



**Federal Forest Advisory Committee Meeting
November 5, 2007
Solutions for Timber Harvest and Infrastructure Needs
Presented by Tom Partin
President, American Forest Resource Council
Salem, Oregon**

Today's topic is policy solutions or approaches that we recommend the FFAC consider addressing timber harvest and infrastructure issues. I have been in front of this group at almost all of your meetings, but today's topic is the one that I am the most emotionally engaged with and want to speak a little from the heart and not just statistics.

I am working for AFRC today as the result of Ochoco Lumber Company, a company that had been in business since 1938, closing both of its sawmills in Prineville, Oregon due to the lack of federal timber. Ochoco Lumber was one of 5 sawmills that were active and thriving in the 1990's in Prineville, but due to the lack of management on the surrounding national forests all 5 of those sawmills are now shut down. Think about this for a minute. Five companies that employed directly nearly 1,000 people in a community of just over 4,000 people. Imagine the impacts. And remember, this was just Prineville, not to mention Steve Grasty's community that has lost several hundred employees with Snow Mountain Pine closing and L-P leaving and many others. As you look at Oregon's map, especially Eastern and Southwest Oregon it is the same story. Dozens of sawmills have shut down since the mid 1990's due to the lack of harvest from our federal forests. Many communities have been hit harder than Prineville, because Prineville has become the bedroom community for Bend. People live in Prineville because they can afford the housing, but work, shop, and recreate in the Bend area. Oregon has become two states, the urban or I-5 corridor state which is flourishing and Rural Oregon that is struggling for an identity and trying to hold on to the little that remains.

John Day, Burns, Pendleton, Pilot Rock, Prairie City, Wallowa, Gilchrist, Lakeview and LaGrande are really ground zero today to either benefit from this Committee's work or suffer the

Prineville Scenario. Several sawmills are operating only one shift and obviously can't downsize from that. I believe the fate of Blue Mountain Forest Products in Reith, Kinzua Forest Products in Pilot Rock, Boise Cascade mills in LaGrande and Elgin, D.R. Johnson's plant in Prairie City, Malheur Lumber in John Day, Interfor in Gilchrist, and Freemont Forest Products are truly in the hands of the work that this committee can accomplish.

There are no secrets to what it will take to keep these plants open. These plants need timber from federal forests. The Private timber in Eastern Oregon has been over harvested during the past 2 decades for a variety of reasons but there isn't enough to keep the existing infrastructure going. At the same time, our federal forests are dying and desperately need treatment for forest health and fire reasons.

Approaches that the FFAC should consider:

1. This Panel needs to take an immediate look at the existing infrastructure of Oregon and create a plan of assistance to make sure that we don't lose any more of our industry. Have you made an inventory of infrastructure and developed a plan of assistance?
2. Do you know the conditions (resource wise for infrastructure remaining in Eastern and Southwest Oregon) regarding their short and long term survivability?
3. We need more money to get the work done. Linda Goodman said her budget is going down for 2008. R-6 is losing almost \$9 million in funding for FY '08 from what it had in FY '07. What is the Governor's Natural Resource person in DC doing to lobby for more funds?
4. We need to use the tools we have---HFRA, Stewardship on a large scale, post-catastrophic utilization of timber, fuels reduction using the Hazardous Fuels line item to quickly get projects implemented.
5. We need a plan in place by the middle of next year. I hope that last 6-months of this Committee's work is spend on implementation rather than planning.

Thank you for taking my comments today.