 and 5. This new approach groups the targets for timber outputs, fuels management, and other resource needs across several Forests located in the same geographical area rather than relying solely on individual Forests to attain their targets. The reasoning behind this approach is that it supports more efficient allocation of limited resources and takes away the ups and downs of individual Forests outputs due to planning, litigation, and other issues and develops a target that a Pod or Zone of Forests must achieve.

Region 1

Region 1 has developed a regional interdependent approach, with forests working in three geographic pods in order to optimize vegetation restoration opportunities on all units. Each pod will work as a unit in order to manage targets, capacity, and budgets in concert with a broader regional level governance team to meet the regional goals. The pod makeup considered ecosystems, infrastructure, social structures, and impacts to employees. The pods are: Northern Idaho Forests, Western Montana Forests; and Eastern Montana Forests and Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

These pods will address the fact that many forested vegetation communities are outside of Forest Plan desired conditions, needing restoration treatments to become more resistant to and resilient from natural events and climate change. Wildlife species are reliant on diverse forest and grassland seral stages that benefit from changes in forest structure and composition created by restoration activities. The pods will consider where the Region has the most need for vegetation restoration, fuels reduction, and aquatic habitat restoration as well as where the Region meets its mission of social and economic sustainability.

The Northern Idaho Pod is made up of the Nez Perce-Clearwater and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The Western Montana Pod is made up of the Kootenai, Lolo, Bitterroot and Flathead National Forests. The Eastern Montana Pod is made up of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Helena-Lewis and Clark, Custer-Gallatin National Forests, and the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. Currently planned volumes for each Pod are below:

Northern Idaho Pod Projected Volumes:

FY18	140 MMBF
FY19	190 MMBF
FY20	205 MMBF
FY21	225 MMBF

Western Montana Pod Projected Volumes:

FY18	205 MMBF
FY19	135 MMBF
FY20	175 MMBF
FY21	175 MMBF

Eastern Montana Pod Projected Volumes:

FY18	70 MMBF
FY19	125 MMBF
FY20	120 MMBF
FY21	120 MMBF

Region 4

Region 4 has also put in place an acceleration strategy to create state based pods for purposes of timber/fuels target performance. Each pod will develop a pod plan to identify a Forest lead, improve communication between forests, identify opportunities to work together, and address barriers identified in the Restoration Strategy. Pod plans would be updated annually to reflect targets, funding, and priorities.

Accelerated volumes for all the forests were not available, however, the figures below represent the most current available information. Each forest is planning to accelerate volume offerings by about ten percent per year.

Please note that FY19-FY21 has the Manti-Lasal in Utah producing 53.5 MMBF each year. This is dead spruce and lodgepole and there is no indication what will happen after that resource is depleted.

Utah Pod Projected Volumes:

FY18	46.4 MMBF
FY19	96.5 MMBF
FY20	95.5 MMBF
FY21	89.0 MMBF

Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming Pod Projected Volumes:

FY18	88.9 MMBF
FY19	89.7 MMBF
FY20	93.4 MMBF
FY21	84.2 MMBF

Region 5

In Region 5 the Forest Service has taken the zone approach to resource allocation and has broken the Forests up into four zones.

- 1) Northern California - Klamath, Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, Lassen, Modoc, Mendocino National Forests
- 2) Central Sierra - Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado National Forests, and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
- 3) Southern Sierra - Stanislaus, Sierra, Sequoia National Forests
- 4) Southern California - Inyo, Los Padres, Angeles, San Bernardino, Cleveland National Forests

The assigned volumes by zone are:

Northern California Zone	169 MMBF
Central California Zone	123 MMBF
Southern Sierra Zone	75 MMBF
Southern California Zone	3 MMBF

This new concept was recently presented to AFRC staff and members during the latest round of forest monitoring meetings. The strategy is a new way to do work differently across the Region to meet the needs of increasing the pace and scale of restoration. One concern that AFRC members voiced is that it is important to keep individual Forest targets and to not let one area become the dominant producer of forest products while other Forests decline. This is an interesting concept and AFRC staff will be working with the Regions and individual Forests to track implementation. */Tom Partin, Irene Jerome*

Changes to Forest Service Bid Form and New Contract Provisions

On March 6, the Forest Service made changes to the Timber Sale Bid Form and created new special contract provisions due to policy adoption by OMB under 2 CFR 180 USDA under 2 CFR 417 regarding Suspension and Debarment Certification to be used in all new contracts. Current contracts will not be modified.

The new government-wide requirement mandates purchasers to fill out form AD-1047 and subcontractors to fill out form AD-1048 upon request by the Contracting Officer. These forms require a signature to certify each entity is not “presently debarred, suspended, or proposed for

debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency” in addition to a handful of other certifying statements regarding the eligibility to operate legally on federal land. Some provisions have been added while other obsolete provisions have been deemed inapplicable. Below is a table showing the contracts old provisions and new provisions. /*Amanda Astor*

CONTRACT	OLD PROVISION	NEW PROVISION
FS-2400-3/3T/3P & FS-2400-6/6T	B/BT8.64	C/CT8.64
FS-2400-13/13T	IT/I.6.4	KT-IT.6.4 & K-I.6.4
FS-2400-4	General Condition 17	Other Condition WO-17

Forest Health in Oregon: State of the State 2018

What does a healthy forest look like? This was the central question of the forest health conference at Oregon State University held on February 28 - March 1. The agenda covered insects, diseases, fire, drought, invasive species, climate change, and other topics. The speakers came from various backgrounds, representing the many forest ecosystems and ownership types we have across the state. Some interesting topics included how pollinators interact with the forest, the ecology of coarse woody debris in temperate ecosystems, destructive insect outbreak vulnerability, wildfire, and the impact of drought and climate on Oregon forests.

A common theme was how preventative management is crucial to healthy forest ecosystems. This means that management needs to be intense enough to create resilient and resistance ecosystems in the face of changing climate and more intense precipitation and drought events. These things are leading to increased susceptibility to detrimental insect and pathogen outbreaks as well as more and higher intensity wildfires. The removal of over mature trees, heavy thinning in dense stands, patch cuts to create fuel breaks, salvage (and subsequent planting) to return considerable amounts of carbon sequestration potential to the land and many other techniques can be implemented on the landscape depending on the imminent threats. It was also stated that spending money upfront on management saves money on the backend, especially in fire prone landscapes.

Overall, the final remark suggested creating healthy forests through preventive management with a resilience and resistance objective instead of always focusing on restoration. The fact is that historic landscapes may not do very well in near future conditions. Now is the time to act! Waiting to act for tragedies to happen on the landscape will not suffice any longer. /*Amanda Astor*

Reminder: AFRC/HFHC Emerging Leaders Program

Spaces are still available for the second AFRC/HFHC Emerging Leaders Program in Spokane Valley, WA on May 16. The program is intended to promote the leadership, communications and advocacy skills of those who are on a path to lead our industry in the future. We encourage you to [review the agenda](#) and hope you will nominate an emerging leader in your company or organization to join us. Our first Emerging Leaders program last year in Salem was well-attended, and we have incorporated feedback from last year's participants to make this year's

program even better.

Our unique one-day program will be held on Wednesday, May 16 from 8:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m. at Mirabeau Park Hotel and Convention Center, 1100 N Sullivan Rd, Spokane Valley, WA. We have secured a small room block for the night of May 15 at a rate of \$102. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel at 509-924-9000 and using the group code Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities.

Our classroom agenda features sessions and guest speakers focusing on:

- Federal forest policy and reforms, with a focus on the Inland Northwest.
- Advocacy and engaging policymakers on the issues.
- How the public perceives forestry and the industry.
- Communicating effectively.
- Our program will also feature a tour of a Forest Service project and Idaho Forest Group's Chilco Mill

Once again, please consider nominating an emerging leader to participate in this event. We need to receive your nomination, and the confirmed participation of your nominee, by April 30 to ensure adequate accommodations. Contact [Nick Smith](#) to nominate one to three employees, or for any questions. /*Nick Smith*

Last Chance to Register for AFRC's Annual Meeting

There is still time to [register](#) for this year's Annual Meeting being held April 3-5 at [Skamania Lodge](#). The [program](#) begins on April 3 with the AFRC golf tournament, followed by remarks from Congressman Greg Walden at the opening reception. The next day will feature keynotes from Congressman Bruce Westerman and Senator Steve Daines, engaging guest speakers, constructive presentations about trends in forest management, interactive meetings with federal and state land managers, and AFRC's annual banquet. The meeting ends on April 5, with a half day of meetings, the Board of Directors meeting, and luncheon.

AFRC Annual Meeting April 3-5, 2018

Tuesday, April 3

11:30 am **Golf Tournament: The AFRC Open**

6:30 pm **Welcoming Reception**
Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR)

Wednesday, April 4

8:00 am **Forestry's Best Days are Yet to Come**
Nick Smith, Executive Director, Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities

8:30 am **Morning Keynote**
Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR)

- 9:30 am **Networking Break**
- 10:00 am **New Leadership, New Direction**
Chris French, Associate Deputy Chief of the U.S. Forest Service
- 11:00 pm **Fighting for a Sustainable Future on Washington’s DNR Lands**
Rod Fleck, City of Forks
Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, WSSDA Trust Land Task Force
State Rep. Brian Blake, Chair, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Comm.
State Rep. Jim Walsh, Member, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Comm.
- 12:00 pm **Lunch Keynote**
Hilary Franz, Washington Commissioner of Public Lands
- 1:00 pm **Afternoon Keynote**
Senator Steve Daines (R-MT)
- 2:00 pm **Public Forest Managers’ Breakouts**
Region 1 – Christine Dawe and Carol McKenzie
Region 4 – Mary Farnsworth
Region 5 – Barnie Gyant
Region 6 - ML Smith and Beverly Li; BLM - Jamie Connell, State Director
DNR – Koshare Eagle, Asst. Division Manager
- 5:30 pm **Social Hour/Banquet**

Thursday, April 5

- 8:00 am **Canada Softwood Lumber Trade Update**
Cameron Krauss, Seneca Sawmill
Steve Swanson, Swanson Group
- 8:45 am **Forestry in the Washington, D.C. “Swamp”**
Bill Imbergamo, Federal Forest Resource Coalition
Heath Heikkila, AFRC Director of Government Relations
- 9:45 am **AFRC’s Legal Program**
Lawson Fite, AFRC General Counsel
Sara Ghafouri, AFRC Staff Attorney
- 10:30 am **Hotel Checkout**
- 11:00 am **Board of Directors Meeting/Luncheon (AFRC Members Only)**