



Washington, DC Update

Washington has largely been consumed with the House’s ongoing impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump’s dealings with Ukraine and more recently the Nationals’ World Series run and championship. The primary focus for Congress in the weeks ahead will be passing Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations bills before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) ends on November 21.

On October 31, the Senate passed H.R. 3055 by an 84-9 vote. This is the first of two “minibus” spending packages and includes funding for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. The bill rejected an amendment by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) to block a proposed exemption from the 2001 Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest and included an amendment by Senators Martha McSally (R-AZ) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) to require the Forest Service to submit a report to Congress on the status of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative in Arizona. The Senate also rejected an amendment by Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) to redirect Land and Water Conservation Fund money exclusively to maintenance of existing federal lands and facilities.

Passing this spending package will allow the House (which has passed 10 of 12 spending bills) and Senate to begin negotiations on the levels and policies in their respective appropriations bills. The minibus includes funding for all USDA, Department of the Interior, Department of Transportation, Justice Department, and other domestic agencies. Collectively, these

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departments represent one-third of all Federal spending, with most funds for Defense, border security, Veterans, and the State Department in another minibus spending package that is not expected to pass over disputes around the boarder wall and related issues. It seems unlikely that both minibus spending packages will make it to the President’s desk before the current CR expires. The Congress will likely have to pass another short-term CR to temporarily keep the government open with dates ranging from early December to next February.

In the meantime, AFRC will continue to work with its partners to advocate for its Federal funding priorities. The [September Newsletter](#) provides an overview of the funding levels proposed under the Senate Interior Appropriations bill, which are modestly lower than the

levels set forth in the House bill for the Forest Service. Making year-to-year comparisons for the Forest Service is challenging due to the adoption of the Forest Service's budget proposal to fund salaries and other agency overhead costs in a single account, rather than tapping individual program accounts with agency "cost pools" charges.

For the BLM Oregon & California (O&C) Grant Lands resource management account, the Senate bill would provide \$107 million, which is level with Fiscal Year 2019 funding. The House Interior bill would increase the O&C Account to \$117 million thanks to the efforts of Oregon Representative Peter DeFazio and the rest of the Oregon House Delegation.

AFRC recently joined with the Douglas Timber Operators and several other associations representing Oregon's forest products industry in sending a [letter](#) to Appropriations leaders in support of the House's higher funding level as well as report language in both bills to require the BLM to report timber volume sold and *awarded* rather than merely offered. The letter also voiced support for report language in the Senate bill urging the BLM to maintain its wildfire suppression contract with the State of Oregon.

Congressman Walden Announces Retirement

On October 28, Oregon Representative Greg Walden announced that he would not seek reelection to the Congress after his current term expires at the end of 2020. Walden is currently the Ranking Member of the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee. He was first elected to Congress in 1998 after spending almost a decade serving in the Oregon Legislature. Prior to his first run for public office, Walden spent time in Washington, D.C. as Chief of Staff to Oregon Congressman Denny Smith and also owned and operated Columbia Gorge Broadcasting.

From his earliest days in Congress, Walden has been a leader on natural resource issues and has a whip-smart grasp of policy details. He was a key architect of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, which was passed into law in response to devastating fires in Oregon and across the West. He also worked with the Bush Administration on measures to balance the needs of agriculture and endangered fish in the Klamath Basin.

During the mid-2000s, Walden served as the Chairman of the House Natural Resources Forestry Subcommittee where he passed the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act to streamline federal forest restoration efforts following wildfires and other catastrophic events. Unfortunately, the legislation was never taken up by the U.S. Senate. More recently, Walden worked with fellow Oregon Representatives Peter DeFazio and Kurt Schrader to secure House passage of the O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act to restore sustained-yield timber production to the BLM O&C lands in Western Oregon. The bipartisan legislation was opposed by Oregon Senator Ron Wyden and failed to advance in the Senate.

Congressman Walden also served as the chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), the campaign arm of House Republicans, from 2012-2016. During those two election cycles, he spent 281 nights on the road helping to raise \$8 million for the committee to defend and expand Republican control of the House. In 2016, he was able to leverage the political and personal relationships he built during his time as NRCC chairman to win selection

as the Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, a position he held until Democrats won back control of the House in the 2018 election. Walden is the 19th Republican to announce plans to leave the House, which is complicating Republican efforts to win back the House in 2020. However, Walden’s statement warned political observers not to read too much from his personal decision not to seek another term:

“Based on recent polling, strong fundraising, and the backing of my wife and family, I am confident I could earn the support of 2nd District voters for another term. I’m also optimistic that a path exists for Republicans to recapture a majority in the House, and that I could return for two more years as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

“But I also know that for me, the time has come to pursue new challenges and opportunities. So, I will not seek reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives, nor election to any other office, but instead I will close the public service chapter of my life, thankful for the friends I’ve made and the successful work we’ve done together.”

AFRC would like to thank Congressman Walden for his many years of service to the people of eastern and southern Oregon and his efforts to restore the health of our forests and rural communities. /Heath Heikkila

D.C. Court Issues Favorable Ruling Enforcing O&C Sale Mandate

On September 30, Judge Richard J. Leon, U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, granted in part plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment in the “*Swanson III*” litigation. Plaintiffs include AFRC and our members who rely on timber volume from the statutorily unique O&C lands. The ruling establishes BLM’s legal obligation to offer its planned timber volume on an ongoing basis, district by district.

This ruling is a significant step forward in judicial enforcement of the O&C Act’s mandates. It reinstates the core of the ruling that Judge Leon [first issued](#) in 2013 in *Swanson v. Salazar* (*Swanson I*), requiring BLM to sell its declared Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) on the Roseburg and Medford Districts. In 2015, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals [overturned](#) *Swanson I* due to lack of standing. The current case was [filed](#) in August 2015. ([September 2015 Newsletter](#)).

Swanson III seeks to require BLM to offer, every year, the ASQ as declared in its Resource Management Plan. Because ASQ volume must come from Harvest Land Base or Matrix lands, BLM has not sold the ASQ in quite some time, with some districts falling short every year since the adoption of the Northwest Forest Plan in the mid-1990s. The [O&C Act](#) requires that “not less than the annual sustained yield capacity [= ASQ] when the same has been determined and declared, shall be sold annually, or so much thereof as can be sold at reasonable prices on a normal market.” The current declared ASQ is 205 Million Board Feet (MMBF). Even when BLM sold a total *statewide* volume above 200 MMBF, as it did in 2017, it has only sold an ASQ of around 115 MMBF, and has told Congress it does not plan to go above 150 MMBF. Since 2009, BLM’s total shortfall is 361 MMBF, and since 1995 the shortfall is over 1.2 billion board feet. To put this into perspective, using a simple jobs multiplier factor of 11 direct jobs created or supported for every one million board feet of timber harvested, this means Oregon has missed

out on approximately 4,000 private sector jobs since 2009 and more than 13,000 jobs since 1995. This does not include indirect job creation or lost revenue to counties to support essential services like mental health, education, and law enforcement.

In this opinion, Judge Leon found that the plaintiffs (specifically, two AFRC members) have standing. “Because plaintiffs purchase timber from BLM, they were harmed when BLM failed to sell the statutorily required volume of timber from 1995 to 2015” and continue to be harmed “when BLM fails to comply with the O&C Act’s timber sale mandate today.” This follows an earlier decision in 2017 where the court reinstated several plaintiffs after the D.C. Circuit [affirmed](#) that AFRC has standing to challenge the critical habitat designation for northern spotted owl. ([April 2017 Newsletter](#)).

Judge Leon also made several rulings which reaffirm the sale requirements of the O&C Act, including a statement that “[t]hese are mandatory directives: Congress decreed that the Department of the Interior ‘shall’ declare a sustained yield capacity and ‘shall’ sell or offer for sale annually” that amount of timber. The court agreed with BLM, though, that it is permitted to vary the ASQ by up to 40% (41 MMBF).

What this ruling means on the ground for the timber sale program is still uncertain. The court has instructed the parties to submit remedy proposals. AFRC appreciates the help of our partners and members in this effort, as well as the perseverance of our counsel Mark Rutzick who filed the original case *Swanson I* in 2010. */Lawson Fite*

Landscape-Wide Injunction Issued in New Mexico and Another is Threatened in Idaho/Montana

Ever since Judge Dwyer’s [infamous injunction](#) preceding development of the Northwest Forest Plan, landscape-scale injunctions against forest management have fortunately been rare. The inclusion of a partial *Cottonwood* fix in the 2018 Omnibus also decreased the likelihood of such broad orders. ([March 2018 Newsletter](#)). Two recent rulings highlight continued risks of *Cottonwood*-type rulings, the urgency of a full *Cottonwood* fix, and the need to educate decisionmakers to take a more nuanced view of active management.

New Mexico Injunction

On September 12, Arizona District Court Judge Raner Collins issued a sweeping [order](#) barring all “USFS timber management actions in Region 3 national forests.” This included providing the 2019 Capitol Christmas tree, which will be harvested from New Mexico’s Carson National Forest. The court issued the order after overturning biological opinions for 11 National Forests in Arizona and New Mexico. The crux of the ruling was that the BiOps assumed the Forest Service would continue implementing 1996 guidelines requiring monitoring of Mexican spotted owl populations. The agency, however, had been unable to do the monitoring, which the court determined “fundamentally hampers the ability to assess recovery.” The court found the agencies “have had over 20 years to find a workable way to monitor MSO occupancy. . . . Budget complications are no excuse.” The court then enjoined all timber management in Region 3.

Although this decision is not a classic *Cottonwood* ruling, it parallels one of the factors for reinitiation of ESA consultation considered in *Cottonwood*. Reinitiation can be required if “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” or if “the identified [action](#) is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the [listed species](#) or [critical habitat](#) that was not considered in the [biological opinion](#).” (50 CFR 402.16). The Omnibus fix did not address these “new information” factors. And here, the Arizona judge ordered reinitiation of consultation and issued an injunction pending completion of the consultation. The decision relied on obsolete Ninth Circuit cases that inappropriately presume that timber sales are irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.

The exact contours of the injunction are still in flux. On September 23, the court granted the Forest Service’s clarification motion, ruling the broad injunction applied only to the six forests still operating under the challenged opinions (Lincoln, Santa Fe, Cibola, Carson, Tonto, and Gila). On October 23, the court approved the parties’ stipulation to allow some activity in these forests, including collection of firewood, harvest of the Capitol Christmas tree, and a limited number of management projects.

The Forest Service filed a request to further narrow the scope of the court’s injunction, with a hearing scheduled for November 7. Needless to say, this order is a grave threat to the forest products industry and to sustainable forest management in New Mexico. AFRC continues to monitor the case and coordinate with our partners at the Federal Forest Resource Coalition and New Mexico Forest Industry Association.

Grizzly Bear Cottonwood Ruling May Threaten Projects Across Region 1

On October 3, Judge Molloy of the Montana U.S. District Court overturned the Pilgrim Project on the Kootenai National Forest due to a *Cottonwood* “new information” claim. The Access Amendments to the Kootenai, Lolo and Idaho Panhandle Forest Plans set limits on road extent for the purpose of grizzly bear conservation. Judge Molloy’s [order](#) found that data over the past eight years demonstrates ineffective road closures that have contributed to increases in linear road miles, potentially impacting grizzly bears in ways that were not considered in the Access Amendments biological opinion. The court held that reinitiation of ESA consultation on the Access Amendments was required.

Later the same day, two litigant groups sent a [60-day Notice of Intent to Sue](#) to the Idaho Panhandle, Kootenai, and Lolo National Forests. The notice claims that the agencies must complete ESA consultation for the Access Amendments before implementing a wide array of timber sales on those forests. This notice lists **148 projects** that the groups claim should be stayed or withdrawn within 60 days, and threatens to file suit on all these projects and seek a broad injunction. AFRC’s Legal Team is closely monitoring this issue. /*Lawson Fite, Sara Ghafouri*

AFRC Moves to Intervene in Tecuya Project

The Tecuya Ridge Shaded Fuelbreak Project, located on the Los Padres National Forest in Kern County, consists of approximately 1,626 acres of thinning treatment in high risk priority areas. To expedite treatment, the Forest authorized the use of the “timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement” categorical exclusion (CE).

The purpose of the Tecuya Project is to provide safe and effective locations for fire suppression efforts, slow the speed of wildfire, and reduce the potential for loss of life, property and natural resources. There have been 15 wildfires within the project area since 1998. The treatment area is located in priority areas already identified by the Mt. Pinos Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Los Padres National Forest Strategic Fuelbreak Assessment. The fuelbreak areas would be strategically placed around communities within the wildland-urban intermix including the communities of Frazier Park and Pine Mountain Club that are among the highest risk of wildfire.

The project area contains approximately 1,500 acres of mixed conifer and pinyon-juniper dominated stands that are unnaturally overstocked and unable to withstand attacks by bark beetles. Due to insect infestation and drought in the area, the stands are dying at an increased rate and are at risk for a wildfire event. Thinning would help increase the forest’s resilience to insects and disease by lowering the number of trees that are competing for limited resources such as water. Below is a photo showing the pinyon pine slope, an area proposed for treatment along the ridgeline.



Environmental groups filed suit against the project raising six claims for relief. First, they allege the Forest Service violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by wrongly relying on a CE instead of conducting a lengthier environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. In their view, the project does not fall under the “timber stand improvement” CE and that “extraordinary circumstances” are present such that the Forest Service may not rely on a CE. Second, plaintiffs claim the Forest Service violated NEPA by failing to address cumulative impacts related to the adjacent Cuddy Valley Project, which is being challenged in a separate action. Third, plaintiffs contend that the Tecuya Project does not comply with the Roadless Rule’s mandates because the Forest Service presumes that the project involves mechanical thinning of trees less than 21 inches diameter at breast height. Fourth, plaintiffs assert that the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service violated the Endangered Species Act in determining that the project was “not likely to adversely affect” the California condor. Fifth, plaintiffs allege that the project violates the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) for failure to comply with the Los Padres Standard 28: “Avoid or minimize disturbance to breeding and roosting California condors by prohibiting or restricting management activities and human uses within 1.5 miles of active California condor nest sites and within 0.5 miles of active roosts.” Finally, plaintiffs assert that the project violates NEPA and NFMA for sensitive species, the California spotted owl and yellow blotched salamander, which are present in the project area.

On October 17, AFRC, the California Forestry Association, and Associated California Loggers moved to intervene in support of this important project. AFRC believes that the Forest Service used the appropriate analyses, tools and policies to expedite this project under federal law. The project is consistent with the Roadless Rule, since no new road construction or reconstruction is proposed and the removal of small diameter trees is authorized under the rule. The project also does not negatively impact the California condor since the closest nesting site is 20 miles away near the Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge and Tehachapi Mountains.

The Tecuya Project is an important effort to improve the health of public lands impacted by insect attacks and drought and is carefully designed to restore the resiliency of these lands while protecting nearby communities and mitigating any impacts to vulnerable species.

The case is before Judge Olguin in the United States District Court for the Central District of California. A hearing on our motion to intervene will be held on November 14. /*Sara Ghafouri*

DNR Update

It has been a busy few months as the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) nears completion of a Marbled Murrelet Long Term Conservation Strategy (LTCS) and a new Sustainable Harvest Calculation (SHC) – two critical decisions that will drive harvest levels from state trust lands for decades. On October 14, DNR released its [Final Environmental Impact Statement](#) (FEIS) on the SHC for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 to 2024 planning decade for state trust lands in western Washington. DNR staff is scheduled to brief the Board of Natural Resources (BNR) on the SHC during its [November 5 meeting](#).

SHC Alternative 6 is linked to DNR’s proposed LTCS Habitat Conservation Plan amendment and would provide an average annual harvest level of 465 MMBF, including 382 MMBF of arrearage volume (missed timber volume that needs to be made up) from the previous FY05-14

planning decade. This harvest level represents a significant reduction compared to the original FY05-14 SHC. In 2004 the FEIS Preferred Alternative was 636 MMBF and the Board adopted target was set at an annual harvest volume of 597 MMBF. In 2007 this target was further reduced to 550 MMBF due to the Riparian Forest Restoration Strategy and the 2006 Settlement Agreement, which was the result of litigation of the 2004 SHC by the environmental community.

AFRC members and staff are reviewing the FEIS, DNR's SHC model, and the basis for the arrearage calculation. We have identified several areas of concern. For example, DNR's LTCS Preferred Alternative (LTCS PA) would only set aside 4,000 more acres than the current Interim Strategy, which the SHC analysis shows would generate an average annual volume of 550 MMBF. It is not clear how the loss of 4,000 acres results in an 85 MMBF annual average harvest reduction under the SHC. It also does not align with claims by Commissioner Hilary Franz that the LTCS will free up over 100,000 acres for timber harvests. There are also other questions about DNR's 382 MMBF arrearage figure, which differs from the statutory definition of 462 MMBF. Nor is it clear why, despite some reductions in deferred acres under the LTCS PA, the SHC Economic Analysis report released in October 2019 showed a 14 MMBF annual decrease in volume from the previous version released in October 2018. AFRC is working to clarify why these numbers don't add up. The potential impacts to jobs, revenue to beneficiaries such as hospitals, and available timber to support the remaining milling infrastructure are substantial.

DNR's proposed LTCS is also receiving significant scrutiny from members of the Board of Natural Resources, the forest products industry, and the beneficiary community. At its October 1 meeting, the BNR received an extensive staff briefing on the LTCS and asked many probing questions. Members of the BNR also heard from the public, including several witnesses representing AFRC, who raised serious concerns and questions with the LTCS. These concerns were outlined in the [September Newsletter](#) and have caused some to call on the BNR to delay a decision beyond its planned December decision timeframe.

Elaine Spencer, AFRC outside counsel, recently sent a letter to the BNR urging it to correct the major flaws with the LTCS as part of any delay. The letter outlines the primary areas AFRC believes DNR must remedy to comply with its fiduciary mandates. If the BNR does delay action on the LTCS it will also likely result in a delay to the SHC since the two processes are closely linked. Adoption of a new SHC will cause the 2006 Settlement Agreement to sunset, which removes some management limitations. Despite this benefit, assuring the SHC target is accurate is critical to the continued ability of the beneficiaries to provide public services and the purchasers to provide economic opportunities in many rural communities. DNR is six years late on the current SHC and will essentially need to begin work on the next decade SHC shortly after completing the current process. Fixing the potential underlying errors now will set DNR up for success into the future. /Heath Heikkila, Matt Comisky

Forest Service Approves Final Colville Forest Plan

On October 22, the Colville National Forest released its Final Revised Land Management Plan and signed Record of Decision. The Plan, which becomes effective November 21, expects to increase the yearly timber output from 41 MMBF to 62 MMBF and create more than 200 new jobs in the forest products sector alone.

The Plan prioritizes rural prosperity, treatment of fire-prone forests, forest access, and healthy watersheds and provides updated management direction that addresses changing environmental and socio-economic conditions. For example, the Plan will focus on treating 18,000-25,000 acres annually up from the initial 6,000-12,000 acres and aims to improve forest health and resilience to insect and disease while reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire over time. By creating a healthier forest, it enables the Colville to be a better neighbor to adjacent landowners. Improved conditions will also provide for long-term economic, social, and ecological value for local communities, cleaner water for downstream communities and farmers, and improved habitat for sensitive fish, wildlife, and plants.

Further, the Plan will outline recent successes of the Forest in accomplishing additional restoration work because of alternative funding sources such as the A-Z project and Good Neighbor Authority projects, thus reflecting why the Forest Service budget should not be a constraining factor in management of the Colville. AFRC was particularly pleased to see that the most current long-term Vegetative Management Plan will be placed on the Forests' website and used as a template for developing out year projects.

Other aspects include a recommendation to designate an additional 61,000 acres of wilderness (only the Congress can legislatively designate wilderness). The Forest will also review how road density is calculated and clarify criteria for including or excluding certain roads in the calculation. During the objection process one area of concern was the desired condition of only two miles of system road per section of land which seemed to be difficult to achieve.

AFRC appreciates the hard work and effort the Forest Service put into developing what we consider a very workable Forest Plan. We look forward to continuing to work with the Colville and our partners to successfully implement the plan. */Tom Partin*

Chetco Bar Fire Salvage

During the summer of 2017 the Chetco Bar Fire consumed 191,197 acres of forest land of which 170,321 acres were on National Forest System lands. In response, the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest completed an Environmental Assessment that considered timber salvage treatments where appropriate and feasible. To help expedite the process, they solicited assistance from inside and outside of the Forest to help with the analysis and increase capacity. The below numbers reflect what was planned versus what has sold through February 2019.

| <u>Planned</u> | <u>Sold</u> |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 15 timber sales | 8 timber sales |
| 4,090 acres | 1,800 acres |
| 71.376 MMBF | 30.105 MMBF |

At quick glance at these numbers may seem disappointing. However, AFRC applauded the Rogue River-Siskiyou's efforts and emphasized that the 40 MMBF of unsold volume was not indicative of any lack of interest or demand in fire-damaged timber by local purchasers. Instead, it was simply a function of rapidly deteriorating timber due to multiple factors including the drought in the summer of 2018, the nature of the burned landscape, and elevated wood-boring

insect activity in recent years. As checking and blue stain affected the trees, the economic viability of the sales diminished.

Unfortunately, there are likely to be future fires similar to Chetco Bar. Learning from it and making improvements in the future are required for continued success. The timber industry continues to be interested in fire-damaged timber as long as it can be harvested in a timely manner. The industry is invested in the health of our public lands and sees salvage treatments as a necessary practice, not only to utilize damaged resources, but to assist with reforestation of the impacted landscapes. /Amanda Astor, Andy Geissler

OWIT Educates the Public During Forest Products Month

October 20-26 was National Forest Products Week. The annual observance began in 1960 when Congress passed a joint resolution establishing the third week of October as National Forest Products Week. President Eisenhower called on people “to observe the week beginning October 16, 1960 as National Forest Products Week, with activities and ceremonies designed to focus the attention on the importance of our forests and forest products to the Nation’s economy and welfare.”

Oregon Women in Timber (OWIT) decided to go one step further and declare October as Forest Products Month. Amanda Astor, AFRC Southwest Oregon Field Forester, is the OWIT Lane County Chapter Secretary and helped develop the educational campaign. The campaign included radio ads on three Lane County radio stations on forest sector jobs, water quality, forest protection laws, and climate change solutions. Amanda was interviewed on the Bill Lundun radio show and Lars Larson’s Northwest Show (listen to the Lars Larson interview [here](#) and look for the 10/21/19 podcast). A very successful social media campaign created #forestfactfriday, which shared interesting facts about forestry. AFRC’s members also used social media to share their story and the marvels of modern forestry and wood products.

Other components of the campaign included mills tours for University of Oregon students and others at Rosboro and Swanson Group facilities (both AFRC members). A trivia night with timber and agriculture questions was hosted at ColdFire Brewing in Eugene with Lane Families for Farms and Forests. The OWIT Lane County Chapter also provided forestry educational packets to teachers around the county.

Finally, the Register Guard published an [op-ed](#) by Amanda on October 17 in response to the degrading articles towards the timber industry. The Register Guard asked Amanda to be their first guest on a new podcast related to letters to the editor and op-eds, which will air in mid to late November. Amanda will also write monthly columns about forestry, timber, and natural resources and appear on the podcast after the piece is published. We look forward to our continued efforts working with other non-profits to educate the public about the timber industry and keeping a vibrant forest products sector in the West. /Amanda Astor

AFRC Dedicates Third Habitat for Humanity Home

Brangmai and Merry Hpauyam and their first daughter arrived in America from Myanmar through the Refugee Resettlement Program. Brangmai overcame a language barrier to find steady employment to support his family. Yet the cost of an apartment consumed nearly half the family's income, and the apartment quickly became too small with the arrival of two more daughters. Like many Americans, the Hpauyam's dreamed of homeownership.

The family's dream became a reality when they received the keys to their home in Vancouver, Washington's McKibbin Commons neighborhood, thanks to a partnership between AFRC and Evergreen Habitat for Humanity. Travis and Demi Joseph joined over 75 members of the community for a dedication on October 6, with Travis representing AFRC members and staff who donated building materials and cash, as well as their own time to help build the home. The Hpauyam family's oldest daughter read a short "thank you" speech before the family received the keys.



At the dedication Travis said AFRC received many compliments about its work with Evergreen Habitat. "A few Habitat board members came up to me after and thanked us for our passion and dedication – noting how easy it was to work with us in the process. They heard from volunteers how excited and motivated we were during our volunteer build day."

"This has been a powerful and exciting partnership that shows how local forest products companies make safe, affordable housing possible. Our vision is simple: let's get to work restoring the health of our at-risk national forests, convert hazardous fuels and wood into lumber and other sustainable wood products, and utilize carbon-friendly material to help solve environmental and social challenges like climate change and the housing crisis. We're part of the solution – and we could not have been more honored or thrilled to apply our vision and passion to build a home for the Hpauyam family."



The 1,170-square-foot home stores the equivalent of 28 metric tons of CO₂. Lumber for the Hpauyam home was donated by Interfor, Timber Products Company and Freres Lumber Company. All AFRC members in all five states it works contributed financially to the project. In addition to providing the family with more space, their new home will provide the stability and safety of homeownership. “I thought it was impossible to own a home, when my daughters would ask why we don’t have a home, I told them it was not possible. Now I can tell them it is possible.” Brangmai said.

This is the third home AFRC and its members have helped build through its partnership with Habitat for Humanity, including homes in Springfield, Oregon and Lacey, Washington. AFRC’s first Habitat build in Springfield is chronicled in the video [Build a House. Frame a Future.](#) /*Nick Smith*