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FS and BLM 2016 Budgets

On February 2, President Obama rolled out his Fiscal Year 2016 budget request. The President's budget proposes a spending blueprint for federal agencies, but those budgets are ultimately set by the respective appropriations subcommittees based on other competing priorities and the desires of Congress. Overall, the President's nearly \$4 trillion annual budget request calls for more than \$1 trillion in new taxes over the next decade, which was immediately dismissed by Congressional Republicans. Both sides may find some areas of common ground for budget reform as entitlement spending continues to grow and discretionary spending will once again be subject to sequestration.

The Forest Service would receive \$4.94 billion in FY16 under the President's request, down from \$5.07 billion in FY15, with a whopping 48% dedicated to wildfire suppression activities. While the overall Forest Service budget is down, it proposes to increase timber sale outputs from the current 2.9 bbf up to 3.2 bbf. It is not clear if these proposed outputs would actually be accomplished since the agency recently signaled it may lower its FY15 timber target.

The Forest Service is again promoting the use of the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) method of funding which pools several specific programs into one line item. This method has been used as a pilot program in Regions 1, 3 and 4 since 2011 with varying degrees of success. The IRR combined line item would include a \$27 million increase, although Congress has not adopted it for the last several years. The budget request also seeks to increase Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) from \$40 million to \$60 million. While the CFLR program can bring more management dollars to forests with forest health problems and are supported by strong collaboratives, it has created winners and losers. Forests without a CFLR project often receive less funding because the Regions have to provide a 50% funding match for the forests with CFLR projects.

The new budget relies heavily on the notion that Congress will pass the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFFA), which will trigger the use of emergency firefighting dollars on the largest catastrophic wildfires. The bill has been championed by Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Representatives Mike Simpson (R-ID) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR). The budget assumes \$173 million in increased funding if these emergency funds were made available. It is unclear if the WDFFA will gain more traction this year or if a competing proposal from Senator John McCain (R-AZ) may find more favor under a Republican-controlled Congress.

Other Forest Service line items of interest include maintaining the Hazardous Fuels (HF) program at the \$355 million level—which was the result of a large increase in FY15. The Administration also proposed a massive increase to land acquisition funding, with the intent to acquire an additional 70,000 acres.

Meanwhile, the BLM O&C timberlands would receive \$107.74 million, which is \$6.04 million less than the FY15 enacted level. The Administration had proposed cutting the O&C budget by over \$10 million last year, but fortunately Congress did not agree. While the O&C budget took a \$6 million hit, the Forest Management line item was actually increased slightly. It is expected that the timber target for the O&C lands will remain about the same at 215 mmbf. The Resource Management Planning and Other Forest Resources Management line items were both down by over \$3 million. The Administration has suggested that these proposed budget reductions coincide with a winding down of activities related to developing new Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for the O&C lands, although the timeline for the completion of these plans has been slipping. AFRC will continue to advocate for sufficient funding for the BLM to maintain their timber program and finalize new RMPs.

AFRC has been in contact with the Forest Service Regional Offices and forests in the west and found that final allocations of FY15 funding to the regions have not been firmed up. Requests to the Washington Office for more timber dollars to be allocated are pending and are dependent upon if the Regions have projects that are field ready and can be sold this year. HF dollars have not been totally allocated as well which leaves many of the forests uncertain of their final timber target since HF dollars go into planning many of the fuels reduction projects on fire prone forests.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is holding an oversight hearing on the Forest Service's budget request on February 26. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell will also be hitting the Hill this week defending Interior's budget request. The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee will hold a public witness hearing on March 18 where industry representatives will be able to present their views and suggestions on both budget proposals. */Tom Partin*

SRS Bill Introduced

On February 12, Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Mike Crapo (R-ID) introduced the "Secure Rural Schools and Payment in Lieu of Taxes Repair Act." This bill would fund the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) for an additional three years and provide full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payment program, which provides payments to counties whose lands include a heavy presence of BLM lands. SRS was first enacted in 2000 as a temporary program until declines in Forest Service harvest levels could be reversed and counties could diversify their economies. It has been reauthorized multiple times since then, but each reauthorization effort becomes more difficult and payment levels have been reduced.

Under this Wyden-Crapo proposal SRS payments would be made at 2011 levels or approximately \$360 million going to the 700 counties that receive these payments. This is an increase over the 2013 payment level. Congress adjourned last year without reauthorizing SRS so the counties have not received a payment for 2014. Wyden's proposal fails to identify required offsets for the spending. The Forest Service recently announced that actual 25% receipt sharing payments for 2014 would be approximately \$50 million, which is down from the nearly \$300 million the counties received last year (or an 83% reduction). Counties with BLM O&C timberland receive 50% of the stumpage returned to them, however, their payments from stumpage would only be half of what they received under recent SRS payments.

PILT payments have been made to counties since 1976 because the federal government pays no taxes back to the counties and much of the west is under BLM ownership which has little timber.

Meanwhile, it is believed that the House is developing a possible one-year reauthorization of SRS to provide the counties a lifeline while the House again focuses on legislation to restore balanced management back to the federal forests to generate revenue, create jobs, and improve forest health. A short-term extension seems much more likely than Senator Wyden's multi-year, increased payment levels reauthorization, particularly after Wyden was unable to secure a one-year extension of the program late last year as Chairman of the Finance Committee. */Tom Partin*

Ninth Circuit Upholds Landscape Scale Project

On February 18, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the Forest Service's decision to conduct a landscape-scale watershed restoration and fuel reduction in the South George Vegetation Management Project on the Umatilla National Forest. The Project involves about 24.6 million board feet and 3,900 acres of commercial forest harvest. The Lands Council, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, and Blue Mountain Biodiversity Project were plaintiffs. Asotin County and AFRC intervened in the case.

The Court rejected plaintiffs' argument that the Forest Service violated the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) by not following the Forest Plan. First, it upheld the Forest Service's approach to provide adequate snags through retaining large snags and smaller replacements snags where large snags were not available in order to maintain cavity nester viability. The Court also rejected plaintiff's arguments that harvest was precluded in areas that currently did not have the target level of three snags per acre.

Next, the Court held that limited, non-commercial fuel treatment in a Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA) did not prevent attainment of riparian management objectives and met PACFISH standards and guidelines and therefore was consistent with the Forest Plan. The Forest Service wanted to test a small area (24 acres) to reduce fuels in RHCAs because their monitoring showed that the RHCAs served as chimneys and corridors to spread the School Fire.

Finally, the Court held that the Forest Service did not violate NEPA by making a simplifying assumption that land within 300 feet of roads would generally not qualify as potential wilderness. */Scott Horngren*

Designation by Prescription Debacle

In 1999, Congress authorized the Forest Service to implement up to 28 stewardship contracting pilot projects. In addition to its main goal of allowing the trading of goods for services, it amended the NFMA to allow greater flexibility in the way the Forest Service could designate timber to be harvested. This led to the widespread use of Designation by Prescription (DxP) where Forest Service professionals provide the timber purchaser with a description of how the forest should look after treatment and guidelines for choosing trees to be left which will lead to the desired future condition. Prior to this, Forest Service employees would mark every tree to be either left or removed which is a very costly endeavor.

For the last 16 years, forests such as the Siuslaw National Forest, have used DxP to successfully treat hundreds of thousands of acres nationwide. In the Siuslaw's case, the value of the timber being sold is the highest in Region 6 and the "prescriptions" written by the Forest Service to be implemented on the ground are detailed and contain some complexity. In these last 16 years, the Siuslaw and forests like it have saved millions of dollars, have found the results on the ground to be superior to other alternatives

to marking such as Designation by Description, and have not had any problems with accountability or timber theft.

In recognition of the outstanding results being achieved by DxP in stewardship contracts, last year Congress again amended the NFMA to extend the use of DxP to all timber sales. The Siuslaw immediately asked for Regional approval to sell their entire 40 mmbf foot program using DxP which is comprised of 50% stewardship and 50% regular timber sales. They as well as many other forests around the country heralded this positive step forward.

Then, unexplainably on January 27 the Forest Service Washington Office issued direction to the Regional Foresters regarding DxP which severely limits its use to the point of it becoming an ineffective tool. Even though the legislation allows full and unlimited use of DxP on regular timber sales, the Washington Office is using its administrative power to limit its use to low valued thinning sales and is requiring all leave trees to be marked by the purchaser and approved prior to treatment. Needless to say, the industry as well as Forest Service field personnel are extremely disappointed and baffled by this direction.

AFRC is working with our national allies to remove the arbitrary limitations being put on the use of DxP. We will be engaging the Chief of the Forest Service as well as the members of Congress that championed the effort to amend the NFMA.

We believe the Forest Service should allow full implementation of the DxP changes made to Section 14(g) of the NFMA in the 2014 Farm Bill for the following reasons:

- Forests that have been using DxP under the Stewardship authority for the last 15 years have found that using DxP results in significant overall cost savings and leads to better results on-the-ground. These same cost savings and land stewardship benefits should now be realized on timber sales.
- The cost savings realized through the use of DxP allows field personnel to treat more acres with limited budgets.
- District and forest-level staff who are responsible for implementing land management activities are asking for and want the authority to use DxP in timber sale contracts. The effort to change NFMA to allow DxP on timber sales started when employees of the Siuslaw documented the cost savings and increased treatment acres that could be realized by using DxP.
- The use of DxP on timber sales will help increase the “pace and scale” of restoration activities. For example, some projects in the beetle-killed timber in Region 2 require five wildlife leave trees per acre. Since all of the trees are either dead or dying, other than some minimum diameter requirements, it doesn't matter which 5 trees/acre are left. Using DxP would allow the Forest Service to not have to cover thousands of acres marking 5 leave trees per acre.
- Congress has authorized the use of DxP in timber sales.

The industry is requesting that new direction be issued immediately to the regions to allow full implementation of the authority granted through the changes to NFMA Section 14(g), including allowing the use of DxP on all timber sales and the removal of the requirement that purchasers must pre-mark DxP units. /Ross Mickey

Federal Forests an Early Focus for Daines

Freshman Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) has been holding a number of roundtable discussions across western Montana seeking to identify solutions to restore more management to Montana's federal forests. Daines was a leader in the effort to pass comprehensive federal forest legislation as a member of the House last Congress and appears likely to play a similar role as a US Senator.

Montana has been an epicenter for litigation and the analysis paralysis that have crippled timber harvests on federal lands. In fact, timber sale volumes declined 58% between 2009 and 2013 due to constant litigation and despite extensive collaboration to create consensus on projects. The excessive litigation has either blocked projects or required the Forest Service to prepare costly Environmental Impact Statements on small projects, thereby limiting the number of acres it can treat.

Over the past two months Daines solicited written comments from stakeholders across the state on potential solutions. His recent roundtable meetings have been focused on identifying key barriers to management and areas of common agreement between representatives of the forest products industry, conservation groups, the sportsmen community, and local governments.

Keith Olson of the Montana Logging Association has expressed urgency about the situation facing Montana's remaining logging and milling infrastructure, noting in a recent Missoula Missoulian article:

"All these collaborative efforts will collapse under their own failure if we don't see some results soon," Olson said. "What our folks need is opportunities. We've identified 5 million acres of overstocked and bug-infested public lands in Montana. That's 5 million acres of jobs and tax revenues."

It will be interesting to see if Daines efforts and hard work will gain traction in Montana and nationally.
/Heath Heikkila

Will Kitzhaber's Forestry Legacy Continue?

With John Kitzhaber resigning as Governor of Oregon and Kate Brown being sworn in as the state's 38th Governor on February 18, many in the forest products industry wonder if the proactive efforts that Kitzhaber and his staff made to highlight the importance of management on our federal forests and state and private timberlands will continue under Governor Brown. We certainly hope so!

At the Oregon Business Plan meeting in Portland on January 5, Governor Kitzhaber outlined how Oregon's urban areas have recovered from the great recession of 2008-10, but our rural communities are still suffering. He highlighted one of the three goals of the 2015 Business Plan which was to "Put our natural resources to work!" We in the forest management world appreciated the time that Kitzhaber took to understand the connection of sustainable forest management to maintaining healthy forests and healthy communities.

In his three terms as Governor, Kitzhaber helped put a focus on the management needs of the federal forests including Forest Service lands in eastern and southwest Oregon and the BLM lands in western Oregon. During his second term as Governor in the 90's he worked with the Forest Service to establish the Blue Mountain Demonstration area on parts of the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. This 1.5 million acre area was to highlight new management strategies for getting

acres treated on a landscape that had just been impacted by the eastside screens. Harvest levels had plummeted and many sawmills shut down.

Our industry also bought into the ideas found in the Governor's salmon plan which was a delicate balance of managing our forested lands while at the same time enhancing salmon and steelhead habitat. Many of our private land companies voluntarily put millions of dollars into enhancing riparian habitat and the end result was to create ecosystems which have allowed coho salmon run numbers to increase to over 400,000 wild fish returning to Oregon streams in 2014.

Last year Kitzhaber created a task force to review potential management strategies for the O&C timberlands and to better understand the implications of competing proposals that members of our Oregon Congressional delegation had crafted. While an agreement was not reached by the task force, a fair look at what was needed for management was given and the implications of different management approaches were outlined through extensive modeling.

Finally, Kitzhaber was to become Chair of the Western Governors Association in June, and he had a desire to bring a bipartisan group of Governors together to focus on improved management of our federal forests. The Governor's draft concepts "A Case for Forest Service Renewal" were presented to the Board of Forestry in January and the Subcommittee on federal forests reviewed them on February 24.

AFRC hopes that Governor Brown will carry forward many of the important forestry efforts that were started under the Kitzhaber regime and build on those concepts in the coming months and years. We have some very important issues facing Oregon on our private, state, and federal forested lands. We need a Governor willing to look closely and weigh in wisely on critical issues such as potential changes to the Oregon Forest Practices Act, management plans for the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests, the use of herbicides and pesticides on our forests, and getting better management back on our federal forests.

AFRC and our members stand ready to work with Governor Brown as she forms her new team and works on these key forest land priorities. */Tom Partin*

Sustainable Harvest Update and Arrearage Scoping

On January 29, the Department of Natural Resources released a [request for scoping on the EIS for the Sustainable Harvest Calculation](#) (SHC) for FY15 to FY24. During this scoping period DNR is looking for input on the Purpose and Need Statement, potential alternatives for analysis, environmental impacts, elements of the environment to be analyzed under SEPA, and the arrearage issue. DNR decided not to hold public meetings but instead provided a recorded webinar and a live webinar which was held on February 12. Links to the recorded webinar and accompanying PDF slide set can be found on the [SHC Implementation website](#). Also available on this site is a link to the comment form and additional background information. Much of this information is from the 2004 SHC calculation and associated FEIS. There are [links](#) to the presentations given by DNR staff to the Board of Natural Resources in 2014.

AFRC will submit comments on the Arrearage Analysis and the SHC update which are due on February 27. */Matt Comisky*

Washington Legislature

The 2015 session of the Washington State Legislature has been a busy one. There are a variety of bills involving both forestry and wildfire issues as well as those which could have impacts on forestry. One of the first bills to catch our attention was HB 1153 which dealt with lumber grading. This bill would have created a new lumber grading process with training potentially provided by Washington State University. Through the efforts of various organizations the bill did not make it out of committee.

With the intensity and size of the Carlton Complex fire last summer, several wildfire related bills were introduced. Most of these ended up not moving out of committee; however HB 2093 which deals with wildfire suppression was passed out of committee with several amendments.

Two bills of high interest to AFRC as well as a variety of other stakeholders are HB 2069, and SB 5959. The bills are essentially identical in language and would prevent DNR from entering into an Aquatic State Lands HCP. There was broad support from various groups including the timber industry, ports, marinas, and many others. SB 5959 was referred out of committee but HB 2069 was not passed out of committee. We anticipate continued work by many of the stakeholders on passage of SB 5959.

The official cutoff for bills to be passed out of committee was February 20. There are still many issues regarding state and individual agency budgets ahead. With many more days left in the legislative session there will be continued work on bills with potential impact to the industry both good and bad.

/Matt Comisky

Spotted Owl Consultation Gets Silly

The US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) continues its campaign to provide more and more spotted owl habitat for the barred owl. They are apparently clamping down on the Forest Service and BLM especially in southern Oregon, based on the “new” information that the populations there are “crashing.” This information is not really new, even the FWS has stated that without a change in the population growth of the barred owl, the spotted owl population will continue to decline. Since they are moving at a snail’s pace to figure out what to do about the real cause of the spotted owls demise, they continue the mantra that “habitat is more important than ever.” How adding more habitat to the already hundreds of thousands of acres of perfectly good spotted owl habitat that is not being used by spotted owls is supposed to lead to the recovery of the spotted owl is beyond reason!

The latest revelation from FWS is that cutting any trees that change the current habitat classification outside any area occupied by spotted owls, but are inside critical habitat, is “likely to adversely affect” the owl if the cutting of those trees is “measureable.” Since the cutting of a single tree is “measureable” any harvest is considered to likely adversely affect the owl even if no owls are present. This standard was recently applied to the Lower Grave Vegetation Management (LGVM) Project on the Grants Pass Field Office of the BLM. The LGVM Project Planning Area encompasses 22,841 acres, BLM manages 10,632 acres (approximately 47%) and the remaining 12,208 acres are owned by private and state entities. The ownership within the planning area forms a “checkerboard” pattern of public and private ownership which is typical of western Oregon BLM administered lands.

The Proposed Action Alternative would conduct commercial timber harvest on approximately 632 acres of overstocked stands within the Grave Creek Watershed. This represents 2.8% of the 22,841 acre Project Planning Area and 0.6% of the 104,559 acre Grave Creek watershed it is located within. The purpose of the

project is to “improve forest health and vigor and reduce wildfire danger while providing a sustainable supply of timber and other forest commodities.”

The Proposed Action would treat 442 acres within designated spotted owl critical habitat. Of this, 435 acres would be treated in such a way as to not change their existing habitat classification. This is referred to as “treat and maintain.” Only seven acres would be “downgraded.” These seven acres would change from nesting, roosting, foraging habitat (NRF) to dispersal habitat because the canopy cover would drop below 60% but remain above 40%.

The seven acres being downgraded are within the 111,410 acre KLE-3 critical habitat sub-unit. This subunit consists of 39,826 acres of NRF, 44,656 acres of dispersal and 26,928 acres of non-habitat. This seven acre downgrade represents 0.006% of KLE-3 and 0.018% of the NRF within KLE-3. Even though the proposed vegetative treatments represent such a minute fraction of the critical habitat sub-unit, the BLM determined that “...the NRF downgrading associated with the LGVM Project in the KLE3 sub-unit would likely have adverse effects on spotted owl critical habitat because the amount of NRF treatment relative to the existing NRF habitat at the 500 acre scale would be measureable.”

So, it has come to this. Adverse effects to the spotted owl are now assumed if a change in habitat condition is “measureable” even if no spotted owls are using said habitat no matter how small those changes may be. */Ross Mickey*

Forest Planning Rule Directives

On February 6, the Forest Service released the final agency [directives for the Forest Planning Rule](#) adopted in 2012. The directives amend portions on the Forest Service Manuel and Handbook to implement the 2012 rule.

AFRC filed [comments](#) on the proposed directives on April 29, 2013. A [lawsuit](#) challenging the 2012 Planning Rule filed in August, 2012 by AFRC and 12 other natural resource user groups is still pending in federal court in Washington D.C. There is no word on when that case may be decided. */Ann Forest Burns*

Northwest Forest Plan Revision Begins

On February 18, the Forest Service announced a series of “public listening sessions” related to its plan to begin revising the Forest Plans within the approximately 24 million acre Northwest Forest Plan area. The sessions will be held: March 17 in Portland, March 18 in Seattle, and March 25 in Redding. The details of time and place are yet to be determined.

Since its adoption in 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan amended the forest plans of all national forests which are home to the northern spotted owl, [has never been fully implemented](#). The plan drastically reduced timber harvest on some 24 million acres of national forest lands, reducing allowable timber harvest from 4.5 billion board feet annually to 1.1 billion board feet. Yet, less than 40% of that allowable harvest has seen its way to market in the two decades since its adoption. Thus, in addition to devastating timber dependent communities, the environmental consequences have been far different than projected. Species dependent on late seral habitat have suffered and catastrophic wildfire has drastically increased. Yet, the spotted owl’s numbers continue to decline, due to barred owl predation and wildfire.

AFRC's preliminary thoughts on things the Forest Service should consider are:

- The planning process should have a clearly articulated purpose and need.
- That purpose and need should include forest harvesting to promote
 - forest health and resiliency
 - community stability
 - stable milling and logging infrastructure
- Proper weight should be given to the interests and opinions of those most directly affected by the management of these forests. The people who live and work there.
- Many aspects of the Northwest Forest Plan have proven unsuccessful and should not be repeated:
 - harvesting in matrix has been ignored in favor of thinning in late successional reserves
 - survey and manage is an outdated system
 - spotted owl populations are probably beyond any hope of recovery
 - spotted owl critical habitat designations have trumped Forest Service plans
- Road maintenance needs to be based on a comprehensive plan for future harvest
- Riparian buffers need to be flexible based on the specific area
- Catastrophic wildfire prevention should be part of new plans
- A range of wildlife habitats, including early and mid-seral, not just old growth, is needed.

We will be following the process closely and we urge your full participation. /Ann Forest Burns

Jordan Cove Pipeline EIS

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Jordan Cove Energy and Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline Project was released late last year. The EIS analyzes the effects of the proposed underground pipeline that would transport natural gas 232 miles from Malin to Coos Bay. Approximately 40 miles of the proposed pipeline route would cross federal land administered by the BLM in the Coos Bay, Roseburg, and Medford Districts. An additional 31 miles would cross National Forest Service lands administered by the Umpqua, Rogue-River Siskiyou, and Winema National Forests. The pipeline construction would require timber removal across the designated right-of-way. Although an extensive timber cruise has not yet been conducted, Pacific Connector estimates that about 17,379 mbf of timber would be cut and removed. This estimation was based on a rough cruise inventory.

Rather than selling the timber through a competitive bidding process, which is typically how the BLM and Forest Service market their timber products, the right-of-way timber associated with the pipeline construction will be sold through a negotiated contract with Pacific Connector, who will then be responsible for marketing the timber. They will also be responsible for hiring a logging contractor, as well as qualified foresters capable of developing site-specific logging plans.

Moving forward with a project that transects such a large swath of federally managed land required a lengthy analysis to ensure implementation is within the framework of the laws and regulations pertaining to these lands, which are contained in each Land Management Plan (LMP). Those familiar with the extent of analysis necessary to harvest timber on any federally managed land are aware of what it takes to comply with these regulations. Considering that the route of the proposed pipeline crosses a variety of timber types, federal land allocations, and home ranges of several threatened & endangered (T&E) species, this compliance was obviously a challenge. In order to comply, the Forest Service and BLM had to amend each affected LMP to make provisions for the pipeline. Ultimately there were

twenty such amendments that included waivers of management recommendations for survey & manage species, reallocation of Matrix Lands to Late-Successional Reserves, waivers on limitations for detrimental soil conditions, allowances for the removal of effective shade on perennial streams, and exemptions of requirements to maintain certain T&E species habitat areas.

It appears that projects proposed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission enjoy a special exemption status. We can only dream that the Forest Service and BLM would consider similar flexibilities on future vegetation management projects that are designed to manage for long-term sustainable timber products. */Andy Geissler*

Forest Restoration Partnership Conference

On February 18 and 19 the Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership (IFRP) sponsored “The Scale of Restoration: From Projects to Landscapes” conference, addressing the successes of and challenges to forest collaboration as the scale of restoration transitions move from traditional projects to landscape analysis areas in Idaho. The IFRP is a coalition of organizations and individuals that have come together to support collaborative forest restoration including forestry professionals, timber industry leaders, and conservationists.

Highlights of the conference included a presentation by Dean Kurt Pregitzer, University of Idaho College of Natural Resources, on “Reforestation and Resilience” that emphasized forest resilience is achieved by promoting biodiversity. Biodiversity depends on maintaining the proper balance of community composition, and structure and function at the ecosystem and landscape scale. Over the past 10 years Idaho’s federal forests have grown more slowly and mortality continues to exceed growth. Given that most of Idaho’s water supply originates in forested watersheds (63 percent) and that the majority of those watersheds are on federal land (68 percent) these statistics are very troubling. The take home message was attention needs to be taken to improve forest health, diversify forest management regimes on federal lands, and improve economic vitality by investing in human capital, communities, and the infrastructure to sustain restoration.

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) posed the concept of a non-profit partnership to expedite “accelerated restoration.” This preliminary outreach is predicated on the fact that the status quo is not working. Regulations, laws, policies, and budgets are limiting the capacity of federal agencies to achieve significant and meaningful progress in restoring Idaho’s federal forests. The non-profit partnership would be a conduit for local collaboratives and partnerships and would have the ability to utilize all existing authorities with fewer limitations based on the “all hands all lands” approach. IDL is seeking feedback, input, and ideas on this idea.

Senator Mike Crapo and Congressman Raul Labrador gave a brief summary on the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. They participated in a question and answer session with the audience and reaffirmed their commitment to restoring the forests, communities, and economic vitality of Idaho. */Irene Jerome*

Dick Posekany

Longtime industry leader and dedicated forester, Dick Posekany passed away on January 18. Dick was born on August 20, 1926 in Keystone Iowa. He joined the Army Air Force in 1944 working as Cryptographer and was discharged as a Sergeant. Dick graduated from the School of Forestry at Ames,

Iowa, and his first forestry job was for Long-Bell Lumber and later International Paper both located at Gardner, Oregon.

In 1964 Dick went to work for Frank Lumber Company where he spent the rest of his career working for the Frank family. Following his formal retirement, Dick continued in the forest/timber industry as a consultant and often presented testimony to the Oregon Board of Forestry and weighed in on other forestry issues.

Dick was president of the Oregon Logging Conference in 1972 and helped write the original Oregon Forest Practices Act during the 1971-72 timeframe. Dick is survived by his wife Phyllis, two sons, two daughters, three stepsons, 20 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.

A celebration of life will be held for Dick on March 6 at two events:

- 10:00 A.M. @ Willamette National Cemetery, 11800 SE Mt. Scott Boulevard, Portland, Oregon. Military and Masonic Honors.
- 2:00 P.M. @ Westminster Presbyterian Church 3737 Liberty Road South Salem, Oregon. Reception will follow at the Church. / *Tom Partin*

2015 Annual Meeting

AFRC will be holding its Annual Meeting April 7-9 at Skamania Lodge in Stevenson, Washington. This year's theme is "Creating Success."

The meeting will begin on April 7 with our golf tournament followed by the opening reception. April 8 will feature a full slate of meetings, social hour, and dinner. The meeting will conclude on April 9 with a half day of meetings and Board of Directors meeting and luncheon. Registration and hotel information is available on our website www.amforest.org.

Tuesday, April 7

11:30 am **Golf Tournament**

6:00 pm **Welcoming Reception**

Wednesday, April 8

7:00 am **Continental Breakfast**

7:30 am **"Drawing up the Blueprint for Success"**
Heath Heikkila, AFRC
Bill Imbergamo, Federal Forest Resource Coalition

8:30 am **Congressional Representative**

Hakan Ekstrom – Wood Resources International

“Laying the Foundation For Success”
Thomas Manness, Oregon State University
Tom DeLucca, University of Washington

12:00 noon **Luncheon** – Dr. Peter Goldmark, WA Commissioner of Public Lands

1:30 pm **“On the Ground Success”**
A panel of four federal land managers will outline successes they have had on their respective forests

3:00 pm **Public Forest Managers’ Breakouts**
Tom Shay & Darin Cramer, Washington DNR
Tom Martin & Christine Dawe, US Forest Service Region 1
Chris Iverson, US Forest Service Region 4
Deb Whitman, US Forest Service Region 5
ML Smith, US Forest Service Region 6
Jerry Perez, Bureau of Land Management

6:00 pm. **Social Hour/Banquet**

Thursday, April 9

7:30 am **Continental Breakfast**

8:30 am **Congressional Representative**

“Assuring Success in the Courtroom”
Rob Molinelli, AFRC
Mark Rutzick, Mark C. Rutzick, Inc.
Elaine Spencer, Miller Nash Graham & Dunn

11:00 am **Board of Directors Meeting**