



2019 AFRC Annual Meeting – Fired Up for Change

AFRC completed another outstanding Annual Meeting over three busy days at Skamania Lodge from April 23-25. More than 130 individuals from the forest products industry, Forest Service, BLM, State land management agencies, elected officials, practitioners, community organizers, and regional leaders attended the meeting.

On Tuesday evening, April 23, meeting participants heard from Senator Steve Daines (MT), a champion of active forest management in the U.S. Senate and member of the powerful Appropriations and Finance committees, as well as the important Energy and Natural Resources and Indian Affairs committees. Daines discussed his efforts to find a long-term solution to the adverse Cottonwood decision; his push for litigation relief such as binding arbitration; and his leadership to clarify and expand the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) – one of the most effective management tools to pass Congress.

AFRC President Travis Joseph kicked off Wednesday (April 24) with the “State of the Association,” highlighting policy, legal, grassroots, and monitoring program successes. After missing last year’s Annual Meeting due to a medical issue, Joseph talked about being “Fired Up for Change” – which, to him, means being fired up for action – and working as a team to be better every day, make the most of every day, and continue to learn, assess, adjust, and act to be the most effective association AFRC can be.

Chris French, the Acting Deputy Chief of the Forest Service, provided an update on the ongoing

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efforts by Forest Service headquarters to modernize the agency; improve internal efficiencies and processes that will lead to more work on the ground; and address cultural and communication issues to maximize all available tools and financial resources. French noted the Forest Service sold more than three billion board feet (bbf) of timber in 2018, the first time the agency exceeded three bbf in over 20 years.

After a Networking Break, Congressman Kurt Schrader (OR-05) spoke about forest management reforms in a divided United States Congress. Congressman Schrader pointed out how Democrats were able to take control of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018 by running

moderate candidates promoting *moderate* political platforms – not by political activism demonstrated by a small minority of the new Democratic caucus. The Congressman also reaffirmed how the economic, ecological, and health impacts of catastrophic fires and smoke are opening the eyes of Democratic and urban leaders who are typically unengaged on forest management issues.

Four special women – [Claudette Moore](#), [Sue Kupillas](#), [Therese MacGregor](#), and [Millie Carlton from the Rogue Valley](#) – led an energetic, authentic, and powerful presentation about community organizing and grassroots activity in response to consecutive years of devastating fire and smoke in Southern Oregon. Despite calls from activists and some politicians to subsidize hotel rooms and vacation rentals during fire season, or, simply moving away from Oregon during its best weather months, participants heard about the inspiring work to organize a diverse coalition that includes local businesses, the medical community, local arts and culture organizations, wine growers, agriculture, and insurance companies to raise awareness of the crisis and to demand change and action from Washington, D.C.

Before lunch, [Jon Songster \(Idaho Department of Lands\)](#), [Phil Chang \(Oregon Department of Forestry\)](#), and [Trevor McConchie \(Washington DNR\)](#) presented on how Western states are partnering with the Forest Service through GNA to share costs, resources, staffing, and benefits to increase the pace and scale of active forest management on Federal Lands. Songster, Chang, and McConchie reported on successes of their respective GNA programs and upcoming opportunities to grow state GNA programs even further.

Participants returned from lunch to hear from about [actions occurring at the national level to improve NEPA and planning processes](#). Christine Dawe, USFS Director of Ecosystem Management Coordination, was joined by Josh White of the Colville National Forest and Katie Isacksen from the Willamette National Forest to highlight how national-level action is being implemented successfully on the ground.

Following a long Annual Meeting tradition, participants spent Wednesday afternoon in “Regional Breakout Sessions” to meet directly with Forest Service leadership from Regions 1, 4, 5, and 6; BLM leadership in Western Oregon; and Washington DNR leadership representing the State Trust Lands timber program. The Breakout Sessions allow individuals interested in specific regional or state timber programs to interact with decision-makers to highlight successes, obstacles, potential opportunities, and to share best practices from other regions/states.

After a fun night of relaxation, socializing, and networking at the Wednesday night Banquet, Thursday started with an energetic and caffeinated presentation. Bill Imbergamo (Executive Director, Federal Forest Resource Coalition) and Heath Heikkila (AFRC Government Affairs Director) provided the 2019 edition of the [“Bill and Heath Show: A Look Into the Congressional Crystal Ball.”](#) The update provided information on the 2018 election, its implications for Congressional committees and priorities, and current legislation and policies impacting the Pacific Northwest and AFRC members.

AFRC’s Legal Team (Lawson Fite, General Counsel, and Sara Ghafouri, Staff Attorney) provided an overview of the complex legal system and the environment in which AFRC and its

partners operate (“[From the Courtroom to the Headrig: How AFRC’s Legal Program Supports Active Management](#)”). Fite explained how, in some cases, a defendant of a timber sale must win nine times in court to protect a project while an activist litigator only needs to win once to bring a project to a halt. The Legal Team discussed three unique cases and how AFRC’s involvement in those cases are intended to protect new Farm Bill authorities and management efficiencies.

Before concluding a substance-heavy Thursday morning, AFRC’s Washington Team (Matt Comisky, Heath Heikkila, and Bruce Beckett) discussed the intense legislative session in Olympia that included multiple opportunities, priorities, and risks for the forest products industry. Kudos to the Washington Team for highlighting more than a dozen timely, relevant issues AFRC is tracking in Olympia (see below article) in the short amount of time allotted.

On behalf of the entire AFRC Team, we extend our thanks and appreciation to all of this year’s attendees, speakers, panelists, and AFRC’s Executive Committee and Board Members for making 2019 another dynamic, informative, and exciting Annual Meeting. Mark your calendar for 2020! Next year, **AFRC’s Annual Meeting will be held April 14-16.** /Travis Joseph

Washington, D.C. Update

Congress just returned from its two-week spring recess, so it has been quiet on the D.C. front. AFRC staff were in D.C. in early April for meetings on Capitol Hill and with agency staff to discuss efforts to increase timber management activities on Forest Service and BLM lands. We expect the Forest Service to formally release its regulatory reform proposal soon, which has undergone extensive interagency review. The Department of the Interior is also finalizing proposed rules to improve the implementation of the Endangered Species Act and provide streamlined authorities for the management of BLM lands.

[Bernhardt Confirmed](#) On April 11, the U.S. Senate voted 56-41 to confirm David Bernhardt as the 53rd Secretary of the Interior. Bernhardt, who has been serving as the Acting Secretary since former Secretary Ryan Zinke left in early January, has a strong command of the legal and policy issues confronting the department – including the management of O&C lands.

As reported in the [March 2019 Newsletter](#), Bernhardt has extensive private and public sector experience working on natural resource issues in Washington, D.C, and served as an aide to former Congressman Scott McInnis (R-CO). Environmental activists and some Democrats on Capitol Hill have leveled conflict of interest claims pointing to Bernhardt’s time in the private sector representing energy companies, irrigation districts, and other clients. However, Bernhardt has been vigilantly following all laws, best practices, and ethics requirements, including recusing himself from issues affecting former clients. Nonetheless, opponents have resorted to personal attacks, labeling Bernhardt a “swamp monster.”

Ultimately, three Democrats and one independent joined Republicans to confirm Bernhardt.

[Fire Borrowing Repayment Remains Elusive](#) As reported in the [March 2019 Newsletter](#), Congress still had not taken action on an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to address recent natural disasters and repay over \$700 million “borrowed” from management accounts

when the agency exhausted its fire suppression budget last summer. While Congress passed a fix to prevent future wildfire borrowing in 2018, that fix doesn't take effect until Fiscal Year 2020.

Almost half of the funds borrowed were from timber-related accounts, including the salvage and Knutson-Vandenberg trust funds. The Forest Service is planning another increase in timber outputs in Fiscal Year 2019, but Congress' failure to repay these funds poses a serious threat to the agency's ability to achieve the increased targets.

Unfortunately, partisan gridlock related to Puerto Rico and other political considerations have stymied recent efforts to pass an emergency supplemental. We are hopeful that Congress will reach an agreement and pass the legislation as soon as possible. /*Heath Heikkila*

Washington Legislature Wraps Up 2019 Session

On Sunday, April 28, the Washington legislature adjourned Sine Die on the final day of the 105-day regular legislative session. It was a productive session for AFRC as we worked to bring greater legislative oversight into the Department of Natural Resources' Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy, secure funding for important forest health and fire preparedness programs, maintain a strong connection between timber harvest revenues and school beneficiaries, extend our industry's preferential Business & Occupation (B&O) tax rate, and engage in emerging discussions about carbon sequestration on public and community forests.

The primary focus of every regular legislative session is the passage of a two-year operating budget for state government, as well as budgets for transportation and capital projects. With stronger Democrat majorities in both chambers, the legislature passed new tax increases that will generate about \$2.5 billion in additional revenue over the next four years. Lawmakers were already working with increased tax revenue due to economic growth, which ultimately allowed the Legislature to adopt a \$52.4 billion 2019-2021 state budget – nearly \$8 billion more than the \$44.6 billion 2017-2019 state budget. While none of the tax increases directly target the forest products industry, increased taxes on financial institutions and service business could be passed along to the industry.

DNR forest health, fire preparedness. Between the operating and capital budgets, DNR received over \$51 million to enhance the agency's ability to fight wildfire, implement its 20-year forest health strategic plan, and conduct on-the-ground forest health treatments. The increased preparedness funding will allow DNR to purchase an additional two helicopters and fund full-time fire engine leaders. The forest health funding will allow the agency to continue working with the Forest Service to implement forest thinning treatments on federal lands through the Good Neighbor Authority. Commissioner Hilary Franz's proposal to create a dedicated account for suppression, preparedness, and forest health activities funded by a statewide tax on insurance policies stalled in the legislature but highlighted the need for robust state funding for these important activities.

Marbled Murrelet. AFRC entered the 2019 legislation to increase legislative oversight into DNR's Marbled Murrelet Long-Term Conservation Strategy (MMLTCS). There is a need for a meaningful analysis of the fiscal impacts to beneficiaries, including junior taxing districts, and to release acres that have been procedurally encumbered by Alternatives F & G. DNR admits both

alternatives conflict with its trust mandate and yet were considered to be “reasonable” alternatives. Early in the session, two work sessions were held to review the MMLTCS process, including DNR’s “losses and gains” report that provided only general information about the impacts of the plan to counties and no information on junior taxing districts.

Bipartisan companion legislation was introduced in the House (HB 1546) and Senate (SB 5547) to require an independent fiscal analysis of the long-term impacts of the MMLTCS and the release of acres encumbered by Alternatives F & G. While neither bill was enacted into law, they resulted in DNR making commitments to address the concerns administratively, including releasing lands included in Alternatives F & G once DNR releases its Final Environmental Impact Statement this summer. We were also pleased that Section 308(19) of DNR’s 2019-2021 operating budget includes language requiring it to “...conduct an analysis of the revenue impacts to the state forestlands taxing district beneficiaries...by September 30, 2019.”

AFRC appreciates the leadership of Senator Kevin Van De Wege (D-Sequim) and Representatives Brian Blake (D-Aberdeen), Jim Walsh (R-Aberdeen), and Ed Orcutt (R-Kalama) on this important issue.

Forest Products Business & Occupation Tax. While AFRC doesn’t typically get involved in taxation issues, we were proud to support the efforts of Representatives Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles), Jacquelin Maycumber (R-Colville), and Senator Van De Wege to extend the industry’s preferential Business & Occupation (B&O) tax from 2024 to 2045. The legislation (E3SHB 1324) was passed by both chambers and is now before Governor Jay Inslee. AFRC recently sent a [letter](#) of support to Governor Inslee outlining the importance of the legislation.

Timber Revenues for Schools. Last year, State Superintendent of Public Schools Chris Reykdal approved an important rule change that allowed school district beneficiaries of state (county) forest lands to realize the full benefits of timber revenues from DNR timber harvest. Before the rule change, schools receiving DNR timber harvest revenue had the same amount *deducted* from their subsequent funding levels from the state – commonly referred to as the “claw back.” The Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) was in strong support of this rule change, which was made possible by Superintendent Reykdal.

Unfortunately, provisions were included in both the House and Senate operating budgets to reverse the rule change and reinstate the claw back. WSSDA, AFRC, Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities (HFHC), and others launched a campaign to oppose these provisions. HFHC generated over 600 emails to legislators in a short period. Thanks to the efforts of Representative Steve Tharinger (D-Pt. Townsend) and Senator Van De Wege, the provisions were removed in both chambers, and the final operating budget also left the school timber dollars untouched.

Carbon and Community Forests. AFRC also engaged in two emerging issues during the legislative session. The first issue was related to a carbon inventory of natural and working lands and the second was a proposal to create a statewide community forests program. On carbon, AFRC worked to ensure that any carbon inventory considered carbon sequestered in wood products through a life cycle analysis and the potential emissions from catastrophic wildfires.

While the legislation (HB 2047) didn't make it through the legislature, the 2019-2021 operating budget provides funding for DNR to conduct a carbon inventory that considers the carbon sequestered in wood products and wildfire emissions. The budget proviso also requires DNR to form an advisory committee to help oversee the inventory, DNR research into carbon markets for nonstate-owned or managed forest land, and a required December 1, 2020 report to the legislature.

AFRC also engaged heavily in discussions surrounding HB 1946, which would have created a statewide community forests program. AFRC underscored its support for state policies that support and maintain working forests but expressed concern about the likely consequences of converting private working forests (or state trust lands) into community forests without any clear mandate on how these lands would be managed. The website of the Washington Environmental Council, one of the leading proponents of the legislation, expressed a goal of seeing up to one million acres of private industrial forestland in western Washington converted to community forests. While this is unlikely, the loss of any truly working forests represents a threat to the timber supply our members rely upon.

HB 1946 did not make it out of the legislature, but the capital budget provided funding for two community forest projects – Mt. Adams, Outlet Creek Tract (Klickitat County) and Gold Hill (Stevens County). The budget also required the Recreation and Conservation Office to “assist Chelan county and other stakeholders to develop a management plan for potential future community forests, including the Nason Ridge community forest.” Nason Ridge is located outside of Wenatchee and was believed to be one of the primary motivations for advocates of community forests legislation. AFRC has not opposed the funding of worthy community projects through the budget process and will continue to engage with community forest proponents.

AFRC appreciated the opportunity to work closely with the Washington Forest Protection Association, DNR, and other allies throughout the session. We are also thankful for the efforts of a bipartisan group of champions in the legislature. */Heath Heikkila*

O&C Act Rulings Set Up Further Explanations and Rounds of Litigation

In a flurry of activity after months of silence, the district courts in Medford and Washington, D.C., issued rulings in cases implicating the O&C Act and the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Expansion.

On the evening of Sunday, March 31, Judge Leon in the District of Columbia issued an order in four cases, brought by AFRC and the Association of O&C Counties, challenging the 2016 BLM Resource Management Plan and the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. The order remands the cases to BLM for 60 days and directs the government to provide an “explanation of how O&C land—both within and outside the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument’s boundaries—is currently being managed, including an explanation for the changes, or the lack of changes, to the land’s management plan following the issuance of Proclamation 9564.” All the parties’ summary judgment motions were denied without prejudice but will be reconsidered after the explanation and further briefing.

Judge Leon recognized that the Monument expansion contains 40,000 acres of O&C land on which commercial timber harvest is “effectively no longer possible” under the proclamation. He also noted that, while BLM may have some discretion in the day-to-day implementation of the Act, “BLM’s discretion has limits. It must, for example, manage O&C land ‘for permanent forest production’ and harvest timber ‘in conformity with the princip[le] of sustained yield.’ 43 U.S.C. § 2601.”

Such orders for further explanation are relatively common in administrative law cases. The Supreme Court has stated that “if the reviewing court simply cannot evaluate the challenged agency action on the basis of the record before it, the proper course” generally “is to remand to the agency for additional investigation or explanation.” [*Florida Power & Light Co. v. Lorion*](#) (1985). Here, there is nothing in the record about current management, so Judge Leon ordered further explanation.

On the West Coast, Magistrate Judge Clarke issued findings and a recommendation on April 2, which rejected Murphy Company’s challenge to the Monument expansion. Judge Clarke’s findings are subject to review by District Court Judge McShane. Unlike Judge Leon, Judge Clarke found “considerable discretion” for management of the O&C lands. As such, he found no “irreconcilable conflict” between the “dominant purpose of the O&C Act and the conservationist purpose of the Antiquities Act.”

BLM must provide its explanation of how O&C lands in the Monument are currently being managed no later than June 3. After that, the only certainty (other than death and taxes) is more litigation. */Lawson Fite*

Cottonwood “New Information” Claims Continue to Frustrate Important Management Actions

In the 2015 *Cottonwood* case, the Ninth Circuit ruled that a completed Forest Plan is a forever-in-progress “action,” meaning that the land management agency can be compelled to re-initiate (redo) Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation at the *Plan* level if a new species is listed or critical habitat designated. Thus, the Ninth Circuit required the Forest Service to reinitiate plan-level consultation across 11 National Forests relating to critical habitat designated for the lynx. The *Cottonwood* decision led to multiple injunctions in areas with lynx habitat, particularly in USFS Region 1, where at one point over 150 million board feet (mmbf) of projects were under some form of an injunction.

Cottonwood does not further the conservation objectives of the ESA since individual forest projects are already subject to ESA consultation. An initial plan-level analysis generally assesses an amount of species-wide impact that is appropriate and projects can proceed as long as their impacts fall within the plan-level approved impacts. But if a project is evaluated without plan-level clearance, there is no such buffer for the agency to rely on. Therefore, ESA consultation at the project-specific level is likely to be more conservative. Both the Tenth Circuit and Southern District of Florida have considered the issue and rejected the Ninth Circuit’s approach.

Congress included a partial *Cottonwood* fix in the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act, thanks to the leadership of Senator Steve Daines and bi-partisan, bi-cameral support including Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) and Representatives Mike Simpson (R-ID) and Collin Peterson (D-MN). ([March 2018 Newsletter](#).) The partial fix provides that re-initiation of consultation is *not* required at the plan level for new species or critical habitat for [Forest Plans](#) or [BLM Plans](#) on O&C lands. It does not apply, after a 5-year grace period, where plans are more than 15 years old.

Like a mole in the backyard, the *Cottonwood* problem has popped up somewhere else. Under the ESA, there are [four factors](#) for requiring re-initiation of consultation, only one of which is addressed by the existing fix. One of those is “[i]f new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered.”

In two cases in Montana, courts have issued injunctions based on requiring re-initiated plan consultation on “new information” grounds. First, on the 1,500-acre Fleecer Project, which has been in litigation since 2011, the court refused to dissolve a prior injunction on these grounds after the Forest Service spent five years preparing a supplemental EA. Second, the North Hebgen project was preliminarily enjoined shortly before the harvest was to begin in 2018 and remains halted while the summary judgment motions are reviewed. These projects total nearly 30 mmbf in volume, and as a result of the North Hebgen ruling, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest has put its whole program [on hold](#).

The “new information” claims are also popping up in the East. Groups challenging oil and gas leasing on Ohio’s Wayne National Forest are seeking to obtain plan-level re-initiation in a lawsuit there. Litigants claim that there is new information relating to the impacts of horizontal drilling on the Indiana bat. AFRC, partnering with the Ohio Forestry Association, submitted an *amicus* brief urging the court to reject *Cottonwood*. Similar claims have been raised in West Virginia’s Monongahela National Forest, potentially imperiling that Forest’s program of operations.

These developments indicate the need to close the door on *Cottonwood* through legislation or the Courts, in line with the position taken by the Obama Administration when it [asked](#) the Supreme Court to take the case in 2016. AFRC will continue to work with our allies to make progress where possible. */Lawson Fite*

Colville Forest Plan Resolution Meetings Held

The objection resolution meetings for the Colville Forest Plan Revision were held April 24-26 in Colville, Washington. AFRC objected to the Plan (November 2018 Newsletter) and was one of the 20 objectors present. The meeting covered several topics over the three days:

- April 24 - Wild and Scenic Rivers, Socio-Economic, Recommended Wilderness, Special Areas, Roadless, and Back Country Designations.
- April 25 - Range, Soils, and Dispersed Recreation, Water Quality, Watershed and Riparian, and Wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species.
- April 26 - Forest Products, Silviculture, and Old Growth, Travel Management, Monitoring, and NEPA and NFMA.

The Forest believes they have the flexibility to manage in all stands of timber regardless of diameter size using the following criteria:

- *Trees need to be removed to meet, promote, or maintain desired conditions for structural stages.*
- *Trees need to be removed to control or limit the spread of insect infestation or disease.*
- *Trees need to be removed where strategically critical to reinforce, facilitate, or improve the effectiveness of fuel reduction in wildland-urban interfaces.*
- *Trees need to be removed to promote special plant habitats (such as, but not limited to, aspen, cottonwood, whitebark pine).*

The Reviewing Officer and Forest Service staff stated the 20-inch diameter criteria would remain in the Plan along with the important criteria for managing larger trees.

AFRC emphasized that while this is a 15-year Forest Plan, the Forest has developed a 20-year timber management plan, which should be incorporated as a road map and provides more certainty for an adequate timber supply for the existing infrastructure. The Reviewing Officer asked that this language be included in the introduction section of the Record of Decision. If the Forest follows the 20-year plan and the higher harvest levels coming from the Colville, this will also address the immediate restoration needs.

Since the Colville Forest Plan was completed using the 1982 Planning Rule, the Reviewing Officer agreed that management opportunities should not be limited by projected or anticipated budget constraints, which apply to the 2012 Planning Rule. This is appropriate since new funding sources are available using the Good Neighbor Authority and outside groups that pay for NEPA planning, as was done on the A-Z Project.

AFRC is still concerned road limits established in the Plan (no more than two miles of system roads per square mile in the general forest areas and no more than one mile of road for Focused Restoration areas). We believe these numbers, while only a target to work toward, could be a target for activist litigation.

AFRC would like to thank the Colville and the Reviewing team from the Regional and Washington, D.C. offices for conducting a focused and productive meeting to find possible solutions to the Final Plan. /Tom Partin

Rogue Forest Restoration Initiative Forum

Last month, AFRC was invited to participate in a “Leadership Forum” sponsored by the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC). The Forum was held in Medford, Oregon and focused on creating support and momentum for the Rogue Forest Restoration Initiative (RFRI). The goals of the RFRI include the reduction of wildfire risk through ecological thinning and controlled burning, the acceleration of dry-forest restoration in the Rogue Basin, and the improvement of socioeconomic conditions in southwestern Oregon.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board has pledged \$6 million over the next six years for community engagement and treatment implementation for projects in the Rogue Basin guided by

the RFRI. In addition to this funding, contributions from the Oregon Department of Forestry, The Nature Conservancy, the Fire Learning Network, Lomakatsi Restoration Project and other partners made the Forum possible.

AFRC's involvement injected a perspective from the local timber industry to a group that included federal land managers, county commissioners, tribal representatives, wildland firefighters, and regulatory agencies. One underlying theme behind the RFRI that AFRC can fully support is the role that timber harvest and the timber industry plays, which can be broken down into three simple concepts:

1. Active management is an integral part of addressing the increased wildfire risk in the Rogue Basin.
2. Active management typically yields a considerable amount of commercial timber supporting local economies, jobs, and renewable products to meet society's needs.
3. A healthy timber industry is integral to implementing this active management.

During the Forum, AFRC voiced its view that the primary barrier to increasing the pace and scale of active management on federally managed land is the current cost and time required for environmental analysis. The multiple years that it takes the Forest Service and BLM to complete their analysis has limited their ability to treat more acres and sell more timber. Recently, this extended timeframe has resulted in wildfires burning through watersheds where fuels reduction projects were proposed - but it took too long to do the analysis! AFRC strongly encourages supporters of the RFRI – and the health of the Rogue Basin generally – to join with AFRC and other partners to help federal land managers overcome major process barriers. One way or another, the capacity to complete the required analysis must be expanded to increase the footprint of active management.

Earlier this year, another mill in southwest Oregon closed its doors. This closure should be a wakeup call for anyone supportive of the RFRI's focus to find ways to jumpstart more active management through timber harvest in the Rogue Basin. AFRC is open to working with groups and community members who want to support an increased level of active management to help reduce fuels on federally managed land and avoid further mill closures. */Andy Geissler*

Member Profile: Rosboro

Rosboro's motto: Enabling contractors to build better.

If you live in the Western United States, chances are your home was built with beams from Rosboro. Located in Oregon's lush Willamette Valley and surrounded by millions of acres of the nation's most productive forest lands, Rosboro is North America's largest producer of glued laminated timber products (glulam).

Glulam is produced by laminating layers of small dimension lumber from second and third-growth forests into larger sections that are used as main load bearing members in home building and other construction projects. The lumber used is graded and laid up in specific patterns that result in beams that are custom tailored to fit the required load. Why is this important? It allows builders to

construct homes economically and sustainably from today's smaller timber while still delivering the large, open spaces desired by homeowners.

This approach is an example of the innovation in the timber industry that often goes unnoticed by the public. Timber is grown, harvested, made into useful and efficient products, and replanted to ensure a cycle of renewability. Unfortunately, the public impression of the industry doesn't always match this reality. Companies like Rosboro have always worked to change that narrative and help the public see the life cycle: planting, growing, and harvesting trees to the eventual use in their homes; replanting, and the cycle begins again.

Adaptability is core to Rosboro's identity. After getting its start as a sawmill in Arkansas, Rosboro's founder Whit Rosborough saw an opportunity in the great Pacific Northwest and moved his family, the company, and 39 of its employees to Springfield in 1938. He purchased a large tract of timber up the McKenzie River and built a thoroughly modern sawmill, setting the stage for decades of success.

As land use, timber availability, public impression, and construction markets changed over time, Rosboro has adapted by looking forward and changing their approach. Lumber production expanded into veneer and plywood, and in 1964 the company installed the country's first glulam production facility to better optimize the use of changing timber supply. Through this time, the company developed a robust forestry department, improved the safety of their loggers and truckers through education and training, and established the principles that have guided the company throughout its history – profitability, careful planning, strategic vision and most importantly – stability.

A defining moment for Rosboro and their adaptive approach was a timber purchase in 2004, in Fox Hollow near the south end of Eugene. The 160-acre sale was set to be logged, and some members of the local community took issue with this. The leadership's response? Well, let's talk to them. The company worked with the local community to gather feedback and ultimately agreed to take steps like spraying by hand and leaving select trees on the landscape. This is the prevailing attitude at the company– do business with integrity, transparency and an open-door policy.

Rosboro has since divested their timberlands and operate by purchasing timber on the open market, but they are still guided by the same philosophy wherever they do business. The company continues to grow, operating two sawmills and three glulam plants in the Eugene/Springfield community.

When asked what the number one thing was that employees of Rosboro want the public to know about their position in the forest products industry, it was this: Rosboro uses renewable resources to make shelter for people. It's a common theme in the industry – we grow and harvest trees to build homes, schools, churches, and offices. Rosboro plays an essential role in this process, using the world's most renewable resource to manufacture products that build America's homes. /*Asha Aiello*