



## AFRC Annual Meeting (In Person) – Registration Open!



[Registration is now open](#) for AFRC’s Annual Meeting from August 2-4 at Skamania Lodge, Washington. Please visit our webpage to [register](#), [book a room](#), and view the meeting [agenda](#).

We will start with our annual golf tournament at Elk Ridge Golf Course, known as the “The best Northwest golf course you’ve probably never heard of.” We’ll gather for our Welcome Reception at Skamania’s new Riverview Pavilion with spectacular views of the Columbia Gorge.

Attendees will hear from elected officials including Congressman Bruce Westerman and Washington Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz; experts on forest management and climate change; a special report on the impacts of Oregon’s devastating 2020 wildfire season; Pacific Northwest journalists and media experts; Federal agency leadership during our fan favorite “Regional Breakout Sessions;” and more!

After a one-year hiatus due to the global pandemic, AFRC is excited to provide a substantive, timely, in-person meeting on some of the most important issues impacting AFRC members and the timber industry. The room block is filling up (closes July 3) – register now to book your spot. See you in Skamania in two months! /*Travis Joseph*

## Washington DC Update

President Biden and Senate Republicans continue negotiations over a potential infrastructure package following the release of Biden’s \$2.2 trillion “American Jobs Plan.” Republicans recently countered with a \$928 billion proposal largely focused on traditional, physical infrastructure projects. This was up from their initial \$568 billion proposal. The revised Republican proposal includes funding for some Democratic priorities like electric vehicles and water infrastructure, although it does not include funding for “human infrastructure” like childcare and increasing wages for home care workers sought by progressives.

Democrats set Memorial Day as an informal deadline for gauging progress towards reaching agreement with Republicans on bipartisan legislation. Ultimately, Democrats may attempt to move a partisan proposal through the budget reconciliation process, which only requires support from the 50 Democratic Senators with Vice President Harris’ tiebreaking vote. It is also possible that Democrats could opt for bipartisan agreement on a traditional infrastructure package and then attempt to secure more progressive

priorities through the reconciliation process. There has been little progress reaching an agreement on paying for an infrastructure package, with Republicans focused on unspent COVID relief funds and traditional user fees (i.e., gas tax) while Democrats want to increase the corporate income tax from 21% to 28%.

*Biden Administration personnel.* Meryl Harrell has been named USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), which oversees the U.S. Forest Service. Harrell spent eight years in this office during the Obama Administration, including serving as Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary. Most recently, she served as the Executive Director of the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards and prior to her service in the Obama Administration she worked on public land issues at The Wilderness Society. Her position is not subject to Senate confirmation. The Administration still has not nominated an Under Secretary for NRE, a position that is subject to Senate confirmation.

On May 13, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the nomination of Tommy Beaudreau to serve as Interior Deputy Secretary by 18-1 vote. Beaudreau grew up in Alaska and has experience working with the oil and gas industry, including serving as the Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management during the Obama Administration. While some environmental groups have criticized Beaudreau, he has the strong support of Chairman Joe Manchin (D-WV), Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-WY) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). A full Senate vote is expected soon.

Biden's choice to serve as Interior Solicitor, Robert Anderson, cleared the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on May 27 with a narrow 11-9 vote that only Lisa Murkowski joined panel Democrats in voting yes. Anderson has recently been serving in the Interior Solicitor's office in an acting capacity and has been involved in the withdrawal of six solicitors' opinions issued during the Trump Administration, including a narrower interpretation of protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Anderson spent 20 years as a law professor at the University of Washington where he specialized in Indian law and directed its Native American Law Center. He is an enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and has advocated for greater consultation with tribes, including as an associate Interior solicitor during the Clinton Administration.

*Forestry hearings.* On May 26, the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee held a [hearing](#) entitled "Rethinking Resiliency: Budgeting for the Future of Forest Management," its first under new subcommittee Chairman Jeff Merkley (D-OR). During his comments, Senator Merkley spoke about the devastating wildfires that impacted Oregon last year and reiterated his support for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA), including a desire to double the funding available to the program, as well as the need to treat acres that have already cleared the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. Senator Merkley noted that 2 million acres of treatments have cleared the NEPA process in Oregon. Much of these areas are believed to involve non-commercial treatments and prescribed fire, as well as timber sales that make up the agency's out-year timber program. Finally, Senator Merkley urged the agency to request the funding necessary to recover and restore the millions of acres burned in last year's wildfires.

Since the Administration has yet to release a formal budget request for the Forest Service, the hearing largely focused on overarching budget and policy issues. The issue of Forest Service fire borrowing is receiving renewed attention as the 2018 bipartisan agreement to end the practice was tied to the Budget

Control Act, which expires this year. Congress will need to extend the budget caps that allow the Forest Service to access disaster funding when wildfire suppression spending exceeds a set level. Chief Vicki Christiansen, who represented the Forest Service, underscored the importance of maintaining the fire fix.

Chief Christiansen noted that a pending Administration report developed in response to a directive in the Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations bill will conclude that the Forest Service must accomplish 2-4 times more forest restoration and thinning if it is going to address the current forest health crisis. Meanwhile, Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) raised concerns about the disparity in pay between Forest Service firefighters with an average annual salary of \$38,500 compared to the \$70,000 average annual salary provided by CAL FIRE.

On May 20 the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Agriculture Committee held dueling hearings exploring the connection between forest management, carbon, and climate change. While the Agriculture Committee [hearing](#) was more focused on private forestland issues, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing focused more broadly on the connection between forests, forest management and wood products and [included](#) representatives from the Trillion Trees Initiative, an organization that promotes the use of wood products in buildings, the National Forest Foundation, a private landowner, as well as Ben Wudtke from the Intermountain Forestry Association.

Overall, the Energy and Natural Resources hearing provided a positive forum for the importance of active forest management to make forests more resilient to climate change and sequester carbon in wood products. Ben Wudtke highlighted the challenges facing our federal forests and the urgent need to increase forest thinning and active management in the face of the growing threats of catastrophic wildfires, insect infestations, and drought. Republican and Democratic Senators asked informed questions and spoke about the challenges forests face in their respective states. Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) commented about the disconnect between the current high lumber prices and the lack of raw materials coming from public lands in the West, which would allow mills in Montana and beyond to increase the domestic supply of lumber.

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) used the hearing to rollout his [National Prescribed Fire Act](#) by observing that “one side wants to cut everything down in the forest” and the other side “sometimes says we don’t want to cut anything down.” He went on to note that his prescribed fire legislation is “a special effort that is backed by good science, tested policy” to reduce hazardous fuels and mitigate fire by increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire. Senator Wyden went on to herald the support the legislation has received, ranging from Earthjustice and the Environmental Defense Fund to Weyerhaeuser and the National Alliance of Forest Owners.

The Wyden legislation is cosponsored by Senators Joe Manchin, Diane Feinstein, and Maria Cantwell (D-WA). A House companion bill has been introduced by Reps. Kim Schrier (D-WA), Kurt Schrader (D-OR), and Mike Simpson (R-ID). The Wyden office has produced a [one-pager](#) and [section-by-section](#) of the legislation, which would create an account to increase the use of prescribed fire, mandate that each unit of the National Forest System, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management conduct at least one prescribed burn, and give states more flexibility for prescribed fire smoke under the Clean Air Act.



AFRC has worked with the Federal Forest Resource Coalition to develop a [position statement](#) on the National Prescribed Fire Act and prescribed fire more broadly. Prescribed fire is an important forest management tool, but across most overstocked Western forests it can't be safely used until fuel loads are reduced through mechanical thinning treatments. Mechanical thinning also has significant benefits for carbon sequestration in wood products and reducing the intensity of smoke from prescribed fires and the associated public health risks. However, we do appreciate the legislative interest in promoting more active forest management, including the appropriate use of prescribed fire as just one tool. /Heath Heikkila

### ***AFRC in the News***

- Heath Heikkila is interviewed by [The Lens](#) for story on the proposed National Prescribed Fire Act, explaining why mechanical treatments on overstocked forests are necessary before fire can be reintroduced to landscapes.
- Nick Smith co-authored an oped in the [Fresno Bee](#) with Robert Longatti on the implications of litigation to stop 45 forest management projects on National Forests in California.
- Lawson Fite was interviewed by the [Redding Record Searchlight](#) on litigation over the Pettijohn project on the Shasta Trinity National Forest.

## **Demand for Timber Salvage in Western Oregon Remains High**



A report published earlier this year by Forest Economic Advisors (FEA) and Mason, Bruce & Girard (MBJ) estimated that over one billion board feet of privately managed timber was damaged by the 2020 wildfires in western Oregon. That report also estimated that over 7 billion board feet of federally managed timber was damaged.

In light of this extensive damage, industry appetite and capacity for absorbing fire-damaged timber was a consideration as the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) developed strategies for planning and prioritizing hazard tree removal and timber salvage. Meanwhile, public demand for wood products continues to rise. That same FEA/MBJ report forecasts an average annual rise of 2.5% in demand for lumber over the next five years. If this forecast is accurate, demand for lumber will have reached a twenty year high by 2025.

Unfortunately, the federal salvage program in western Oregon has yet to fully materialize as public land managers navigate the cumbersome planning requirements that emphasize deliberation and caution over expediency and efficiency. However, early sale results are promising and should encourage the USFS and BLM to maximize their timber salvage offerings as soon as possible. Doing so will meet land management objectives, mitigate safety hazards, and meet public demand for wood products.

Since January, the USFS and BLM have offered and sold 20 sales consisting of fire-damaged trees, exclusively trees posing a hazard to roads and recreation sites. Those 20 sales attracted 56 bids for an average of almost three bidders per sale. This competition has resulted in an average bid premium of approximately 80% and has generated nearly \$20 million that can fund additional fire recovery efforts, land restoration projects, and county governments.

National Forest	Volume (MMBF)	Value
Willamette	11.6	\$4,933,346
Umpqua	4.3	\$1,510,234
Rogue River-Siskiyou	4.9	\$2,335,754
BLM District	Volume (MMBF)	Value
Roseburg	0.5	\$217,999
Northwest	22.5	\$10,872,208
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>\$19,869,541</b>

The most staggering statistic revealed by this data is that, according to the FEA/MBJ report, the federal government has only captured 0.63% of their damaged timber products. AFRC is hopeful that both the USFS and BLM will expand their salvage program this year to consider treating areas burnt at high severity beyond the roadside hazard zones that have, to date, comprised nearly the entirety of the volume outputs illustrated in the table above.

The photograph above from the Archie Creek Fire on the Umpqua National Forest illustrates and summarizes the current post-fire response paradigm being implemented on federal forest land: a thin strip of roadside hazard tree removal in the foreground with an entire hillside of fire-killed trees in the background that is not planned for salvage. Over 280,000 acres of the nearly half-million acres of federal land burnt last year resembles this hillside—to date, 0% of this has been salvaged beyond hazard tree removal.

AFRC is confident that there is broad public support for the federal government to salvage more than 0.63% of fire-damaged trees following wildfire events and hopeful that both the USFS and BLM develop strategies to expedite and implement that salvage. Information on accessing the FEA/MBJ Wildfire Report can be found [here](#). /Andy Geissler

### **FWS Oregon & Northwest Offices Play Politics with NSO Critical Habitat**

In her landmark confirmation hearings, Interior Secretary Debra Haaland pledged to follow science and the law, and that her policies would be President Biden’s policies. And throughout the campaign, President Biden pledged he would do everything to make sure America would “Build Back Better.”

Based on recent actions, it is unclear whether these messages penetrated the Oregon or Pacific Northwest Region offices of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, where leadership has taken a series of questionable steps in their zeal to undercut the [2021 Revised Critical Habitat Rule](#) for the Northern Spotted Owl.

On April 30, FWS [purported to extend](#) its March 1 [illegal delay](#) of the 2021 Rule to December 15. This notice was based in part on a January 15, 2021 memo from the FWS Oregon State Director to the Acting Assistant Regional Director. The memo was never provided to anyone in the FWS or DOI Washington Office at the time, and though it was responsive to AFRC's FOIA requests submitted in March, was not produced until being posted publicly on April 30. However, documents already provided show that the State Director was the driving force behind the Delay Rule, with the active encouragement and participation of the Regional Director.

The memo purports to be an interpretation "from a scientific perspective" of the 2021 Rule. It is not. Rather, it is an attempt at legal analysis tied to false assumptions and misstatements of law. It is important to recap what is in the 2021 Rule. The Rule excludes: (1) O&C lands which by law must be managed for sustained-yield timber production; (2) Forest Service Matrix lands, the bulk of which are uninhabitable by NSO, and thus legally ineligible to be designated as critical habitat; (3) Tribal lands to be managed by the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians and Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians; and (4) the White Pass ski area. The Rule does not affect agencies' obligations to consult on projects under Section 7 of the ESA if [actual owls](#) may be affected. However, much of the area excluded is [not habitat](#). The Supreme Court has ruled that non-habitat cannot be designated as critical habitat, though FWS appears determined to resist that ruling.

The thrust of the state office memo is to claim that these exclusions will immediately result in complete harvest of all excluded acres, regardless of occupancy. This is fanciful for several reasons. First, and most glaring, is the continued application of ESA Section 7 consultation which the state memo [completely ignores](#). This omission erases any credibility the memo might otherwise have.

Second is the assumption that the exclusion will lead to annual harvests of 1 Billion Board Feet or more from federal lands in Oregon, while the remedy briefing in the O&C Act litigation seeks an interim ASQ of 500 MMBF. Third is the statement that impacts from the Barred Owl mean more forests must be set aside—which directly contradicts the FWS' own statements in a recent status review. Based on these false assumptions, the memo makes the unsupportable assertion that these exclusions are likely to increase the owl's extinction risk. This is just the kind of "speculation or surmise" that the ESA prohibits.

FWS continues to drag its feet in providing the full administrative record for the Delay Rule, meaning it may soon be subject to litigation under FOIA to compel full disclosure. */Lawson Fite*

## **AFRC and Partners Educate Fourth Circuit on 2012 Planning Rule and Importance of Site-Specific Amendments**

Joined by a coalition of forestry associations, AFRC filed an amicus brief on May 24 in the United States Court of Appeals for the [Fourth Circuit](#), defending the viability of site-specific Forest Plan amendments and pushing the court to interpret the 2012 Planning Rule consistent with NFMA.

For Forest Plans adopted under the 1982 Planning Rule, the 2012 Planning Rule [requires](#) that Plan amendments apply to any of the substantive requirements of the 2012 Rule where the amendment is "directly related" to the particular requirements. In *Wild Virginia v. USFS*, a number of environmental organizations have challenged the permits for the proposed [Mountain Valley Pipeline](#) from Wetzel

County, WV (south of Wheeling) to Pittsylvania County, VA (near Danville). The approval process included 11 site-specific amendments to the Jefferson Forest Plan to allow issuance of a permit for the 83 acres to be occupied by the pipeline.

In 2018, the Fourth Circuit remanded on the Planning Rule issue, determining several provisions of the 2012 Planning Rule were “directly related.” The petitioners and allies claim the amendments violate the 2012 Planning Rule by not mitigating all impacts within the project footprint and assert the 2012 Planning Rule was a “sea change” toward prioritizing “ecological” values in managing National Forests. The first argument would make site-specific Plan amendments virtually impossible, which our brief explained, and would interfere with badly needed forest management. The second point would read the Planning Rule to overrule NFMA’s multiple-use mandate, which it cannot lawfully do (as we asserted in the original challenge to the Planning Rule). We explained how the Planning Rule should be interpreted to comply with multiple use.

If some of this sounds a little familiar, the same court issued the ruling that the Supreme Court reversed in the 2020 *Cowpasture* case. (Article: [Cowpasture decision upholds integrity of the National Forest System](#)). That case involved a different pipeline but also threatened to cause chaos in the National Forests. This case will likely be argued in Fall 2021 in Richmond, VA.

Thanks to our partners with Black Hills Forest Resource Association, Colorado Timber Industry Association, Federal Forest Resource Coalition, Intermountain Forest Association, and Montana Wood Products Association, plus special appreciation to Scott Horngren, Tom Troxel, and Lindsay Warness, who did foundational work on the 2012 Planning Rule. */Lawson Fite*

## **Pettijohn Victory After More than a Decade**

On May 17, the federal district court in Sacramento issued a [ruling](#) allowing the Forest Service to proceed with the long-delayed [Pettijohn LSR Habitat Improvement and Fuels Reduction Project](#) on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

The Pettijohn Project was initially developed in 2012 to improve forest health, mitigate wildfire risks and provide timber to support local communities. After the project was developed, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service issued its illegal 2012 critical habitat rule for northern spotted owl, which designated huge swaths of forest that are not actually habitat. Anti-forestry groups took advantage and brought several claims against the project in 2013, resulting in a six-year stay as federal agencies reinstituted wildlife consultations under the Endangered Species Act. After the stay was lifted in July 2019, the groups renewed their attempt to stop the project.

AFRC intervened to defend the project in the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California, to prevent further unnecessary delay. This latest attempt was rejected by U.S. District Court Judge John A. Mendez, who ruled in favor of the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and AFRC.

“Plaintiffs go to great lengths to challenge different aspects of the Forest Service’s analyses of wildfires and tree removal and their effects on spotted owl habitat and greenhouse gas emissions, but in doing so, they miss the forest for the trees. So long as the Forest Service considered the relevant factors and articulated a rational connection between the facts found and choices made, the Court must uphold the agency decision,” Judge Mendez [wrote](#).

Pettijohn encompasses approximately 13,162 acres of Shasta-Trinity National Forest and includes 774 acres of thinning to promote the health and vitality of forest lands designated as “Late Successional Reserve” under the Northwest Forest Plan. To protect firefighters and nearby communities from the risks of catastrophic wildfire, the project will also conduct fuel treatments on 2,926 acres.

In AFRC’s [press release](#), we noted that “forest health threats have only increased since the project was proposed nearly a decade ago. Thinning these overstocked forests will help provide safe and effective locations for fire suppression efforts, and prevent landscape-level insect and disease outbreaks, and support the development of healthy old-growth forests. Just as importantly, the project would provide wood fiber to benefit local jobs and the economy.

“These delays were an unfortunate result of the Fish & Wildlife Service’s overreach in 2012, which has been partially corrected by the 2021 rule issued on January 15. We urge the Biden Administration to implement the 2021 rule without delay.”

In a [newspaper interview](#) with the Redding *Record-Searchlight*, a representative of the plaintiff groups said, “I think judge Mendez’s decision is a travesty. And I think, and I know I’m not supposed to say this, but I think he is a very biased judge.” The plaintiff groups have 60 days (until about July 17) to initiate an appeal to the Ninth Circuit. In the meantime, project implementation may begin. */Lawson Fite*

### **The White House’s “Preliminary Report” on the 30 x 30 Conservation Initiative**

On May 6, the White House released the [Preliminary Report](#) on President Biden’s 30 x 30 Initiative to conserve lands and waters in the United States, now characterized as the “America the Beautiful” campaign. The Preliminary Report was submitted to the National Climate Task Force and was developed by the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The Preliminary Report calls for a “decade-long effort to support locally led and voluntary conservation and restoration efforts across public, private, and Tribal lands and waters in order to create jobs and strengthen the economy’s foundation.” The “Letter to America” in the report notes that “rather than simply measuring conservation progress by national parks, wilderness lands, and marine protected areas in the care of the government, the President’s vision recognizes and celebrates the voluntary conservation efforts of farmers, ranchers, and forest owners.” But the report notes there are different views of what should count as “conservation” but recognizes that “many users of our lands and waters,” including working lands, “can be consistent with the long-term health and sustainability of natural systems.”

The report lists eight high level principles for a locally led effort towards conservation: (1) Pursue a Collaborative and Inclusive Approach to Conservation; (2) Conserve America’s Lands and Waters for the Benefit of All People; (3) Support Locally Led and Locally Designed Conservation Efforts; (4) Honor Tribal Sovereignty and Support the Priorities of Tribal Nations; (5) Pursue Conservation and Restoration Approaches that Create Jobs and Support Healthy Communities; (6) Honor Private Property Rights and Support the Voluntary Stewardship Efforts of Private Landowners and Fishers; (7) Use Science as a Guide; and (8) Build on Existing Tools and Strategies with an Emphasis on Flexibility and Adaptive Approaches.



The report also discusses how to establish a mechanism to measure progress. Although there is “no single metric” that could fully measure progress towards meeting the conservation goals, transparent and measurable goals for conservation can be a helpful tool to “set a baseline, understand overall trends, and catalyze the collective action across the country” to address climate change and biodiversity. The report recommends that the government take two actions to measure and report upon conservation process: (1) create an American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas that collects baseline information; and (2) publish annual updates on the health of nature in America and the Federal Government’s efforts to support locally led conservation and restoration efforts.

The report’s recommendations are a starting point for additional public input and conversations to inform the 30 x 30 goal for conservation. AFRC will continue to press the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to establish a formal public input process where we can submit information about current conservation efforts and the need for flexibility to address forest health concerns on public lands. /Sara Ghafouri

### **AFRC Tours the Twisp Project**

On May 25, AFRC staff and representatives from member companies Hampton Lumber and Sierra Pacific Industries joined a group of twenty-four people to visit and discuss the 77,000-acre Twisp Project area on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. While the Twisp Project has been out for scoping and Draft EA comments since late 2019, this was the first opportunity to look at the project on the ground with Forest Service personnel since COVID protocols were implemented.



*Parties gather to discuss Twisp Project.*

The Twisp landscape needs a more proactive approach to forest management because a century of fire suppression has dramatically altered the health and natural balance of the forest. The 2018 Crescent Fire, 2015 Twisp River Fire and 2014 Little Bridge Creek Fire all burned close to or within the project area and are the most recent reminders that now is the time to treat and restore a forest for the needs of present and future generations.



*2018 Crescent fire scar in the background-burned 52,610 acres.*

The Forest has developed an aggressive plan to manage the landscape including the use of Condition Based Management in Matrix lands, thinning in spotted owl habitat in LSR lands, removing Douglas-fir trees that are heavily damaged from mistletoe disease, thinning in riparian reserves, implementing shaded fuel breaks along major roads, and treating fuels in Inventoried Roadless Areas. The Forest is planning to treat up to nearly 20,000 acres commercially and another 30,000 acres with non-commercial treatments including prescribed fire and pre-commercial thinnings. There are four or five timber sales being planned from the Twisp Project over the next three years which could yield as much as 50 MMBF.



*Photo: Heavily mistletoed Douglas-fir—unhealthy and extreme fire risks*

While AFRC and our members strongly support the Project, several members of the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative (NCWFHC) have questioned the Forest’s aggressive approach



and have pushed back on several parts of the project. The intent of the field trip was for the Forest Service to explain and demonstrate the need for the actions planned to lessen the risk of wildfire and improve the aquatics and other resources in the project area.

In an attempt to appease some NCWFHC members and gain support of the Collaborative, the Forest has reduced the harvest tree size in Matrix lands from 30 inches dbh to 25 inches dbh, reduced the width of shaded fuel breaks from 600 feet down to 200 feet, cancelled any potential salvage from the Crescent fire, and reduced the acres of riparian areas to be treated, along with other concessions.



*Photo: Heavy fuels in proposed Shaded Fuel break-unfortunately, treated distance reduced to 200 ft.*

AFRC and our members, as well as several other collaborative members voiced support for the science and rationale the Forest has used in designing the project. We strongly encourage the Forest to publish their Draft Decision which is due out later this summer without further compromise or reduction of treatments. We applaud the Forest for taking a landscape treatment approach for the Twisp Project in an attempt to prevent future devastating wildfires. /Tom Partin

## **AFRC Joins Coalition to Defend Wolf De-Listing**

AFRC has moved to intervene in litigation involving the gray wolf alongside a national stakeholder coalition including American Farm Bureau Federation, American Sheep Industry Association, the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, and the Public Lands Council.

[Three cases filed](#) by environmental and animal welfare groups in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California challenge the final delisting rule issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 3, 2020. The cases are all assigned to Judge Jeffrey S. White in the Oakland division. The stakeholder coalition is represented by Karma Brown of the law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP.

The coalition is defending the delisting because it recognizes the successful recovery of the wolf and enables responsible wildlife management and protection of private property by farmers, ranchers, and forest resource users. The coalition provided the Court with personal stories that illustrate the harm inflicted by unchecked wolf populations on livestock ranchers and farmers, natural ecosystems, and other wildlife.

Since being listed under the ESA in 1974, the gray wolf has exceeded recovery goals by more than 300 percent. This has become a story of runaway success, with uncontrolled populations now threatening livestock and rural communities across the country.

The delisting of the gray wolf properly returns protection of the species to state and local management agencies. Delisting would also put an end to bizarre loopholes where wolves, crossing state lines as their numbers grow and strengthen, suddenly become designated as threatened. This is what happened in Washington, Oregon, and California before January 2021—a wolf could walk out of the “Northern Rockies” area and suddenly the same animal would be listed.

The ESA is intended to promote species recovery and delisting — not to impose permanent protected status for recovered species. Delisting appropriately reflects the success of recovery efforts, follows the science, and enables states to move forward with the active management that is necessary for balanced ecosystems.

“As Gray wolf populations increase, the science clearly supports the species’ delisting under the Endangered Species Act,” said Travis Joseph in a [press release](#). “Returning protections to state and local agencies gives public lands managers greater ability to reduce the risks of severe wildfires, insects and disease that are impacting communities and forested ecosystems. The American Forest Resource Council is pleased to join this coalition to protect multiple-use management of our nation’s public lands. This includes proactive and science-based active forest management that benefits all wildlife by providing quality habitat and forage for all species.”

In addition to the coalition of agriculture and forestry interests, a number of hunting groups are involved in the case, as wolf hunts are planned in Wisconsin in the fall. */Lawson Fite*

### **Kameron Schroeder Joins AFRC as Summer Law Clerk**

Kameron Schroeder was born and raised in Elk Grove, California before heading to Duke University on a football scholarship in 2014. At Duke, Kameron completed his bachelor’s degree in environmental science and policy in 2017 and thereafter decided to return to Duke to obtain a master’s degree in environmental policy.





In 2020, Kameron graduated from the master's program as the Valedictorian and because of their strong environmental law program, chose to attend the University of Oregon School of Law. Having recently finished his first year of law school, Kameron is the co-director of both the Green Business Initiative and the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at the University of Oregon School of Law.

Kameron has worked for a variety of organizations during his young professional career from the Monterey Bay Aquarium to the Solano County Water Agency. Notably, Kameron assisted with the development of study methodology, statistical analysis, and data collection for a report on fisheries sustainability for the United Nations. Additionally, Kameron aided with identification, digital transfer and presentation of evidence, and damages data for use in legal proceedings for a boutique law firm specializing in California wildfires.

Kameron is excited to join the team at AFRC and help advocate for sustainably managing and utilizing our forest resources. He strongly believes in the benefits of timber harvesting in protecting the health of our forests, protecting residents from wildland fires, and ensuring the businesses that make up the AFRC membership continue to provide economic opportunities and benefits for local communities in the Pacific Northwest. /*Kameron Schroeder*