



**Federal Forestland Advisory Committee
Salem, Oregon
October 15, 2007**

**Policy Solutions Dealing With Forest Health
Presented by Tom Partin
President, American Forest Resource Council**

Thank you for taking my comments today regarding some policy solutions that I believe might help in making a difference in the health of Oregon's Federal Forests. Two of today's subjects, forest health and insects are directly linked and the root of both problems is overcrowding of vegetation and too much biomass growing on each acre of forestland.

Today I would like to present some information that was included in AFRC's Iron Triangle project that looked at 3 national forests in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington and their forest health concerns. These 3 national forests are present a very familiar trend that is occurring on all east side and southwest Oregon National Forests.

- First to set the stage on all of the east side forests in Region 6 total annual growth is 1.8 billion board feet of fiber
- Mortality each year is 45% of the growth---or 810 MMBF
- 10% of the growth is being removed in management efforts---180 MMBF
- 45% of the volume is going into net growth each year meaning we are adding 810 MMBF of fiber to all of our east side forests each year

Iron Triangle Forests—Wildfire Risks

- Malheur National Forest---1.7 million acres---88% (or 1.5 million acres in moderate to high wildfire risk)
- Umatilla National Forest---1.4 million acres---60% (or 830,000 acres are in moderate to high risk of wildfire)
- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest---2.3 million acres---69% (or 1.6 million acres are in moderate to high risk of wildfire)

The above three forests represent a staggering amount of acreage 3.9 million acres that are in moderate to high risk of wildfire. Obviously these acres present a real challenge to forest health and that is why we are now seeing wildfire so prevalent in eastern and Southwest Oregon National Forests.

I would also like to add that during the past 15 years when all of this biomass has been growing there have been 16 forest products sawmills closed.

Solutions

The solution to our forest health dilemma is to get acres treated and these needs to be acres in condition class II and condition class III lands where fuels are the heaviest.

As I have mentioned in the past we need to be able to tap the hazardous fuels line item of the Forest Service's budget to get the much needed work done. The hazardous fuels line item of the budget is nearly equal to the forest products line item. Secondly we need to make sure that all projects that are planned in condition class II and III lands use the HFRA authority. This expedites planning using an action/no action alternative, expedites the appeals procedures and expedites and possible court actions.

Thank you for taking these brief comments, but I believe they will go a long way in solving the forest health problems now facing our federal forests in Oregon.

**Annual Growth and Mortality for the Iron Triangle Forests
For Forested lands in Oregon
(Units in thousand board feet)**

	Gross growth (MBF)	Mortality (MBF)
Malheur		
Nonwilderness	262,592	68,128
Wilderness	11,285	29,013
Umatilla		
Nonwilderness	155,141	170,042
Wilderness	33,195	27,738
Wallowa-Whitman		
Nonwilderness	347,429	145,885
Wilderness	81,761	82,767

Merchantable board foot volumes for gross growth and mortality were based on diameter breast height (dbh) ≥ 9 inches for softwoods and ≥ 11 inches for hardwoods. The Forest Service's Forest Vegetation Simulator Growth and Yield Model (FVS) was used to calculate the tree volumes (used values at cycle 0).

Gross growth and mortality calculated from Current Vegetation Survey (CVS) plots. (The sample of CVS plots in wilderness areas is at a lower intensity than nonwilderness areas, therefore the variability of the values for wilderness is greater.)