



**Federal Forest Advisory Panel
July 2, 2007**

1. Policy Solutions and Approaches:

I want to thank the Committee today for letting me discuss my thoughts on Policy Solutions and Approaches. First I would like to compliment the Committee for putting together a very detailed and accurate list of the most pressing problems facing our federal forests. These problems are not new, but what has to be new is a better way to deal with them. We need to get a lot of acres treated and we need to get them treated quickly. We have spent a decade identifying the problems, now we need treatments on the ground.

- I believe the Committee should undertake a three pronged attack to get the needed management and acres treated on our National Forests.
 1. First on the funding issue, I believe a structural change needs to take place in the Forest Service budget, and we must be able to tap the hazardous fuels line item of the budget to do needed fuels reduction projects. The Senate mark for the 2008 Forest Service budget has the Forest Products line item and the Hazardous Fuels line item almost equal. Hazardous fuels dollars can now be used for planning projects, but can't be used for sale preparation or for layout and administration---this needs to be changed. Unfortunately now, forests are being rewarded for acres treated and most of the money is going into prescribed burns and not mechanical treatment of fuels. (see budget)
 2. All projects being put up in fire prone forests currently have a large component of fuels reduction and forest health as their core issues. I believe this committee should propose that every project being put up in condition II and condition III forest be able to utilize the HFRA authorities. These authorities expedite planning, reduce the ability to have blanket appeals, and shorten the time projects are tied up in court.
 3. I believe the Department of Forestry should establish a new position of Assistant State Forester with the responsibility being that of federal lands coordinator. With 57 % of Oregon's forests being federally owned, the Department of Forestry by default is pulled into issues such as forest health, initial attack on fires, and oversight on committees like you folks are on now. There needs to be one position in the State

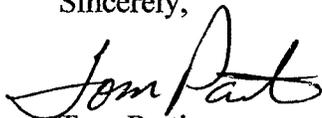
that follows the transition of Governors at the State level and Administrations at the national level to provide some consistencies year in and year out with how our forests are being managed. This committee is replowing turf and efforts that were started under the Kitzhaber Administration. Peter Green has been replaced by Mike Carrier and the federal forest issues have fallen through the cracks or been put on a shelf. Funding for this position could come from the harvest tax collected on forest health projects on federal lands.

Opportunities and Challenges

I think the above mentioned recommendations are the best way to get more dollars to the ground to implement needed forest health projects. More and larger forest health projects will help to treat the back log of fuels build up we are facing now and will face in the future. Finally, we need consistency from one administration to the next both at the State and National level to insure forest health is attained on federal lands in Oregon, hence the need for a new Assistant State Forester with this needed oversight.

Thank you for taking my comments and AFRC looks forward to being a partner with this committee as we move forward with endeavors to make our federal forests healthier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Partin".

Tom Partin
President