



AFRC Submits Comments on Federal Old Growth and Mature Forests

This month AFRC submitted [comments](#) responding to the Biden Administration's [Request for Information: Federal Old-Growth and Mature Forests](#). Under Executive Order, the Forest Service and BLM were required to solicit public feedback for a nationwide attempt to define and inventory old-growth and mature forests on federal lands by April 2023.

AFRC's [comments](#) highlight how this misguided effort to define old-growth and mature trees will only lead to more arbitrary policies that limit the ability of federal agencies to treat overstocked forests and will lead to less old-growth on the landscape over time.

Anti-forestry groups are using this "define and inventory" process to push for more anti-forestry regulations, even though only [25 percent](#) of the National Forest System is available for regular timber management. Anti-forestry activists point to the 2001 Roadless Rule as a model policy that restricted active forest management and road building on over 58 million acres of federal lands.

More than [37 million acres](#) of national forests have burned since the Clinton-era Roadless Rule was adopted, an acreage [more than seven times larger](#) than the acres where thinning and timber harvest has actually occurred during this time. Fires are burning so hot some forests are [failing to regenerate](#) naturally. Efforts to restrict management in "old growth and mature" forests ignore the fact that forests are dynamic ecosystems where disturbance events can reset 100- to 200-year-old forests to zero in the course of a single day.

The new directive comes as the Forest Service faces ["pretty brutal" staffing shortfalls](#) and [fresh criticism](#) that the wildfire prevention treatment figures it reports are "misleading, "inaccurate" and incentivize the treatment of low cost acres rather than the most effective or at-risk areas.

Rather than confronting our national wildfire and smoke crisis through [climate adaptation](#) strategies and active forest management, federal agencies must now spend limited time and resources developing a "universal definition framework" of old-growth and mature forests across incredibly diverse and complex forests with widely different tree species, sizes, characteristics and needs. Nonetheless the Forest Service and BLM are obligated to comply with this misguided executive order. Public input was collected through August 30.

The Request for Information exercise is not a formal rulemaking. However, AFRC expects this political exercise will lead to further conflict and confusion on the ground, litigation, and possible future executive actions or rulemakings by the Biden Administration. */Travis Joseph*

The AFRC Podcast



*Episode 12: Bill Imbergamo
Defining 'Old Growth' when
our forests are burning.*



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The [AFRC Podcast](#) is a monthly discussion examining key issues and news relating to forestry, forest products and public lands management.

On Earth Day, President Biden issued an Executive Order (EO) on “Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities, and Local Economies” focused on protecting “mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands.” The EO followed months of pressure by anti-forestry groups seeking to end logging on public lands. It also directed the Forest Service and BLM to initiate a process to define and inventory old-growth and mature forests on federal lands within one year. In July the agencies issued a Request for Information from the public to inform how to proceed with meeting this direction. Joining us to discuss this process is Bill Imbergamo, Executive Director of the Federal Forest Resource Coalition in Washington DC.

Oregon's Rum Creek Fire Reveals Risks of New Wilderness Proposals

As of this writing, the Rum Creek Fire in southwest Oregon has burned nearly 12,000 acres along the iconic Rogue River northwest of Grants Pass. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has declared an emergency as “Level 3 - Go Now” evacuations are in place for homes near the rural communities of Rand and Galice. The fire is impacting popular put-in points for rafters running the Wild and Scenic section of the Rogue River, in addition to threatening a resort, cabins, and other infrastructure.



According to [Inciweb](#), the Rum Creek Fire is burning through heavy fuels, including dead trees, as temperatures are expected to reach 100 degrees. Communities across southwest Oregon are choking on [toxic smoke](#). The air quality index in Grants Pass and surrounding communities is expected to exceed 300, which the US Air Quality Index defines as “hazardous” not only for sensitive groups – but everyone.

More than 1,300 firefighters are working the blaze, which tragically killed 25-year old firefighter, Logan Taylor, after he was struck by a tree on August 18. The fire is 1% contained and is not expected to be fully extinguished until November.

The Rum Creek Fire is burning through the same geographic area identified by legislative proposals introduced by Rep. Peter DeFazio and Senator Ron Wyden. The “Wild Rogue Conservation and

Recreation Enhancement Act” ([H.R. 7509](#)) and “Oregon Recreation Enhancement (ORE) Act” ([S. 1589](#)) seek to expand the existing Wild Rogue Wilderness Area by 60,000 acres and establish a new 98,000-acre recreation area adjacent to the wilderness. While the latest iterations of the bills direct federal agencies to develop a “wildfire mitigation plan,” this is coupled with new restrictions and procedural requirements that prevent or complicate efforts to implement forest health treatments.

The legislation would create massive new land set-asides in the Wildland Urban Interface directly adjacent to homes near the small communities of Galice and Merlin. The total acreage represents more than 245 square miles of fire-prone federal land, where proactive forest management efforts to reduce wildfire risks would either be restrictive or entirely prohibited. These communities already faced the highest risk of catastrophic wildfire in the state of Oregon.

When commenting on federal legislation related to Wilderness, Wild and Scenic, and other “conservation” designations, AFRC has consistently and repeatedly pointed out the serious risks to public health and safety of drawing arbitrary lines on dynamic, fire-prone forested landscapes and restricting management tools that could prevent, limit, or respond to catastrophic wildfires.

When H.R. 7509 received a hearing in the House Committee on Natural Resources earlier this year, AFRC [sent a letter](#) to Committee leadership highlighting the risks to these very communities:

Communities in southern Oregon are consistently identified as some of the most at-risk to wildfire. In fact, three areas in southwest Oregon were recently identified among the top 10 “firesheds” by the Pacific Northwest region of the Forest Service “based on wildfires igniting on forested national forest land available for mechanical treatments and exposing buildings in adjacent communities.” Forested communities such as Merlin, Redwood, Grants Pass, New Hope, and Williams are in close proximity to the designations proposed by H.R. 7509 and have been identified by the Forest Service as among the 50 communities in Oregon with the greatest cumulative housing-unit exposure to wildfire, with Merlin and Redwood ranking first and second, respectively.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities launched a grassroots campaign in 2019 opposing these legislative efforts, and even sent mailers to local property owners warning them about the proposal and what it would mean for wildfire prevention efforts. HFHC also had an oped published in the [Stateman Journal](#), Oregon's capital city newspaper:

One would think our elected officials would work to make forest management easier for federal agencies, not more difficult. Yet Congress has already passed legislation this year to make fuels reduction more difficult- through arbitrary “Wild & Scenic” designations- along sections of the Rogue River and its often-dry tributaries...

The federal Wilderness Act is clear in prohibiting forest management activities on such congressionally-designated lands. In this age of larger and severe fires, it's unfathomable our elected officials would place additional “no touch” zones near communities at greatest risk of catastrophic wildfire.

The Rum Creek Fire provides just one example of misplaced priorities, and the risks of pushing new land set-aside proposals as America's wildfire and smoke crisis continues. Unfortunately, this dangerous trend is playing out across the western United States. The [Six Rivers Lightning Complex](#) has burned more than 36,000 acres of the Six Rivers National Forest, including areas proposed for additional legislative "protection" and management restrictions envisioned by Rep. Jared Huffman's Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forest Act. ([H.R. 878](#)). The proposal impacts more than one million acres of fire-prone forests in California.

The River Democracy Act ([S.192](#)) introduced by Senators Wyden and Merkley would impose management restrictions on approximately 3 million acres, many of which are at extreme risk of severe wildfires. And the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act ([S.1276](#)) – legislation introduced by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and promoted by celebrity Carole King – would legally prohibit active forest management on more than 23 million acres of fire-prone federal forests in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming. That's more than 37,000 *square miles* of new wilderness, and no management. Many of these areas have burned, are burning, or are at eminent risk of catastrophic wildfire without intervention.

AFRC believes proactive, science-based forest management is essential to addressing America's wildfire and smoke crisis that is tragically destroying our communities, forests and watersheds, air and water quality, wildlife habitat and other important values. Rather than seeking to pass new land set-aside bills, AFRC strongly encourages the Congress to work with the Forest Service and BLM to quickly implement treatments to reduce the risks to these communities, which will also support local recreation and tourism businesses. /*Travis Joseph and Nick Smith*

Washington DC Update

Inflation Reduction Act. On August 12, the House of Representatives passed the "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022" on a party line vote, sending it to President Biden who signed it into law on August 16. The Senate passed the legislation on August 7 after Vice President Harris broke the 50-50 tie to clear the legislation under the rules that apply to budget reconciliation. It was fast action on a sweeping 273-page bill that was announced on July 27 by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) following months of failed negotiations between Democrats to move President Biden's Build Back Better proposal. Like Build Back Better, this legislation includes disappointing forestry provisions.

According to [a summary](#) from Senate Democrats, the "[Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#)" will [generate about \\$735 billion](#) by increasing taxes on corporations and the wealthy, ramping up IRS tax enforcement, and through [prescription drug pricing reform under Medicare](#). The package directs [\\$369 billion at energy security and climate change programs](#) and \$64 billion to extend provisions of the Affordable Care Act, while reducing the deficit by about \$300 billion -- all over 10 years.

On the forestry front, the Inflation Reduction Act provides \$1.8 billion for Forest Service hazardous fuels reduction projects but limits those activities to the Wildland Urban Interface. \$200 million is provided for vegetation management projects focused on watershed protection and restoration. The funding comes with restrictions and directives, including prioritizing projects that have a completed Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. Apparently, the authors of the legislation would prefer

the agency not use the expedited planning authorities - including Categorical Exclusions – that Congress has provided it in recent years. Ironically, the legislation also includes \$100 million to “provide for more efficient and more effective environmental reviews” of federal forest management activities. Here’s a [good article on CNN about the incompatibility of NEPA and doing big things](#).

The legislation includes \$50 million “for the protection of old-growth forests on National Forest System land and to complete an inventory of old growth forests and mature forests within the National Forest System.” This directive comes as the Forest Service is [soliciting public comment](#) as a first step towards implementing President Biden’s April [Executive Order](#) to identify, conserve and protect old-growth and mature forests – a directive that had lacked any basis in law or science. This provision provides funding and Congress’ formal approval of this nonsensical exercise and potentially exposes the Forest Service to new litigation over the protection of “old growth.” Republicans sought to strike the old growth language under the Byrd Rule, which prohibits provisions that are “extraneous” to the budget, but the Senate Parliamentarian’s ruling made the language worse.

The Inflation Reduction Act also includes \$450 million for new competitive grant programs for private landowners, including:

- \$150 million to carry out climate mitigation or forest resilience practices for underserved forest landowners.
- \$250 million to support participation in emerging private markets for climate mitigation or forest resilience practices for underserved forest landowners or those owning less than 2,500 acres.
- \$50 million to provide payments for implementation of forestry practices on private forest land, that are determined by the Secretary, based on the best available science, to provide measurable increases in carbon sequestration and storage beyond customary practices on comparable land.

The payments would be in addition to those private landowners may receive through private markets or other public incentive programs. The legislation also includes \$100 million for wood innovation grants, including construction of new facilities and hauling to utilize hazardous fuels, up to a maximum amount of \$5 million with a priority on “projects that create a financial model for addressing forest restoration needs in public or private forest land.”

The Forest Service Forest Legacy Program will receive \$700 million “to acquire land and interest in land, with priority given to grant applications that offer significant natural carbon sequestration benefits or provide benefits to underserved populations.” [According to the Forest Service](#), since 1990 the Forest Legacy Program has conserved over 2.8 million acres of “working forests.” \$1.5 billion will be made available for grants to state agencies local governments, Tribes, and nonprofits for tree planting and related activities, with a priority for underserved populations and areas.

Washington Primary Election Results. Washington’s primary election was held on August 2, although it took some time until the results were final under Washington’s vote by mail system. In one closely watched race, incumbent Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Camas) failed to advance to the general election when her Trump-endorsed Republican challenger Joe Kent narrowly took second in Washington’s top-two primary system. The forest products sector is a key industry in Southwest Washington’s 3rd Congressional District, which is also home to the 1.3-million-acre Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Herrera Beutler has been a proponent of active forest management and more effective approaches for

conserving habitat of species like the Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet. AFRC appreciated her efforts on behalf of healthy forests and healthy communities.

Herrera Beutler was one of 10 Republicans to vote to impeach former President Donald Trump for his involvement in the January 6 capitol insurrection. With the subsequent loss of Liz Cheney (R-WY), 8 of 10 were defeated in their primary election or elected not to run for reelection. Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Sunnyside) from the neighboring 4th Congressional District is one of those two after he survived a similar challenge from the right by Trump-endorsed and 2020 Washington Republican candidate for Governor Loren Culp. Newhouse is well positioned to hold the seat for the Republicans. It remains to be seen if Joe Kent's advancement to the general election could put the seat in play, although his Democratic opponent Marie Glusenkamp Perez has wasted no time labeling him as too extreme for the district.

In Washington's most competitive district, Republican candidate Matt Larkin (R-Woodinville) advanced to the general election with 17% of the vote – edging out the more moderate King County Councilman Reagan Dunn, whose late mother Jennifer Dunn represented the district for many years, and 2020 Republican candidate Jesse Jensen. Larkin, an attorney, previously ran unsuccessfully for Washington Attorney General in 2020 and will face two-term incumbent Democrat Dr. Kim Schrier, a pediatrician. Finally, Republican Tiffany Smiley advanced to face long-time incumbent Democratic Senator Patty Murray, who polls show is well positioned to win reelection.

In state legislative races, Democrats performed better than expected in the primary election – perhaps aided by strong turn out from a Democratic base fired up by social issues. The one exception was in the 42nd District, which includes much of Whatcom County in the northwest corner of the state, where Republicans look well positioned to pick up seats in the House and Senate. However, the outcome in the 42nd and other battleground districts will likely hinge on voter turnout in the general election and larger national issues. Democrats currently enjoy a 28-21 majority in the Senate and a 57-41 majority in the House. /Heath Heikkila

McMorris Rogers and Westerman Visit Northeast Washington



On August 25, Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR) joined Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) in northeast Washington to tour two local mills and the A-Z Project on the Colville National Forest. Westerman, the only professional forester in the U.S. House, serves as the Ranking Republican on the House Natural Resources Committee. McMorris Rodgers serves as the Ranking Republican on the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee. Both could chair their respective committees if Republicans take control of the House following the mid-term elections in November.

The special guests visited the Vaagen Brothers mill in Usk, Washington before participating in a lunch discussion at the Vaagen Brothers office in Colville. That meeting was also attended by representatives from Boise Cascade, Columbia Cedar, and AFRC, as well as Colville National Forest Supervisor, Rodney Smolden, and Deputy Supervisor, Josh White. The discussion focused on the A-Z Project, which has become a model for effective, landscape-scale treatment of overstocked, at-risk federal forests while providing numerous other benefits, including carbon-friendly wood products.

They also toured the Vaagen Timbers cross laminated timber (CLT) plant in Colville, which relies on Vaagen Brothers' lumber to manufacture CLT for a growing list of customers that value the benefits of CLT and lumber produced from federal forest health treatments.

The tour concluded with a helicopter ride to see the results of the A-Z Project: healthier, more resilient forests, reduced fire risk to communities, culvert replacement and other service work, and jobs in rural communities. /Heath Heikkila

DTO Report: Build-up of Dead Trees Increases Future Fire Risk

In the aftermath of Oregon's 2020 Labor Day Fire, AFRC urged the Forest Service and BLM to act quickly to remove dead and dying trees to recover the economic value of the burnt timber, store carbon in long-lasting wood products, reduce future wildfire risks and support reforestation efforts. AFRC also advocated for the removal of roadside hazard trees to restore public access and protect firefighters, forest contractors and those recreating in the burn scars. Yet the agencies have conducted area salvage on just a fraction of federal acres burned from the fires, and efforts to remove roadside hazard trees have been heavily litigated by anti-forestry groups (See [July 2021 Newsletter](#))



Archie Creek following the 2020 Labor Day Fires

AFRC member Douglas Timber Operators commissioned fire historian Bob Zybach, PhD to analyze historic fire behavior in western Oregon and recent trends in wildfire activity. In his report, "[A Growing Sea of Snags](#)," Zybach predicts that the massive amount of dead trees left after forest fires on federal lands will drastically alter both fire behavior and reduce options for fire managers. Zybach's report included interviews with current and past fire managers, firefighters and others experienced with wildfire in Douglas County and the North Umpqua drainage in particular.

Major findings of the Zybach report include:

- Approximately 40% of the Umpqua National Forest has burned at least once in the last 20 years; many areas have burned 2-3 times in that period.

- As little as 1% of snags are being removed from federal burn areas – contributing to an over-abundance of dead trees in the North and South Umpqua drainages for the foreseeable future.
- The presence of snags across the landscape intensifies fire behavior and poses hazards to firefighters, reducing the ability to directly attack fires and leads to even more acres being burned.
 - Attempts to manage a wildfire are made far more dangerous by burning snags.
 - Burning snags can greatly increase the heat and severity of fire.
 - Wildfire managers will be reluctant to directly attack fires in re-burn areas.
- Based on historic wildfire patterns in western Oregon, there will be a heightened fire risk in the upper North and South Umpqua watersheds for the next half century until snags are removed intentionally or by subsequent wildfire.
- Re-burn areas may ultimately convert forest stands to another vegetation type altogether (e.g., brush field, hardwoods);
- Federal land managers are crippled before and after fires by the current suite of administrative land designations.

The report includes a number of recommendations. Zybach suggests federal land management designations should be reevaluated to allow land managers to reduce the threat of future fires to human and wildlife populations. Land managers should remove most snags from high-risk areas with residences, major roads, power lines and other key locations. Agencies should also open up riparian areas and ridgetops to more closely mimic early historic forest patterns and replicate historic Indian burning practices in the Fall in places such as grassy prairies, ridgelines and berry fields.

The report also suggests fuels reduction along existing road networks can create a system of ready-made firebreaks, and reforestation projects can be used to create a network of strategic firebreaks. The Zybach Report can be [downloaded here](#). /Nick Smith

New Litigation “Watch List”

The following is a list of recently filed cases that AFRC is closely monitoring.

The Helena-Lewis and Clark Revised Forest Plan Challenge. On July 19, Helena Hunters & Anglers Association, the Western Watersheds Project, Sierra Club, and WildEarth Guardians filed an action challenging the Forest Service’s Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Helena portion of the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest (Revised Forest Plan), which had not been updated since 1986, and the Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) regarding its effects determinations for grizzly bears and Canada lynx. This case is before Judge Molloy in the United States District Court for the District of Montana (Missoula Division).

In October 2021, the Forest Service issued its Revised Forest Plan. The revision process began in 2014 and involved extensive public participation and opportunities for commenting, including input from collaborative working groups. The Revised Forest Plan will guide forest management decisions and projects for the next 10 to 15 years. In their complaint, plaintiffs allege the Forest Service and FWS violated the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by not sufficiently analyzing the effects of removing 10 forestwide standards for wildlife habitat regarding elk hiding cover and road densities standards for elk summer and winter ranges. Plaintiffs also allege the Forest Service should have considered cumulative impacts from logging, livestock grazing, and climate

change on big game species and habitat, on grizzly bears, grizzly bear movement and recovery, and on lynx, lynx habitat, and lynx critical habitat. Plaintiffs are requesting vacatur of the Revised Forest Plan. The government's deadline to file an answer or responsive pleading is September 26.

Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands Challenge. On July 5, Cascadia Wildlands, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, and the Center for Biological Diversity sent a 60-day notice of intent to sue to the Forest Service and FWS regarding the BLM's approval of the Integrated Vegetation Management for Resilient Lands Programmatic (IVM) Environmental Assessment (EA), on the Medford District, and FWS's approval of the Programmatic BiOp for Southwest Oregon (SWO) Dry Forest Resilient Lands.

The 2016 SWO Resource Management Plan (RMP) includes direction to “apply selection harvest or commercial thinning treatments to at least 17,000 acres of Dry-[Late-Successional Reserve (LSR)] per decade,” which can be achieved through commercial timber sales. The IVM Programmatic EA meets this direction under the RMP, and BLM will issue Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) notices for each timber sale associated with implementing activities in the Dry-LSR. The Decision Record for IVM authorized treatments of up to 4,000 acres annually. Two DNAs have already issued—the Penn Butte timber sale, which will be offered in November 2022, and the Late Mungers timber sale, which will be offered in February 2023.

In their [60-Day Notice of Intent to Sue](#), the environmental groups allege ESA violations, specifically, the agencies' findings that the take of 15 coastal martens is not likely to result in jeopardy and that proposed commercial harvest activities are not likely to adversely affect marbled murrelets or their habitat. Environmental groups stated that if FWS does not withdraw its Programmatic BiOp, then they will challenge the Programmatic EA and BiOp in federal court. They can file a challenge to the IVM Programmatic BiOp on or after September 6.

Olympic Experimental State Forest Challenge. On July 29, the Olympic Forest Coalition (OFCO) filed suit against FWS involving the 2016 Forest Land Plan for the Olympic Experimental State Forest (OESF) and the 1997 Washington State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Specifically, plaintiff claims the agencies should re-initiate consultation under the ESA for the northern spotted owl and bull trout. See [Olympic Forest Coalition v. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). This case is before Judge Robart in the U.S. District Court for the District of Western Washington (Tacoma Division).

The OESF, located on the western Olympic Peninsula, is a working and experimental forest comprised of 270,000 acres of Washington DNR state trust lands which produces revenue for state trust beneficiaries, such as counties and public schools. The OESF is also habitat for the northern spotted owl and bull trout which are managed under the HCP and the DNR Policy for Sustainable Forests. The 1997 HCP's BiOp included an incidental take permit for the northern spotted owl. After the bull trout was listed in 1999, FWS reinitiated consultation and provided an incidental take permit for the bull trout under the HCP.

Plaintiffs claim that FWS violated the ESA by failing to reinitiate consultation. In plaintiffs' view, with respect to the northern spotted owl, there is new information regarding the barred owl and the loss of riparian habitat that were not considered or anticipated in the BiOp. With respect to bull trout, plaintiffs allege that FWS must reinitiate consultation to analyze the new information with respect to climate change, as well as reduced buffers around the bull trout's habitat. In addition, plaintiffs allege that the

OESF Forest Plan allows increased logging and other forest practices beyond what was envisioned in the BiOp. The government’s deadline to file an answer or a responsive pleading is on or around October 2.

Timber Stand Improvement Categorical Exclusion Challenge. On July 12, Oregon Wild and WildEarth Guardians filed an action against the Forest Service challenging three projects on the Fremont-Winema National Forest: South Warner, Bear Wallow, and Baby Bear. These projects were authorized under a Forest Service categorical exclusion (CE) for “timber stand improvement and/or wildlife improvement” that allows for commercial timber harvest activities. This case is before Judge Clarke in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon (Medford Division).

Plaintiffs allege the Forest Service violated NEPA by approving the three projects under CE-6, and also challenge CE-6 as-applied under NEPA—meaning, that CE-6 itself violates NEPA and its implementing regulations if it permits commercial timber harvest with no acreage limit. Plaintiffs assert these projects, which authorize up to 29,000 acres of commercial thinning, require more extensive NEPA analysis through preparation of an EA or EIS. Plaintiffs also claim that, if the three projects are lawfully within the scope of CE-6, then that categorical exclusion itself must be unlawful and set aside as applied to commercial timber harvest activities. However, on February 12, 2022, the Ninth Circuit in *Mountain Communities for Fire Safety v. Elliott*, upheld the use of CE-6 for the Cuddy Valley Project, even though CE-6 does not include an acreage limitation. See [February 2022 Newsletter](#). The government’s deadline to file an answer or responsive pleading is on or around September 12. /Sarah Melton

Chief Grants ESD’s to Region 1 Salvage Projects



Picture of the Sand Mountain Fire Salvage area

Forest Service Chief Randy Moore has granted Emergency Situation Determination (ESD) requests from the Idaho Panhandle and Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests for three large fire salvage projects from 2021. An ESD expedites the time period in which a salvage sale can be offered for sale by allowing implementation of the project immediately after a decision on the project has been signed and published.

An ESD request must achieve one or more of the following: 1) relief from hazards threatening human health and safety; 2) mitigation of threats to natural resources on NFS or adjacent lands; or 3) avoiding a loss of commodity value sufficient to jeopardize

the agency's ability to accomplish project objectives directly related to resource protection or restoration.

The ESD for the Character Fire Salvage on the Idaho Panhandle was granted in July, and the ESD’s for the Sand Mountain and Johnson Creek Salvage Projects on the Nez Perce-Clearwater were granted on August 4. Both Forests are moving quickly to sell all three projects. The first timber sale from the Character Fire was sold on August 17 with other sales scheduled to sell in late August and early September. Total volume from the Character Fire salvage is 32 MMBF. The Sand Mountain Fire salvage

(11 MMBF) was sold on August 17 and the Johnson Creek salvage (20 MMBF) will be sold in early September.

AFRC would also like to acknowledge the Kootenai and Lolo National Forests for their work to get salvage sales planned on two large fires on those Forests. Both Forests had to complete their planning using an EA. The Forests were not able to request an ESD, due to consultation with the FWS for the presence of threatened or endangered species. The South Yaak Fire salvage on the Kootenai (6 MMBF) was sold on August 17 and the Thorne Creek Fire Salvage on the Lolo (4 MMBF) should be advertised this fiscal year. Both projects had to go through the objection/resolution process, which pushed the timing of the projects back.



Heavily burned area in the South Yaak Mountain Fire

AFRC would like to thank all four national forests for their efforts to get these fire salvage projects sold quickly while they still have value and volume. */Tom Partin*

Tami Kerr Named Region 1 Director of Forest Management

On August 5, Regional Forester Leanne Marten announced that Tami Kerr will be the new Director of Forest Management effective October 1. Tami currently serves as the Northern Region Permanent & Trust Fund Manager as well as the Budget Coordinator for the Fire & Aviation Management, Forest Management, and Renewable Resource Management program areas. Tami started her career in 1995 as a temporary employee in timber sale preparation on the Detroit Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest. She holds a bachelor's degree in Forest Management from Oregon State University and has more than 25 years of agency experience.

AFRC has worked closely with Tami in both Region 6 and Region 1 and we look forward to working with her in her new role as Director of Forest Management. */Tom Partin*