CALIFORNIA SPOTTED OWL RECOVERY PLAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

TESTIMONY ON THE FOREST SERVICE'S DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SIERRA NEVADA RANGE IN CALIFORNIA

JUNE 6—WASHINGTON, DC

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CALIFORNIA SPOTTED OWL RECOVERY PLAN

TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1995

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND LANDS, COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES,

Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m. in room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. James Hansen [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES V. HANSEN, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM UTAH AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND LANDS

Mr. HANSEN. The committee will come to order. This is a meeting of the Committee on Resources, the National Parks Committee on Forest and Lands and today our hearing is on the California Spotted Owl Recovery Plan on forestlands in California.

The Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Lands is convened to hear testimony on the Forest Service's draft environmental impact statement regarding the management of the Sierra Nevada range in California. The draft environmental impact statement appears to be the direct result of the Forest Service's reactions to the threats that the California spotted owl is in danger of being listed under the Endangered Species Act and of the Forest Service being sued due to their management practices in the Sierra Nevada forests.

Although the Forest Service itself found that the California spotted owl had not declined either in their overall distribution or abundance in the Sierras, the Service pressed forward with this DEIS that will severely impact the timber-dependent communities surrounding these forests. If alternative C were implemented, timber harvests would be reduced by approximately 60 percent.

The subcommittee wonders of the necessity of implementing a management plan that would decimate rural communities for a species that is more abundant today in the Sierras than in the past 100 years.

There are many inconsistencies involved in this issue and I want to thank Congressman Doolittle for bringing this matter to the attention of the subcommittee. I welcome our witnesses who have come a long way to testify and I look forward to their testimony.

The gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. I have no statement, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I am here to hear the witnesses.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you. The gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any formal statement.

Mr. HANSEN. The gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. COOLEY. I have no formal statement, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

We have three different panels, but before we do that we should have two Congressmen here, the Honorable Vic Fazio from California and the Honorable Wally Herger. I don't see either one of them here.

Well, we are just going to go ahead. They learn around here we start on time and if they are not here we start without them. Speak of the devil—I mean Congressman Herger.

Congressman Herger, you are on, brother. We just about went ahead without you. We will turn to our distinguished colleague from California, the Honorable Wally Herger, the time is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. WALLY HERGER, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. HERGER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members. I appreciate this opportunity to testify on behalf of the residents of my congressional district in northern California. The subject matter of this hearing, the management of national forests within the habitat range of the California spotted owl, is an issue of paramount importance to those who I represent.

To preface my remarks, I would like to acknowledge two individuals from my district who have traveled a long way to be with us today. I would like to thank Frank Stewart of the Collins Pines Company and Supervisor Bill Coates of Plumas County for their efforts to join us at this hearing.

Mr. Chairman, these two gentlemen represent some of the hardest working people I know. They represent those who have the most at stake in the management of our Sierra Forest. Because they live in them and rely on them to sustain their families and their futures, I urge my colleagues on the subcommittee to carefully consider their comments today.

Mr. Chairman, we are presently faced with a dual crisis in the Sierra Province of northern California. On the one hand, we face a forest health crisis. The buildup of natural fuels in our forests due to overgrowth, periodic drought, disease and insects is rapidly approaching epidemic proportions.

Over the past several years, a number of dead and dying trees, which comprise 50 to 80 percent of the timber, stands in some areas. This serious degradation of overall forest health greatly increases the risk of catastrophic wildfire throughout the region.

Last year, wildfires consumed over 375,000 acres of forestland in California, leaving entire landscapes barren and lifeless. Much of this devastation occurred in the Sierra Province. On the other hand, we have a regional socioeconomic crisis.

Timber-dependent communities hover on the verge of collapse due to a drastic decline in Federal timber harvests. Mill closures and their economic ripple effects have caused regular double-digit unemployment in many communities. Unemployment has caused welfare rolls to balloon and social ills like domestic violence and substance abuse to rise sharply. Schools in the regions have also

suffered severely from the lack of funding historically derived from timber sales.

Many of these schools have been forced to drastically scale back or completely eliminate some of their most basic scholastic programs.

Mr. Chairman, common sense suggests that we are in a position to kill two birds with one stone. We could restore forest health and prevent wildfires by using dislocated timber personnel to remove the excess dead and dying trees and other natural fuels from our forests. In doing so, we would also restore economic and social stability in our timber-dependent communities.

Mr. Chairman, this is a simple win-win proposition. Yet in what to me is a tragic irony, instead of pursuing this common sense solution to our current predicament, we are moving in exactly the opposite direction. Recently, the Forest Service released a draft environmental impact statement for managing California spotted owl habitat in the Sierra Nevada forest.

Rather than addressing forest health, fire prevention and the related social and economic issues, this draft EIS focuses on the preservation of large expanses of habitat for a single species, which is neither threatened nor endangered, and in fact, flourishes throughout the Sierra province.

Mr. Chairman, it is a mystery to me why we would jeopardize the health of our forest, risk the outbreak of catastrophic wildfire, and sacrifice the economic viability of our timber-dependent communities by implementing a forest management plan, the primary purpose of which is to protect a thriving and evenly distributed species.

None of the alternatives presented in the draft EIS adequately address our fuel buildup problem. Not one of them adequately considers the economic or social impact of preserving owl habitat. Rather, they propose to further restrict active management on an increasing acreage of public forestland in order to protect owl habitat from human molestation.

Any one of these alternatives will greatly exacerbate the risk of fire and speed the economic degradation of our timber-dependent communities. Simply stated, Mr. Chairman and members, they are all prescriptions for disaster.

In the final analysis, neither owls nor people can live in a forest that has burned to the ground. On the other hand, both would thrive in a healthy managed forest. Mr. Chairman, I suggest to this committee that we change the dangerous course we are taking by instructing the Forest Service to direct its efforts away from preserving the owl habitat and focus them on the more pressing needs of restoring forest health, reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and providing relief to depressed and rural communities.

We do not need a management plan which protects only one kind of habitat. We need a plan that protects all habitats. Including the human habitat. The Forest Service has several excellent resources from which to draw in order to accomplish this task, many of which have not been adequately tapped to date.

It has, for example, the Collins Pine Company, which has distinguished itself as a national leader in the practice of ecologically-sensitive forest management. This forward-thinking company has

successfully maintained a sustainable yield on its private forest without diversely affecting owl or any other wildlife habitat. In doing so, it has greatly reduced the occupants of wildfire on its property. Certainly, the management techniques used by Collins Pine on its private forest would work just as effectively on public forest.

We also have the Quincy Library Group, a unique and unprecedented association of environmentalists, industry representatives and public officials who have pooled their expertise to develop an innovative and balanced forest health and fire prevention plan specifically suited for the Plumas, Lassen, and part of the Tahoe National Forest. This adaptive management approach could be applied to other regions in the Sierra Province to establish local management plans which are specifically suited for the unique characteristics of individual forests.

Mr. Chairman and members, these are two examples among many. Clearly we have the wherewithal to manage our Sierra forests in a productive and environmentally safe way. In order to do so, however, we need to set both the draft EIS and interim guidelines for the California owl aside and return to the drawing board. Today, we will hear several suggestions as to how this might be accomplished.

I respectfully urge my colleagues on this subcommittee to use this information to instruct the Forest Service to start over and do what it should have done in the first place; that is, to develop a balanced management plan that would preserve our Sierra forests as healthy renewable resources for present and future generations. Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you, Mr. Herger. Congressman Herger, would you stay with us just a moment. Congressman Doolittle has come in.

Congressman Doolittle, we thank you for bringing this to our attention. Do you have any opening statement or any questions for Congressman Herger.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I do have an opening statement. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. The plane left late, I got here as fast as I could. This is a very important hearing. I want to thank you and members of your staff for organizing the hearing today.

We are looking at potentially disastrous consequences, which have been, I think, well described by Mr. Herger to the people, communities and health of our forests in the Sierra Nevada that may arise as a result of implementing the Forest Service plans for the California spotted owl.

I am eager to listen to testimony of the witnesses here today. Mr. Herger and I have worked together on these issues affecting our districts. We have here today several witnesses from my district who will testify for us in the various panels. Cheri Jacobson is the Executive Director of United Forest Families, an organization representing hundreds of families in several States whose livelihoods depend on the wise management of our forests.

I would also like to welcome Ken Marks, County Supervisor, Tuolumne, California; and Chris Conrad, a professional forester for Fibreboard Wood Products Company. I also note former constituents who now belong to Mr. Herger. Bill Coates, Supervisor of Plumas County, and Frank Stewart from Collins Pine, both of whom I believe are testifying. People who are here from my district and attending, but not testifying, Stacey Rodriguez from United Forest Families and Joe Martin Trucking; Tom Lealos, President of TUCARE; Ginger Armstrong, education coordinator of TUCARE; Bill Holman, member of the Tuolumne County board of supervisors; and Barrie Conrad from Tuolmne County.

The California spotted owl, as has been noted, is neither listed as threatened nor as endangered. Concern for the California owl is the direct result of the listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of its cousin, the northern spotted owl.

The Forest Service has had many problems with the northern spotted owl. I do not want to happen to our part of California what has happened to the Pacific Northwest and northern California with the spotted owl. It has been a travesty. It has been an utter shameful disaster what has happened to the people there. And we do not wish to see that repeated in our part of California.

Environmental groups threatened to sue the Forest Service unless they implemented the same restrictive policies as were used for the northern spotted owl. In response to this threat, the Forest Service exceeded and created a steering committee to study the California owl in 1991. The Service established a technical assessment team, which in 1992 released the CASPO report.

This report found the California spotted owl abundant and well distributed. The team recommended further study and in the interim proposed a strategy for protecting key habitat elements. The Forest Service, disregarding overall forest health, implemented interim guidelines which did not allow any tree greater than 30 inches in diameter to be harvested dead or alive.

The effect of this mandate was to preclude the harvesting of even an average size tree. Mills have been closing ever since. On February 6th, 1995, the Forest Service released a draft environmental impact statement, their draft EIS for the California spotted owl. The draft EIS is premised on the faulty notion that quick action must be taken in order to ensure suitable habitat for the owl.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service subordinated the broader issue of forest health in order to give preference to the maintenance or viability of a single subspecies which already seems to be thriving.

To date, the Forest Service has already spent over $50 million for forest plans in the Sierra Nevada region. It has spent over $6 million on studying the California spotted owl. A subspecies that is neither threatened nor endangered, it has been noted. Now, because of this subspecies and the CASPO report, these forest plans will have to be amended further, costing the U.S. taxpayer millions of dollars.

In addition, Congress last year appropriated millions of dollars, $130 million for fighting forest fires. However, due to the severe fires, the actual amount spent was closer to $900 million.

According to the draft EIS, for the California spotted owl, a number of "acceptable" national forest acres which we can expect to lose

due to fire is as high as 350,000 acres per year. The lowest number of so-called acceptable acre losses is approximately 270,000 acres.

I find these figures to be amazing and, frankly, unacceptable. How much money will the U.S. taxpayer have to pay to fight these fires? What will be the cost to the communities and industries who depend upon these natural resources? What will be the cost in wildlife? What will be the cost in terms of ruination of the soils when you have fires of that high heat intensity burn through there, where you aren't going to get regrowth for many years in the future as a result? These questions must be answered.

Every alternative presented in the draft EIS will guarantee that catastrophic fire will continue to be the major threat to spotted owl habitat in the Sierra. The California spotted owl unfortunately will not be the only victim. Our communities and the American taxpayers will be victims also. The Forest Service's own studies indicate that the California spotted owl is abundant, well-distributed and thriving throughout the Sierra Nevada, possibly more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada than in the past 100 years.

The Forest Service has also stated that the owl's uniform density may be the result from interterritorial interaction rather than limitation on suitable habitat. The Forest Service has found no evidence of a decline in the number or distribution of the California spotted owl either in the Sierra Nevada or in Southern California, despite the fact that logging has occurred over nearly all of the conifer forest of the Sierra Nevada in the past 100 years.

Why, then, does immediate action need to be taken to ensure the owl's habitat? Why, indeed, are we pursuing policies that will result in the vast destruction of areas of our forest triggered by the forest fires that surely will happen? Not a question of if, but merely of when they will happen.

The Forest Service has restricted logging in the Sierra Nevada based upon the assumption that a decrease in habitat will mean the loss of owls. This would be true if the owl's habitat were decreasing. The forestry practices have not decreased the owl's habitat as demonstrated by the Forest Service's own reports. The owl is not declining. It is more abundant today than ever before, so why are more logging restrictions being proposed by the U.S. Forest Service?

It is not to protect forest health because the threat of catastrophic fires will only increase if any of the proposed alternatives should be implemented. It will be these fires which will destroy owl habitat, not logging, which is their threat. It is not to help our community, for indeed the interim guidelines and draft alternatives will destroy the timber industry in the Sierra Nevada and will devastate communities. We have seen what happens. We have seen it happen well to the northern spotted owl.

Certainly, the effect of all of those proposed alternatives will be to destroy the livelihood of the thousands of hard-working Americans and destroy our forests by making them more prone to devastating forest fires. Unfortunately, it seems today that the extreme environmental groups are out also to destroy the venerable concept which has worked well; namely, the multiple use of the public lands, specifically the national forests.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, I look forward to the testimony.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you, Mr. Doolittle, we have been joined by our colleague from California, Vic Fazio. Vic, it is nice to have you with us. We will turn the time to you.

STATEMENT OF HON. VIC FAZIO, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. FAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I am not going to be speaking at great length, but I do want to thank you and members of the subcommittee for allowing me to appear before you this morning on short notice. It is my purpose to discuss the concept of forest health and particularly in relation to the California spotted owl EIS, which was developed recently by the Forest Service.

As you know, my district is down in the valley and except in the eastern part of Tehama County not up in the mountains, but I am vitally concerned about the health and vitality of the national forest located in the northern and central California Sierra Nevada mountains. I am concerned about the economic well-being of my constituents, many of whom are related to some degree to the forest products industry.

Whether they are directly or indirectly related to the production of that industry, their jobs are to some degree on the line. So I come to this hearing this morning out of a belief that we can find ways to bring people together and develop creative win-win situations. I am well aware of the efforts that have been made in the Quincy Library Group efforts that are going forward in Siskiyou County.

In my opinion, there is no reason why we can't do right by the forest, right by the people who are dependent on them and right by the species that are endangered or threatened, including the owls. I think the first place to start is to stop concentrating on the status of a single species of wildlife. I think there has been a growing emerging consensus that we need to work on habitat-wide solutions.

The focus in this case is on the health of the forest, as well as on any of the specific species that we have mentioned and are obviously the concern of this hearing. One of the main messages that I want to bring to you is that forest health ought to be a nonpolitical issue. Whatever our differences on other issues, we ought to be able to put aside those things and work cooperatively toward improved forest health.

I made a commitment to do that and I think others in this room are prepared to do it and I think, hopefully, by continuing to work together we can come up with some sensible long-range solutions that can be embraced by both sides of the aisle here in Congress and by President Clinton, Secretary Glickman and the Administration, and I look forward to meetings that members of our delegation will be having later on with the new Secretary of Agriculture to see if we can pursue some bipartisan agreements.

One of the first things we have to come to grips with is the fact that our Federal forests throughout the West have become choked with too many tinder dry trees as a result of a nearly century of

vigilant fire suppression. The forest ecosystems have changed drastically.

Historically, there were a few large trees per acre. But now I think we are seeing the growth of a lot of small diameter trees competing with each other for survival. These are trees that have become, in the most recent decade of California drought, terribly stressed, invaded by insects and disease, very prone to fire.

This year, of course, with the tremendous rainfalls we have had, there has been an incredible growth of tinder and now I think we see the potential for fires this summer as we have for a number of summers now, that have the potential of really doing some very destructive damage to the ecosystem, to the wildlife habitat and the very fabric of the forest.

Sometimes these fires burn so very hot that forest soils are turned into beads of glass. From what I can see, there are only a couple of sensible reasonable alternatives. We can either allow the fuels to continue to build up in the forest or we can remove that material and, where possible, because some of this is beyond the point where it can be economically harvested, convert it into useful products. I think it is time for the Forest Service to look at how some of the major private forest landowners in the Sierra Nevada have managed their forests.

I know that there are a couple of companies coming before you today, Fibreboard and Collins Pine. I think they both have very good records of forest management. I think major elements of both the companies' forestry is the idea that timber harvest should be in balance with forest growth. I think that is a concept that needs to be given some consideration by this committee and by the Administration's policymakers as well.

I know that there are a number of controversies that you are going to struggle with. I know that this is an area that has been regrettably politicized in the past to the point where sometimes we reach the point where we can't effectively talk with each other. I know that the people in the timber-dependent communities are going to be affected by some very significant foreign policy decisions in the next couple of months and, as you know, I couldn't be a stronger proponent of maintaining fish and wildlife habitat on our forest lands.

It is extremely important, particularly to the salmon runs that are so vitally significant to our recreational and commercial fishermen in California, endangered and in part threatened by the elimination of access to streams, in some cases silt buildup that may have resulted from forest practices of the past. Now they are threatened by the potential for even more silt buildup as a result of catastrophic fires in the present.

That doesn't need to happen. I think we can put together a forest practice approach through this administration that really is the consensus, that good private forest managers and public forest managers can work out together and preserve the fish and wildlife populations and increase the flow of materials into the forest industry for our mills as well as for people who work directly in the forests themselves so they can have a livelihood.

In my experience, fewer issues have become more polarized, but I do think it is time in the division in the political calculus that

we face at the moment to try to go back to work and see whether or not we can find consensus.

I am not interested in legislation that is simply going to be a political document that will further polarize. I do want to work with this committee, with my colleagues in the region, to see if we can reach agreement with the administration on something that will advance the cause of all these competing objectives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

Congressman Herger and Congressman Fazio could you stay just a moment, we may have some questions for you. The gentleman from Michigan, do you have any questions for our colleagues? We will limit the members to five minutes on their questions.

Mr. KILDEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank both the Members. They are both well-respected Members of Congress. I appreciate their testimony. Just maybe one suggestion, Mr. Herger, since we are discussing spotted owl you might want to change your metaphor, "kill two birds with one stone. " It might not be very wise.

I do appreciate your testimony. It is great to see the two parties represented here giving similar testimony. I don't know what my final decision will be when it comes to a vote, but both of your testimonies were very helpful. Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. I don't have any questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. The gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. COOLEY. Mr. Chairman, I have no questions. I just want to make a comment.

As you know, I represent the second congressional district of Oregon, which is about 73,000 square miles and some of the things talked about or mentioned by both of the Congressmen really have been devastating to my area as far as rational management is concerned.

I think that your comments, both of you, about a balanced management approach between timber utilization, multi-uses of forest as well as the protection of the species has been overlooked to a point that it has not helped the species nor has it helped the communities in which these timberlands lie.

I hope that these discussions can bring about a rational decision-making process that maybe we can also apply to the northern part of this country as well. Thank you very much.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Doolittle.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I just want to thank both Members for their testimony and just hope the Forest Service and the administration takes note when you have the range of political philosophies spanned by Fazio, Herger, and Doolittle and we are coming together asking for some reasonable forest policies based on balance and overall concern for all the factors in the environment, including the human factor, I think it is a coalition worthy of note.

This is not just one philosophy or one party at this point. It is a recognition finally that we are going to need some common sense

brought to the needs of the region and I just commend both the gentlemen for their testimony.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you. I join with you in thanking our two colleagues for their testimony. It was excellent. I agree with them. Somewhere there has to be some balance in this where we are going to lose jobs, take a community apart, people are overreacting, those problems we always get into.

I think the most trite statement—I shouldn't call it a trite statement—but the most overused statement there is in Congress is "a level playing field." I would like to know where that is. Most of the time it is tilted, if you notice.

We thank our two colleagues for being with us. If you would like to join us, we would be happy to have you with us.

We will now turn to our first panel. Our first panel is Mr. David G. Unger, Associate Chief of the Forest Service; G. Lynn Sprague, Regional Forester, San Francisco, California; and Janice Gauthier, Team Leader, Sacramento, California. Thanks.

We want to thank our panel for being with us today. That is very kind of you to join us.

Mr. Unger, are you the lead-off man and the rest are supporting cast or do you all have a moment to speak?

Mr. UNGER. I will lead off, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate the opportunity to be present at this important hearing on this important subject.

Mr. HANSEN. May I just ask you how much time you are going to need for your testimony?

Mr. UNGER. I would like to ask that our full statement be included for the record and I would just like to summarize it in a few minutes here.

Mr. HANSEN. OK. Without objection, your full testimony and your testimony and the witnesses on panel two and panel three, their entire testimony will be included. We try to keep these things from rambling on too long and if you tell us what you are looking at, we are going to time you and we will give you additional time if necessary, but we don't want it to go on ad nauseam or forever infinitis, so tell me how long you think you will need.

Mr. UNGER. I would certainly think within five minutes.

Mr. HANSEN. Dawn, would you give Mr. Unger five minutes and any other speaker up to five minutes. If they need additional time, ask for it and it is yours. Mr. Unger, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF DAVID G. UNGER, ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF FOREST SERVICE; ACCOMPANIED BY G. LYNN SPRAGUE, REGIONAL FORESTER, SAN FRANCISCO, AND JANICE GAUTHIER, TEAM LEADER, SACRAMENTO

Mr. UNGER. Thank you. I am accompanied by our regional forester, Lynn Sprague, as you indicated and Janice Gauthier who led the team that developed the environmental impact statement.

The environmental impact statement, as perhaps has been mentioned already, was prepared in response to the regulations governing the National Forest Management Act protection diversity by assuring the viability of fish and wildlife within the planning areas that we are concerned with.

Since 1984, the management of California spotted owls was undertaken through using a network of spotted owl habitat areas that were similar to those in the northern spotted owl area, but in 1990 a scientific analysis team indicated that that strategy was flawed and that it would not assure the long-term viability of the northern spotted owl. This led to the development by our team of the CASPO report that a number of the speakers have mentioned here this morning.

They found no clear evidence of decline in the overall distribution nor abundance in any forest type principally because the data on population are scanty. Studies have been undertaken for only a short period of time. But they did find that continued even age management of our forests and the short rotations that we were using were resulting in a rapid decline in key habitat components that are critical to the long-term survival of the owl. This refers particularly to large old trees used for nesting.

They also found that there was, as has been mentioned again this morning, a risk of high severity fires to owl habitat due to our fire suppression policies over the past several decades. They recommended retention of old trees and snags. They recommended thinning to help reduce fire hazards and in 1993 we adopted in 10 national forests this environmental strategy of those recommendations until we could develop a long-term strategy through this environmental impact statement. That process began in 1993. The draft was issued in February of this year.

I might mention that because of the complexity of the ecosystems involved and the kinds of concerns that were expressed by the public as we were gathering their input as we started on this process, we took a broader approach than just dealing alone with the California spotted owl. We looked at habitat requirements for the fish and wildlife community as a whole. We looked at forest health and the risks of high severity fire. We looked at riparian areas and their contribution to aquatic habitat.

The preferred alternative that is out for public comment looks toward management of valley bottoms for old growth forests, the mid-slopes to be managed for protection of owls and timber production through small group selection and on the ridgetops for open forest managed as shaded fuel breaks.

There is definitely a proposed reduction under this form of management in timber. The amount that would be estimated to be produced would be about 466 million board-feet per year. When you look at the green volume plus the expected salvage volume, comparing that with the present combination of green and salvage volume, it amounts to something like a 45 percent reduction, a very substantial and serious reduction.

But this proposal does aim at the sustainable management of all resources on those 10 national forests.

Let me just conclude by saying we are aggressively seeking comment on the EIS and our preferred alternative and the other alternatives. We have extended the comment period to July 10th. We are interested in what we have heard this morning already from your distinguished colleagues.

We expect our final decision is likely to combine elements from a number of alternatives rather than being confined to solely one,

but we are committed to making the best decision that we can based on the best science and the best public information that we can gather in this process.

Thank you for this opportunity and Mr. Sprague and Ms. Gauthier and I are available to answer your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Unger can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Sprague, do you have any statement?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No further comment.

Mr. HANSEN. Ms. Gauthier, do you have anything.

Ms. GAUTHIER. No.

Mr. HANSEN. The gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. ALLARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would assume that you are fairly familiar with the biological characteristics of the northern and California spotted owl.

Mr. UNGER. Those characteristics I am not familiar with, Mr. Sprague and Ms. Gauthier are certainly——

Mr. ALLARD. So you do have expertise with you?

Mr. UNGER. Yes.

Mr. ALLARD. Is the chromosome count for the northern spotted owl and the California spotted owl the same?

Ms. GAUTHIER. I am sorry. I am not going to be able to answer that. I would be happy to provide that information for you. I should explain that I am actually a professional forester. I am not a biologist.

Mr. ALLARD. I see. That is what I was hoping we could have. If we have a northern spotted owl and a California spotted owl, we put them in the same tall tree, are we going to have babies?

Ms. GAUTHIER. I would say it is possible, yes.

Mr. ALLARD. Then they would have to have the same chromosome count if that was possible. But I would like a clarification of that for the record, if we would, please.

What is the range that is required on a northern spotted owl or a California spotted owl? I had heard a figure, was it 100 miles, 200 miles?

Ms. GAUTHIER. No. I am sorry we don't have enough data available to respond to that question. As Mr. Unger indicated, the California spotted owl has not been studied for as much time as the northern spotted owl.

Mr. ALLARD. Can you give me an estimate?

Ms. GAUTHIER. No, I can't.

Mr. ALLARD. How much forest area are you trying to set aside for a nesting pair of owls? Do you have that fundamental question?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well I guess I could respond to this in another way. What we are attempting to do is to design some management strategies that provide for the owls on the landscape basis. We are not looking to manage individual owls. That would be very difficult. We are looking to manage the population by providing certain habitat needs across the landscape.

Mr. ALLARD. So the amount of trees that you need for a nesting pair of a certain species you really don't have any idea at this point?

Mr. ALLARD. Well, we certainly know that the California spotted owl selects and prefers large trees generally over 40 inches in di-

ameter in size to nest in. We do know that. So how do you determine how much area a nesting pair needs?

Ms. GAUTHIER. I don't have an answer for you on that.

Mr. ALLARD. I would like to have a memo that would help clarify that if we could, please.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Sure, we would be happy to.

Mr. ALLARD. How far north does the California spotted owl range?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Approximately up to the Pit River in northern California.

Mr. ALLARD. It goes to the Pit River and it doesn't go into Oregon.

Ms. GAUTHIER. No.

Mr. ALLARD. So as soon as the spotted owls fly up to the Pit River, they quit.

Ms. GAUTHIER. No, then you get into northern spotted owl territory.

Mr. ALLARD. So it is a geographic distribution between the northern and the southern spotted owl.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Exactly.

Mr. ALLARD. So what is scientific about that? What is scientific about the classification of a northern spotted owl and the southern spotted owl when it is just a geographic distribution separated by a stream?

Ms. GAUTHIER. They are considered to be different subspecies of the same species.

Mr. ALLARD. So then if you have a northern spotted owl that mates with a California spotted owl, how do you classify that subspecies?

Mr. UNGER. I think, as Ms. Gauthier indicated, we need to get you some further information about the scientific basis of the distinction of the subspecies.

Mr. ALLARD. Well, I think it is important if this committee is going to analyze this kind of report on a scientific basis that we need some good scientific facts and up to this point in time, I think it is sadly lacking and I would hope that we can get a memo to this committee that fundamentally answers those scientific questions.

Mr. UNGER. We will be happy to provide that to you, sir.

Mr. ALLARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you, doctor, and he is a doctor.

The gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. COOLEY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Mr. Unger, you know this is a very frustrating thing for me and for the people that I represent in the Second District.

We asked the same questions that are now asked by others because now they are starting to feel the impact of interpretation of the endangerment or possible endangerment in the habitat.

Janice, I won't even try to pronounce your last name, I will just mess it up. I would like to take you to eastern Oregon and show you we don't have many spotted owls in eastern Oregon, but in my southern and western part of my district, which takes in Josephine and Jackson County, we have spotted owl territory. And to show you the northern spotted owl, which is in those areas living in ev-

erything from culverts down in the road areas to snags and this 40-inch diameter preferred tree stand just doesn't make sense to a lot of us that are nonscientists and do not have the discipline that you have.

I find it difficult, I guess, to say that we are using a species in order to obtain a goal and the goal is to stop cutting trees on public lands. Using a species that may or may not truly be endangered by several scientific people disputing their endangerment, this whole movement has created even a threat to that species itself.

Instead of people in private property enhancing that particular species, and doing whatever they can do to keep that species alive, many times, as you know, that species is disappearing because of the fear that people have and the concerns that they have that they will lose their economic value to the community, their private property rights, their whole way of life because somebody designates a bird to be endangered when they know literally there are hundreds of those animals within certain ranges of private property, which you or your people and people in government agencies have spent a lot of time tracking over private properties, which they should not have done classifying things and creating problems for the people.

I think that we should look at this in a different light looking in the idea that we should reward people for taking care of the species and not punish them for a species being on their property. I think that we are going through another cycle now.

Now, that cycle has dropped down into California and we are going to see the same problems created by the northern spotted owl now in the California spotted owl in reality. In many cases it was not really truly endangered. It was being used as a method, a procedure that could eliminate logging and we all know that the logging practices that have been enforced upon public lands have not been to the betterment of those lands.

You can look at private forestlands right next to public lands and see the difference even from the air or on the ground. Basically, we in government have done a very poor job of managing our public lands because of various reasons and one of those reasons happens to be the spotted owl. And the philosophy by some individuals that this is a tool in which they can use to take the multi-use process and preserve an animal at all costs, that may or may not even really be truly endangered.

I hope that in these hearings that we can make a determination not only whether the animal is endangered or not, but what we can do to actually help the animal survive if it truly is going to be endangered and threatened and not merely take a punitive action toward those people in those communities where this particular animal may be a habitat or will be involved in the local area.

I think we need to look at this in a different way than the way we have in the past and put it in a perspective of what we can do as a community, and when I say community, both you as a manager of public lands and the community together to make sure that these species are taken care of, but also with a realistic attitude toward are they really endangered, what we can do to have commercial activity and multi-use of public lands and still being able to have the species survive. This idea of need for an animal to have

a 100-mile radius in order to be able to survive with the proper food and environment is pretty tough to understand.

All I wanted to ask you is one question after that statement. You have had management plans before in this particular area which have cost the public millions and millions of dollars to develop. What has changed from those times that you spent that money in your planning to what we are seeing today?

Mr. UNGER. I think that the kind of plan that is represented in the environmental impact statement that has been drafted here represents a more comprehensive and realistic approach than we have been able to achieve in the past. That should give us a result that will avoid even more difficult problems down the road should species become listed as threatened or endangered—more impacts on the economy, more problems in the courts.

I think that by taking a more comprehensive approach we are going to be able to defend our outcomes more adequately and be able to do a better job of sustaining all the resources and we certainly associate ourselves with your comments about the importance of having a balanced, multiple-use approach to both the production of goods and services from the public lands as well as the protection of the fish and wildlife species that are present on them.

Mr. COOLEY. One more question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Go ahead, take one more.

Mr. COOLEY. We are not revisiting your previous plans merely for the fact that you may or may not find yourself in a position defending yourself in litigation, are we?

Mr. UNGER. That is not the only reason that we approach a different way of doing planning. Certainly, we have to take into account the record in the courts, the case law that develops, the requirements of the laws under which we operate and try to do our best job to come with decisions that are legally defensible.

Mr. COOLEY. Do you feel that your decisions prior to this time were not legally defensible?

Mr. UNGER. I feel that, based upon our understanding at the time, based upon the scientific information available at the time, that we did our best to make those legally defensible. But when new information comes along, we have to, by law, take it into account and see whether it means that we should change our plans.

Mr. COOLEY. Could you specifically tell me what new information has come along that creates the philosophy today that you must change your plan? Could you do that with something specific?

Mr. UNGER. In this specific case rather than generally, it was the report of the scientific team in 1990 that found that the strategy of having habitat conservation areas, the SOHAs, spotted owl habitat areas, was flawed in terms of long-term survival of northern spotted owls and the additional information that we had to take into account was the results of our team that looked specifically at the California spotted owl and determined that if we continued our current management practices that we were going to endanger the habitat upon which the owl depended in the future.

Mr. COOLEY. Even though there may or may not be a possible connection between the northern and the California spotted owl, you are just assuming. That is one. And number two is that even though previous scientific people of your own choosing came up

with information that there are more animals available than maybe in the past and that they were certainly not endangered or threatened at this point, you looked at your plan and said the plan you put together in 1990 was inadequate to cover what is going to go from now forward. Is that what you said?

Mr. UNGER. I was saying that the plans that were developed in most cases earlier than 1990, the information that the scientists produced in 1990 reflecting concerns about the strategy that we were using to protect the California spotted owl might be, as it was found to be for the northern spotted owl, inadequate caused us to investigate whether indeed that was true for the California spotted owl so we did look specifically at the California spotted owl to answer that question and found that there were concerns.

The scientists found that despite the fact that we don't have any clear evidence about a decline in population now, because of the lack of data over a long period of time, that there was enough concern about habitat damage that would affect the situation in the future, we needed to look at this for development of a long-term strategy.

Mr. HANSEN. One more question.

Mr. COOLEY. One thing. I just want to get a statement.

So what you are saying is you determined scientifically, intellectually that there is a possibility, because you don't know for sure, that the methods you have now are going to create a decline. You just think that maybe they are.

Mr. UNGER. The best scientific advice is that it will be a problem.

Mr. COOLEY. OK. Could you tell us where that advice came from?

Mr. UNGER. From the technical committee that developed the CASPO report.

Mr. HANSEN. The gentleman from California, Mr. Doolittle.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Unger, why doesn't this draft EIS have an alternative that balances growth with removal?

Mr. UNGER. I am going to ask Mr. Sprague to comment on that.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Congressman, that is a difficult question to answer. There are a whole lot of factors involved in balancing growth with removal. In the situation we are in, part of the strategy is to grow some of the old growth or old growth type—larger trees back into these stands, so there is a certain amount of growth associated with that that wouldn't be calculated in the removal.

There is a certain amount of the under story growth that is not of commercial value that would, as part of our strategy, be removed in other methods through underburning and other fuels reduction methods that doesn't come into the calculation, so it is hard to really balance the growth with removal in a general way.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Well, Mr. Sprague, now private foresters generally balance growth with removal, do they not?

Mr. SPRAGUE. I cannot comment on how or what their strategies are.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. Well, you have proposed in this draft DEIS

habitats and the other factors that I talked about, I would say yes, we are. The whole strategy was built on improving forest health as well as providing habitat for not only the spotted owl but all of the other wildlife species that exist in the Sierra forests.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Sprague, what is the threat to the forest health of the catastrophic forest fire?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, the threat is to wipe out the forest.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And what happens to the species?

Mr. SPRAGUE. The same.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So they are, the forest, their habitat and themselves are wiped out by a catastrophic forest fire, is that fair to say?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Potential.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. My concern here is—go ahead and answer that one. I don't want to jump the gun. Is that a yes?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. This report, while openly acknowledging the threat of forest fire, I mean I realize other members here may not have flown over our forests lately, but you know, if you ever had occasion to fly to California, check out those forests as you go over. I mean, it is shocking to see the number of dead and dying trees. It really is.

About a third of them are dead in many areas. And of course that makes it more difficult and Ms. Chenoweth testified there was a fire in Idaho that burned down below the surface of the ground. I think the testimony was several feet. And destroyed the soil to such an extent that the years have gone by and there still isn't much to show in the way of regeneration.

Anyway, my question to you is, before you come forth with a variety of alternatives which will have a major impact on the area, you ought to produce an alternative that at least balances growth with removal. And I would ask you for your reaction to that idea as you contemplate where to go from the draft DEIS and whether you would be willing to entertain the thought that you would come forth with a new alternative that would do that.

Mr. SPRAGUE. We haven't foreclosed doing anything like that because to be clean with the process here, our public comment period is intended to gather all the information and questions, and other data that we possibly can to assess what we did with those alternatives and do we indeed need to craft another one, or recraft the existing one. So we are not precluding doing that.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Isn't the greatest threat for catastrophic forest fires overgrowth of the forest?

Mr. SPRAGUE. We have a situation where, because of our fire exclusion, our extremely good efforts at fire prevention and putting fires out once they get started over the last hundred years, we have a tremendous amount of growth that has developed that in historic times would have been removed through periodic natural fires. Because we have been at this fire exclusion for some hundred years, there is a tremendous amount of buildup that we just simply wouldn't be able to deal with in a very short time span.

What we are trying to do with this and several of the other processes we have going in cooperation with the State of California is working at overall strategies, looking at the national forest system

lands as well as other Federal lands and private lands and the overall fuel reduction needs that we have in the State and trying to prioritize work in an orderly way at that. But it is not something we can do overnight.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I know my time is up.

May I just pursue the end of this question?

Mr. HANSEN. Go ahead.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I guess what concerns me, Mr. Sprague, well, one of many things but in the line of questioning we are in right now, when we have already got greatly overgrown forests and you admitted that and the chief of the Forest Service has said that is a big problem.

In fact, when you have them so overgrown they become too shady and the desirable kinds of trees can't even grow and you get the shade-tolerant varieties, when you have a situation we already have, which I frankly I don't think it is an overstatement to say really it is near a crisis or indeed at a crisis point already in terms of the threat we face from a catastrophic forest fire.

But your service has reviewed all of this and you have come forth with alternatives that have the ratio of annual growth to ASQ varies from 2 to 15 times. Now, the preferred alternative is 4 times. What is disturbing to me, that means every year, year in and year out, we are going to be having 4 times as many trees, new trees being grown as are being taken. To me, that is a sure-fire formula for disaster. Am I missing some part of this picture or how do I react to that?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, it is not that easy.

It is not in numbers, it is in volume. And even in the numbers, if we are able to carry out some of the fuel reduction strategies in the ways of thinnings and prescribed fire underburnings, we will be removing—I don't know what percentage. I couldn't give you that number. But we will be removing a significant amount of that growth in that process. So it is not a straight relationship there.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Well, I think I misspoke. I didn't mean to imply—I said trees.

What I meant was amount of timber. But I mean, the removal of the undergrowth and so forth that tends to be the case anyplace they are managing forests anyway, doesn't it? I mean that is going to be a common factor just about any place.

So if we include that, to think that we are somehow better off, I mean, I am not sure that that should be included because that is a routine part of good forest management anyway, isn't it, apart from the norm—what you think of as normally subject to the ASQ determinations.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. All right.

Well, I guess my time is up, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

The gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Vento.

Mr. VENTO. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The whole issue, of course, of fire suppression I mean is trying to build some fire resilience. The whole issue that is missing in the last series of questions was that there are differing species now

that are coming back after the cutovers and they are not as fire-resistant; is that correct, Mr. Sprague?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, where we have excluded fire but have not had any other removal of the timber, it is different species that are shade-tolerant kinds of species coming in underneath.

Mr. VENTO. They are susceptible to fire, right?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mr. VENTO. Fuel buildup means that instead of a small fire from a lightning strike at a time of the year where it may not spread, it may in fact get into a catastrophic type of fire, is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mr. VENTO. That is because of man's activities there for 100 years, both harvesting and putting out fires, is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes.

Mr. VENTO. That is what the study says. The issue here of course is one of the California spotted owl, not the northern spotted owl. That is not on the endangered, threatened list yet; is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is correct.

Mr. VENTO. I don't know whether you could answer the question regarding whether the genetic makeup is such that the Mexican spotted owl and the northern spotted owl could interbreed. But when scientists look at this I think they are looking at whether or not those subspecies can or cannot produce.

The issue here is they behave significantly different than the northern spotted owl. I think your testimony, Mr. Unger, is that they say that the California spotted owl has a different behavior and is much more adaptable to differing types of landscapes than the northern spotted owl is; is that your understanding?

Mr. UNGER. That is my understanding. I should mention in relationship to the earlier questions that were asked about the——

Mr. VENTO. Well, you are going to submit the entire DNA map, aren't you?

Mr. UNGER. I just wanted to make the point that it is the Fish and Wildlife Service that determines which is a species and subspecies and so forth and they do that in consultation with other members of the scientific community.

Mr. VENTO. I know when we get that information we will be able to get the right policies, so I trust that you will get that to us. Science to some of my friends is like what religion was to the Inquisition.

In any case, I think I know a little bit about it and trust that obviously the issue here with this is to try to get ahead of the train wreck, as Secretary Babbitt has tried to put in place a plan. So this came out as interagency task force. This is for Region V. Jack Ward Thomas headed that interagency.

So you have all the different agencies at the table to try to come up with this plan. This portends not just the management of the spotted owl, the California spotted owl, but an ecosystem type of approach; is that correct?

Mr. UNGER. Yes. It attempts to be comprehensive and look at the entire fish and wild life community, not just the California spotted owl, and it is an attempt to be proactive in order to come up with a plan that will avoid the more difficult and serious impacts of listing should the species be listed.

Mr. VENTO. Well, I was reading through a 1980 study here, Reagan-era—I don't know whether it was a Forest Service study or who did it—that is in our testimony from obviously a suspect group here, the California Aged Forest Alliance.

They say the study here said this was going to happen in the 1990's with regards to this particular region. So it isn't something that should come as a big surprise that we have to limit this. But the issue in terms of fire suppression then is one of not expending a lot of money to put out the small fires but to try to get back to the fire-resistant species like the Ponderosa pine.

Mr. UNGER. We definitely agree with a number of the comments that have been made here that fire policy is extremely important, not just in this California situation but in many other parts of the country and that we need to be looking at fuels management, we need to be looking at our suppression policies, prescribed burning in order to do a better job of achieving forest health and we have announced some initiatives last year in that direction. We are trying to incorporate those kinds of considerations in our budget proposals and in our policies.

Mr. VENTO. Well, I commend you for that. Obviously there has been a lot of debate about salvage.

I have been in the middle of it because I think that forest health in this forest is not good but I think the reasons for it are because of fire suppression and the selective type of harvesting that has gone on obviously in terms of your forest management plans, and you have attempted to revamp them at this time to try to take this into consideration.

I mean, one of the problems that we have is we keep getting new information and your job and my job is to write that into policy or into law to in fact integrate that. That is very unsettling.

Some would like business as usual. Business as usual is one billion board-feet harvest and if we proceed with that, we will not. That isn't necessarily a profitable area, like with salvage; very often it loses money. More often than not, it loses money, especially if you are trying to do it for fire suppression purposes. If you don't, you leave a lot of other nondesirable species or tree sizes behind.

So we talked about thinning and riparian management, all of that as part of forest health. The forest is unhealthy in this area but forest health hopefully with the revamped policies will cost money, unfortunately. We don't have the stub of the receipts. That will be one of the ongoing issues that we face, so I see my time has expired but I don't want to cut off Mr. Unger if he had a response to that.

Mr. UNGER. No, I think that you have stated the situation very well.

Mr. VENTO. Thank you.

Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you, Mr. Vento.

Mr. Romero, a member of the committee, does not have any questions.

Mr. Herger, we have gone through the committee members. We will now turn to you for questions.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity of joining your committee on this very important hearing which very dramatically affects my district as the gentlemen, the gentlelady are aware. My district houses eight national forests, covering 36,000 square miles in the northeastern part of California. Although they are not as large as the gentleman in Oregon's district, they do make up a major part of the Sierra providence. So what we are doing is very important.

I would like to express my agreement with one aspect of the comment made by the gentleman from Minnesota, on using the new science we have. We need to make decisions based on our most current information. If there is one thing that we are very aware of, as Ms. Gauthier mentioned, it is that we haven't been able to ascertain a lot of information, or science on any of these issues in the recent past.

As Ms. Gauthier has pointed out, so many of our decisions have been made on incomplete or inadequate information.

I feel that it is very important to emphasize the importance of credible science in dealing with this issue. I'm sure that you are all familiar with the Verner report, a group of scientists that were studying this very area to come up with some decisions. I will quote from their report. This is a currrent science, and the information was compiled from scientific investigation; and, again, I hope the gentleman from Minnesota is listening.

Mr. VENTO. I am listening.

Mr. HERGER. To some of this new science that I am talking about. Let me read from the report.

"In spite of the fact that logging has occurred over nearly all of the conifer forest of the Sierra Nevada in the past 100 years and especially in the past 50 years, spotted owls continue to be widely distributed throughout most of the conifer zone. Indeed, spotted owls may be more abundant in some areas of the Sierra Nevadas today than they were 100 years ago."

Now, let me move more recently to Ms. Gauthier. Excuse me if I am not pronouncing your name right. But let me go to your report, two spots from pages 2–39, the first, this is a quote out of your CASPO report, the draft CASPO EIS.

"The California spotted owl appears to be abundant and well distributed within the forests of the west slope of the Sierra Nevada. It is possible that the spotted owl is more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada than in the past 100 years or prior." You even go further than the Verner report, or prior—if the gentleman from Minnesota is still listening.

Mr. VENTO. I am listening.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you. Or prior to Euroamerican settlement.

Mr. VENTO. When are you going to say something?

Mr. HERGER. I guess.

Mr. VENTO. Do you want me to answer the question for you?

Mr. HERGER. No, it is still my time.

Part is new science and what we are coming up with, and again, the allegations are that, somehow, these owls are disappearing. The question should be, why are we shutting down all of these mills? In the last several years 29 mills in the district that I represent have been shut down. This is due to Federal policy that I believe is misguided.

That is the nicest way of putting it, misguided, dramatically misguided Federal policy. Now, Mr. Sprague, I want to thank you for taking the time to come out to a woods tour we recently had in our district. The gentleman, my colleague from California, mentioned he has parts of his forests that are a third dead and dying.

I want to mention we saw areas—now this was not in the Sierras, but we know of areas, for example, the cottonwood fire just up northeast of Truckee that threatened towns of Laurelton three different times this last summer. We saw this in the news for about a week-and-a-half.

It is not a third of the forest that is dead and dying; it is 60 to 80 percent of the forests that are dead and dying. This is where I have a problem with the Forest Service. I am just wondering, are you reading your own reports?

Are you looking at the information that we are seeing? How can we come up with a report that allows some—I believe you recommended some 460 million board-feet of timber to be thinned, to be taken out. Guess what? We have some 1.7 billion in additional forest that is growing.

Now that means that even if we took out this 460 million board-feet of forest, that we have an increase of 1.3 billion board-feet of forest. Now it is great that we have the rain we have this year but we have had seven of nine years of drought.

Mr. Sprague, I know for a fact that you have been around the area. I feel you are sympathetic to this.

I guess I have to ask this question: how in the world do we come up with the recommendations that the Forest Service does knowing the new information we have?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Congressman, the new information specific to the spotted owl that came out of the CASPO report was used in this document as far as the spotted owl itself is concerned.

But we also, in response to the public input we got at the beginning of this process, went out as part of our scoping to start this EIS process to find out what, in addition to the owl, people were concerned about and what we are doing here and we did get some specific feedback that we covered in this EIS. So it is not just the spotted owl.

That is why we took on the fuels and fire issue as a part of this. That is why we expanded to look at the full range of wild life species as a part of it. And that is why we expanded it to deal with the riparian situation as well.

So it is more than just the owl and even with respect to the owl itself, we were not really dealing in numbers, even though there is reference to the fact that there are plenty of owls and they are well distributed. It is the habitat that we are looking at, the components that the owls and the martins and fishers and other of these species prefer for their survival. And that is why we didn't really get into the count and all that in the process.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Sprague, I want to thank you for saying that. That is what I had hoped you would say, and that is what I would hope the Forest Service should be doing to expand its objections. Let's look at the whole forest health picture.

Let's not take one species which, according to your own report, is thriving, probably even more than 100 years ago.

Now again, if you looked at all that, how could you come up with a plan that allows our forests to be growing thicker by 1.3 billion board-feet a year? They are already so thick, far more so than historically, even by your own reports. How can you possibly, if you look at everything, come up with a report like this?

This is a report that would not go in and thin and take our dead and dying trees, or would attempt to restore our forests to the condition that they were 100 years ago. We were able to prevent forest fires when we had thinner growths of trees, particularly in California where we don't get the moisture they do in Washington.

If you have looked at all of this as you indicated, it puzzles me how you came up with this finding. I understand that even members of your team were not recommending this. Even if they had recommended it, I didn't like the one that many of them were recommending. But their recommendation was not as extreme as the one that you ultimately came up with.

Mr. HANSEN. Do you want that question responded to?

Mr. HERGER. Yes.

Mr. HANSEN. We will allow one more question from Mr. Herger. Go ahead and respond.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, with respect to just the volume question itself, the number is green sale volume. So there is a tremendous amount of salvage that will go on top of that number.

Now, to ask how we arrived at where we did, we, as in most groups of people, this team, our staff in the Forest Service in California, have differences of opinion. In the process of deciding on a preferred alternative, I listened to all that opinion and decided what I wanted to really be able to do is to be able to get focused on the landscape in total and the forest health issues and see if we could generate the same kind of focus from the people, the public that would be reviewing this document to look at the landscape and not be focused on just the numbers, the number of owls or the number of board-feet.

We are not locked in just because we have a preferred alternative. We are not locked into that.

We really put that out there to generate the discussion, the thought processes and so forth of the public involved and the stakeholders involved and so that is the rationale for why we came out there.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

Mr. Pombo.

Mr. POMBO. Don't have any questions.

[The written statement of Mr. Pombo follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD W. POMBO, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today to determine why the U.S. Forest Service is shifting the direction of its forest plans in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range away from the health of the forests and onto the health of the California spotted owl.

I have grave concerns about the current Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the spotted owl, especially since its enactment could potentially reduce the current volume of timber sales by an additional 70 percent.

Mr. Chairman, as you will hear today from a number of witnesses, the California spotted owl is not an endangered or threatened species, nor is it likely that it will ever become one. Every scientific report indicates that spotted owl populations are

abundant, well distributed, and thriving throughout the Sierra Nevadas. Why, then, is the Forest Service moving forward with an EIS based on a premise that quick action must be taken in order to ensure "suitable habitat" for the owl? The Service claims that their actions will effectively avoid the listing of the California spotted owl, a subspecies of its famous cousin to the north, as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The truth—plain and simple—is that the Forest Service, afraid of being sued by the corporate environmentalist community, is choosing to ignore sound scientific information and threatening the health of this vibrant ecosystem.

If enacted, the land management reforms selected by the Forest Service in their "preferred alternative" would exclude thinning, salvage, and regular timber harvest and regeneration in over 60 percent of the national forest lands deemed "suitable habitat" for the owl. Apparently, it wasn't enough for the so-called environmentalists to devastate the economy of the Pacific Northwest—now they want to bring down California too.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses—a couple of which I recognize from my Endangered Species Task Force hearing in Stockton, California earlier this year. However, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I am extremely disappointed that the Forest Service continues to push ahead with this process when, instead, they should set aside the Draft Environment Impact Statement for the California spotted owl and simply address the forest health issues in the Sierras and throughout the West. Even the Chief of the Forest Service, during a 1994 Senate hearing in Boise, contended that the decline in forest health—too many trees and many of them the wrong species—is a concern for both wildlife and wildfires. And if there is another rampant wildfire, its effects will have far greater negative impacts on species protection than any human impacts. Worse still, such conditions unnecessarily threaten the lives of people.

The goal of protecting the California spotted owl and invigorating the northern California economy are not mutually exclusive. We can continue to protect this species—a thriving species—not by shutting down the forest, but instead by adequately addressing the forest health needs of the Sierra Nevada range and actively managing this national asset.

The time has come for policymakers to put an end to the environmental extremists' attempts at forest management by lawsuit and allow the forest service to do their job in a sound scientific manner. The health of our forests and the prosperity of our people depend on it.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) recently released by the Forest Service analyzing alternative ways to manage habitat for the California spotted owl.

I am most concerned that the Forest Service management strategy has been to perform an EIS on the California spotted owl (CASPO), which is neither listed as threatened nor endangered under the Endangered Species Act, rather than study the larger, more critical need for improvement of forest health. Healthy forests provide healthy habitats. Single species management plans have been continuously rejected by the scientific community in favor of multi-species, multi-purpose management plans.

During the 1994 Senate hearings in Boise, Idaho, Chief Jack Ward Thomas testified that the decline in forest health is the result of too many trees and many of them the wrong species. Tree density and species mixture is a concern for wildlife and wildfire. "Forest stands that are more open would most likely demonstrate a high degree of vigor and resistance to insect and disease attacks."

California private industry lands are managed more intensively for production of wood products than are Forest Service lands, yet private land managers in California maintain the healthiest forests and wildlife populations. Much of this is due to the fact that private land managers balance forest growth with timber harvests. None of the alternatives in the current CASPO EIS remotely attempt to balance growth with removals, adding to the overall trend in recent years toward timber growth substantially exceeding removals. Timber growth in excess of timber removals increases tree density to unhealthy levels and promotes regeneration of non-fire resistant tree species. Private land management techniques can correct the unhealthy trends.

Further, the draft EIS is premised on the faulty notion that quick action must be taken in order to ensure "suitable habitat" for the owl; thereby avoiding listing

this sub-species as "threatened" or "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act. However, the land management reforms selected by tthe Forest Service in their "preferred alternative", would exclude thinning, salvage, and regular timber harvest from over 60 percent of the national forest lands deemed "suitable habitat" for the owl.

In closing, I would like to urge you to listen carefully to the witnesses who will raise serious questions about the adequacy of the CASPO EIS, why it is ill-planned and how its enactment will affect their families, their businesses, and the land. I would hope that the subcommittee will give attention to their assessment that the CASPO EIS was not sufficiently comprehensive and offers no measurable enhancement of forest health, and should be revisited with an attention to good science and creation of a biodiverse forest.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA

It is imperative that the U.S. Forest Service take steps immediately to implement a timber salvage program that will prevent catastrophic forest fires.

The health of western forests has declined sharply in recent years due to prohibitions imposed on salvage harvesting and thinning. This has resulted in unnatural fuel load concentrations in forest stands, which are in effect timber boxes just waiting to be lit. Last summer, 67,000 wildfires burned over 4 million acres of forests and grasslands in the western States. Some 33 firefighters lost their lives in forest fires in 1994, and the Forest Service spent $950 million in taxpayer dollars fighting these fires.

It is clear that we have a forest health crisis on our hands, which is why I am so concerned about the alternatives the Forest Service has proposed regarding the California spotted owl. In my opinion, none of these alternatives go far enough to prevent catastrophic forest fires. Of the alternatives proposed, however, Alternative D would do most to protect wildlife and humans from the dangers of forest fires. This alternative would permit an adequate amount of thinning and salvage harvesting needed to improve forest health.

But for some reason, the Forest Service has selected Alternative C, which does not address seriously the threat of fires in our forests. For example, alternative C would prohibit thinning and salvage operations in 60 percent of the National Forest lands deemed suitable habitat for the California spotted owl. These lands would remain highly susceptible to fire. In fact, all alternatives except for Alternative E provide more suitable land than Alternative C for vegetation management such as prescribed fire, thinning, salvage, and other fire prevention measures. Alternative C simply tinkers at the edges of the current policies that created our forest health crisis in the first place.

I not only disagree with the alternative chosen by the Forest Service, but also am confounded as to why the study which created these alternatives was ever conducted in the first place. It is disturbing that during this period of fiscal constraint the Forest Service used taxpayer dollars to create a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) for an animal that is not listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

In its DEIS, the Forest Service states that steps must be taken to provide "adequate habitat" for the California spotted owl; the Forest Service claims that such action is necessary to keep this owl from being listed under the ESA. But this explanation simply rings false. After all, the DEIS states that it is highly possible that more California spotted owls now live in the Sierra Nevadas than at any other point prior to Euro-American settlement.

In addition, one cannot ignore the economic consequences of the Forest Service's policies that led to the forest health crisis. Our mills are closing down while logs rot and become forest fuel. It makes no sense to continue to deprive citizens of the economic benefits of the dead and dying timber that surrounds them, which otherwise threatens to burn down their homes.

The greatest threat to owls in the Sierra Nevadas, as well as the people living there, is fire. Until the Forest Service takes this issue seriously and allows a substantial amount of salvage harvesting and thinning, both owls and humans will remain imperilled.

Mr. HANSEN. Mrs. Chenoweth.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I just wanted to address a question to Mr. Sprague. I think for the first time we have heard the Forest Serv-

ice admit that it really wasn't the species that was their first concern, it really was the land.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Thank you—well, I don't know if it was the first time but what we are about in this project is the landscape, yes.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. And Mr. Sprague, is it true that even though your report indicated that the numbers were healthier than you had anticipated, that you still recommended that we continue to study the issue?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct, because the preferred habitat of the spotted owl is in decline.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. How do you locate the spotted owls since they are nocturnal?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Janice, do you want to—I have not tried to locate any.

Ms. GAUTHIER. You go out and you hoot for them. You call them. They are quite tame. They will come up to you.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. They will come up to you if you hoot for them?

Ms. GAUTHIER. It is quite likely they will, yes.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Do they hoot back or how do you know, how can you see them in the dark?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, you can usually see them. They will come up quite close. I personally have only seen one.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. You have only seen one.

Ms. GAUTHIER. That is correct. I have seen one spotted owl.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. But you go out and hoot for them and how do you locate them? I mean you have only seen one.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, that is not my job to go out and locate owls, but those field biologists who are in the position of monitoring owls will go out and try to locate them and see if they are having nesting success every year. They generally stay in a particular nest tree for a few years. It is not that difficult.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. It still sounds complicated to me so I want you to bear with me here. You hoot for them at night. How do you locate where they are? Or how can you understand how many numbers of owls there are?

Ms. GAUTHIER. We have pretty good records of owl sights right now on the 10 national forests. So you can actually count them. You can count them in the trees.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. From the noise they make.

Ms. GAUTHIER. And from visual observation.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Of what?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Of the owls.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. So you can see them during the day sitting up there in the trees?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, what they would do is they would locate them during the evening and then probably try to locate the nest tree and the actual animals during the day.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Herger and Mr. Cooley pointed out that your own report indicates that they are more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada than in the last 100 years.

Ms. GAUTHIER. We say that very cautiously. We don't know that for a fact.

The line of logic there is that because of the change in vegetation distribution in the Sierra Nevada and, in other words, change from

a more open condition to a more densely stocked situation which many observations have been made, it is possible that there are more owls now than there were previously. But we don't know that for a fact.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. It doesn't say "possible". It does say "and the spotted owl is more abundant today".

Ms. GAUTHIER. I am not sure where you are reading from but——

Mr. COOLEY. Page 2–39.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Page 2–39 of your own report.

So you know, the only thing is that we need to be able to rely on the information and so I would have to say, Mr. Chairman, that when the Endangered Species Act was originally passed, it was passed on the basis of numbers of species that must be recovered. There may come a day when the Congress may have to do some micromanaging and making some of these decisions if the Forest Service fails to make decisions based on the law the Congress passed.

Mr. Unger, would you like to respond to that?

Mr. UNGER. Could I comment on the several statements regarding the numbers of owls, including the one you just mentioned? That clearly was one of the findings of the scientific group that based on all the information they had, which in the case of numbers was not a lot because the studies of numbers have not been conducted for many years, that they could not come to any conclusion that there was a decline in these numbers.

The additional conclusions that they came to were, however, that the habitat that is essential for the spotted owl is declining clearly and rapidly, that even age management and short rotations and the fire management policies that are in existence at this time have been for some years clearly a danger to future survival of the species. And so it was a total. It was the total picture.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Is it because we have shifted from fire suppression programs to actually fighting fire and so is that——

Mr. UNGER. Well, suppression, I include fighting fires as well as preventing, yes.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I mean putting the fire out while it is still small instead of letting it burn.

Mr. UNGER. Well, it is not possible to say that in any given situation that is right or wrong. One would have to look at it.

But we do need to be looking at an overall policy that takes into account the need to keep fuels from building up so catastrophic fires don't occur. They can be controlled. They can be lower-level intensity fires. In some cases prescribed burning can be accomplished, in some cases we can mechanically remove the fuels to prevent those disastrous fires, a whole series of activities based on what is right in the given situation.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Chairman, I see my time is up. I just have one more quick question. And that is that in order to maintain the health of the forest for the habitat, the owl habitat, do you prefer prescribed burning to salvage logging?

Mr. Unger.

Mr. UNGER. It is one tool. I think that in any given situation you would choose one or the other or both. It depends upon the situa-

tion, the requirements of the situation. I don't think you can say that one is better than the other.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I would say if I were an owl I would much prefer that you decide for salvage logging than prescribed burning.

Mr. UNGER. When I say prescribed burning that would be under very limited circumstances and it would be in cases where you don't destroy the whole forest. There are cases where you can burn fuels that are on the forest floor in a manner that the fire will be confined to the forest floor, will not endanger the larger trees. It is a carefully worked-out process that would have to be followed based on a site-specific circumstance.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. But prescribed burning weighs more heavily with you than would logging?

Mr. UNGER. No.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

Let me make this point, if I may. We have two more panels and we have kept this panel here a long time. I know there are some further questions.

We would ask the members if they could be brief in their questions to the panel, be somewhat brief in your answers. We have two more panels who have waited very patiently.

I will turn to the gentleman from California, Mr. Pombo.

Mr. POMBO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just had one quick question, ma'am. You said that you thought there were more owls now but you weren't sure. Why are you not sure on the counts?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Because no one was counting owls 100 years ago. So I am sorry, that is——

Mr. POMBO. So if on the other side of this, if someone said that there are less today than there were 100 years ago, the same reasoning would also hold true. No one was counting them a hundred years ago.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Correct.

Mr. POMBO. So they really don't know.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Right. We are basing this on the best information we have on what the vegetation looked like historically and what it looks like now and the best information we have about what the owls need and use in terms of vegetation.

Mr. POMBO. So when they said the northern spotted owl needed old growth forest and they were predicting or guessing that there were less today than there were 130 years ago because of the condition of the forests in the length of the time the trees had been there, and now today they are finding northern spotted owl in second and third and fourth growth forest, that should change what their guess was about the number of owls that were here 100 years ago because their assumption was wrong when they went in to decide how many there were before and how many we had now.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, I guess I would say if that is a valid scientifically conducted work then that would have to be considered.

Mr. POMBO. But your validly, scientifically conducted work is a guess based on what you think you know about the owl and where it lives and then trying to figure out what you think the forests

looked like 130 years ago. So it is not really scientific as much as it is a guess.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, I guess it is the best we can do.

Mr. POMBO. Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Duncan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I just want to yield my time to my friend, Mr. Doolittle.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Doolittle.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding.

Ms. Gauthier, you have indicated you are comparing the owls we have today to a period—either is it 100 or 130 years ago? Which is the period of time you are comparing that to?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, first of all, I would like to make one thing clear and that is that this ID team that developed the environmental impact statement did not develop any new science. We used the science in the technical team report. So I would like to first of all make that distinction. When you are talking about going back in time, you know, I couldn't be that specific about it. We are merely trying to characterize the situation as best we can.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. But is it roughly 100 years ago?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Sure, 100.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And may I ask, why did you select that time in which to compare the owls that we have today?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, generally we have been looking at vegetation changes prior to pre-Euroamerican settlement and so you know, that is sort of a point in time where we know changes were made in vegetation patterns that existed for long periods of time.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So you are comparing this to—what?—roughly the time of the 49ers or just before they got to California?

Ms. GAUTHIER. I think most people are using about 1840 as the approximate time period.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. 1840?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Yes.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. The forests in 1840, were they managed or in natural condition?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, I suppose they were managed by the indigenous peoples at the time.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Is there any doubt in that they were, in fact, managed?

Ms. GAUTHIER. No, not in my mind. Managed—surely we know that burning was being used.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. So I just wanted to establish I think there is an inference that when we talk about pre-European American settlement that we are touching then the unadulterated state of nature, so to speak, and I just want to make clear that when Mr. Muir took his famous stroll through the Sierras, maybe he didn't know it but he was strolling through a carefully managed forest, was he not, a forest that would be the envy of anything that we had today, at least in the public lands. Is that basically true?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, I couldn't agree with you more. Clearly the forests looked different back then.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Well, I guess my concern through all of this is it seems to me the Forest Service feels so burned by having lost a couple of these lawsuits, just listening to your testimony, it seems

like you are bending over backwards so that they can't do that to you again. But in the process, you are ignoring the forest for the trees, if you will forgive an unfortunate pun.

Because indeed the greatest threat to fowl habitat, as I read your reports and listen to you, is not from logging, although that is the one—that is the area that is going to take the huge hit in this, but it is from catastrophic forest fires.

Mr. Unger, to ask you a question, you have indicated that habitat is the concern here. When your preferred alternative allows four times the amount of timber to be produced annually, four times more than what is being removed, how do you realistically think you are going to lessen the chance of a catastrophic forest fire?

Mr. UNGER. Well, I would have to defer to Mr. Sprague's analysis that what growth versus removal really means in terms of trees, in terms of fuel, in terms of growth on existing trees would be a different situation than the production of additional stems, so to speak, which would be susceptible to the wildfire circumstances.

I also can't comment on the relative proportions of the degree of concern that the scientists expressed regarding the effect of even aged management and short rotations versus the effect of fires. Again, I would defer to Lynn to make that judgment.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Let me just say--I mean this as no criticism of Mr. Sprague, I frankly don't comprehend his response to the question. It just doesn't add up to me. Now maybe in your written response, you will provide written testimony I will understand it. It seems to me all that other stuff is not counted in ASQ. I don't care about that. That is going to go on.

I want to know from ASQ why do we have four times the amount being grown annually as opposed to the annual ASQ. To me you are grossly building up the thickening of the forests which is going to lead to an even worse forest fire. Telling me you are going to clear out some brush and do some things, that is good, we need that.

But that, to me, doesn't get to the fundamental heart of this issue. I mean, this is a dramatic progression in the number of trees year-by-year-by-year, four times this year, four times that much more the next year and four times after that. I mean it doesn't take many years before you have an intolerable situation.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, we will try to describe that for you for the record so it is clear.

But one other thing that I didn't mention, too, is we have a tremendous number of acres in plantations, small tree plantations and they are growing like crazy and that is growth that is not available for ASQ yet, either. But there is a whole bunch of it. It is a complicated thing. We will try to describe it for you for the record.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thanks.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you. We thank the panel.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Chairman, just to add onto it, I will take a full five minutes.

Mr. HANSEN. I will recognize the gentleman from this side.

Mr. VENTO. But the point is with this ASQ, do you include all the lands in there, the riparian areas, the wild receding rivers, everything else as well, is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. It would be the areas in suitable timber land base; yes.

Mr. VENTO. Well, the point is that, in other words, the decision is being made here to go for a more mature forest: lengthen the rotation, have more matured aged trees for the various attributes that occur in terms of that ecosystem; is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is correct.

Mr. VENTO. I mean at least that is the recommendation. I understand Mr. Doolittle's question. I think it is a legitimate question in terms of this.

I mean the whole plan here has been we have gone from about 700 million ASQ in the 1970's to 1.7 billion harvested, I don't know what the sales were during this time but did it also oscillate in that particular manner? I mean, what has been the pattern here?

For instance, we are hearing from our colleague here that a lot of mills have closed and so forth and yet some of the information I have looked at indicates that there hasn't been, that the number of sales has been pretty significant, that timber receipts are even higher now in these counties than they have been partly because of price, but partly because of volume in the harvest.

Can you comment on this?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, not in the last few years. The sale and the harvest has been down over the last four or five years.

Mr. VENTO. But it did go through this oscillation of 700 million board-feet harvested in the 1970's and 1.7 billion board-feet harvested in the mid-1980's; is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Right. And you can go back further in history. There have always been oscillations in the——

Mr. VENTO. But these haven't been due to an ecosystem management plan. They have been due to factors in the economy. Are some of the reasons these mills close due to other factors than simply the availability of harvest? Private lands, what are the private lands' role in this particular instance? Are they a significant factor?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, they are a factor. I couldn't comment on why all of the mills have closed.

Mr. VENTO. Well, I can and I think part of the suggestion is that the work force numbers don't look that different, either. It has oscillated between 7,000 and 11,000, 12,000; it is down to something like 8,000 now.

I don't think there is any question about the recent demise. The idea of getting ahead of this is to, of course, keep jobs, I suppose, and keep a sustainable role in place. I think everyone says they want to use the new information. I think that you have to accept it.

I think this fire regime issue is a very important one that needs to be worked out. The members have to understand this is not new science but I think it is pretty good science.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you.

We are going to take one more member to speak. Mr. Herger, we are going to recognize him for two minutes and then we are

through with this panel, OK? If that is all right with you folks. We will give him two minutes.

Mr. Herger.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I have to invite the gentleman from Minnesota to come out to my district.

Mr. VENTO. I have been there.

Mr. HERGER. I invite you to come see all the schools that are shutting down. People are crying for lumber.

Mr. VENTO. Why?

Mr. HERGER. The suggestion that the economy is declining and that schools are shutting down due to lack of demand and of harvest is completely false and outrageous. That is not the fact at all.

Mr. VENTO. Well, I don't know. What is your point? I don't understand your point. Are you talking to me?

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Herger has the time.

Mr. HERGER. My two minutes. The inference is that there isn't a demand. I can assure you there is a demand.

Mr. VENTO. I didn't say anything about demand. I said what the actual record had been in terms of harvest.

Mr. HERGER. About triple what it is right now.

I, again, want to read from what the report says. Let me read from your report, this draft CASPO DEIS; again, page 2–39. Your report states that the California spotted owl appears to be abundant and well distributed within the forest of the west slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It is possible that the spotted owl is more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada Mountains than it was in the past 100 years or prior to Euroamerican settlement.

Now I have to ask throughout the statement I hear references to decline, I hear a reference to concerns. I am just wondering are you reading your own report? It would appear that your own report is saying that you have as many or more owls than you have had before and I also want to mention that up in the northern part of my district, they have actually found three times more northern spotted owls in just northern California than they thought they had in all of Oregon, Washington and California combined.

Again, new science, as we get out and hoot for the owls—and I have hooted and have seen at least six or seven myself. As we are doing that, we are finding owls that we just weren't aware were there before.

And again, the severity of this—to the Forest Service and to the people who live in this area in our Nation, is that by not managing wisely we are not only losing owl habitat, we are seeing our entire forest burn up, and this is a catastrophe that is happening and it should not be happening. And I think it is clearly because of the mismanagement that I feel we have to change.

Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Thank you. Could I ask Commissioner Unger if you and your associates could stay with us a while with the next panels? I understand the committee may have some further questions for you.

Would that be terribly inconvenient, do you have other obligations or could you stay for a while?

Mr. UNGER. Let me check the schedule. I am sure that at least some of us could stay.

Mr. HANSEN. OK. We will excuse you now to the first row if that is OK.

We will ask the second panel if they will come up. And the second panel is Cheri Jacobson, Executive Director, United Forest Families; Kent Duysen, Terra Bella, California; Ken Marks, Supervisor, Tuolumne County Administration Center; Bill Coates, Supervisor, Plumas County, Instigator of Quincy Library Group.

If they would come up now, we would appreciate it. We appreciate the other panel if they could stay.

Thank you. We appreciate you appearing before the committee.

May I ask you at the onset how much time do you need for your opening statement, keeping in mind that your full statement will be incorporated in the record?

Ms. JACOBSON. Approximately five minutes.

Mr. HANSEN. Five minutes.

Does that figure seem to be all right with everybody? All right. When the green light goes on you can start; yellow light, wrap up; red light, terminate, if you would, please.

Cheri Jacobson, we will start with you.

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you.

Mr. HANSEN. Before you start, I have got to go over to the Floor.

Mr. Doolittle, would you take the chair?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. [Presiding] Welcome.

STATEMENT OF CHERI JACOBSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITED FOREST FAMILIES

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you. Good morning.

My name is Cheri Jacobson. My husband and I are tree farmers. I am representing the United Forest Families here today made up of over 500 working people and their families, whose livelihoods depend upon the wise management of our forests. We have had very little voice in the highly politicized debate over the destructive path our government has taken in the management of our natural resources.

It is time for you to move this debate beyond the rhetoric we so often hear and look at the faces of us, of the people who are being devastated both economically and emotionally. We have members who are third generation wood workers whose proud heritage comes from the forest and whose future depends upon the decisions made by committees like this.

We are the true environmentalists who work and care for the land. Mill closures throughout the west in recent years have had devastating and all-too-often overlooked consequences. Once thriving communities have been reduced to ghost towns and have seen increases in the unemployment rates, spousal and child abuse cases as well as decreased funds for local school and road programs.

It is not necessary for you to take my word for this. Just contact the county administrators or school officials in towns like Yreka or Crescent City, California or even Roseburg, Oregon. Ask them about the impacts on their social service programs in their areas since their mills have closed. Ask them about the crime rate in

their areas since their mills have closed. Ask them about the economic stability in their area since their mills have closed. These are extremely real impacts that have already occurred to families and communities throughout the northwest and are beginning to spread throughout rural towns in the Sierras.

Timber industry workers are increasingly seen in the mainstream media as a dying breed. President Clinton has used the phrase "economically dislocated" to describe forest workers who have lost their means of support for their families and who are now eligible for retraining.

Once again, ask these communities how the retraining is going. The answer: nowhere. These are very proud people providing material that this country depends upon, proud people who are constantly improving the methods we practice in the woods, including the use of high-tech equipment which is gentle to the land.

We don't want to be reduced to accepting handouts. We don't want to be retrained for minimum wage jobs that will require us to become dependent upon our communities. We want to remain positive, contributing people within our communities and our government. We want to continue to instill the pride that one feels that comes from knowing you have done a job well and to pass that on to our children and our grandchildren.

This draft EIS is correct in stating the obvious benefits of high-paying jobs and in the families that are committed to their communities. But it is an insult to characterize livelihoods as honorable as loggers and sawmill workers as a subculture.

We have been a major contributor to the growth and prosperity of this great country and will not accept a flawed notion that we have somehow served out our usefulness. This should not be an owl versus people issue.

The real issue is the health to our public forest lands. We are tired of fighting catastrophic wild fires and protecting our communities from physical destruction. We are the people that have the tools. We have the technology. We have professionalism and we have backbone to return our forests and our local communities to a healthy state and we are ready to do so.

Due to the collapse of the National Forest Timber Management Program, our small mills in Tuolumne County, California currently have only enough supply to operate through the rest of 1995. Unfortunately, impending mill closures are now common to rural towns throughout the Sierras and the western United States and it emphasizes the urgency of the problems we are now facing.

I want you to know that as recent as of January this year my husband and I relocated a great portion of our business to southern Colorado to provide timber to the Sierra Nevadas. It is not easy nor is it fun to have to leave your families behind. We recognize and appreciate Congress' willingness to address this crisis but I can't overstate the need for immediate action.

We are in big trouble. We appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people in the timber industry. Our hope is to keep these people working to meet the needs of their families, their communities, the national forests and the American people.

[The statement of Ms. Jacobson can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you very much.
Let's see, Mr. Duysen? Did I pronounce that correct?
Mr. DUYSEN. It is actually Duysen.
Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF KENT DUYSEN, PRESIDENT, SIERRA FOREST PRODUCTS

Mr. DUYSEN. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, my name is Kent Duysen, president of Sierra Forest Products.

The two mills that we operate in Terra Bella and Dinuba were the lone survivors among the mills dependent from timber from the national forests of the south Sierra Nevada. Let me tell you today we are really on the edge of disaster. We are hanging on by our fingertips. We desperately need your help.

I have come here with some good news. I think we are all aware that the focal point of today's hearing is the California spotted owl. The good news is there are a lot of owls. There are a lot of owls on national timber lands. There are a lot of owls in private timber lands. There are a lot of owls in old growth timber, a lot of owls in second growth timber.

According to the Federal biologists, there are probably more owls today than there were 100 years ago. The problem, I am going to bring you some bad news, and that is that the Forest Service still seems intent upon changing all the forest plans in the Sierras for the sake of what they were saying is protecting the owl. And that the changes that they are wanting to make are going to cause forest-destroying wildfires, which will eventually eliminate prime owl habitat. It is going to create the closure of more sawmills and eventually maybe even the owl itself will be endangered.

As a witness at this hearing, I have come prepared to answer your questions, but I must tell you that I have some questions of my own that I would like for you to ponder on as you listen to the witnesses that follow me.

Why are we even worried about the California spotted owl? As I mentioned earlier, these birds are plentiful, reproducing well, and distributed widely throughout the Sierras. They are neither listed as endangered nor threatened under any ESA listing and I don't think it could be listed that way for anything in the near term. If we are really concerned about the owl, why aren't we doing the right thing to protect owl habitat?

Forest Service scientists agree that the greatest threat to the owl is a wildfire. And the only way to lessen the frequency and the severity of those fires is to reduce fuel loads in an aggressive program of thinning and salvaging of dead timber.

Why are the national forests in the West at such high risk? A very simple answer as we have heard earlier, is that there are just simply too many trees. For nearly a century, we have excluded fire from the forest and at some point in time fire needs to be reintroduced into the ecosystem but to do so now is just at too great of a risk that the fires might get out of control.

You know, sometime in the future I think we are going to finally decide that we do need to cut some timber, but I have to ask who will be left in the private sector to process the woods that must be

removed. As I said at the outset, our company remains just a handful of survivors.

Later this morning, you will receive testimony from two professional foresters representing two companies, Collins Pine and Fibreboard, they manage substantial private forestlands in the Sierras. However, even the mills operated by those two companies are in jeopardy without a steady supply of Federal timber.

Where are the people in this picture? Small communities in the Sierras are dependent upon Federal timber. Why should hard working men and women be forced out of work just because of the owl and an owl that is not even endangered or in jeopardy of its own life. The truth of the matter is that there is more than enough wood to keep all the existing saw mills and logging crews working. There is probably enough to even open some of the closed down facilities and that best of all there is enough for the owls. It is a win-win for everybody.

What other country in the world would permit its natural resources to be squandered the way we are squandering ours? According to Forest Service statistics, more timber dies and decays each year in our national forest than is removed for conversion into lumber, paper, and/or wood products. How did we let this happen to ourselves? How in this day and age could we be so financially foolish?

Last year, we spent almost a billion dollars fighting forest fires. In addition, we lost revenues of a like amount because the government did not sell as much timber as the market would absorb. Clearly, the cost of doing nothing in the forest and watching it burn is greater than the benefit of doing the right thing, by reducing fuel loads and selling more timber.

How can we bring back common sense into the situation? It seems to me that we have only one choice. Mills are in desperate need of timber. The government is in desperate need of revenue and our forests are in desperate need of some type of management. We need fuel reduction. There is really only one common sense answer. Congress must direct the Forest Service to sell more timber.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by saying that for better or worse, this problem is in the hands of Congress. Sadly and for a variety of reasons, I don't think the Forest Service is going to solve their own problem. Still they cannot get out of focusing on a single species.

Now, what is appropriate, is to look at the bigger picture and that bigger picture is forest health, not the California spotted owl; it is truly forest health. We need to do something to ensure that the national forests in the West are not destroyed by massive fire storms. We look for your help and thank you for the time for this presentation.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Duysen can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Our next witness is Mr. Ken Marks. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF KEN MARKS, SUPERVISOR, TUOLUMNE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER

Mr. MARKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for this opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Ken Marks and I have the privilege of serving as the Chairman of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors.

Tuolumne County is a county rich in natural resources, located in the heart of Sierra Nevada's mother lode. Nearly 80 percent of Tuolumne County's land is government owned. Thirty-one percent of Yosemite National Park lies within the boundaries of Tuolumne and it also houses over 68 percent of the Stanislaus National Forest.

Now, using experimental science, the U.S. Forest Service is proposing to rewrite history, not only for 10 of its Sierra Nevada national forests but also for 17 of California's rural counties. The criminal part of this whole report is that it is being done unnecessarily. As the draft environmental impact statement summarizes, "The California spotted owl appears to be abundant and well distributed within the forests on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada."

The draft environmental impact statement outlines seven long-term strategies to protect the habitat of the California spotted owl. If any one of the options being recommended in this report are adopted, let me describe a few of the impacts I will see affecting our county.

We will immediately lose approximately 1,000 jobs, jobs that are directly tied to the timber industry. An additional 3,000 will be lost in related industries. That is a total of 4,000 jobs lost if any of these alternatives are adopted.

We currently suffer from an unemployment rate in Tuolumne County of 11.7 percent. We have just over 18,000 jobs in our county. If we lose 4,000 of them, our unemployment rate will skyrocket to over 30 percent. More importantly, our future generation, our children, will be directly affected as Tuolumne and Calaveras County schools will lose over $2 million per year in forest reserve funding derived from timber receipts from the Stanislaus National Forest.

The Tuolumne County Board of Education has voted to oppose draft EIS for managing the California spotted owl. Nine independent local school districts have also voted to send their opposition of the draft EIS to the Forest Service.

Our schools will not only suffer from a cutback in direct funding, but the downsizing of an important industry in Tuolumne County will have a predictable domino effect throughout the community, whereas an increase in unemployment historically results in an increased incidence of child and spousal abuse along with drug and alcohol abuse.

My wife is an educator at a local elementary school with about 650 students where all of the forest reserve funds are used to provide basic educational programs. Within the last year, when environmental regulations have helped shut down an operational gold mine in our county, 250 jobs were lost. At the school where my wife teaches, there was a noticeable change in the behavior of many of the attending students. It is not immediate but little things start

showing up: No lunch, no jacket, no home work, no concentration, no parent, no student. No sense.

The Forest Service plan for managing the habitat of the California spotted owl is opposed by every member of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors.

Tuolumne County's road department will need to cut back its maintenance programs from snowplow services to pothole repairs as we will be losing over $900,000 per year in forest reserve funding directed toward county road maintenance. But a loss of direct funding is just the tip of the iceberg. As unemployment increases, social problems increase as well. Demand for county services will rise from public health to public safety. The cost to Tuolumne County at providing these essential local services will rise astronomically at a time when its citizens will be least able to support the increased cost.

Finally, all of the alternatives outlined in this Forest Service plan put our forests in greater jeopardy of catastrophic fires. According to this report, an acceptable rate of destruction for Sierra Nevada forests is 421,000 acres lost per year. This is a prescription for the demise of the Sierra Nevada Range. Forest fires destroy more than trees. They destroy lives. They destroy homes. They destroy our resources and ironically they ultimately destroy the habitat of wildlife.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I urge you to consider the true costs of this planning. Remember that while the Forest Service is required to maintain viable populations of native species, the California spotted owl is not threatened or endangered. In fact, it is more abundant now than at any time in the past. And question the attitude of those in the Forest Service who assert that public comment is not a vote. I ask your committee to file your own comments, cast your vote to join with me in supporting the needs of California's rural counties and the people of the Sierra Nevada. Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Marks can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Next witness is Mr. Bill Coates. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF BILL COATES, SUPERVISOR, PLUMAS COUNTY, INSTIGATOR OF QUINCY LIBRARY GROUP

Mr. COATES. Thank you. I am Bill Coates, supervisor of Plumas County, Past President of the California Counties Association, Past President of the Rural Counties in California Association, and Past President of the 16 Western States County Supervisor Association. I am also representing today the Quincy Library Group, which is a collection of three counties, three-fourths of the school systems, the labor unions, the environmental groups locally, and the people. I will answer questions about that as we go on.

I am delighted with the knowledge that this committee already has. In fact, I submitted my notes. I am not going to bore you by reading them. I will make some verbal comments and answer questions.

You all know what we do. I think even Congressman Vento probably knows what a rural community does. I know that he is from Minnesota.

Mr. VENTO. Yes, even Congressman Vento knows what a rural community does.

Mr. COATES. Thank you. I think you also know what CASPO does to us. So I am not going to make comments about that.

Why is it bad? One size fits all in this report. That doesn't work. It would be like taking half of the East Coast and calling it all the same. Obviously, that wouldn't work.

In our county, we have a plan for a piece of that county about the size of Rhode Island, but if you get any bigger than that and try to make the same prescription work, it doesn't work.

The bird, as many have mentioned already, isn't listed as threatened or endangered. The CASPO report makes no provision for monitoring. I think all of us sitting here in this room, if you do something you ought to check it and find out if it works. It is very poor, bad on water restoration, and without a good watershed you don't have any animals or any plants or any forest. But its greatest problem is the poor description of fire in the Sierras and I am delighted that the committee has already talked as much as it has about it.

Basically CASPO studied the wrong thing and you have hit on that already with your question. It should have been studying forest health. It started out with one bird, expanded that to several species, and still does not get to the basic question of forest health. It needs eventually to go there. I think the team realized halfway through they were studying the wrong thing and wishes they could have started over but they couldn't and they had a different mandate.

Meanwhile, the greatest disturbance going on in the West, as you have already pointed out, is fire. It is bigger than logging. It is bigger than Mt. St. Helen's disaster. It is bigger than drought or anything else. It is bigger than floods, earthquake. It is an environmental disaster. It would be like taking Minnesota and trying to clear-cut everything in Minnesota. The tragedy that takes place with fire is like asking everybody to take the top soil out of an area, take all the trees out of an area, ruin the streams, and then hope that somehow eventually you can recover. That area is not going to recover in our lifetime, in my children's lifetime or in theirs.

Unfortunately, early European forestry had a great influence on Giffer-Pinchot. European forestry did not understand the role of fire in the West and unfortunately then we suppressed fire for a hundred years and we are ruing the day that that happened.

One question that I need to mention is one of pace. All of you folks here probably owned a front lawn at one time or another and if I suggested to you that you cut eight foot of your front lawn every Saturday and that is all you could cut, eventually you would be looking at the rest of your lawn seeing something growing like crazy and realizing you weren't gaining on it. That is exactly what that report is doing.

And here is a picture. This is desired future condition. This is where we are with the density. It is way too dense and we need

to take this line and get down to a future condition and instead this is what is happening. We are wandering away from it. Your questions were driving at that earlier and you were right on point. There is really no suitable answer that the Forest Service is going to be able to give you on why we are not getting out as much as we are growing. If they had an answer for that, we wouldn't be choking on small fees right now.

Finally, and by the way, prescribed burning is not the answer. It might be 1 percent of the answer or 2 percent. We go into that country and try to prescribe burn. We don't have the windows of opportunity. We do not have the manpower at the right times of year because they are fighting fire and we will burn up all kinds of people in houses and homes and schools if we try that. Very difficult. We need to get the density cut down, then we can prescribe burn hopefully in about 30 years if we work hard enough at it.

By the way, on this pace business, they are suggesting in our country doing about 4,000 acres a year. We know that we have to do 50,000 acres a year in order to be done in 32 years. So consequently, the CASPO report and the things that the Forest Service just mentioned about pace are not true, in my estimation. They are not prescribing a pace that gets the job done and we are going to burn up a lot of country before we learn that if we don't get started. So we have got to move fast.

It is very critical that you now give the Forest Service any chances for delay. They have been delaying for the last 15 years while our forest health has gotten worse. If you tell them to do anything else that takes some time, we will lose another chunk of ground.

The interim guidelines have been a debilitating evidence of indecision. We need to use the same zeal at organizing to fight fires; we need to take that zeal and put that into preventing them. We spent $800 million last year fighting. We killed 37 people, approximately. If we would even put 10 percent of that into forest health, we would have a fighting chance of starting to get our way out of that.

I would like to suggest reinvesting the money that we make on our efforts, put it back into the land. Reinvest in America that way. Perhaps a new national campaign, a Smokey Bear campaign, if you would, and maybe just dreaming for a minute, you could say an American legacy, healthy forests and healthy streams.

And I am pleased that the committee is working on this now. I think you are beginning to take us back. I wish the rest of Congress knew as much about this problem as your comments have shown me that you know this morning.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Coates can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Let me ask, we are now going to go to the questions. Mr. Sprague and Ms. Gauthier, would you take a seat next to Mr. Coates. I want you up here to respond to some of the questions. Would you be willing to do that for us, please? If there is a better place on this end, it is up to you. I am just thinking where you can get a couple of seats.

Mr. COATES. While we are waiting, along that line of density. We are estimating we have 40 percent of white fir in our country. Presettlement condition would indicate 10 percent. So we have changed the nature of the forest to a small, very dense, very crowded forest. These little white fir work like water pumps and they are drying out the eastern side of the Sierras. That is one of the reasons our country is exploding with fire.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

Mr. Sprague, today under the environmental guidelines the ASQ for the range of the California spotted owl would be, what is it, 412; is that right?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And under the preferred alternative it is 416 I believe?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And at what year did the restrictions on timber harvest kick in? Was it in 1990?

Mr. SPRAGUE. 1993.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. 1993. So what would the average ASQ have been, say—I don't know, going back I guess to the 1980's, maybe the beginning of the 1980's through 1993. Is that a fair period to take the average? What would that have been?

Mr. SPRAGUE. The average would be close to a billion. And that would be total green and salvage.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And was the figure, the other figures were those green and salvage?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. The 412 and 416 are just green.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I am trying to do a reasonable comparison here. Give me two sets of figures I can work with, so we either lump the salvage with all of them or take it out. I want to know, in other words, what percentage reduction are we looking at here between the preferred alternative, for example, and the period of time before we had restrictions?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Approximately 45 percent.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So we are looking at a 45-percent drop. Is that in your estimation due primarily to the restrictions or due to some aspect of the economy that lessened the demand for timber?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. It has to do with the standards and guidelines in the forest plans and the standards and guidelines in the interim guidelines up to this point.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So it has nothing to do with the economy at all, or little to do with it. Would that be a fair characterization?

Mr. SPRAGUE. What we take into account in our forest planning and in this effort—economics. We are also putting together a plan for the landscape of the forest in total, so——

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. So basically we are looking at a 45-percent reduction due solely to the whim of government. Maybe "whim" is a pejorative term because I feel negatively about it, but due to the action or decree of government?

Mr. SPRAGUE. There have been some other factors and again it is government, but there has been acreage taken out and wilderness designation, wild and scenic river designation, along with the acreage taken out for the standards and guidelines for wildlife and

for what we have done in the way of providing for riparian protection.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK.

Ms. Jacobson, you testified that you have had to go to Colorado to get a new supply of timber.

Ms. JACOBSON. That is correct. In our area, the material has been dwindling due to the interim rules on the California spotted owl and we opted—it was a very tough decision to make, but we felt it was possibly a good decision for the future, at least for the immediate future, to keep our men working and to hopefully continue to provide material back in to Tuolumne County.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So you actually can make it profitable by shipping logs from Colorado to Tuolumne County and dealing with them there.

Ms. JACOBSON. It is somewhat profitable. It is too new and too soon to tell exactly.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. Well—anecdotal evidence—we had a mill that was going to be closed because they didn't get any timber off the Federal forest in our district, the Michigan facility, and finally another company bought it and closed a mill someplace else, and they import logs now into my district, but again we are the victims of this artificial action of government which is cutting by almost half the amount of timber that is available for harvest.

Ms. JACOBSON. Yes.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I am aware of a document you have drawn to my attention called "The Forest Health and Restoration Alternative," which I think has as its primary focus the idea that we ought to be balancing annual growth with annual harvest; is that correct?

Ms. JACOBSON. Very much so.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Sprague, are you aware of such a document that has been developed? I guess we would think of it as another alternative to the ones that you put forth. Have you heard of that at all?

Mr. SPRAGUE. I am not aware of it, no.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. One of the things I would like to ask you to do is if you would take a look at that, I think it is a pretty complete set, hopefully it is, and if we could get your feedback, individually or through the committee. I would prefer you to do it. But one of the concerns I have had is there was no alternative out there that had this, something that matched the annual growth with the annual ASQ, so that would be very helpful to me if you could take a look at that and, Ms. Jacobson, maybe you could make that available.

Ms. JACOBSON. I would be happy to.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. The yellow light came far too fast. I am sure it was accurate but I will yield at this point to Mr. Vento for questions.

Mr. VENTO. Thanks. Mr. Marks, what is the number of people in Tuolumne County that are employed in the wood products, both private and public? Do you know?

Mr. MARKS. We have approximately a thousand that are directly employed.

Mr. VENTO. Your State employment department says 840. About half of those are in the private sector; is that right? So what per-

centage does that make up of your work force? How many people that you have in your work force in the county? Do you know the answer?

Mr. MARKS. No, I don't.

Mr. VENTO. According to this report, 14,640. So this makes up about 3 percent of the employment. It is important. I understand small communities are dependent on this. I am sensitive to that and I am very concerned about it. And it is not an easy thing. It is one of the reasons that I sponsored legislation to try to deal with this particular problem, which the environmentalists didn't like either, if it was any satisfaction to anyone here, but in any case it is not something that we take lightly. I mean, we want to look at it and understand the impacts.

What is the percentage of revenue that comes back to your schools? You receive some revenue from this; do you know, Mr. Marks.

Mr. MARKS. We have a 25 percent——

Mr. VENTO. I know the amount. Do you know how much it is of the budget in your schools? Does it make up 2 percent, 3 percent, 1 percent? I have information that says it makes up a very small percentage of the budget, 1 to 3 percent. Do you disagree with that?

Mr. MARKS. No, I agree with that.

Mr. VENTO. It is important. I was a teacher. I want those dollars there so we can compensate the teachers. I understand the importance of that as well.

These areas because of the way the Forest Service calculates costs sometimes obviously has resulted in a below-cost timber sale in the last five years. In fact, it was just the last year or so that they made it above-cost calculation, especially if you take the shared revenues back to the county in materials—or to the school districts. So it is important for us to understand what we are doing.

Has there been any effort to try to look at the white fir and the water spouts and the incense cedar and some others? I tried to get that into the discussion earlier about the constituent members of these. We want the desirable species because generally what we are talking about cutting here, the Forest Service tries to put up a sale. They know a lot more about it than we do sitting here, and we can micromanage it, but I can tell you it is going to be a lot worse than if we let the professionals work this out, and I have got some ideas about why that is occurring.

In any case, I want to convey to you that we understand the concerns and that we need to plant these highly desirable aged species in terms of harvest. That has been part of the problem. Obviously, if you have got a plant life and someone said they wanted to cut all of the white—the other plants down, we would be all right; we would be in good shape.

I think the Forest Service would prefer that, to eliminate those particular plants and begin to manage it in a different way.

Now Mrs. Chenoweth talked about prescribed burning. I mean, that wasn't me. I just want to point that out. I mean I understand that you know the lightning strikes and some of the other issues are a problem and the thinning and more aggressive type of man-

agement to build fire resiliency is where we have to go in terms of watersheds and some of the other areas. I understand that. But that takes money and we don't have the receipts coming back to do that. In fact, if we did that, these things would really be out of whack in terms of whether or not these were below-sale, below-cost timber sales or salvage sales, most of which, of course, are all below cost.

Mr. Coates, you were trying to say something?

Mr. COATES. Yes, a couple of things. First of all, the communities would like to do two things. They would like to cause the communities to survive and they would like to return the environment to a better and better condition. So it is not true that we are just trying to maximize product. The opposite is true.

Second, it is not true that we need to be below cost on all that work. We can use trees down to six inches and the technology is there to do that, so there is a lot of work that needs to be done in the small, medium, and medium-large category. We think we have got about 50 years of work to do and I would commend you to our document which is a pretty balanced approach to getting that work done. If we can do that, we can keep these communities alive.

Mr. VENTO. It won't be saw timber, I think.

Mr. COATES. Yes, it will. I am sorry to disagree with you.

The other thing I was going to point out is that I noticed you asked Mr. Marks what his schools and economies were. In our case, it is about 60 percent of the money it takes to run the road system, which you folks need to visit that county, and it is about 15 to 25 percent of the school budget.

Mr. VENTO. That is a little bigger portion of those.

Mr. COATES. The other thing is our unemployment rate is running much higher than the national average, and we believe that our educational levels are falling below the national averages because we can't teach languages or anything else.

Mr. VENTO. What are your numbers with regard to your area for these counties that you are representing? What are their numbers for the number of timber employees versus the overall——

Mr. COATES. I can give you the timber dollars.

Mr. VENTO. Number of employees, workers, versus workers who are not timber-employed.

Mr. COATES. I am going to try to give you the one I know, that is, that we are ranging between 20 and 67 percent timber dollars into the community as basic wages.

Mr. VENTO. My time is expired, Mr. Chairman. I would want to comment about this owl business and the number of owls. Of course the issue at the Forest Service is that they are trying to get ahead so they don't have this problem with the endangered listing. Of course in doing that they are dealing with the entire ecosystem system, the primary plants. Any seventh grade student obviously can tell all of us about how a plant community or pyramid works both in terms of those that are going in one direction and the saprophytes going in the other direction. So the idea is to get ahead of this and obviously face up to this. Now the predictable problem that has been predicted for decades is here.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Cooley is recognized.

Mr. COOLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know that my colleague on the other side keeps referring to timber salvage as below cost, costing us money for salvaging. If you keep saying something long enough, I guess everybody starts to believe it, but the GAO marked up our timber salvage bill and it is a plus and we think it is even low on the plus side. If you are going to keep saying it is below cost, I am going to keep telling that it is not so we can get through that.

Mr. VENTO. We will agree to disagree, Mr. Cooley.

Mr. COOLEY. Absolutely. We have been on television disagreeing already. We will do it again.

Anybody on the panel, you are on the ground, you are working every day. Could you give us in your own words, somebody tell me what they think is wrong with the Forest Service as far as your experiences with it and make it really short. We only have five minutes here.

Ms. JACOBSON. Mr. Cooley, I would like to have the opportunity. We have several problems that we do deal with in the Forest Service, but I would have to say in the most recent years, the biggest problem we are all faced with is something called "the consent decree" and that is meeting a quota. It is like what we went through in the late 1960's and early 1970's by hiring a minority of people. That is what the Forest Service has been doing recently with women and I resent it because I am also of the same sex. We have a lot of women that have been placed in positions to meet that quota that are either not management material, leadership material, or have not the background or the time to understand the position that they are dealing with.

Mr. COATES. Along with that, and I mentioned this one when the different panel came out, the Stockton. At the same time the Soviet Union has learned that central planning doesn't work, and it has broken itself up, we continue to centralize power on the banks of the Potomac. That is not the way to run those forests out there. You need local knowledge, you need the enthusiasm and activity levels of people. That is the reason we are only getting 30 percent of the American population voting. And so I think Congress has recently had a good start at returning that and getting people back in government, and that is the same thing that needs to happen in the Forest Service. Let's allow them to make the decisions in those ranger districts based on good soil, good weather information, good science, and all the communities will get excited about that and get behind it.

Mr. COOLEY. Anybody on the panel?

Also, I hear the Forest Service many times say that we have decided to change the plan, expand it or modify it because of public input. Have any of you been privileged to attend public meetings or what have you, what they are referring to as public input, and were any of your recommendations or your public input considered in these possible new programs that are directly affecting you?

Mr. MARKS. Congressman Cooley, I would like to address just the county's perspective on that. The entire board of Tuolumne County feels we have been excluded from this entire planning process, including this report in the informational gathering system when it has——

Mr. COOLEY. They keep referring to public input and that is why we are doing all this changing. What public is this?

Mr. MARKS. I don't know. If States and Congress all along say the local entities will be involved in that process of input, and, believe me, the closest we can narrow it down is the spotted owl team meeting with one member of our Board of Supervisors for a period of somewhere between two and four hours. That has been our total involvement and we have an awful lot at stake for that kind of input.

Mr. COATES. I have got to say in defense of the Forest Service that our county and counties around us have been apprised of the process. They have been up there numerous times, talked quite a bit with the regional forester about it. He has assured me that they are taking our comments seriously. I believe him. And time will tell but they are in the gathering process right now.

Mr. COOLEY. Well, you know, they are in the process of implementing a program that is going to have further restrictions on utilization of public lands, especially in the timber industry. Do you feel that you had anything to do with that process?

Mr. COATES. It depends on how the process turns out. We don't like the current CASPO report at all. The alternatives are bad. There isn't a single good one in there and it depends on what happens from this point forward.

Mr. COOLEY. Well, did you have any input with the Forest Service before that report came out?

Mr. COATES. We just spent a lot of money and incredible hours. There are about 150 pages in here of document that we are going to turn in on what is wrong with that CASPO report. If they will straighten out the things that we talk about in here, we will have healthy communities in a much better environment without the fire danger.

Mr. COOLEY. My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Chenoweth.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I have a couple of quick questions for Mr. Marks. You know, you stated that only 1 to 3 percent of your county's education budget comes from timber receipts. Did I hear you correctly?

Mr. MARKS. That is correct.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. But don't these timber receipts fund special education programs and special programs for the hearing impaired?

Mr. MARKS. Well, Congresswoman Chenoweth, I am not sure you can direct it at that. The timber receipts go into the educational program and they are divided among schools. We get money from the State to provide, supposedly, the basic educational requirement, including the programs that you are mentioning. These receipts that came in in the past have been used to give the children special items that you don't get from the basic educational requirement.

We live in an area that is tremendously beautiful and the field trips into that area, teaching people about local history, our whole State is full of it, and these dollars have been used in the past to help provide field trips to further their educational foundation.

Now, due to other impacts in the educational system and the reduction of these dollars, they have gone in just to provide basic requirements.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Thank you.

Mr. Duysen, or Mrs. Jacobson, either one, when you bid out a timber sale, do you bid along very prescribed bid specs that have been offered to you by the Forest Service when you used to bid out timber sales?

Mr. DUYSEN. It has been such a long time I can't even remember. Could you repeat that question, please? I am sorry.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. When you bid out Forest Service sales, you would bid under certain prescribed specifications. Didn't you get a book of specs?

Mr. DUYSEN. There is a contract that you have to adhere to.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Yes. And that is how you would make your bid along certain specs.

Mr. DUYSEN. Yes, and the quality of timber and your costs associated with logging it and getting it to the sawmill, also your manufacturing costs and where the lumber market is in that period.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. OK. What would happen if you deviated from that? I mean, is there an enforcement mechanism that would keep other than the motivation of getting the bid?

Mr. DUYSEN. In terms of if you deviate from your contract you can be in default with the government.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. And when you are in default with the government, what happens with that contract? What happens to you?

Mr. DUYSEN. The government will look for damages. Your timber will be under bond, maybe taken away. There are severe ramifications.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Severe ramifications, OK.

Mr. Sprague, when Jack Ward Thomas was here, he indicated to us that sometimes some of the problems that were developing was because there was too much timber and sometimes the wrong species. If you had one of your subcontractors out there that were replanting and they replanted the wrong species, what would you do against your bids?

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is not likely to happen because the contractors who plant our trees plant the trees we give them to plant so that wouldn't happen.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. You mentioned that in 1993 there were changes that caused this to come about with regard to a new management policy. What were the changes you remembered to rules and regulations and in-house——

Mr. SPRAGUE. They were the result of the so-called CASPO report, the California spotted owl report that was prepared by a team of scientists, and they recommended a set of standards and guidelines that were adopted at that time as interim direction for the management of these forests.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Sprague, where in the Endangered Species Act does it say that you manage habitat that isn't even listed as critical yet in violation of the National Forest Management Act?

Mr. SPRAGUE. It doesn't say that in the Endangered Species Act but in the National Forest Management Act. Dealing with viability of species is where we get the authority to do this.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Could you please provide me with the exact language with that because I am pretty familiar with that law and I do know that that law says that you are mandated to take out the windthrow, burn, disease and insect-infested salvage material. And the Forest Service is simply not abiding by the law, Mr. Sprague, and I am becoming very, very impatient with that.

I don't think it is pleasant for you to submit to a lecture, but I find it very hard to understand how any agency of this government can write their own laws and step outside the authority Congress gave you. You are doing that, sir. And you are breaching the public trust and you are pushing us beyond a level of tolerance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I again, Mr. Sprague, want to try to understand how we came up, how the Forest Service came up with the determination of this plan for the CASPO plan, and again I am trying to rehash what has taken place at this hearing so far.

It was mentioned, I am not sure if it was you or the other Representative, or Mr. Unger mentioned, one of you stated that the preferred alternative in the draft EIS is based on public comment as well as on scientific evidence.

Now, when we look at the last part, scientific evidence, please forgive me, but I wonder if you have read your own report? When we use this evidence, quoting from your own report, again, it states: "It appears to be abundant and even well distributed within the forest." This is about the third time I have read this because again I just for the best of me I can't understand how you came up with the decision you have. Right now I am talking about scientific evidence.

Also, even your chief, who I have a great respect for, but Chief Jack Ward Thomas has testified many times even before this committee and out at hearings that the forest health problem is the result of too many trees. Now, he has stated that on a number of occasions. We see that your plan, every one of them, would allow—would create more trees, would allow for more trees that grow rather than thinning and doing the types of things that I believe your chief has even recommended on different occasions.

And we have also heard from those people who represent these counties, the gentleman right next to you, Mr. Coates, many years, I won't venture how many years but not only representative of a county where the Sierra forest that we are talking about but also representative of counties throughout the State and rural counties, I believe has a very good feel for what is going on.

We have heard other supervisors here and others indicate that this is not what their communities feel is in the best interests of the forest that they love. My question is, which segment? It doesn't sound like it is from those who live there. I wonder whether it is from your chief? Which segment of the public does support this draft EIS that you are talking about?

Mr. SPRAGUE. First of all, I didn't suggest or I don't think any of us suggested that public input determined which one of those would be the preferred. The public input that we got up front when we started this process is what determined the range of alter-

natives and the considerations that we would make in those alternatives. So I can't say what segment of public. In fact, I would guess you couldn't get any segment that would agree with any one of those. Because there has been no decision made, the idea here is to propose a range of alternatives from which we can get input from people like Bill Coates and the rest of the stakeholders in this and that is really what we are about.

Mr. HERGER. Well, then, let me turn to Bill Coates, and I want to thank you for your involvement with the Quincy Library Group, a group we have heard quite a bit about just in fleeting. Here is a group that was made up of not just timber people, not just community people, but made up of environmental people. This group includes everyone, and I might mention some very strong environmentalists from the environmental community who we both personally know. You came up with a plan.

Supervisor Coates—again we heard this input—thank you for the clarification of the input. Evidently the input has determined which direction to go in.

Supervisor Coates, did the EIS move in that direction that your group and again a balanced group, made up of environmentalists, would suggest we go in?

Mr. COATES. No, the alternative was supposed to be the Quincy Library Group's idea of forestry. Unfortunately, it poorly or does not represent our efforts and endeavors. Had it, we would have discovered that it is possible to make the environment better and do enough logging to keep the logging and the schools and everybody alive. We also believe that it is very possible to start cutting down the fire danger and we need to start. Unfortunately, CASPO used some real old fire information. This looks like your grandmother's apron with the polka dots and this is the old fire system. We used to cut down the fire danger by making a hole in the forest. Then the fire comes along and burns around all those little holes and we are not any better off than we used to be.

What we suggested is cutting a line through this. Every decade the fires double in size. We would like to at least know that the work we do this year helps us next year or the year after by cutting a line through there and making the size of the fire smaller. We provided that information to the CASPO team. I don't know what they are going to do with it, but I know that the local forests are starting to realize that by cutting and then cutting again we can start to make the forest a better place to be.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you. We are talking about new science that you have used. Again, the environmental community brought in everything that is new, not old information as evidently the Forest Service and their study was making their decision on, but we are talking about new science.

Mr. COATES. Yes.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Coates, we are going to go to a second round of questioning on this. Unless you produce those charts for us in some fashion that they can be incorporated into the committee report we won't have them and I think they would be useful.

Mr. COATES. OK. We are going to submit a large, very complicated, very scientific response to the CASPO team's work and I

would be happy to make that available to this committee if you are interested. It will give you—for instance there are math errors in the CASPO report. One chart is off by 100 percent in every column and when you extend that all the volumes are wrong. So basically the CASPO report in some cases has used incorrect information. The only way we found that out is to run those computer runs ourselves. So that will be made available to the committee if you are interested in it.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Good. I would appreciate that.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And I would like to get incorporated into this report the impact on each of the counties, their school system, their roads and what the dollar impacts in the budget is, the percentage impacts, and we will list it for purposes of comparison.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Sprague, you heard the testimony of our county supervisor, Mr. Marks. Would you be amenable to arranging an opportunity for the Board of Supervisors of Tuolumne County to have further input with the Forest Service over this draft EIS?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Absolutely. In fact, I have even talked to Supervisor Marks about coming down personally and visiting with him, so, yes, absolutely.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

Mr. Sprague, does the draft EIS point to alternative "C" as the likely preferred alternative?

Mr. SPRAGUE. I am not sure I understand your question. Did you ask if it points to it as the——

Mr. DOOLITTLE. In other words, from the information produced in the draft EIS, is it clear that alternative "C" would be the preferred alternative just based on the results and the information that was developed in that EIS?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, I will have to be honest with you, I would have preferred in this case to have not had a preferred alternative. I say that because I was really hoping that we could come to a way that we could get the best possible constructive input that we could. But as I mentioned earlier, we did select a preferred alternative and we did it based on that idea of selecting one that would give us what at the time we thought would be the one that would focus attention on managing the forest as a whole, the landscape as a whole and not just the critters or not just board-feet.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Did the team unofficially recommend or prefer some alternative other than alternative "C"?

Mr. SPRAGUE. I think the team was generally in the area of "C" and alternative "D." I don't know that they specifically recommended. While I wasn't there when the charge was given to the team, had I been, my charge would have been for them to develop the range of alternatives that we had selected to do the assessment, the evaluation, and come back to us with the pros and cons, the pluses and minuses of various alternatives for us, then the management, the regional supervisors and foresters would get together and decide which alternative we were going to select.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So your wish as the regional forester was really that no preferred alternative be designated.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Not by the team.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Not by the team but rather by you and your people reviewing their work, but the team in fact then did come down and recommend a preferred alternative; is that not the case?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. No. It was very close to the first day that I was in this job and was time to review the work that they had done on this range of alternatives and I was there kind of green in some respects about what all had gone on before me, but we did go through the team under Janice's leadership, laid out all of the alternatives and we went through one by one the pros and cons of each. It was my impression that the team, if they had made a formal recommendation it would have been either "C" or "D."

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I understand that the preference was for "D." I mean, can you confirm that?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No, I can't.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Does it concern you as a public official with responsibility over vital resources affecting these small communities that basically you are recommending a reduction of 45 percent, which from the testimony we are hearing is 45 percent in the ASQ is going to virtually devastate these timber communities? I mean, does that give you pause to perhaps wish to reconsider the road down which you have been traveling?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Of course it gives me pause. It is another reason why we extended the public comment period. We want as much information and input as we can possibly get before we move on to crafting a final decision on this whole process.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I realize my time is up but I just want to pursue so we get this worked through.

Well, I think you have heard from several of the area's representatives, myself included, and Mr. Fazio whose district is impacted by this forest activity, that, you know, we would like another look at this. What concerns me is if what happened here is typical, you know, you will take those alternatives you have got and just work within them, but to me none of those is acceptable. I don't think it is acceptable to Mr. Herger and Mr. Fazio didn't really say, but we cannot have a 45 percent reduction in ASQ, especially not when our forest health is being devastated by all this new growth. So you know, as one representative, let me make the plea to you, go back to the drawing board, come back with an alternative that matches the annual growth with the annual ASQ, and then we will have some hearings or testimony and go through that, but that would be my plea, and my time is up and I will yield to Mr. Vento.

Mr. VENTO. The issue with regard to constituent makeup of the forest, of course, Mr. Sprague, is important. How does this option "C" contemplate the makeup of the forest changing? In other words, right now, for instance, harvesting certainly has played a major role in the species shift; hasn't it?

Mr. SPRAGUE. It has.

Mr. VENTO. From what?

Mr. SPRAGUE. The preferred alternative, again, it is just that. It is in the draft, but what it envisions is a landscape approach where in the riparian zone, the lower slope zone, is managed primarily to maintain that habitat type, extended rotations in that area, not any heavy removal of trees, moving up to the mid-slope, a scheme of removing timber by group selection primarily and then on up to

the upper slope where there would be understory removal where we would leave more of a shaded field break kind of appearing landscape.

Mr. VENTO. It obviously anticipates a restoration of some Ponderosa types and riparian areas, special areas where there is a significant amount of different fauna and flora. Consider the selection, if harvest were to go on, I mean the pressure is on, we are talking ASQ, we are talking usually the old growth, we are talking Ponderosa, right?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mr. VENTO. That is the problem I think that is being missed in some of this and you have some areas that are off-site. We talked about salvage here. Of course obviously there has to be riparian work, there has to be thinning. That is forest health. I mean salvage by itself—when you made the suggestion, you took quite a tongue lashing here because the suggestion was you were not making salvage sales available. You are making them available all the time; aren't you?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes. I wish we could move quicker. We recognize that we have a significant buildup of dead and dying material and——

Mr. VENTO. The problem is if you offer certain areas, you don't get bids on them, I suppose.

Mr. SPRAGUE. No, that is not true right now.

Mr. VENTO. Timber price is higher, it is better.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Pretty much whatever we can get on the market, we have takers.

Mr. VENTO. So you have just a preparation problem.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Right.

Mr. VENTO. So I mean the point is you have been moving as quickly as you can to, in fact, provide those. Are some of these sales below cost sales?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Some may be but——

Mr. VENTO. The price is higher but it is obviously limited by what you have to pay back. Obviously, my colleague from Oregon left.

Mr. COOLEY. [Presiding.] No, I am here.

Mr. VENTO. I am sorry. I didn't notice.

The issue here in terms of sale—not the GAO, we mean the CBO. I think that is what you meant. You said GAO. The issue is CBO does not count the cost of road building. They don't count the cost of payment to the counties, which I don't think the counties want whether it is from salvage or otherwise. There are many other costs that they don't do but they are below cost. You have a provision in there notwithstanding that it doesn't matter that they are below cost. If you didn't believe that, you wouldn't have it in that particular bill. So I mean, I think the point is made that this bill doesn't deal at all with forest health, it simply deals with salvage, and obviously the inclusion of green trees in salvage is another matter in terms of how much you include.

When you make these sales up, Mr. Sprague, you have to in fact try to provide that there is an attractiveness to them; is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is correct.

Mr. VENTO. So that there is some profitability because these private sector contractors are not going to come in and cut something if they can't make any money out of it. Is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, they are not going to come and bid on it.

Mr. VENTO. That is the whole point. So the issue isn't as simple as it seems on the face of it, and obviously some green trees get cut. It isn't just a matter of going in and excising diseased trees. All of us don't agree that because the trees are dead or diseased, that that is necessarily a bad thing in terms of an ecosystem, in terms of the multiplicity and the variety of the biodiversity that occurs in them. But clearly when it is these cases where we are building up fuel, we need to look carefully at solutions.

I think we could all make those decisions right here in this committee but I don't think we would get much else done, and that is why we convey and appreciate the professionalism of the Forest Service and you folks trying to do your job. Maybe it is not always evident.

Mr. COOLEY. Mr. Sprague, so we don't sort of mislead the committee and the record as well, when you put out a salvage bill, you don't necessarily put a lot of green in it just to get the salvage, because my understanding of the timber industry—and I happen to have a small timber stand myself, came from a long, long line of timber people in Oregon, we are more efficient today and we can almost utilize anything up to a certain point of how far—how long it has been dead and dying in a productive manner in new methods that we have.

So it is not really necessary to throw in a lot of "green" in order to obtain a reasonable bid on salvageable material. Isn't that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, generally that is correct, but if you have some trees that are green, may in fact be diseased in some form or another, mistletoe and that sort of thing, we may have an objective to get some of that cleaned out at the same time. And technically they are green trees but we would throw them into a salvage situation.

Mr. COOLEY. I just want to clarify for the record, I don't want to have anybody misinterpret salvage with the idea that the Forest Service is throwing in good green trees just to get somebody to bid on it because that is not a fact.

Mr. Herger, you are next up.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, Mr. Sprague, I want to thank you for coming out to our district. During that tour that we had here just very recently—and this was not an area we are talking about. This was up further in the northern spotted owl area. The condition of the forest is very similar.

As a matter of fact, in the Sierra area it is even worse, more deteriorated than we saw. We did see areas, large areas where there were too many trees, they were dead and dying. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but wouldn't you say that a lot of what we saw were examples of unhealthy forests?

Mr. SPRAGUE. I would say so, yes.

Mr. HERGER. So what we are here about, I would believe, is what follows when you have an unhealthy forest. The type that we

looked at and the type that we are talking about now, over in the southern part of my district. These are forests that are subject to total disaster through wildfire.

Unlike the old days 130 years ago, where fires would go through and you would still have your healthy trees. The fire would just burn the underbrush or thin out, whereas now we see fires that will go through as again the cottonwood fire where there is nothing left. That fire scorched the forest to such a degree that even the earth is ruined and we won't be able to grow trees there for several years; is that correct?

Mr. SPRAGUE. There will be in some burned isolated areas where the soil is burned so deep and thoroughly that it would be a while. But generally speaking we can get an acceptable recovery rate and plant seedlings and reseed in a burned area. But if it burns extremely hot, it can slow up the reproductive processes.

Mr. HERGER. The point being that because of the annual increase of the fire hazard due to more trees growing, and fewer thinning programs. We see this buildup and fires are getting worse. This situation is happening often in the environment where we are seeing more and more soils. This is not the case in every situation, but certainly is so in the cottonwood in the area above Truckee.

Now, we have talked a lot about what the problem is. I think that it is more important now that we recognize the problem. Mr. Sprague, respectfully, there isn't one part of the recommendation in that EIS that I believe is going to take care of this forest health problem as a whole. Focusing not solely on the spotted owl but on the problem as a whole.

I would like to refer now to a plan that I feel will help us with that, even right in the middle of the Sierra province that we are talking about. I will refer again to Mr. Coates; also if we could go over this Quincy Library plan again, that you were involved in. This plan involved our community, environmental community, and timber people. Everyone was involved to help preserve the beauty of the forests as well as the livelihoods of people. How well received was this by the Administration when we presented this to them?

Mr. COATES. I felt that everyone that has looked at it has complimented it. Now, that doesn't translate into results on the ground.

Unfortunately, we were told that if we could get on the same song sheet that they could get the job done, and we have been asking that the job be done since—about two-and-a-half years now. Recently we have even asked for a Norman Schwarzkopf-type person out there who would take the bull by the horns and talk about results. Unfortunately, in a bureaucracy as large as the Forest Service, it is made up of lots of very good people but it is not an efficient strike force to get something done, and there are too many rules. And so results have been far short of the political support that we have had.

Mr. HERGER. Well, I see my time is up, but I would like to inform you, Mr. Sprague, that I believe we have a plan. It may be the only plan that I have seen to date, where we have had a group, everyone working together, that has agreed. I mean, that is unbelievable.

Environmentalists have agreed, the timber people have agreed, the community has agreed on a forest health plan that would take care of all the problems that we are talking about now. I would really like to urge you to please go back to the drawing board and your good people, use the great information that you have in this but I would like to have you utilize this new information, the new science we have and try to come up with a plan that would be similar to one that all of our groups are agreeing to.

We talked about having the input of the community. I believe that we have had it here and come up with something that will help solve our problem. Most important, it won't make it worse, which I am afraid all of these plans that have been proposed to us might do.

Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you. We will excuse the members of this panel.

Mr. COOLEY. I didn't get my chance.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. I apologize. We are not done yet.

Wait a minute, have you asked your questions yet? You are recognized. You are not excused yet.

I am sorry, Ms. Chenoweth has questions, too.

Mr. COOLEY. Mr. Sprague, I know we have got you on the hot spot, but that is why I guess you are getting paid and have to go through this, but let me ask you something. As a forester and a manager of a forest in California, do you feel that the forest lands that you are managing are in as good condition as the private property owners of the lands that are adjacent to your lands?

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is a pretty broad statement. I can't say I have seen all the adjacent private lands.

I know some of the adjacent private timber lands are managed very, very intensely and I have seen some, in fact, with Congressman Herger just a few weeks ago that are managed to a different standard. And I would say that in many respects they are more healthy than the adjacent stands. But I couldn't say that across the board.

Mr. COOLEY. OK. Well, let's assume that some are more healthy; is that a fair statement?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Yes.

Mr. COOLEY. Could you tell me why some are more healthy than the ones that you are managing?

Mr. SPRAGUE. There are a lot of reasons, I suppose, Congressman, priorities, and priorities in how we task up our budgets and so forth. And let me just say that getting back to supervisor Coates' plan here, we are not in disagreement with their plan.

In fact, we have been working with him and as a way to step up the pace, so to speak, we have adjusted the priorities in our regional budget scheme to include more upfront money in fuels reduction and fuels treatment. We feel that that is a whole lot better.

We tend to look at it as an investment and not a cost and as opposed to an outlay of cost of fighting raging fires that are out of control. And so we would prefer to get in a mode where we are investing but it takes a little while to get those priorities adjusted and make those kinds of shifts in our overall program of work. But we are working at it.

Mr. COOLEY. Well, what I am saying is I am not trying to directly embarrass you or get you on the spot. If a lot of, let's say, some of the private lands are in the area that are managed better than our public lands, we as representatives of the public, of course, wish that was not a fact.

We would like to see that as managers of public property that we are managing the property as well as our private neighbors are managing the property and I think that is a little disturbing to some of us and probably most of us.

I think that basically as we look at the discussion today, we are looking at this discussion really to try to simplify, make it very simple, is that we want to manage our public lands the best, as well as we can, at least as good as the private sector or as well and meet all the other requirements.

I guess what I am trying to get out of you basically or get you to respond to as a professional forester, what happens in the system that truly prohibits you from being a good manager as on the private land other than if it is just money then tell me that?

Is it just money or is it—what is happening to the system that is shutting down the ability for not only communities to be viable and use the timber in a renewable resource, in a very manageable way, retain the species that we want to retain and still have a strong forest as the private sector does? Is it strictly money? Or is it other things that I am not aware of?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No, it is not strictly money, and it is probably not things that you are not aware of. It is priorities.

Mr. COOLEY. I don't want to be controversial, but what priorities do you have other than healthy forests as a manager of a forest? What other priorities do you have? I am just curious.

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, we have a lot of processes in place that take time to get through to get to an end product that, frankly, we are working on to try to streamline them and to even eliminate those that no longer contribute to achieving our mission.

It is getting through some of those things so that we can make decisions in a faster way, in a more positive way and I think we are getting here, but to truly get into more of an adaptive management process where we make decisions and we make adjustments as we monitor and evaluate the results of those decisions and make course corrections as we implement projects, as we implement forest plans. That is where we need to get.

And to get out of having to try to make decisions where there is no risk associated, it is not possible in the business we are in to make decisions where there is no risk. So we have to assume that we are going to accept some risk in a responsible way but to follow up then with monitoring and evaluation of what we are doing.

Mr. COOLEY. Well, do you speak of risk, would you define that word for me when you say "risk"? Are you talking about forest health risk because of fire, degradation for bug kills, et cetera, or risk of public opposition to any decision or management plan you have of utilization of this resource? I need to know what you mean when you say risk.

Mr. SPRAGUE. I think it is all of those or risk of losing species of wildlife or plants. It is all of those. It is risk in total and not just any one specific thing.

Mr. COOLEY. Do you feel pressure as a forester, the fact that you could be sued for maybe not complying to what somebody's interpretation of the law is a big factor in your decisionmaking? I am just curious.

Mr. SPRAGUE. No, I don't. Because if I feel like I am on the ragged edge of complying with the law, I check with my attorneys. I don't worry about that. I try to do what is right.

Mr. COOLEY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, my time is up. I want to thank you, Mr. Sprague, for your candor. I appreciate it.

I don't want you to feel like I am, let's say, picking on you because I am not. I am really trying to honestly determine—there are so many influences that are actually affecting the people we represent that it is hard to dig through and find out where they are to look at them. Maybe we should have some legislation.

Maybe we should do some things to make your job easier, make it more friendly, more people-friendly, environmental-friendly and everything else. That is what I meant.

So please, if you feel I was attacking you, I don't mean to.

Mr. SPRAGUE. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mrs. Chenoweth is recognized.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Sprague, I appreciate the line of questioning that Mr. Cooley was pursuing and I want to follow up a little bit because a lot of us think we are at point A and we want to get to point B and what a good forester, as you obviously are because you hold a position of administrative management, very high position, if you want to get from point A to point B, you go from A to B and you keep that vision in mind of what you want to do in point B.

I have given a lot of speeches about the fact that I think we are making life terribly difficult for people like you in your job because you have so many things impacting you. Am I beginning to hear from you that the decisions and the process that you have to deal with have so many other criteria other than multiple use, sustained yield management under the National Forest Management Act and in some areas you do set aside areas designated for wilderness or special management zones?

You know, I think we are all still trying to get our hands on what is keeping you from getting to point B. And again, I want to ask, is it the lawsuits? Is this why you must go through a certain process three or four times? You referred to the process, the decisionmaking process, is this what is slowing things down?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. Lawsuits in and of themselves are not what slow things down. You know, we react to lawsuits to the extent that when lawsuits are settled, case law gets established and we have new direction, so to speak.

But just the idea of a threat of a lawsuit, unless in reexamination we find that we are not in compliance with the law in some form, the threat of a lawsuit is not a decision criteria. The issue of processes and that is what causes all this—I am just talking primarily about the processes that we put in place internally to deal with these matters of law that we have to deal with.

And you know, over time things grow and blossom and bloom and periodically we need to reexamine what we are doing in rela-

tion to the mission and objectives that we are after. And we are in the process of doing that now. We haven't done it for a while and I think when we get through this we will reestablish some clearer direction from point A to point B instead of going through the backwoods.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. You know, I was frustrated, as you could probably tell, about where is the legal authority to run the train off the track and go on another track that Congress had not clearly laid out because in the National Forest Management Act, Congress laid out a very clear track and that has not been amended to the degree that actions in the field indicate.

And so you know, I think that some of our agency people are getting out there in the fog legally because there is a case you may want to have your legal people look up, it is called the Bivens versus six unnamed agencies, United States Supreme Court decision that came out in the late 1970's that said when anyone operates to deprive anyone of their civil rights or constitutional rights within an agency, they are personally libel.

That is what I say when this civilization, this society is getting real intolerant. And you know, there are civil rights cases out there.

I mean look at Mr. Duysen and Mrs. Jacobson and their inability to make a living and their employees and inability to make a living because people are tied up in making decisions and processes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask your permission or unanimous consent to have three more minutes.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Without objection.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Under this new draft environmental impact statement, which apparently this is coming out under the National Forest Management Act, as you stated to me before, right? I did some research and some of the regs say that the Forest Service must manage wildlife habitat so that viable populations of existing native and desired nonnative vertebrae species are maintained. Is that the criteria that you are operating the forest under?

OK, then when we hear that there is a large population growing and healthy population of the spotted owl, when do you decide it is viable?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Well, we decided the viability after we have had scientific input from researchers and scientists noted for whatever that particular field of biology happens to be.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Sprague the affected national forces under the DEIS, the Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, El Dorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Inyo, Sequoia National Forests and Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, did each one of those have an individual forest management plan that had a set-aside for certain special management units and allowable cut and so forth?

Mr. SPRAGUE. They did.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. And each one of those were individual, right?

Mr. SPRAGUE. Correct.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. And how is it we have an environmental impact statement that encompasses them all? Well, first let me ask—I am sorry, I should have been more clear. First, let me ask, have each one of the forest plans run their course? Is it time to reana-

lyze the forest plans? Or are we interrupting the forest plan with this massive DEIS?

Mr. SPRAGUE. No. The National Forest Management Act provides for periodically amending plans, whether or not we are into a full-blown revision of an environment forest plan. So there is provision for amending them as we get new science, we get new information that would indicate we should.

In the case of these 10 forests, the forest plans all had dealt with the California spotted owl, with the spotted owl habitat area concept, kind of scheme. And that through the CASPO report and other scientific reports on owls was determined to be a faulty strategy. It was as a result then of that finding and the work of the scientific team and the CASPO report that we determined that we needed to go through this process and amend those plans to get out of that strategy and into a more of a habitat-wide or landscape-wide kind of approach to managing this species as well as the rest of the species that are involved in these 10 forests.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Well, Mr. Sprague, I have two comments.

Number one, I would like to ask the committee to officially request a legal analysis of where your authority is under the National Forest Management Act to stop all other activity in the forest and set aside your other personal public trust responsibilities to the communities and which allows you to also get into a massive DEIS.

Mr. SPRAGUE. We haven't stopped all activities while all this is going on.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Well, most timber harvest has been stopped and fire management has been even altered. I mean a lot of things have been altered.

Mr. SPRAGUE. That is correct and that was as a result of these interim guidelines from the CASPO report. And the reason we went ahead with this EIS process was to get us out of this interim guideline situation and into a more permanent kind of setting. So that is the reason for that.

Ms. CHENOWETH. Would you mind providing for the committee a legal analysis as to the forest authority with regards to the mandate under the Forest Management Practices Act.

And finally, Mr. Sprague, I do want to say I appreciate your being here and being so forthright in answering all of our questions. I know it is not an easy job. We are all frustrated with this.

It is my hope and desire that some day you will be freed up to be the forester you were trained to be and probably even in your heart want to be. But I also went to say this is the exact reason why we are all very leery of ecosystem management.

So thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you. I would like to excuse the panel.

I would like to ask Mr. Sprague and Ms. Gauthier if they will remain as ex officio members for the next one. I know we are providing you with a lot and you are providing very valuable information and you are doing real well. So just hang in there.

Just for the record, this is the final panel and we appreciate the indulgence of members of the committee and the audience. We haven't had any breaks. I guess we are not going to have.

We will begin today by recognizing Mr. Chris Conrad.

STATEMENT OF CHRIS CONRAD, PROFESSIONAL FORESTER, FIBREBOARD WOOD PRODUCTS COMPANY

Mr. CONRAD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today.

I am a registered professional forester employed by Fibreboard Corporation in the Sierra Nevada community of Sonora, which is located in the central Sierras. I have a 20-year background in forestry, and was educated at the University of California, Berkeley. I appreciate the opportunity to be here to tell you a little bit about what our experience has been with the spotted owl.

I agree with Mr. Coates, I am delighted with the level of knowledge of the committee in regards to the DEIS itself. I had a prepared statement that I have submitted for the record but I would like to diverge from that a little bit and get directly into our experience with the owl in the central Sierra Nevada.

Fibreboard owns 80,000 acres of timberland. This timberland has been intensively harvested. The old growth was cut out from 50 to 60 years ago—that was the beginning, and the last of the old growth was removed from our timberlands 20 to 30 years ago. We operate these timberlands on a selective basis.

We began surveying for spotted owls on these managed timber lands in 1989. We have surveyed for owls every year since then. I want to tell the committee that we were astounded with the results we found when we first began surveying for the owl. All the experts told us we wouldn't find any owls in the kind of timber stands we had and we found through six years of work that we have a higher density of owls in our second growth stands than the Forest Service claims it has in adjacent timber stands that are dominated in large part by old growth timber.

I want to speak a little more to the biology of the owl. I have some photographs that I think might be of interest to the committee. I would like to say that I think our focus for being here today, we put a lot of effort into getting here and our focus is we feel the Draft EIS should be withdrawn. The solution to forest health is a solution that should be common all across the West.

We don't feel the Forest Service needs to be instructed to go back to the drawing board and redo the DEIS. We feel there is no reason for the DEIS. The DEIS itself states the owl is abundant in the Sierras and it has been repeated here more than once, is more numerous today than it was in the days of Kit Carson or John Muir, you pick your period.

But we feel the solution to poor forest health has got to be a solution that is common to every State in the western United States. This is a problem that is common throughout the western United States. I have some publications here that document the overstocked stands we have today all across the western United States.

This is a publication from Montana done by a researcher named George Gruell. This is one of his publications from Wyoming demonstrating exactly the same thing. Incredibly here is a publication done by the Forest Service itself which showed a little insight for the Boise National Forest in Idaho. Here is a publication documenting the same long-term changes in Oregon. And incredibly

here is one for the Black Hills of South Dakota which was published over 20 years ago.

I don't think there is any dispute that we actually have more acres covered by trees in the West today than we have ever had since European man first entered the Sierra. So we feel this is more than a spotted owl issue, the California spotted owl. We feel this is a forest health issue for everybody in the West.

In regards to that, I would just like to say that forest growth on all national forest lands in the United States currently is 22 billion feet a year. We are presently removing only five billion feet and, Mr. Chairman, I agree with you, it is pretty obvious that we have got a problem when every year we are adding 17 billion feet to our national forest's fuel loading.

The other side of the aisle, to be frank with you, I don't think they have got an answer to this. They need us in the woods. Everybody knows it. It is my understanding this hearing is getting transmitted on live radio to a radio station in the mother lode. There are a lot of people listening to what is happening here.

And Mr. Vento, I would just like to say to you, a lot of these people are blue collar Democrats. They don't understand why you are not responsive to protecting their jobs.

Mr. VENTO. Well, we are responsive but we want policies that are based on fact, not on conjecture, Mr. Conrad.

Mr. CONRAD. That is exactly why I am here. I am glad to hear you say that.

Mr. VENTO. We will be pleased to engage you in the facts of the issue.

Mr. CONRAD. Great. I appreciate it.

Anyway, I appreciate the opportunity to be here and I would be happy to show the committee some of the photographic evidence we have to document some of the things we are saying.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you. What do you have, charts or big pictures or something?

Mr. CONRAD. I have photographs in regard to changes in stand conditions in the Sierras.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Is that something that we can easily see if you put them up? If the committee doesn't object, it might be worth it just to take a look at these.

Mr. CONRAD. These are the size of the photographs we are looking at.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Why don't we pass them around? I think it would be easier to see if maybe the clerk can bring them up and we can take a look at them as the other witnesses—do you need to explain?

Mr. CONRAD. I would like to go over each pair individually, if I may.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Is there any objection if he takes the time to do that? It might be instructive, really. A picture is worth a thousand years especially in this matter of the forest. Go ahead.

Mr. CONRAD. Are you giving me an opportunity?

Mr. DOOLITTLE. You have the opportunity. Why don't you explain what they are and then send them up here and we will look at them.

Mr. CONRAD. This is some of the same work that has been done by this gentleman, Mr. Gruell. He is retired from the Forest Service. He was the fuels management officer for the Forest Service in the intermountain area for a number of years, and retired recently. He has published extensively on vegetation change over time.

It has been documented what the removal of fire has done to our timber stands in the West. He, Mr. Gruell, has recently completed a piece of research for the Sierra Nevada. Incredibly, part of the problem is this research actually had to be funded by the private sector. The Forest Service apparently in the Sierra Nevada found this kind of documentation of long-term changes over time to be somehow threatening to where they were taking our national forest lands.

The first photograph, this is the Cape Horn area, north fork of the American River taken in 1867. This is Placer County.

I think it would be helpful to compare them together. This is the same area, 1993. This is an uncut area. These are uncut timber stands. They were open, free of brush. Incidentally, this was very poor owl habitat down in this drainage. Today I would not be surprised to find that there is a California spotted owl living down at the bottom of the canyon of the north fork of the American River.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. It looks like it is much, much more overgrown in the recent photo but it is a little hard to grasp from back there.

Mr. CONRAD. This is the Grizzly Flat area of El Dorado County. This is one of the earliest photographs of the Mother Lode area in the Sierra Nevada, 1849. There is a saw mill down here. They have cut off this slope here but the stands in the background are open and parklike.

That is the exact same area today, Grisly Flat. Highly fire-prone, came in strongly to Ponderosa pine.

This is the Eureka area, now called Graniteville in Nevada County. This photograph was taken about 1874. Again, there is a community here that had been built up but the stands in the background are open and parklike.

When the photographer, Mr. Gruell, went back in to retake this photograph, the stands were so dense he had to go up in a helicopter to actually retake that shot. That is 1993. Incidentally, the stands in these early photographs, if you cut timber stands today to resemble those conditions, most spotted owl researchers, government researchers would tell you that is not good spotted owl habitat (pointing to 1993 photo). It is pretty well documented we have more spotted owl habitat today than we ever had.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So are you saying you concur with the government researchers?

Mr. CONRAD. No, sir. I am saying the pre-European conditions were not conducive to spotted owl habitat in a large way.

This is a photograph from Union Point, Yosemite Valley, 1866. You can see how open these stands were.

Again, very poor owl habitat. And from the work we have done on company lands, we are not finding owls in those kinds of open timber stands. This is the same area, exact same photograph. This is El Capitan here. It is 1993.

So we have the same problem happening in our national parks.

This is the Howland Flat area, Plumas County, 1890. You see these hillsides were fairly well slicked off. They probably had very low stocking levels to begin with. That is that same area today, 1993. Incredible amount of growth, obviously no owl habitat here (pointing to 1890 photo) and today it is owl habitat from horizon to horizon.

This is the Spaulding Lake area, Nevada County. This was taken 1919. Probably very little timber harvesting done in this area at the time of the photograph. You can see it is fairly open.

This is the exact same shot today. This is good owl habitat right there, dense timber stands (pointing to 1993 photograph).

This is the east fork of the north fork of the Feather River, approximately 1890. This is an incredible photograph because this shows—there is a layer of snow there. This shows how open and parklike pre-European conditions were. It also shows how much second growth timber there was in those days. Those are not six-foot diameter trees in there.

This is the same area today, 1993 heavy regrowth of black oak and mixed conifer. Not only are these excellent owl habitat conditions today but they are also excellent conditions for catastrophic fire.

This is the Emigrant Gap area, 1867, elevation about 5,400 feet, Placer County.

That is the same area today (pointing to 1993 photo). Again stands in the background that were open and parklike, are closed up, dense and prone to fire today.

This is the Kiburz area, Highway 50, El Dorado County, 1896. Open, again, open and parklike Ponderosa pine stands with some white fir on the north slopes there. Very dense timber stands today, 1993.

Incidentally, the Cleveland fire burned just to the west of this in 1992 and destroyed a whole drainage.

This is the Fallen Leaf Lake area, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, El Dorado National Forest. This is basically east side pine type. We are getting into that type. This is Jeffrey pine. Very open stands.

This is that same stand today, 1993. There is a rock here that is in both photographs. There is actually not an owl in this particular drainage right now, but this is good owl habitat today.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Let me just ask, I think I am persuaded that there is a considerable amount more timber. Looks like about twice what it used to be 100 years ago. Perhaps the other photos we can make available in some fashion to the members. I don't know how many more you have.

Mr. CONRAD. No, I appreciate that. I didn't mean to wear the committee out. The point is, though, these photographs have not been hand picked to prove a point. You can go out there and fairly well pick your site and you are going to find the same thing happening all across the West.

So I appreciate the opportunity to show those to the committee.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Conrad can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Our next witness, Mr. Frank Stewart.

STATEMENT OF FRANK STEWART, RESOURCE MANAGER, COLLINS PINE COMPANY

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate the opportunity.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. May I interrupt? I apologize. We need to take care of one matter.

Mr. Sprague has been kind enough to sit here all this time. He has a 2:00 appointment.

Can you stay here until 2:00 or do you have to leave before then to get there?

Mr. SPRAGUE. If I could leave at 10 till.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK, anybody have any objection if he leaves at 10 till? You have been indulgent to the committee. We really appreciate it.

But would you leave behind Ms. Gauthier so we can ask her a couple questions? OK, thanks.

Sorry, Mr. Stewart, please begin.

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Chairman, my name is Frank Stewart, resource manager for Collins Pine Company, a family-owned business with over 60 years of forest management and saw milling in the Chester, California area. Our 90,000 acre forest is intermingled between the Lassen and the Plumas National Forests and meets 50 percent of our annual timber volume requirements. The balance of our sawed log volume comes from the time sale programs on the Lassen and Plumas National Forests.

When Mr. Collins purchased our timberlands in the early 1900's, he had the foresight and understanding that business and forest principles applied to a dynamic forest would benefit his family and society for perpetuity. Our company management plan is updated every 10 years to meet the changing forest conditions.

However, the original concepts and principles remain unchanged. Our sustained yield policy specifies that only annual growth and mortality are harvested. We maintain a continual forest inventory system with established sample plots that are measured every 10 years or as needed.

We have a permanent road system that provides permanent access throughout our timberlands. Our dedicated professional foresters have an abiding appreciation and respect for the forest. We employ an all-age subculture system, not even age management that utilizes single tree selection. Strict timber marking guidelines are followed and applied on the grounds by our foresters for the selection of what trees are to be harvested and what trees are to remain for future growth.

As a result of our forest management program we have had more than our share of public recognition and support and, believe me, in today's political environment, public support and understanding is crucial in managing natural resources. This is especially true when it comes to harvesting trees on public or private lands in the State of California.

To further our opportunities in the marketplace and educate the public on good forestry, Collins Pine Company was the first private forest owner in the Nation to be certified under the Green Cross Program.

I do not come here today to criticize this country's most distinguished agency, the U.S. Forest Service, an agency that has been serving the people of America for over 100 years by managing our national forests and providing goods and services to a growing nation. As our population continues to grow and demands on natural resources increase, the Forest Service is under public, political and judicial pressure to meet goals of a constantly moving target.

Forest management is a long-term commitment that requires stability in the legislative and policy arenas while maintaining flexibility in the areas of scientific and professional application on the ground. Over the last 15 years, our government has spent millions of hard-earned tax dollars developing land management plans for each national forest.

These plans are intended to provide management direction and necessary tools to meet the social, economic and environmental demands of our communities. Rather than functioning as intended, the plans have been mired in conflicting laws, regulations, policies and litigation.

The management of our national forest has been reduced to little more than a paper producing process since 1991, that was the real start in California of the Cal owl problem. The timber sale program, just to give you an idea on the Plumas and Lassen National Forest, has fallen 54 percent from what was the previous 20 year historic.

But if you took that—where it has fallen from what the ASQ on the land management plan is, it is 80 percent. So you have to realize what they have sold over time were far over the ASQ's under their land management plans.

Since our saw mill is dependent on a stable Federal timber sale program, we believe in our part of the State, the Quincy library group proposal is the appropriate vehicle to resolve the battle over national forest management. For over two years, the library group hammered out a proposal that addressed forest health, ecological integrity or ecosystem management and economic stability.

We developed a win-win nonpartisan management package. The irony is we can't get the proposal implemented in a timely manner that meets the needs of our communities without going through the lengthy process of this current draft EIS.

The most serious flaw in the draft EIS, the attempt to specify one size fits all. In a single alternative, the draft attempts to handle a variety of issues in each forest along the Sierra Nevadas. This approach fails to recognize the unique character of the forests and their local communities.

The preferred alternative also fails to address the forest health crisis, the fire-prone status of our national forests and the immediate need to reduce catastrophic fire risk. I brought some pictures that were taken just before the snows came this past year on the Lassen National Forest that I hope we would like to make a part of the record, Mr. Chairman.

[The information follows at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. STEWART. These are not all little trees. There are trees in here that are 30 to 40 inches in diameter that are dying over the stocking. This is what is happening basically on the east side of the Lassen National Forest. Because of the CASPO guidelines, trees

Lassen National Forest. Because of the CASPO guidelines, trees over 30 inches can't be felled or have to maintain eight NAGs per acre, a lot of this will not get salvaged. So we have again this conflict in rules and regulations.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Stewart, while you are talking will you send those up around here?

Mr. STEWART. We provided about six or seven sets of copies, Mr. Chairman. I think she has them right there on her right.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Fine.

Mr. STEWART. There they are.

Mr. Chairman, the current annual growth on the Sierra Forest is 1.7 million board-feet. The preferred alternative as has been discussed is 416 million feet or 20 percent of the annual growth. Rather than decreasing the annual harvest, the ASQ must be accelerated through the elimination of the departure constraints that they use when they run all their models in this draft plan.

Another fire season is upon us. We hope this committee will direct the Forest Service to develop forest health alternatives that incorporate local solutions for individual forests throughout the Sierras.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stewart can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

Our next witness is Ms. Terry Terhaar.

STATEMENT OF TERRY TERHAAR, PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL

Ms. TERHAAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

My name is Terry Terhaar. I am the California Projects Director for the Pacific Rivers Council. I specialize in forestry, fire and aquatic issues strictly within California on both public and private land.

I am also a member of the California Fire Strategy Team which is chaired by our California Assistant Secretary of Resources for Forestry, Ms. Terry Gordon.

I also wish to point out that I am a licensed timber operator, licensed by the State of California. I also am a member of a family which has managed timberland in the State of California since 1913. In fact, they were managers for what was once the largest timber landowner within the State of California and they managed the largest sawmill in the world until it burned down.

My expertise, as I said, is in aquatic, fire and forestry issues. And I am here today to talk a little bit about the efforts of the Forest Service with respect to the management of the California spotted owl.

Several years ago the Forest Service noted that there was a likelihood that a train wreck might occur with regards to the California spotted owl. There was a shift in paradigm thinking within the agency at that time that was going on and good members of that agency, members who you have heard today, realized there was a need to move to a broader landscape approach with respect to the management of our public lands. That was an ecosystem approach.

Members of the committee, it was an approach that maintained the viability of all species on that land: species, I might point out, that include fish.

Of the 116 species and subspecies of native freshwater fish in California, only 38 percent of them are said to be in stable, healthy condition at the present time. My grandfather used to fish for those critters up in northeast California. I still have his bamboo fishing rod, but when I go out to fish I almost never catch anything because the fish are not there anymore.

Within the draft EIS, the Forest Service has recognized that we do have a risk, a high risk from a threat of catastrophic fire within our State but this risk, I would like to point out, does not exist across the landscape. This risk exists in certain areas.

These are areas that have faced impacts from previous management decisions that include not only logging, that include not only fire suppression but urbanization, channelization of our streams, road building and many other management activities.

My research with the California Fire Strategy Team has indicated in my talks with the strategic planning unit of the California Department of Forestry and fire protection that the risks that we face from catastrophic fire are much higher on our ever-expanding rural urban interface line. This is where the wildlands meet the urban, the suburbs of our State, and this line is expanding tremendously as our population within California increases every day.

This is where we get our ignition starts. Yes, we do get them from lightning strikes out in the wildlands, but by and large when you examine the research, you will see that the ignition starts, the threat from catastrophic fire is down in the low elevation foothill areas, and this, members of the committee, is where we believe we need to concentrate our limited resources in these troubled times in terms of lowering the risk from catastrophic fire.

Yes, we need to create shaded, fuel breaks around our suburbs. Yes, we need to ask the Forest Service to conduct programs that reduce the fuel loads. We need to do this where our people are, our homeowners live.

We need to assist our homeowners in creating defensible space around their homes. We need to do this around our shopping malls. We have limited resources.

It does not make sense to us at the present time to use a shotgun approach to prevent the threat of catastrophic fires in the areas where we have the least risk. I also might point out, if we go to the higher elevation areas and we do a lot of logging in those areas, we are going to change the rate of snow melt.

If you remove significant canopy from that area, you are going to get much faster snow melt. You are going to get a lot of erosion. And as that sediment comes down the streambeds, it fills up our reservoirs in the State of California.

We have many reservoirs that are already half filled. They are very, very expensive to clean out.

You must understand there is another product within these lands that are covered by the draft EIS and that is the product of water. Seventy percent of the water that is used by the agribusiness and the residential users of the State of California comes from this timberland. We need to maintain our watersheds

throughout these forests in order to maintain this other most valuable commodity.

That is why we support the efforts of the Forest Service to conduct this process. We would urge you to allow them to continue and I would like to thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to testify.

I will be available for questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Terhaar can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you very much.

Our next witness is Mr. Craig Thomas.

STATEMENT OF CRAIG THOMAS, CALIFORNIA ANCIENT FOREST ALLIANCE

Mr. CRAIG THOMAS. Thank you, Congressman. My name is Craig Thomas. I am here today representing the California Aged Forest Alliance, which is a coalition of national regional and local grassroots environmental groups throughout the Sierras and the State. We have a diverse set of interests but we are all involved in the Forest Service California EIS spotted owl draft environmental impact statement process.

I would thank you very much for the opportunity to appear here in front of you today and I have provided you with testimony that I am going to relate to some degree but certainly not read it all.

I live in El Dorado County in forested land in Congressman Doolittle's district. I have been involved in the forest issues for roughly a decade now.

My background is in cultural ecology, which is the interface between the environment and human culture. I think it is important that we address some of the issues that the various committee members brought up today in this hearing process because what I have seen after reading in detail this stack of documents here to my left that there is still a great deal of misunderstanding in the public and amongst the people in this room, and I think we need and we owe it to all of the people involved, the agency, the timber workers, the environmental community and yourselves, that we really do bear down and get to the bottom facts in this issue.

I heard a lot of discussion today about salvage logging and how salvage logging is potentially the salvation to our forest health problems. I would like to refer you to the first attachment at the end of my testimony that is a letter from Forest Supervisor Robert Harris, who is the Lake Tahoe Basin Land Management Unit Forest Supervisor.

In this letter written to Richard Wilson, who is the Director of the California Division of Forestry, dated December 7th, 1994, Mr. Harris states very clearly and very courageously the problem with the myth of suggesting that salvage logging by itself is going to solve our problems regarding forest health.

I refer to the paragraph with the asterisk that I underlined and I will read it: "What is apparent to me now is that large salvage sale contracts are not a major part of addressing the large acreages and urban intermix needs. Planning and attempting to market several salvage sales ranging from 100 acres to 7,000 acres has shown since 1989 that the value of salvageable material will not bear the

costs of an adequate treatment for fuels reduction and long-term forest health. Where salvage sales reach break even, we see a submerchantable stand remaining that is overstocked with unacceptable fuel loading."

What he is saying there is that when you remove the bole, the main stem of the tree in a forest environment in a dead and dying situation, there is still and has created a tremendous amount of residual coarse fuel material left on the ground. We cannot continue to lie to the communities in the Sierra Nevada and say salvage logging without the proper and fully funded fuels prescriptions that need to follow directly behind it, we cannot continue to lie to these communities to suggest that that is a solution.

I think Mr. Harris needs to be applauded for the courage that he took after witnessing his own professional situation up there for the last five years.

The Quincy Library Group proposal is something that the California Interforest Alliance is very familiar with and to a great degree we are very supportive of. There are a couple of pieces of that proposal today that I haven't heard any of the Members mention and I want you to fully understand the detail of that proposal.

Number one, it has large, very large acreage set-asides in reserves, untouched forestland done for reasons of protecting biology diversity and viability of species. Sierra Pacific industries, the county board of supervisors, Mr. Coates, and the environmental community all are on board in that proposal.

The Quincy Library Group proposal has significantly greater stream side protection than does alternative C in the Forest Service's preferred alternative. It provides stream protection of 300 feet to all fish-bearing streams as opposed to just large rivers. So we are talking about significant environmental protections there. I haven't heard that expressed amongst this body or amongst the panelists today, but you should be aware of that.

We conclude that the Forest Service needs to fully analyze their proposal, the way they send it to them. I think it is very important. We are eager to see the results of that. It needs to be a public process. It needs to be the way it was designed to have an open and fair hearing so that all of you committee members, the people in those communities, the environmental community, everybody can see the results of that. I think it is very important. I think it is a very positive direction what we are, what they are doing up there.

The owl technical report written in 1992 by the technical team is the place to look for the answers to a lot of the questions that you have today. It discusses the relative differences among the races of the spotted owl species. There are subspecies. It talks about the lack of genetic differences, differences in morphology, differences in how the northern owl responds to climate versus the southern owl. It lays that out very clearly. It is on page 55.

It says at the bottom of that that we need to look at the trends in the populations and not whether they are related or not related. So it is important that we get to that point.

I am very concerned from what I have heard today of the continued selective reading of the CAL-OWL EIS, which talks about the abundance and distribution of spotted owls. I know that everybody

in this room has either got staff or themselves has read farther than page 9 or page 39 in both cases where the description of abundance is made. It is an assumption and then the document goes on to say when you go farther down the page that unless specific management actions take place, abundance will not be the case any longer.

We need to complete the reading of that page. I think it is important and it is the responsible thing to do for all publics involved; that there needs to be a protection of the key habitat components of owls that are disappearing over time; of large trees, large stands, downed logs and relatively closed canopy forests.

The last thing I would like to mention is the Sierra Nevada ecosystem project process and a basic parallel process that is going on today mandated by Congress, funded by Congress, the results of which are due December 31st, 1995. The CAL-OWL EIS is basically ahead of that process, although they are going to take a significant amount of time to have to address and interpret and respond to all of the public input that has happened here throughout time so far in the comment period.

What we see is that the Sierra Nevada ecosystem process will publish the best, most detailed, most scientific information that will occur regarding the ecological condition of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The Forest Service must delay its analysis until the Sierra Nevada ecosystem process project is in place so that we can see that best assigned. Mr. Herger mentioned that we need to look at the best science. We must wait until that best science is produced.

I will stop here. I want to give everybody a chance to ask questions and to respond. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify.

[The prepared statement of Craig Thomas can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you.

Ms. Gauthier, since Mr. Sprague has left, I will question you about something he has mentioned. He testified, Mr. Sprague did, before a Senate committee that the Sierra Nevada ecosystem project analysis will be included in the final CASPO EIS, but I understand that the SNEP analysis will not be completed until December so are you then holding the final EIS until at least that time so you can include the SNEP report?

Ms. GAUTHIER. It doesn't appear that we are going to be able to finish the EIS until the SNEP work is completed anyway and so I suspect we will be able to take advantage of the good work that SNEP provides us.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. Thank you. Let me ask you the same question I asked Mr. Sprague about alternative C because you are the team leader of CASPO; is that right?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Team leader for the EIS.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. For the EIS, excuse me. Are you aware of preference by members of the team for another alternative, I believe it was alternative D as opposed to C?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, certainly everyone has their personal opinions. Most of us on the team felt that we could support any of the

newer landscape-type alternatives. Those being alternatives B, C, D and F as well.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And how many members, again, were on the team? Or are on the team?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Sure, we have six permanent folks, but we have drawn on quite a large number of people from the forest and from the scientific community.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. For input, but do you actually get to the point of voting or conducting business in that fashion?

Ms. GAUTHIER. No. What we did was we provided the regional forester with analysis that compared a simple set of criteria against the alternatives that we analyzed, so basically we summarized the analysis for him of the alternatives.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. And did that summary point toward one alternative over another?

Ms. GAUTHIER. I would have to say it probably centered around alternative C and D.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. I would ask Mr. Sprague this question, but let me ask you. I am aware that forest plans have in many cases been recently redone, have they not, in California?

Ms. GAUTHIER. That is correct. I believe the Stanislaus and the Modoc plans are current within the last three years or so.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Now, are all of these going to be affected or have to be reopened, I guess, as a result of any decisions made pursuant to this final EIS whenever that is produced?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Yes. This EIS would amend them.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. So it actually has the effect of amending them. You don't go through a new round of comment and so forth on each of the forest plans.

Ms. GAUTHIER. No. This process will take care of everything for them so they don't have to do any further work.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. When do you anticipate the draft EIS process to be completed?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Well, I felt the draft was completed when we issued it. We certainly are still in the public comment period which is currently scheduled to end July 10th at which time we will begin to review and analyze and respond to the comments and begin modifying our alternatives accordingly and publishing the document.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. When you modify those alternatives, are you free to pretty much do whatever you like or is there some constraint on how far you can go at that point?

Ms. GAUTHIER. We are constrained by our original stated proposed action and purpose and need. If we stray too far from that, it might require another round of public comment.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. OK. Thank you.

The gentleman in Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. VENTO. Ms. Gauthier, if you were to adopt, for instance, the Quincy plan, which has a reserve, would you have authority to do that to set up reserves administratively?

Ms. GAUTHIER. Yes, we would.

Mr. VENTO. And the wider stream set-asides.

Ms. GAUTHIER. Yes, we would.

Mr. VENTO. Of course, this is unique in the sense it is multi-forest. Obviously, some of those plans are much further behind. They were due to be modified. I take it this does not fulfill necessarily the Forest Service replanning for them; is that correct?

Ms. GAUTHIER. No. This is an amendment process. The plans aren't quite ready for complete revision yet.

Mr. VENTO. So that you anticipate that this is not in lieu of, but amendments to existing plans so that others that are up for recycling three or four years would still have to undergo; is that correct?

Ms. GAUTHIER. That is correct.

Mr. VENTO. We talked about, of course, the way the forests are managed and Mr. Sprague was suggesting that these forests aren't just managed for wood production, are they?

Ms. GAUTHIER. They are not mismanaged?

Mr. VENTO. They are not only managed for wood production, someone said how is forest health here. I don't think they are really talking about total forest health necessarily. They are just talking about trees.

Ms. GAUTHIER. As I understand it, we have other mandates to respond to.

Mr. VENTO. I would say so, yes. Like recreation and like, preservation of some areas, correct?

Ms. GAUTHIER. That is correct.

Mr. VENTO. And, of course, even the species in them. I feel like Mr. Thomas. You must feel a little bit like the news reporter with the rest of the story here. At the end of the day it might have been useful to have a little more of that earlier in the cycle.

I looked at your testimony. In fact, as you noticed, I was drawing from it to talk about some of the different situations. I would just draw my colleague's attention to it because I think it sets forth a different path or at least a different perspective with regards to jobs and what the sensitivity here is.

Did you have any comment, Mr. Thomas, or Ms. Terhaar about the issue about the amount of wood production versus that which is harvested? Did you have any comment on that? You know, you heard this nationwide statement. I have some ideas about it myself, but I would rather listen to what you have to say than myself.

Ms. TERHAAR. Yes, having been involved in the last five years in discussions concerning the nature of sustained yield and harvest versus growth in California, I have some limited amount of expertise in the area. And one must remember everything is not quite as simple as it appears.

You will hear, of course, that the best way to manage our forests is not to cut more than they grow. And yet you must dig a little deeper into the issue and understand that if we are to try and create a truly healthy forest, we must provide for all the basic forest components. That is to say, we must provide for all of the different age and diameter classes of trees.

We must provide for not only young trees that are growing very rapidly that provide, if you were to only consider young trees, a very high cut rate, but you must also provide the medium-aged and older-aged trees that are in the forest. Those trees grow at a slower rate.

You must also consider that you must maintain the diversity of all of the different species. We have heard today quite a bit about how white fir is taking over our forest. And yet the research from University of California at Berkeley's forest research station indicates that in many areas of the Sierra Nevada white fir is almost in the same percentage as it was in pre-European times. It is just that it is in different areas at the present time.

What happened was my family, members of them, people they worked for, went into certain areas and harvested what were considered to be the high value trees at one time, the pines. And so in those areas you have fir coming back.

But this issue of sustained yield of harvest equaling growth is a very complicated one. I urge you not to look just at the face of the issues. You must get very deeply into the issues in order to truly ascertain if we are going to not harvest any more than we are growing.

In order to maintain the health of the forest, we must also give consideration to all of the other resources that are within that forest because it is those resources that maintain the health of the forest ultimately.

Mr. VENTO. Well, Mr. Thomas, I guess my time is up. Maybe they will permit you to respond.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Sure.

Mr. CRAIG THOMAS. I first would like to respond that we need to all remember that the forest health problems that exist in the Sierras today did not originate and did not just appear before us since the CASPO interim guidelines came into place in 1993. This has been an ongoing problem of incredible fuel load building up in our national forests, under what is referred to as sustained yield logging levels, significantly higher than is happening today. Those logging levels did not solve the problem.

I believe in my heart that we are all in this room because we do want to solve the problem, not win a victory. That is why I am here. And those levels of logging did not solve the fire and fuel threat problems in the Sierra Nevadas. So we are not hitting the issue yet is that we can log at higher levels if we do not treat the unmerchantable material and do the understory thinning of the smaller to medium-sized trees, we are not going to help anybody or anything out there in the Sierra environment.

I know the situation is difficult to understand. You have to remember that the planning horizon of this document is roughly a decade. We are talking about the next 10 years and when the preferred alternative is saying it is going to grow more timber than it is going to remove, the direction of the document based on the current science is saying that we need to grow the larger-sized classes of trees up.

A lot of that wood volume is growing those larger trees. That is where that growth is going. It is not necessarily all falling on the forest floor year, after year, after year. It is growing larger boles. You know, we strongly support the concepts of thinning the forest. There isn't anybody in this room that is arguing that point. It is just how, particularly how we pay for that work. How it is funded is one of the big issues.

Mr. VENTO. Thank you, I think the insight about the cost is right and I think the resiliency in terms of forest fire prevention is absolutely true. That is all dollars you can have this on paper, but it isn't going to be developed unless you put the money into it and salvage alone is not forest health.

Mr. CRAIG THOMAS. Absolutely.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mrs. Chenoweth.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Conrad, you are a professional forester. What does sustained yield mean to you?

Mr. CONRAD. Sustained yield would mean over the long term you would harvest what you grow on your property.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. How does that relate to salvage? Or the timber that is dead, dying, windthrown, burned, diseased or insect-infested?

Mr. CONRAD. Well, in order to improve or maintain stand health that would need to be salvaged under any good sustained yield program.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Does salvage material have any commercial value?

Mr. CONRAD. It does if it is salvaged in a reasonable amount of time. One of the problems we have today is that the system is broken and even though there is recognition on the part of the Forest Service that some areas need to be salvaged, by the time it gets on to the bid table, most of it ends up being unmerchantable.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Because of the bluing process, I take it.

Mr. CONRAD. Because of the bluing process and just the general decay. Actually, we are happy if we can just get blue stained wood. It goes beyond that.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. You heard Mr. Thomas testify very eloquently about the fact that forest practices in the past contributed to the heavy fuel load. Do you find that in your professional opinion? Do you find that multiple use sustained yield forest practices contribute to a heavy fuel load?

Mr. CONRAD. I think there are places in the forest that you could find that we could have had better utilization standards 50, 60 years ago. We left some of the tops out there, but that is not the reason for the fuel loadings today.

The reason is the elimination of fire and the research that Mr. George Gruel has done shows that regardless of whether the stands have been logged previously or not, white fir and other shade-tolerant species have come up in the understory and created an incredible fire hazard and that is one of the problems we have even in Yosemite Park now. We have vast areas that never have been harvested, but when they burn today they burn to the ground.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. In the areas where there are sales going on have you found that the Forest Service is willing to let the smaller timber, the medium-sized timber like Mr. Thomas referred to in his testimony, have you found that the Forest Service is letting those out in sales?

Mr. CONRAD. Well, unfortunately, that is the only thing they are letting out in sales.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. And not the large?

Mr. CONRAD. I think there is universal agreement among everybody in the industry today that we don't need to harvest these 6-

foot trees to survive. We would be happy to set those aside and manage for them. But what we do need is to manage all of our forest lands and then we can survive. We can have our cake and eat it, too. We can survive on medium to small trees in the timber industry through forest thinning.

Today we have the kind of technology that lays a very soft hand on the woods. There is an incredible amount of stuff we can do out there that we couldn't do 20 years ago. It is just insanity to keep the very people out of the woods that are in the best position to protect the woods.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. You testified that the larger populations of the California spotted owl are found on private land. Why is that? Does it provide a better prey base? Do they go where the groceries are?

Mr. CONRAD. I believe it has a lot to do with prey base. They found on Simpson Timber Company lands, with the northern owl on the northern California coast, that they have the highest densities of northern spotted owls found anyplace, in 50- to 80-year-old second growth timber. This is work that has been very well documented by Ph.D.s.

They have densities now of a pair of owls every 500 acres in some areas. I think it is prey-base related. That is what they found. It is related to the number of wood rats they have. You open a stand up and you have more wood rats. I believe the densities we have on our lands are very much related to prey base and more open stands.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Thank you. I would like to also ask Ms. Terhaar, I note from your professional-looking testimony that the Pacific Rivers Council has offices in Oregon, Washington, California, Montana, and Washington, DC. How large is your group's current annual budget?

Ms. TERHAAR. I am not aware, unfortunately, at the present time of what the group's current annual budget is. I know what my own present budget is within the State of California. The reason for my ignorance is I am newly hired, but I have just been informed by the staff from our Washington, DC office that it is about a million dollars.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. OK. Could you provide that for the official record?

Ms. TERHAAR. I would be happy to provide that information.

[At press time, the budget had not been supplied by Ms. Terhaar.]

Mrs. CHENOWETH. OK. Now, I come from Idaho and I am painfully aware that your organization was a plaintiff in a lawsuit that temporarily halted all grazing, logging, mining, and road-building activities on six of our national forests in an effort to protect the salmon.

I also have documentation that since 1992 Pacific Rivers Council received three grants totaling $143,500 from the federally funded National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for stream restoration efforts in Oregon. The bottom line is this Federal money has leveraged the ability of your group to shut down for a period 18 of Idaho's 44 counties that were affected by this lawsuit.

Now, in addition to the $143,500 Pacific Rivers Council received in grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation since

1992, what other Federal grants, contracts, or awards has your organization received in recent years?

Ms. TERHAAR. Congresswoman, as I said, I am a specialist in California issues. However, I must disagree with some of your statements. Happily, there is a member of our Washington DC office here. If you would allow her to testify, I believe she will be able to answer your questions.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. If the Chairman would agree, I would appreciate that.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. That would be fine. Please state your name for the record.

STATEMENT OF JUDY NORITAKE, NATIONAL POLICY DIRECTOR, PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL

Ms. NORITAKE. My name is Judy Noritake. I am the Pacific Rivers Council National Policy Director and, Mrs. Chenoweth, I also hail from the State of Idaho.

I would like to correct one of your statements for the record, which I also hear the other Senators and the other Congressman from Idaho repeatedly state and it is totally incorrect and that is that we shut down activities on those forests.

That is not true. There were never any activities shut down on the forests. There was an injunction which was stayed for a period of time and the Forest Service completed the work they needed to do with NMFS and there was never any activity shut down on those forests. And I am glad to have the opportunity to put that in the record.

Secondarily, the grants that our organization receives from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are in the nature of matching grants for stream restoration projects which we do in conjunction with the Forest Service and with private timber companies. They do not leverage other grants that we receive for the kind of work that Ms. Terhaar and I do.

And in fact, I think your point is that even though the grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation are not used to bring litigation, as is in the case of Idaho, it frees up other funds that we had to do that. I believe that is your point. In fact, in the State of Idaho for those cases, we were represented by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and we do not pay them. So your allegation that we are somehow misusing those funds is totally unfounded.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I didn't catch your name. Would you repeat it for the record, please?

Ms. NORITAKE. My name is Judy Noritake.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. How long has it been since you have been in Idaho?

Ms. NORITAKE. Let's see. My last trip out must have been in July when I picked up my 8-year-old daughter last year from spending six weeks with her grandparents and aunts and uncles there.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I do want to say that the other three members of the Idaho delegation and myself are not overstating or misstating the fact that the Pacific Rivers Council's lawsuit shut down the activity in 18 of our counties.

Now, if you and I want to dispute that, I am happy to provide you with the information, but you are here to provide me with information today and believe me, that happened in Idaho. Thank you very much.

I do have one final question, Mr. Chairman. The Pacific Rivers Council Executive Director, Bob Doppelt, March 8th, 1995, press release on a scientific report on timber salvage contained the following statement: "Congress must heed the strong warning from this prestigious group of scientists that massive post-fire salvage logging will exacerbate, not resolve the ecological problems that exist on the forests of the Northwest. If Congress truly wants to restore forested landscapes and if they are serious about debt reduction, they must not act in haste, not approve blanket salvage logging proposals."

Since this press release was released immediately prior to the House vote on the Taylor timber salvage amendment, this is clearly an obvious attempt to lobby the Congress. How much of your group's budget is devoted to lobbying Congress and other legislative bodies?

Ms. NORITAKE. A very minor portion of our budget goes to that. I can't answer that specifically. I would guess that it is well below 5—probably even 2 percent of our budget, but I would be happy to provide that figure to you.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. I really appreciate that, Ms. Noritake and if you could also provide that for the record and for the committee a breakdown of where your funding comes from. Thank you.

[At press time, the information had not been supplied by Ms. Noritake.]

Ms. TERHAAR. Congresswoman, I might add that within California the amount of the budget that I have available for activities, less than 1.5 percent of it goes toward lobbying.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Thank you. Mr. Herger is recognized.

Mr. HERGER. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and I want to again thank the Chairman and the members of this committee for allowing me an opportunity of sitting with you and joining you on this issue which is so important to us in California. And I am particularly encouraged when I hear individuals from our environmental community and those who are from the rest of the community agreeing on solutions to these issues that are destroying our communities.

We were not only losing our way of life there, but again destroying the beautiful forests that we all love so much and I think if there is anything all of us share is that love for the forest and, Mr. Thomas, I want to thank you. You mentioned in your testimony, I believe, some areas that we agree on. I believe you mentioned that you do not disagree with the importance. As a matter of fact we might find the absolute necessity of thinning these forests, of somehow moving them back to that area, that the way they once were and we saw pictures earlier in the hearing of what it looked like back in the early 1800's and what they look like now and, of course, we know the problems we have when we are not managing these forests. I thank you.

I am also encouraged to hear—I don't want to misstate you so please correct me if I do, but also I believe I heard you speak some encouraging words about the work that the Quincy Library Group has done.

Mr. CRAIG THOMAS. Absolutely.

Mr. HERGER. And this is really the area that I think we get into of how we can come together and be able to solve these mutually recognized problems. As a matter of fact, crisis we might add, so I thank you for that testimony and, again, if I have misstated, please——

Mr. CRAIG THOMAS. No. That is correct.

Mr. HERGER. I would like to move, if I could, to Mr. Stewart. And if you could comment, Mr. Conrad, in his statement mentioned that he felt that we should, as far as the CASPO draft EIS that we should withdraw completely. What would be your comment on that?

Mr. STEWART. Well, Congressman, our concern is we want to get something implemented, a process that allows us to move the Quincy Library Group process forward and at this level, the EIS is the only process we have. If there is another vehicle, we would probably be supportive of that also.

Mr. HERGER. How about the current draft? I think you are referring to the current draft. How do you view the current draft? We have heard a lot——

Mr. STEWART. I don't like it. It is terrible for forestry.

Mr. HERGER [continuing]. that it does not do the type of thinning, have the type of measures that would come about that would help, again, restore our forest health. I guess my real question is how do we get from point A where we are now to point B where we would like to be?

Mr. STEWART. I think the main thing is we need to get back in the elevator and upgrade our current national plan. We spent a lot of money to give direction to these national forests. I think Congress needs to help give some redefinition in our National Forest Management Act. The viability standards are critical.

Maybe you need to say you need to have a certain number of species. Then they can say, yes or no, they have it, but right now you are leaving it up to an interpretation. And so we need some viability standards that we can set. I think those kinds of things would allow them to move the land management plan forward. That process lets everybody participate and it applies good forestry on the ground.

One of the issues brought up early on, and I can't remember which one from the Forest Service, but a lot of this started because Verner way back thought the land management plans were geared toward even-age management. That is clear-cutting basically. That has shifted in the Sierras. We are now looking at other management alternatives. So maybe there is an opportunity to look at that very foundation that Verner got excited about.

We are not clear-cutting large acreages in the Sierra Nevadas. They are looking at other silvicultural systems. Single tree selection, group selection. Those kinder, gentler silviculture systems on the landscape. It is very complex, but we need to look at those things.

Mr. HERGER. The nature of this hearing, this specific hearing is on the California Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, so working within that framework, again, we have the recommendations. Do you feel we can work with those recommendations somehow or are any of the alternatives something that we could incorporate in order to bring about forest health? Where do we go from here with the nature of this hearing having to do specifically——

Mr. STEWART. I think you can direct the Forest Service to go back and come out with an alternative that addresses forest health.

Mr. HERGER. Other than what they have already offered?

Mr. STEWART. That is correct.

Mr. HERGER. So you agree that what they have offered will not solve the forest health?

Mr. STEWART. That is correct.

Mr. HERGER. OK. That is the main point. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank the Forest Service also.

I just want to state this for the sake of the Forest Service and I regret that our Regional Forester Sprague is not here. Lynn Sprague isn't here, but some of the hardest working, dedicated, professional people I know work within the Forest Service.

My concern is with some of the policies many times that come here from Washington and many from legislation that needs to be adjusted prevents them from doing their work and, again, I want to thank everybody involved. We are only going to solve this problem if we work together and I would urge all of us to redouble our efforts to do precisely that. Thank you.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Well, thank you. I just want to observe as a footnote to the hearing record, I strongly supported and support the Quincy Library Group. I am not sure that is applicable to the situation down in our part of the district in Tuolomne County. I would just—however, the concept of attempting to get the groups working together is a good one. Where that can be implemented it should be.

I want to thank our Chairman, Mr. Hansen, and his staff of the subcommittee for convening this hearing. We have had some very useful testimony, I think. I would like to thank the witnesses for spending this amount of time with us, especially Mr. Sprague and Ms. Gauthier, who probably didn't anticipate being on the line for the whole time, but you handled yourselves very well and I thank you for that.

There will be some additional questions that we will wish to submit in writing to some of the witnesses and the record will be held open for that purpose and we would ask your prompt response and with that, if no one has any further business, this session of the subcommittee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:31 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, and the following was submittted for the record:]

STATEMENT OF
DAVID G. UNGER
FOREST SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Before the
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Lands
Committee on Resources
United States House of Representatives

Concerning Conservation of the
California Spotted Owl

June 6, 1995

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the development and current status of the California Spotted Owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). With me today are Regional Forester Lynn Sprague and Janice Gauthier, EIS team leader.

The Draft EIS was prepared to amend the regional standards and guidelines pursuant to requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976. This Act and its implementing regulations require the Forest Service to provide for diversity of plant and animal communities by ensuring the viability of native and desired non-native species of fish and wildlife, to develop management strategies for that purpose, and to review new scientific information and adapt management practices as appropriate to ensure viability of species.

Prior to January 1993, the California spotted owl was managed on National Forests in California using a network of Spotted Owl Habitat Areas (SOHAs) similar to those used to manage the northern spotted owl. In 1990, a scientific analysis team, led by Jack Ward Thomas, released its peer reviewed conservation strategy for the northern spotted owl. This analysis showed that the SOHA approach could not ensure viability of the species.

In June 1991, an interagency technical team composed of six scientists was formed to review the status, habitat requirements, and population trends of the California spotted owl. The team's findings were released in July 1992 in what is known as the CASPO Report. They concluded that the data on the distribution and abundance of the owl do not suggest that owls have declined either in their overall distribution in the Sierra Nevada or that they have declined markedly in abundance within any forest type there. They also found that the California spotted owl uses a wider range of habitat conditions than the northern spotted owl.

A key concern identified by the technical team is that emphasis contained in current forest land and resource management plans on even-age management, including short rotations, would continue to cause a decline in key habitat components critical to the long term survival of the spotted owl. Specifically, the team found: "Of greatest concern to us at this time is the rapid disappearance of the large, old, and generally decadent trees that are the focus of nesting by spotted owls....They cannot be

replaced quickly." The second major concern was the increasing risk of high-severity fires to owl habitat, the result of over 70 years of fire suppression and fuels buildup.

The technical team recommended a series of short-term measures to maintain the current distribution of spotted owls and key habitat components. These included the retention of varying amounts of large trees and snags in suitable owl habitat and the thinning of overstocked stands to reduce the risk of high-severity fires.

These recommendations were adopted by the Forest Service and implemented as interim Regional Guide and Forest Plan Amendments on the 10 affected national forests in January 1993 until an EIS on alternatives for maintaining spotted owl viability could be completed.

In April 1993, an interdisciplinary planning team was formed to develop a long-term strategy for maintaining the spotted owl's viability on 10 Sierra National Forests covering over 10 million acres of National Forest System lands. The Draft EIS prepared by the team analyzes a number of alternative strategies. It was released for public comment in February 1995.

The CASPO Report of 1992 provided a foundation for developing an ecologically sound strategy for maintaining the viability of the California spotted owl. However, given the complexity of the Sierra Nevada ecosystem, the EIS team took a broader ecosystem

approach rather than focussing solely on a single species. The draft EIS was developed to:

1) analyze the habitat requirements of the wildlife community as a whole, including the spotted owl;

2) emphasize restoring forest health and reducing the risks of high-severity fire; and

3) strengthen riparian management direction to maintain and restore the productivity of wildlife and aquatic habitat.

The draft EIS analyzes a number of alternatives ranging from a network of large reserves with virtually no logging to an active management proposal with extensive use of timber harvests and prescribed fire. From this array of management alternatives, a preferred alternative was identified in accordance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

The preferred alternative differs from both current forest land and resource management plans and the CASPO interim guidelines. Alternative A in the draft EIS shows management under current forest plans. In this alternative, timber management is emphasized on lands not allocated to other purposes and spotted owl habitat is provided by habitat areas. Some of the habitat areas were located in wilderness and other lands where timber harvest does not occur. To ensure viability, it was also

necessary to establish some owl habitat areas within lands allocated to intensive timber management. Total sawtimber production under this alternative is estimated at about 692 million board feet annually.

Alternative G shows management under CASPO interim guidelines. This alternative focuses on spotted owl viability, mainly by retaining 30-inch and larger diameter trees and other attributes favored by owls across the landscape. CASPO was designed as an interim strategy to maintain future options for maintaining spotted owl viability. Total sawtimber production under this alternative is estimated at about 414 million board feet annually.

The preferred alternative C is intended to restore key ecosystem elements that will ensure viability of the owl and other species. It places both commodity production and spotted owl management in a broader Sierra Nevada ecosystem context and provides for fuels management to reduce the risk of high-severity fires.

Under the preferred alternative, valley bottoms on National Forest System lands are managed primarily for old growth forest, mid-slopes for a mix of attributes favored by owls and for timber production using small group selection, and ridge areas for an open forest to serve as shaded fuel breaks. This alternative builds upon lessons learned through Forest plan implementation,

incorporating key elements of on-going research, such as the CASPO Technical Report, as well as information related to riparian management and ecological risks of high-severity fire. The end result is a proposed management strategy that moves towards sustainable management of all resources in the Sierra Nevada. Total sawtimber production under this alternative is estimated at about 466 million board feet annually.

The draft EIS and preferred alternative are starting points for discussion, not the end of discussion. The original 90-day period for public review and comment has been extended until July 10 to ensure that we receive the most in-depth review possible. We are aggressively seeking input. The EIS team is continuing to meet with individuals, county boards of supervisors, organizations representing a wide range of interests, and congressional representatives.

The strategy finally developed could likely combine elements from a number of alternatives. We are committed to basing the decision on a final management strategy on the best scientific information available and the best information available from our publics.

This concludes my formal statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

STATEMENT OF CHERI JACOBSON
TO
HEARING ON DRAFT EIS ON THE SPOTTED OWL
NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND LANDS SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
JUNE 6, 1995

My name is Cheri Jacobson. I am representing UNITED FOREST FAMILIES. We are comprised of over 500 working people and their families, whose livelihoods depend upon the wise management of our forests. To date, UNITED FOREST FAMILIES has had very little voice in the highly politicized debate over the destructive path our government has taken in the management of our natural resources. It is time for you to move this debate beyond the rhetoric we so often hear, and look at the faces of the people who are being devastated both economically and emotionally. We have members who are third generation "wood workers" whose proud heritage comes from the forest and whose future depends on the decisions made by committee's like this. We are the true "environmentalists" who work and care for the land and fully expect our children and grandchildren to be able to do the same. My purpose here is to attempt to illustrate the impacts the current policies are having on families and rural communities in the Sierra's and throughout the west.

Mill closures throughout the west in recent years have had devastating and all too often overlooked consequences. Once thriving communities have been reduced to virtual ghost towns and have seen increases in unemployment rates, spousal and child abuse cases, as well as decreases in funds for local school and road programs. In a nation where education is a priority, why are we penalizing our children by not managing our natural resources for their benefit? It is not necessary for you to take my word for this, just contact the county administrators and school officials in towns like Yreka, California, Cresent City, California and Roseburg, Oregon. Ask them about the impacts on social service programs in their areas since THEIR MILLS CLOSED. Ask them about the crime rate since THEIR MILLS CLOSED. And ask them about the economic stability of their community since THEIR MILLS CLOSED. These are very real impacts that have already occurred to families and communities in the northwest and are beginning to spread throughout rural towns in the Sierra's. Hopefully we can stop this spread through actions that will come from hearings like this.

Timber Industry workers are being increasingly seen in the mainstream media as a dying breed. Thanks to a benevolent government, they can be retrainded to become productive members of our society. President Clinton has used the phrase "Economically Dislocated" to describe forest workers who have lost their means of support for their families and are now eligible for retraining. Once again, ask the affected communities how the retraining is

going. The answer, is NO WHERE! These are proud people, providing material this country depends on. Proud people who are constantly improving the methods practiced in the woods, including the use of High-Tech equipment which is gentle to both the land and the residual stand of trees. We use good, sound management which focuses on the overall health of our forests, allowing us to continue to provide our only Renewable Resource to the American People. We don't want to be reduced to accepting handouts, we don't want to be retrained for minimum wage jobs that will force us to become dependent upon our communities. We want to remain positive, contributing people within our communties and government. We want to continue to instill the pride we feel from constructively providing and in knowing you've done a job well, to our children and our grandchildren.

Let me briefly read a portion of the Draft EIS for the California Spotted Owl from the Social and Economic Environment section. On page 3-310 under Timber Industry employees it says "In some communities, logging operations and lumber mills are the major sources of high-wage jobs. Loggers, logging truck drivers, and sawmill workers earn $9 to $16 per hour, depending on the specialty and experience. Although some of the jobs are subject to seasonal layoffs, they pay two to three times the minimum wage and provide some fringe benefits. Employers often contribute to community fund drives and may sponsor special programs, such as training seminars on college scholarships. Many families have been in the timber industry for generations and identify strongly with this occupational subculture, sharing its values and perceptions".

First, the EIS is correct in stating the obvious benefits of high paying jobs and families who are committed to their communities. But second, it is an INSULT to characterize livelihoods as honorable as loggers and sawmill workers as a "SUBCULTURE"! We have been a major contributor to the growth and propsperity of this great country and will not accept a flawed notion that we have somehow served out our usefulness.

The sad part of this whole debate is that it is unnecessary. We know that owls live in well managed forests. This should not be an Owls vs People issue. The real issue is the health of our public forestlands. We are tired of fighting catastrophic wildfires and protecting our communities from physical destruction. We are the people who have the tools, the techonology, the professionalism and the backbone to return both our forests and local communities to a healthy state and we are ready to do the job.

In this regard UNITED FOREST FAMILIES, has presented a proposal to Congressman Doolittle as a framework for legislation to deal directly with our current forest health problems. This proposal is strongly endorsed and was prepared under the direction of the California Licensed Foresters Association. This is a win-win

situation. Not only will we be creating healthy forest conditions, but we will also remain employed, continue to contribute

significant dollars to the economy through taxes and timber sales, help educate our children and keep our families and communities healthy.

Due to the collapse of the Naticnal Forest timber management program, our local mills in Tuolumne County, California currently have only enough supply to operate though 1995. Unfortunately, impending mill closures are now common to rural towns throughout the Sierra's and western United States, and emphasizes the urgency of the problems we are facing. We recognize and appreciate Congress's willingness to address this crisis but cannot overstate the need for IMMEDIATE action. We're in TROUBLE!

We appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people in the Timber Industry, normally hard at work when hearings like this are held. Our hope is to keep these people working to meet the needs of their families, communities, National Forests and the American People.

FOREST HEALTH AND RESTORATION ALTERNATIVE

Background

In January of 1995, the Forest Service released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) outlining an ecosystem approach for managing California Spotted Owl habitat in the Sierra Nevada National Forests. While the DEIS was specifically created to address the concerns with regards to declining Spotted Owl habitat, the analysis was expanded under an ecosystem analysis approach to include a number of other species.

After a thorough review of the DEIS, we came away with a number of concerns with the document. These concerns are focused in two major areas. First, the range of alternatives analyzed is far too narrow. Second, the critical issue of forest health, while recognized by the drafters of the document, was largely ignored in terms of providing management scenarios which would address the problem. This is particularly true in regards to management alternatives designed to reduce the risk of losses to catastrophic fires.

Current Situation

The DEIS recognizes that the California Spotted Owl is well distributed throughout the Sierra Nevada National Forests. This is also the case with respect to owl distribution on privately owned forests in the Sierra Nevada as well. We do not have a problem with respect to either the numbers or distribution of owls. Where the problem lies is in the potential for change in habitat. We concur that the single greatest threat to owl habitat is not from harvesting or other related management activities. The greatest threat is from habitat loss to catastrophic fire. We have seen the effects of these large fires here in Tuolumne County with the Stanislaus Complex Fire which burned over 146,000 acres in 1987. Other parts of the state have experienced similar events.

While it may be argued that drought played a role in these fires, the overriding contributor to the size and intensity of these fires was excessively heavy fuels. We have become very good at putting out fires over the years. As a consequence, the repeated light ground fires that shaped the Sierra Nevada ecosystems in the 19th century have not been permitted to burn. With the exclusion of fires, understory brush and trees have filled in under these stands adding to the fuel loading and creating fuel ladders which carry fires into the crowns of the dominant large trees.

It is doubtful that we will ever be able to reintroduce the type of fires into the Sierra Nevada ecosystems that shaped the Sierra Nevada for so many years before Europeans settled in California. Our fuel loading problem is too universal and too great. Too many people now live and work in the Sierras and our air quality is too fragile to tolerate the burning which would be required.

Still, fire presents a clear and present danger to the Sierra Nevada ecosystems. We stand not only to lose large tracts of productive lands to fire but also to suffer degradation of water quality, loss of wildlife habitat, destruction of old growth and late seral stage forests and conversion of large parts of the forested landscape to brush and grass.

The Solution

Management of the forested landscape to mimic the effects of the light ground fires which were part of the equation before fire suppression began to shape our forests is crucial. This management will undoubtedly involve a holistic approach utilizing mechanical harvesting and removal and prescribed fire. The management strategy must also involve addressing the problem of dealing with the backlog of fuel accumulation. None of the alternatives in the current DEIS deal with this problem.

In response to what we see as shortcomings in the present range of alternatives, we have developed an alternative that we feel is similar to what should have been developed and chosen as the preferred alternative by the DEIS team. We would like to have modeled by the Forest Service. We have called this alternative the "Forest Health and Restoration Alternative". Under this alternative when desired future forest conditions are reached the forest will:

-be resistant to catastrophic events (fire, insects,disease)
-provide for a full range of sustainable multiple-use forest resources.
-provide for a well distributed mosaic of forest vegetation types capable of supporting a full range of wildlife populations.
-provide commodities for human needs.
-support customs, culture and economics of local communities.

Theme of the Forest Health and Restoration Alternative

As indicated by the title of the alternative, the key objective of this alternative is to restore the health of the Sierra Nevada Forests. This will be done initially by reducing overstocked forest conditions to an acceptable level within 20 years. The objectives will be to maintain the productivity and sustainability of the forest ecosystems while reducing fuel levels significantly. Lands which are available and suitable for production of commercial timber as identified in the current Land Management Plans will be treated as a first priority. Timber harvesting will be the primary management technique employed to treat fuels in these areas. The silvicultural prescriptions to be used will be designed to develop stand conditions which will reduce the risk of loss to stand replacement fires.

Management of areas outside of the capable, available and suitable landbase will be designed to be compatible with the vegetation to be treated, the need to provide protection for adjacent managed areas, and overall management objectives for the area. Where timber harvesting opportunities exist, this form of vegetative control will be used. Prescribed fire will also be used particularly on unsuitable lands.

Stand treatment and progress during this transition period will be measured in acres treated each year. Volumes to be generated will be incidental to the overall objective to reduce fuel loading and stocking.

After the initial transition period, the objective will be to maintain current fuel loading conditions throughout the forest. On the Capable, Available and Suitable lands (CAS), an additional goal will be to secure regeneration of desirable trees in order to provide for sustainability of the

forests in these areas. ASQ levels will be set based upon the ability of the desired future forest to produce commodities at the targeted basal area leave levels and rotation ages.

Resource Program Highlights

Spotted Owls- SOHA acreage would be available. On regulation Class III lands at least 20% of the area will be maintained in suitable nesting habitat. On regulation class I and II lands at least 60% of the total area will be maintained as suitable foraging habitat. Spotted owl population levels will remain viable but may decline slightly.

Wildlife communities-Harvesting prescriptions during the transition period would generally create habitat conditions suitable for species favored by the partial cutting regimes. It is likely that large tree, closed canopy forest conditions will decline during the transition period but will return to levels at or near current conditions during the post transition period.

Riparian and aquatic areas-Harvesting activities within riparian areas will be encouraged but limited. Silvicultural prescriptions to be applied will be designed to balance growth with removals, create conditions where 20% of the area is in early successional riparian vegetation and maintain 60 to 80% canopy cover. Riparian zones would be defined and established as per current standards and guidelines.

Timber-Harvesting activities during the transition period would generally be limited to regulation class I,II, and III lands as designated in the currently approved Land Management Plans. The basic overriding principle will be that growth and removal will be at least equal. During the transition period removals will need to exceed growth in order to address the current overstocked conditions.

Some harvesting of other non-regulated lands would be permitted on a case by case basis. Timber output during the transition period would be a by product of treatments designed to treat fuels. No regeneration cutting will be done during this period except to regenerate currently understocked areas. Harvesting of catastrophic losses would be aggressively pursued.

Harvesting activities after the fuel treatment activities are completed will be designed to maintain the desired basal area target levels to meet fuel management targets. Regeneration will be secured through use of shelterwood methods with large tree retention. Large trees will be retained indefinitely. One per cent of the acreage will be regenerated each year in openings ranging in size from 2 to 5 acres.

Treatment of unmerchantable material necessary to meet fuel management objectives will be done concurrently with entry in the stands for Sawlogs and is expected to be accomplished economically in almost all cases and provide a positive return to the U.S. Treasury.

Forest Health-Stand treatment objectives will be to reduce stocking levels and fuel levels to reduce significantly the potential for loss to catastrophic stand replacement fires. Overall losses to pests and diseases should be reduced as remaining trees will have more of the site's resources available to meet their need for moisture, sunlight , and nutrients. Endemic insect levels are

expected to decline from historic levels.

Contributions to the Economy-Contributions to the economy are based on primarily on the volume generated and the value. While targeted ASQ levels are not the objective during the transition period, we expect that treatment acres will generate more volume than any of the current DEIS alternatives. This will be particularly true if the objective to remove what is being grown is met. Because of the backlog of material and acres needing treatment, volumes generated by treating acres will likely result in a departure from long term sustained yield which would be calculated based on conditions of stands after the fuels treatments have been completed. This departure is clearly warranted based on the present condition of the forest and the need to address the overriding problem of too much vegetation.

The overall result will be increases in direct payments to the counties, direct employment, and lower commodity prices.

Fire and Fuels-Fuel treatment will be aggressive under this alternative particularly during the transition period. Large stand replacement fires should begin to decline in numbers and size by the 5th year of the treatment. Long term this trend will continue.

Special Areas-With the exception of the Spotted Owl Habitat Areas (SOHA), special status areas would remain the same as those proposed in the Forest Land and Range Management Plans. Existing roadless areas would be maintained. Prescriptions designed to protect adjacent managed areas would be consistent with the management objective for the special area and would likely preclude the use of harvesting.

Transportation Facilities-Exiting roads would be used to extent possible and where compatible with other resource protection objectives. The need for additional road reconstruction should be minimal.

Conclusions

We feel the Forest health and Restoration Alternative is clearly a superior alternative to any of those presented in the DEIS. It would do much more to address the real risk to habitat loss and would provide a broader range of goods, services and jobs. We are pleased to present this model for a preferred alternative in outline form for your consideration.

Implementation - Transition Period Objectives

Desired future forest conditions will be reached over a 20 year period. Emphasis during this period will be to meet fuel reduction objectives. Management prescriptions will be based on the following general objectives for the various classifications of lands specified in the current Land Resource Management Plans (LRMPs).

I. Regulation Class I & II lands (±20% of the landbase)
   A. Treatment will be prioritized to meet the following objectives:
      1. Growth will equal removals.
      2. Stands will be treated based on the following prioritization:
         a. Fire history
         b. Fire potential
            (1) urban interface
            (2) current fuel loading
      3. Salvage & restoration of substantially damaged lands will be done promptly.
      4. Basal area and stocking levels will be modeled to maintain maximum growth possible while maintaining stands in a condition resulting in no greater than 10% loss to stand replacement fires over a 10 decade planning horizon.

II. Regulation Class III (±20% of the landbase)
   A. Riparian Areas will be treated to meet the following objectives:
      1. Growth = removals
      2. 20% of area to be maintained in early successional riparian vegetation.
      3. Canopy closure to be maintained at the 60% to 80% level.
   B. Non-riparian Areas will be treated to meet the following objectives:
      1. Balance growth and removals.
      2. SOHA acres made available for full range of management options.
      3. No less than 20% of the area in suitable nesting habitat.
      4. Basal area and stocking levels will be modeled to maintain maximum growth possible while maintaining stands in a condition resulting in no greater than a 10% loss to stand replacement fires over a 10 decade period.

III. Unregulated Lands
   A. Capable but not suitable lands will be managed to:
      1. Balance growth & removals on a tonnage basis.
      2. Treatment priorities will be directed to protect forest health of Reg. Class I, II & III areas.
      3. Fuel loading levels will be modeled to meet the no greater than 10% loss to stand replacement fires over a 10 decade period.
      4. Harvest catastrophic losses and restore burned areas where feasible.
      5. Utilize harvesting opportunities where feasible to reduce use of fire and pay for cost of doing fuel treatment.
   B. Unsuitable Lands
      1. Protect Reg. Lands
      2. Develop fuel break through control burning to reduce risk of fire.

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Implementation - Sustaining the Desired Future Forest Condition

After the stands are treated to meet the fuel management objectives and desired future forest conditions are achieved, emphasis will then be placed on maintaining the desired condition and providing for sustainability through regeneration. Management prescriptions based on the following general objectives for the various classifications of lands specified in the current LRMPs are as follows:

I. Regulation Class I & II lands.
   A. Balance growth and removals
   B. Basal area levels targeted to maintain maximum growth possible while maintaining stands in a condition resulting in no greater than a 10% loss to stand replacement fires over a 10 year period.
   C. Regenerate 1% of the acreage per year using group shelterwoods of 2 to 5 acres in size.
   D. Shelterwood removal step following regeneration is to retain all large trees meeting the following criteria by Forest Survey site classes:
      1. Sites 1 - 3 > 48" DBH
      2. Sites 4 - 5 > 40" DBH
      3. Site 6 > 36" DBH
   E. Large trees are to be retained indefinitely.
   F. Intermediate treatments are to be applied to all other stands to provide for:
      1. Sanitation
      2. Salvage
      3. Basal area control
   G. 60% of the total area to be maintained in suitable owl foraging habitat.

II. Regulation Class III lands.
   A. Riparian areas -
      1. Individual tree selection on small groups (< 1/4 acre) be utilized to maintain desired multi-storied canopy.
      2. Growth will be balanced with removals.
      3. 20% of the area will be occupied by early successional riparian vegetation.
      4. Salvage will be permitted after snag retention requirements are met.
      5. Manage inputs of large woody material into streams.
      6. Maintain 60 to 80% canopy cover.
   B. Non-Riparian areas
      1. Balance growth and removals.
      2. Basal area levels targeted to maintain maximum growth possible while maintaining stands in a condition resulting in no greater than a 10% loss to stand replacement fires over a 10 year period.
      3. Regenerate 0.67% of the acreage each year using a group shelterwood of 2 to 5 acres in size.
      4. Shelterwood removal step following regeneration shall retain the 10 largest trees/acre.
      5. Trees retained shall be retained throughout the life of the stand (150 years).

6. Intermediate treatments are to be applied to all other stands to provide for:
    a. Sanitation
    b. Salvage
    c. Basal area control
7. No less than 20% of the area in suitable nesting habitat.

III. Unregulated Lands

A. Capable but not suitable lands will be managed to:
    1. Balance growth and removals on a tonnage basis.
    2. Set treatment priorities to protect Regulation Class I, II & III.
    3. Utilize a variety of treatment strategies including:
        a. Control burning
        b. Mechanical treatment
        c. Basal area control where feasible
        d. Salvage
        e. Chemical treatment
    4. Harvest catastrophic losses & restore site productivity.

B. Unsuitable lands
    1. Protect Reg. Lands
    2. Develop fuel break through control burning to reduce risk of fire.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMNS
APPENDIX "A"

Term	Definition
Bd. Ft.	Board Foot - piece of lumber measuring 1" x 12" x 12".
CASPO	California Spotted Owl
CMAI	Culmination of Mean Annual Increment
Capable Forest Lands	Those portions of the forest that have an inherent ability to support trees for timber harvest and produce at least 20 cubic feet per acre per year of wood fiber at CMAI.
Commodity	Outputs from the National Forests for which the government receives compensation.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
DBH	Diameter of tree at 4'6" above the ground.
Evenage	Stands of trees of the same age or age class.
Green Tree Retention	Retention of up to 8 large trees per acre which are left indefinitely on site to provide structural elements for wildlife habitat.
Habitat	Area with necessary features to support populations of a particular species of wildlife or plant.
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
MMBF	Million Board Feet
MMCF	Million Cubic Feet
Mortality	Death of trees from natural causes.
N.F.	National Forest system lands
Nesting Habitat	Two-storied or multi-storied stands with 75 to 90 percent crown cover, 225 to 300 square feet of basal area/acre in live trees and 20 to 25 square feet/acre in snags. Stands should have a mixture of tree sizes present with an accumulation of logs and limbs on the ground.
Non-riparian areas	Regulation class III lands within the regulated landbase which are managed for purposes other than timber production.
Regeneration Harvest	Removal of trees with the intent to establish a new generation of trees.
Regulated timber lands	Land which is capable and is managed to produce regular periodic yields of commercial timber in perpetuity.
Regulation Class I lands	That portion of the regulated timber land base to which silvicultural prescriptions are applied to achieve full timber yields that result in optimum timber production measured in volume for the site.

Term	Definition
Regulation Class II lands	That portion of the regulated timber land base with silvicultural prescriptions modified to meet non-timber objectives that would reduce yields on these lands below what would be expected, given the biological potential of the site.
Regulation Class III lands	That portion of the regulated timber lands base managed for other purposes than timber production. Timber produced in this class is a by-product of other activities.
Riparian area	Land situated along the bank of a stream or other body of water and directly influenced by the presence of water.
Salvage	Removal of trees which are dead or dying due to damage from fire, insects, disease, floods, wind or other injurious agents.
Silviculture	Process of growing and managing forests.
Site Class	A measure of the maximum capacity of an area to produce timber measured in cubic feet per acre per year: Site Class — Max. Cu. Ft./Ac./Yr. 1 — 225+ 2 — 165 - 224 3 — 120 - 164 4 — 85 - 119 5 — 50 - 84 6 — 20 - 49 7 — less than 20
Snag	A standing dead tree from which the leaves and most of the branches have fallen.
SOHA	Spotted Owl Habitat Area consisting of 1,000 acres of suitable owl habitat and up to 1,650 acres of replacement habitat depending on the management employed to sustain habitat over time.
Stand	A community of trees or other vegetation which is sufficiently uniform in composition, constitution, age, spatial arrangement, or condition to be distinguishable from adjacent communities of trees.
Stocking	Number of trees needed to achieve the desired productive potential of an area.
Thinning	Removal of trees from a stand to maintain or increase average stand diameter, promote timber growth, and improve forest health.
Tonnage	The measured weight of living and dead vegetation expressed in tons/acre.
Unevenage	Stands with at least three age classes of trees intermingled on the same area.

Term	Definition
Unsuitable lands	Refers to lands which are not suited for timber production according to the following criteria defined in NFMA Regulations, 36 CFR 219.14. 1. is not at least 10% occupied by forest trees of any size or formerly having had such tree cover and currently developed for non-forest use; 2. there is not reasonable assurance that such lands can be adequately restocked within 5 years after final harvest; 3. technology is not available to ensure timber production from the land without irreversible resource damage to soil productivity or watersheds; 4. land has been withdrawn from timber production by Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture or the Chief of the Forest Service.

TESTIMONY
OF
KENT DUYSEN
SIERRA FOREST PRODUCTS

NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND LANDS
SUBCOMMITTEE
OF
HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

JUNE 8, 1995

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Kent Duysen and I am president and general manager of Sierra Forest Products and Sequoia Forest Industries, the two most southern sawmills in the Sierras and also in California. These mills are located in the towns of Terra Bella and Dinuba. The forested lands sourcing these two mills are 95% federally owned, of which only 10% are available for timber management.

The number of sawmill operations in our part of the state has declined during the last fifteen or twenty years. I can think of at least ten mills running in 1975 in Tulare, Fresno, and Madera counties. By 1993, all but five of the most modern mills had been shut down because of the reallocation of federal forest resources which artificially reduced the commercial land base. Today only two mills are running, two others are in the process of being dismantled, and one is sitting idle. The five sawmills ran a total of 8½ shifts of employment with a combined work force of 850 men and women. Today, the two remaining mills work a total of 2½ shifts and employ about 270 people. I ask myself why or how can this be happening when we have several million acres of forest land desperately needing some form of management in our backyard.

We have been plagued the last eight years with appeals and lawsuits, and have struggled with the results. We somehow have survived these assaults. We even completed a court-ordered and approve settlement agreement on the management of the Sequoia National Forest. We had the confidence that these issues would pass with time and that tomorrow would bring more certainty in our lives and the lives of our employees and their families. I was wrong. During the past 15 years, the dismantling of the regional industry had been a slow process, until the California spotted owl guidelines came into effect.

The California spotted owl is not a listed species and according to scientific studies, it is not likely to become one. The concern for the California owl is the direct result of the listing of northern spotted owl. After it was determined that the Forest Service management strategy, the spotted owl habitat area (SOHA) network, failed to assure long-term viability of the northern spotted owl, environmental groups threatened to sue the Forest Service for using the same management strategy for the California spotted owl. The Forest Service immediately implemented a system for screening timber harvest activities known as the Cumulative Effects Analysis. That system reduced federal timber sales by 30%. Meanwhile, an interagency team of wildlife biologists were chartered to study the California spotted owl. Although their report, The California Spotted Owl: A Technical Assessment of its Current Status, commonly referred to as the "CASPO Report", found California spotted owls abundant and well-

distributed, the team recommended further study, and in the interim a strategy for protecting potential key habitat elements. The CASPO report was officially adopted through an Environmental Assessment in 1993 for an interim period until an EIS could be completed. The Interim guidelines have devastated most of the sawmill industry in the south central portion of the Sierras by reducing the federal timber sales by 60 percent.

These interim guidelines are the documents that finally put the hammer on our local mills. The Interim guidelines do not allow any trees greater than 30" in diameter to be harvested whether they are dead or alive. In the southern end of the Sierras the trees are of greater average diameter than in the northern end of the state. The Sierra National Forest has an average diameter at breast height of 29", and the Sequoia National Forest has an average of 28 ½". This means that a near average sized tree cannot be harvested in the lower Sierras. In conjunction with the diameter restrictions, there are constraints on canopy closure that have to be met before any type of management activity can occur. Obviously with these constraints, it is very difficult for the agency to find stands of timber that could be entered.

The Sierra range is very different from one national forest to the next. From a professional forestry point of view, one cannot take a broad brush approach to forest health issues with only a single solution. Each area is unique, and should be treated accordingly. Again I have to question why do we have interim guidelines when the owl isn't in danger? The greatest concern for the health of the owl is the threat of stand destroying fires. This has been caused due to a lack of forest management over large land bases.

We are now engaged in an EIS to further restrict the way we manage forests for the owl. But again I ask why? The science team that studied the California Owl wrote in the EIS "[t]he California spotted owl appears to be abundant and well-distributed within the forests on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada. It is possible that the spotted owl is more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada than in the past 100 years or prior to Euro-American settlement. This is likely because of a shift in the dominant Sierran forest structure from more open canopy to closed forests."

In another section of the EIS, the team stated "[c]urrently, the adult owl survival rate is relatively high and may not be amenable to further increases." Why do we persist in spending thousands of dollars to write an environmental document for the California spotted owl when the past management practices have not jeopardized its existence, and in fact, may have increased its population.? The Sierra National Forest has 217 owls, of which 143 are pairs, plus there are an additional estimated 50-52 sites. The Sequoia National Forest has another 151 birds, 95 pairs, and 15-20 additional sites. Several years ago the Forest Service admitted that they could no longer manage for single species. Why then do we have an EIS and a major change in the management of the National Forest in California when the creature they are studying appears to be in good health, which I might add, is quite a contrast to today's prognosis of the forest products industry and the very forest itself.

The greatest need in the Sierra Nevada is to improve forest health. Healthy forests provide healthy habitats. The EIS team stated "All other concerns are of secondary importance." The CASPO EIS should be redirected into a forest health EIS. Chief Jack Ward Thomas testified at the 1994 Senate hearings in Boise that the decline in forest health is the result of too many trees and many of them the wrong species. The suitable land base in the Sequoia National Forest is growing about 135 million board feet (MMBF) of timber annually, however it is currently selling only 10 MMBF. The Sierra

National Forest is growing about 80 MMBF and only selling 34 MMBF. When the agency who has the responsibility to reduce the threat of wildfire removes less than 40% of the biomass that is growing annually, you end up with the mess that we have on the public lands today. It is a tinder box ready to explode, and we are adding tons of firewood to the pile for each and every year that actions are delayed.

Today it is not logical to continue with the interim owl guidelines nor an Owl EIS, based on the conclusions reached in the Draft California spotted owl EIS. The report seems to provide some fairly good science, however there does not seem to be a wide range of alternatives. For some reason, the agency chose an answer which might be called "political science", versus good logic and sound science. For what ever the reason, we must move away quickly from the Cal Owl EIS process, since there is no evidence the owl is in any danger. I believe the Agency needs to begin studies on what will create biodiverse and healthy forest. If environmental documents are to be done, they should not focus on individual species, but they should encompass management techniques which enhance habitat for multiple species and improve forest health.

I am hopeful that this committee will assess and give prompt direction to the Forest Service and Region 5. The restrictions in place under CASPO and the management proposals under the Cal Owl EIS have and will continue to have serious adverse consequences both socially and to the environment.

While these issues are being deliberated, Region 5 should return to their pre-CASPO land management plans. There is no evidence to suggest an interim departure is necessary. They should be allowed to work.

Time is getting very short for our employees and their families, as is the same for the heath of our forests and communities. The last two sawmills in the lower Sierra Nevada are hanging on by their thumbnails. If some common sense in the management of our national forest does not come into play this year, I believe we will only see one sawmill located near the two southern Sierra National forests.

Testimony

Supervisor Ken Marks
County of Tuolumne

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for this opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Ken Marks and I have the privilege of serving as the Chairman of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors.

Tuolumne County, California, is a county rich in natural resources - located in the heart of Sierra Nevada's Mother Lode. Nearly 80% of Tuolumne County's land is government-owned. 31% of our County's land lies within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. 68% of the Stanislaus National Forest lies in Tuolumne County.

Now - using experimental science - the U.S. Forest Service is proposing to rewrite history. Not only for 10 of its Sierra Nevada National Forests...but also for 17 of California's Rural Counties. The criminal part of this whole report is that it is being done unnecessarily. As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement summarizes..."The California Spotted Owl appears to be abundant and well distributed within the forests on he west slope of the Sierra Nevada."

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement outlines seven long term strategies to protect the habitat of the California Spotted Owl. If any one of the options being recommended in this report are adopted...let me describe a few of the impacts I see effecting Tuolumne County.

* We will immediately lose approximately 1,000 jobs that are directly tied to the timber industry. An additional 3,000 local jobs will be lost in related industries. That's a total 4,000 jobs lost if any one of these alternatives are adopted. We currently suffer from an unemployment rate in Tuolumne County of 11.7%. We have just over 18 thousand jobs in our county. If we lose 4,000 of those precious jobs our unemployment rate will skyrocket to 30%!

* More importantly, our future generation - our children - will be directly affected as Tuolumne and Calaveras County Schools lose 2 million dollars - per year - in Timber Reserve Funding...derived from Timber Receipts from the Stanislaus National Forest. The Tuolumne County Board of Education has voted to oppose the DEIS for Managing the California Spotted Owl. Nine independent local school districts have also voted to send their opposition of the DEIS to the Forest Service.

Our schools will not only suffer from a cutback in direct funding. Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Orville Millhollin points out that the downsizing of an important industry in Tuolumne County will have a predictable "domino" effect throughout the community: Whereas an increase in unemployment historically results in increased incidents of child and spousal abuse - along with drug and alcohol abuse.

My wife is an educator at a local elementary school with about 650 students where all of the Timber Reserve Funds are used to provide educational programs.

Within the last year, when environmental regulations helped shut down an operational gold mine in our county...250 jobs were lost. At the school where my wife teaches - there was a noticeable change in the behavior of many of the attending students. It's not immediate, but little things start showing up...no lunch money, no jacket, no homework, no concentration, no parent, no student...it just makes no sense.

The Forest Service Plan for managing the habitat of the California Spotted Owl is opposed by every member of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors.

Tuolumne County's Road Department will need to cut back its maintenance programs from snowplow services to pothole repairs as we will be losing 700 thousand dollars per year in Timber Reserve Funding directed for county road maintenance.

But a loss of direct funding is just the tip of the iceberg. As unemployment increases...social problems increase as well. Demand for county services will rise from public health to public safety. The cost to Tuolumne County of providing these essential local services will rise astronomically...at a time when its citizens are least able to support the increased costs.

Finally...all of the alternatives outlined in this Forest Service plan put our forests in greater jeopardy of catastrophic forest fires. According to this report an acceptable rate of destruction for Sierra Nevada forests is 421 thousand acres lost per year. It doesn't take a high speed calculator to figure out that this is a prescription for the demise of the Sierra Nevada Range. Forest fires destroy more than trees...they destroy lives...they destroy homes...they destroy our resources...and ironically...they ultimately destroy the habitat of wildlife.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I urge you to consider the true costs of this plan. Remember that while the Forest Service is required to maintain viable populations of native species...the California Spotted Owl is not threatened or endangered. In fact, it is more abundant now than at any time in the past.

And question the attitude of those in the Forest Service who assert "that public comment is not a vote." I ask your Committee to file your own comments. Cast your vote to join me in supporting the needs of California's Rural Counties and the people of the Sierra Nevada.

COMMENTS OF BILL COATES; PLUMAS COUNTY SUPERVISOR
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

WHO WE ARE.

The Quincy Library Group (QLG) is a three-county alliance of elected officials, lumber mill operators, woods workers, union representatives, local environmentalists, and citizens who have agreed on certain principles of natural resource management for the National Forests that dominate our area of northeastern California. Since 1993 QLG has been proposing substantial modifications to US Forest Service priorities and operations, in a continuing dialogue with individual citizens, other groups, the USFS, and elected officials.

The QLG area includes the Lassen National Forest (LNF), the Plumas National Forest (PNF), and the Sierraville Ranger District of the Tahoe National Forest (SRD). Nearly 2. 5 million acres of National Forest System land fall within the QLG area, this represents 3 5 percent of the 7 million acres in the seven Primary Forests.

WHAT WE THINK.

The Draft EIS (DEIS) ignores or misinterprets key aspects of the available science, is legally deficient, and promulgates a management regime that would lead to catastrophic decline of forest ecosystems, social structures, and economies in the QLG area.

WHY WE THINK IT.

- The DEIS would impose ill-founded, inappropriate, and unworkable "one size fits all" prescriptions to widely diverse Forests and local areas over half the length of California.
- The DEIS proposes no substantive watershed protections nor describes an active watershed restoration program such as that already being carried out in the QLG area.
- The DEIS gives only lip service to the need, indeed the legal requirement, for ongoing scientific and management monitoring, to report on the state of the ecosystem and provide the basis for adaptive management responses.
- The DEIS gives inadequate attention to the high and increasing probability of catastrophic wildfire. We believe the buildup of fuels and fire-prone, drought-intolerant vegetation are the greatest current threats to both the ecosystem and the economy of our area.
- The DEIS does not give sufficient weight to the fact that the QLG area has a greater relative economic, social, and environmental stake in USFS practices than other areas of the Sierra.

WHAT WE PROPOSE.

QLG does not believe that any of the published DEIS Alternatives is suitable for the whole seven-Forest Province. Alternative F is said to be the "QLG Alternative", but it does not correctly represent the QLG Proposal.

We urgently request that the Final Draft of the EIS be based on sub-regional Alternatives that are fully appropriate for each Forest or major affinity group among the seven Forests. Since the LNF, PNF, and SRD share significant attributes among themselves that they do not share with the rest of the seven-Forest Province, we believe the most logical sub-regional group in northeastern California is the QLG area.

Within the QLG area, we propose the following concepts for USFS management, and we urge the EIS Team to provide a final Preferred Alternative that is fully consistent with these concepts:

- A network of strategically located defensible shaded fuelbreaks should be established across the landscape within five years, to drastically reduce the size of stand-destroying catastrophic wildfires. This would not substitute for eventual treatment of excess fuel buildups throughout the forest, but be the emergency first-stage response to the intolerable fire threat caused by those fuel buildups. We are pleased to note progress among the three major USFS components of the QLG area (LNF, PNF, and SRD) to develop a unified Fuels Technical Report that we expect to be the first step toward implementing an areawide strategic network of defensible fuelbreaks and fuel treatments.

- Forest management based on the QLG Landbase Map, which recognizes existing off-base areas such as wilderness and reserved areas, supplemented by limited-time deferral of timber management activities in certain sensitive areas designated on the QLG map.

- Timber management of on-base areas by Group Selection with Area Control, Single Tree Selection, or the QLG version of "CASPO thinning", depending on which is appropriate to the given area and purpose at the time.

- Improvement of watersheds, riparian habitat, water yield, and fisheries through a watershed restoration program.

- Economic recovery of the QLG area to a condition of healthy long-term stability through quick energetic implementation of the QLG fuelbreak and forest management proposals, along with continued protections provided by SBA/SSTS set-asides, enhanced use of stewardship contracts, and the creation of a northern Sierra sustained yield unit, as called for in the QLG Proposal (our appendix A).
- Provision for old growth retention and replenishment through Group Selection on a 200year rotation with area control, along with suitable long-term adaptive management of areas now reserved and deferred on the QLG landbase.

We believe that a properly remodeled computer projection of the QLG proposal will result

- Significantly greater protection against catastrophic wildfire.
- Better watershed and forest health.
- Sustained green sawlog production very near pre-CASPO levels.

The National Forests of the northern Sierra stand to succumb to catastrophic wildfire. The local communities stand waiting with top-of-the-line technology to deal with the fuels concerns. If logging that deals quickly with the excess of small trees would require a departure from the "non-declining yield" rule, there is ample justification on grounds of fire hazard and other forest health considerations. There is no justification for the DEIS to assume, and thus tacitly support, the continuance of inappropriate and illogical management practices that fail to deal with the excess of small trees and white fir in the timber inventory. The current sags and lags in our local timber economies are due largely to USFS administrative bottle-necks, not to a shortage of technology and business capability, or to the QLG Proposal.

The proposed EIS on the spotted owl poses no viable alternatives to solve the fire problem, the owl problem or the economic problems that will ensue from the lack of a solution. The QLG proposal, if fully implemented, will provide short term solutions while the long term answers are sought, developed and implemented.

COMMENTS OF FRANK STEWART, COLLINS PINE COMPANY
TO THE
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. Chairman, my name is Frank Stewart, Resource Manager for Collins Pine Company, Chester, California. As a family owned company with over 60 years of forest management and sawmilling in Chester, California, and 140 years of forest management and sawmilling in our Kane, Pennsylvania operations, we are appreciative of this committee holding this oversight hearing on the Draft EIS For The California Spotted Owl.

Our Chester sawmill operation employs 200 people from the Chester-Lake Almanor area and our annual two shift operation manufactures 65 million board feet of sawlog volume into lumber products for the American consumer.

Our 92,000 acre of timberlands are intermingled between the Lassen and Plumas National Forests and are managed on a sustained yield basis that generates 32 million board feet of sawlogs annually, or 50% of our volume requirements. The balance of our sawlog requirements have historically developed from the public timber sale programs on the Lassen and Plumas National Forests.

When Mr. Collins purchased our Chester timberlands in the early 1900's, he had the foresight and understanding that sound business and forestry principles applied to a dynamic forest would benefit his family and society for perpetuity. As such, he hired a forester and commenced on the development of a long term management plan that is still being followed by our foresters today.

The management plan is reviewed and updated every 10 years to meet the needs of changing forest conditions. However, the concepts and principles that the management plan are founded on, remain as valid today as they did back when Mr. Collins envisioned them.

What are these magical and secretive concepts, and where did they come from? They came from the US Forest Service, because Mr. Collins

they're just common sense forest management principles that have been adhered to by the Collins family and their employees for over fifty years!

As a result of this commitment, we have had more than our share of public recognition and support. And believe me, in todays "political environment" public support and understanding are crucial in managing natural resources, and especially when it comes to harvesting trees on public and private lands in California.

To further our opportunities in the market place and better educate the public on proper forestry practices, Collins Pine Company has been the first private industrial forest owner in the nation to be certified under the "Green Cross - Forest Conservation Program" of the Scientific Certification Systems; the nation's leading independent agency certifying industry's environmental accomplishments.

We did not come here to criticize or condemn one of this country's proudest and most distinguished agencies, the US Forest Service. This agency has been serving the people of this nation for over 100 years by managing our National Forests, and providing goods and services to a growing nation. As the population of this nation continues to grow and the demands on natural resources are increased, the US Forest Service is constantly under public, political and judicial pressure to meet the goals of a constantly changing and moving target. Forest management is a long term commitment that requires stability in the legislative and policy arena, while maintaining flexibility in the areas of scientific and professional application on the ground.

Over the last fifteen years, we as a nation, have spent billions of hard earned tax dollars on developing what amounts to the most complex environmental impact statements ever done, the Land Management Plans for each of the National Forests. These plans are intended to give direction to the management of our national forests, while providing the necessary tools for the Forest Service employees to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of our nation. Rather than functioning as intended, these LMP's have been mired in conflicting laws, policies, regulations, appeals, and litigation, that have relegated the management of our national forest to nothing more than a paper producing legal process that has unfortunately, replaced sound forest management on the ground.

Since 1991, when the Regional Forester responded to a threat for a petition to listing of the California Spottec Owl by the Audubon Society, the timber sale program on the Plumas and Lassen National forests has continually plummeted to unacceptable levels.

Land Management Plan Information:		
Average annual growth	570	million feet
Average annual mortality	380	million feet
Annual Sale Quantity (ASQ)	388	" "
Actual Annual Timber Sale Program:		
1970-90	353	" "
1991-94	202	" "
1995	130	" "

During this devastating period with its 64% reduction in timber sales, 9 sawmills and numerous contract loggers and haulers that were dependent on these forest service timber sale programs have gone out of business in our part of the state and created social and economic hardship in the various communities. Mind you, the California Spotted Owl is only a sensitive species according to the Forest Service and not threatened or endangered.

Since our Chester sawmill operation is dependent on a stable and sustainable federal timber sale program, we like others, believed that in our part of the state, the Quincy Library Group - Community Stability Proposal was the appropriate vehicle to bring resolution to the continual battles on managing our National Forests. For over two years at the local grassroots level, the QLG took the President's and Congress's advice and "sat around the table and stayed out of court" and hammered out a proposal that addressed the concerns of forest health, ecological integrity, local economic stability and adequate timber supplies. In others words the QLG developed a win-win, non-partisan management package. The irony is, we can't get the proposal implemented in a timely manner that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of our communities without going through the lengthy process of the California Spotted Owl EIS.

The most serious flaw we find in the Draft EIS is its attempt to specify "one size fits all". With one solution the EIS attempts to handle a

variety of issues in each forest along the Sierra Nevadas and these overly-simplistic proposals fail to meet the unique character of the individual forests and communities themselves. This approach is a serious flaw, even if the EIS had stuck to its original charge, spotted owl habitat. By expanding the scope of the EIS to deal with the habitat of all wildlife species, the "one size fits all" scenario works against forest management on any of the forests involved.

The preferred alternative fails to address the forest health crisis and the increasingly fire-prone status of the national forests and the immediate need to reduce the catastrophic fire danger. Current mortality from the drought and insects is never quantified in the EIS or alluded to as an issue that currently threatens habitat of wildlife or humans to any substantive degree. The underlying forest health problem, the overstocking of timber stands, coupled with drought-weakened or dead trees is given no mention in the issues section of the EIS. As such, all the proposed outcomes in the EIS are misleading. A recognition of this overstocking and mortality problem could not have led to a decrease in the ASQ as proposed, but rather an acceleration of the environmentally sound fuel treatments in the form of salvage logging of dead and dying trees, green tree thinnings and other appropriate silvicultural treatments.

The current annual growth on the Sierra Forests is 1.7 billion board feet and the preferred alternative promotes an ASQ of only 416 million bdft. or 24% of the annual growth. As such, this limited harvest scenario will contribute to an already over-stocked condition and further amplify the catastrophic fire situation. Rather than decreasing the annual harvest, the ASQ must be accelerated through the elimination of the departure constraints of their various modeling programs.

As we move into what looks to be another catastrophic fire season in the West, I urge the Resource Committee to direct the Forest Service to develop a preferred alternative in an expedient manner that incorporates local solutions to the various regions of the Sierras.

hired his 1st forester away from the Forest Service and paid him to develop and implement the management plan on the Collins timberlands.

The concepts and principles are no mystery; they're founded and based on good science, economics, business practices and common sense:

- Develop and maintain a Sustain Yield Policy that specifies that only the annual growth and mortality on the forest are harvested, and the growing stock or "principal" is left to continue growing. As such, over the past 50 years we have harvested over 1.6 billion feet of sawlog volume and the original inventory volume remains.

- Establish a Continual Forest Inventory system (of fixed 1 acre plots) that are measured every 10 years or as needed to monitor and evaluate the growth, mortality, species composition, and other dynamics that are taking place within the forest.

- Develop and maintain a permanent road system that allows access to all areas of the forest for management and fire protection activities.

- Employ qualified and dedicated professional foresters who have an appreciation and respect for the forest and enjoy spending long hours each day working in it and solving the problems on the ground.

- Apply an All-Aged silviculture system that responds to the individual requirements of the different conifer tree species that grow on the forest. In our situation, we utilize the Single Tree Selection Method because it allows each tree to be evaluated on its own.

- Apply strict timber marking guidelines that are followed by company foresters in selecting trees to be harvested and trees to be left for future growth. The continual growth of healthy and vigorous trees is paramount in that these trees produce the seedlings for natural regeneration and continuation of the forest ecosystem.

- Conduct logging operations that remove the harvested trees in an efficient and economic manner while protecting the soil, water, wildlife, standing trees and other values of the forest.

As you can see, these concepts and practices are not a mystery;

THE PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL
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THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND LANDS

REGARDING THE CALIFORNIA SPOTTED OWL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF TERRY TERHAAR CALIFORNIA PROJECTS DIRECTOR JUNE 6, 1995

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Terry Terhaar, California Projects Director for the Pacific Rivers Council. I specialize in forestry, fire, and aquatic policy issues on both public and private lands in California. My family background is similar as members of my family have been managers in the California timber industry since 1913. I am also a member of the California Fire Strategies Team that is chaired by California Assistant Secretary of Resources, Terry Gorton.

The Pacific Rivers Council is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to insuring the development of sound science-based policy and protection of watershed ecosystems and aquatic species on watersheds throughout the West.

Background

Land management practices in California have profoundly affected aquatic, forest, and grassland ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada. The entire range of land management practices is implicated including streamside development, urbanization, logging, grazing, mining, fire suppression, water withdrawals, the introduction of exotic species, and the chronic effects of roadbuilding.

Of California's 116 species and subspecies of native fresh water fish, 7% are extinct, 15% are listed as threatened or endangered, 21% qualify for listing, and 21% are either declining, exist in small, isolated populations, or require special management to survive. Only 38% of the state's fresh water fish species are in stable, healthy condition. [California Water Education Foundation] These losses have created widespread ecological and economic hardships.

The primary factors that have lead to this loss of fish are the destruction of freshwater habitat, the fragmentation of habitat, and the introduction of exotic species. In order to maintain and eventually recover populations of fish, amphibians and other vertebrate aquatic species along with the economic benefits they represent, recent regional level National Forest planning efforts both within and without California have rightfully adopted watershed level Aquatic Conservation Strategies. (Scientific

Analysis Team, Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team, Pacfish) In addition, scientific teams have come to the same conclusions as planning teams, that conservation of aquatic species, forest health, and water quality, must be derived from a watershed perspective. (Scientific Panel on Late Successional Forest Ecosystem, Eastside Scientific Societies, and others.)

Context

In 1991, the Forest Service decided that an ounce of prevention was worth a pound of cure. A process was begun to adopt a new land management strategy to protect California Spotted Owls. This strategy was to be scientifically based and would comply with existing laws to prevent potentially more restrictive land management requirements that might accompany a listing of the California Spotted Owl under the Endangered Species Act. A Steering Committee was formalized with the support of the Forest Service, other state and federal agencies, and the tacit support of the timber industry.

In 1992, a report, "The California Spotted Owl: A Technical Assessment of its Current Status", which was accepted by the Steering Committee, stated that two studies showed a decline in the owl population but neither was statistically significant. The report did conclude that the owls prefer old growth forest and that this habitat element was rapidly disappearing. The report recommended that a strategy that, in part, protected large trees over 30 inches in diameter be pursued.

In 1993, the Forest Service adopted the recommended strategy known as CASPO with an Environmental Assessment as an interim plan until a long term strategy could be fully developed.

In 1995, the Forest Service released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] for managing California Spotted Owl habitat in the Sierra Nevada which brings us to this hearing today.

Deficiencies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The draft EIS ignores or misinterprets key aspects of available science including the Technical Assessment Report completed in 1992. The draft EIS is also legally deficient and promulgates a management strategy that fails to incorporate an adequate Aquatic Conservation Strategy and which will lead to a catastrophic decline in forest health.

While the draft EIS appears to also suggest that it offers a strategy to resolve the threat of catastrophic wildfire in the Sierra Nevada, the draft EIS offers inappropriate and unworkable "one size fits all" prescriptions to widely diverse forests and local areas that do not help to alleviate the danger from

catastrophic fire where the risk is most profound - the extensive rural-urban interface line of the Sierra Nevada.

It is also quite clear that the draft EIS offers no substantive watershed protection nor describes an active watershed restoration program, despite the fact that 70% of the water that is utilized by agribusiness and residential interests in California is produced in the Sierra Nevada and that the majority of watersheds that supply this water are severely degraded.

With respect to the California Spotted Owl itself, the preferred alternative could foreclose options for the owl, because the management strategy that is proposed is totally untested and the assumptions are unproven. The preferred alternative, in fact, fails to meet the goal of CASPO to avoid precluding options and, as such, must be considered as highly experimental as no demonstration projects or tests of the prescriptive approach have been completed to date.

The draft EIS also fails to meet the legal requirement to conduct ongoing scientific and management monitoring to report on the state of the ecosystem and to provide for an adaptive management response.

70% of the water used by agriculture and residential users in California is at risk

The declining health of Sierra Nevada watersheds, caused by the impacts of accelerated timber harvesting, overgrazing, intensified mining, road building, and urbanization upon the soils of the Sierra Nevada, has placed the crown jewel of the Sierra -its water - at risk. The problems resulting from the decline in forest watershed health have resulted in erosion and severe sediment problems in many watersheds that affect not only the delivery of good clean water but the abundance and timing of that water delivery.

The Pacific Rivers Council recommends that before undertaking unproven management strategies that may or may not work, the Forest Service develop regional management strategies for protection of the California Spotted Owl that provide for the maintenance of the viability of the owl and include effective watershed protection for the water users in California. Additionally, the Pacific Rivers Council believes that none of the published alternatives in the draft EIS meaningfully address the risk in some areas of catastrophic fire.

None of the published alternatives are suitable for the entire Sierra Nevada. We request that the one-size-fits-all alternative be rejected in favor of sub-regional geographic alternatives that fit conditions on the ground. Regional alternatives, however, must adopt overarching minimum levels of protection in order to ensure that the watersheds of the Sierra, the watersheds that

supply over 70% of the water that is used by agriculture and residential users of California, be fully protected.

THE PRINCIPLES OF AN AQUATIC CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Identify the key watersheds which have remaining healthy aquatic habitat

Protect riparian areas across the landscape

Analyze the watershed so that harmful management practices may be modified

Secure, expand, and reconnect the healthier habitat and riparian areas through restoration plans

The conceptual outline of providing an adequate Aquatic Conservation Strategy that offers meaningful protection for water resources is simple: refuges drawn on watershed boundaries combined with systematic riparian reserves. Watershed analysis and restoration then build on this core of protection to provide the framework for recovery. None of these measures is fully adopted in the draft EIS preferred alternative, even though their efficacy has been detailed in other Forest Service documents.

The draft EIS must address forest wide riparian protection of all riparian areas that contribute significantly to the physical and biological function of aquatic systems. Additionally, key watersheds that are largely functionally and biotically intact must be functionally conserved along with biotic refugia areas that have significant populations of aquatic species. And finally, the understanding of aquatic biotic and ecosystem function in California is incomplete. Continued analysis that evaluates and develops watershed analysis methods, provides an iterative evaluation of the function of the reserve system, acquires knowledge of individual systems, and that develops restoration plans must be completed.

Additionally, soil productivity is in serious decline due to the loss of soils in many Sierra Nevada watersheds. A loss in soil productivity impacts the ability of timberland to produce high quality timber and to produce a sustainable flow of timber to local mills. The loss of soil through erosion leads to the siltation of municipal dams and reservoirs. Half of the Pacific Gas and Electric Companies Rock Creek Reservoir in the Sierra is already filled with mud and silt. The siltation of municipal reservoirs leads to extensive costs to restore the productive capacity of these reservoirs to store and release water on demand. These costs and long-term losses could be lessened with the adoption of an adequate Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

The risk from fire

The risk of catastrophic wildfire does not threaten all areas of the Sierra Nevada equally and the alternative should not treat all areas the same. The Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project [SNEP] scientific team has recently completed studies in the Sierra Nevada that show that its analysis of fire issues is superior to that completed by the EIS team. The data from SNEP indicates that fire risk is lowest in the higher elevations and roadless areas. These areas should not be treated the same as the lower elevation areas that are feeling the pressure of the ever-increasing rural-urban interface zone. The draft EIS should incorporate all of the most up-to-date scientific information that has been gathered by the scientific SNEP team. The alternative should focus its efforts on those areas that are most likely to burn in the low elevations where millions of homeowners live and work.

The alternative should also consider more appropriate strategies that address those areas truly at risk of catastrophic wildfire by creating a network of strategically located defensible shaded fuelbreaks in areas of high risk along the rural-urban interface line and along existing forest roads. Trying to create fuelbreaks and remove fuels in areas that are not prone to catastrophic fire as presented in the draft EIS is akin to paying a dollar for a cent worth of protection. The Forest Service will get the most "bang for the buck" by creating fuelbreaks in wildlands that border urban areas and by creating a system of shaded fuelbreaks along existing roads that will provide staging areas for firefighters if and when such areas are needed to fight fires. A focusing of efforts in these areas will also ensure that critical owl habitat areas in higher elevation areas are protected.

The regional strategies must recognize that wilderness, roadless, and reserved areas are least likely to burn as they generally are at higher elevations and consist of larger diameter trees; provide the most habitat for the owl which, if maintained, will aid in preventing a listing of the owl; and serve to protect the headwaters of crucial watersheds that provide sustainable water yields to support fisheries, residential and agribusiness, and recreational users.

Additionally, the costs to both state and federal government of offering fire prevention and fire suppression services to dwellers on the rural-urban interface line are becoming profound. Local and state government must be made to face the fact that, if unlimited expansion of the rural urban interface line is allowed to continue unabated without regard to the impacts of the expansion on fire prevention and fire suppression budgets, then taxpayers cannot be expected to provide a bailout forever.

Finally, the Forest Service needs to adopt a post fire policy that is based on sound science. The ecological context of post-

fire salvage has been addressed in a report by Dr. Robert Beschta et al. entitled Wildfire and Salvage Logging. [A copy has been attached.]

The Forest Service must cope with the legacy of the past

The follies of past management strategies have created the legacy on the ground that we Californians must now cope with in the Sierra Nevada. If we act now to restore our watersheds, we can stem any additional significant impacts to our water supplies and stem the costs of restoring silted reservoirs. If we immediately act to control the sprawl of the rural urban interface line and require that homeowners provide defensible space around their structure and require that the Forest Service set as a priority the implementation of strategic fuelbreaks in rural urbanized areas, we can offer meaningful protection from fire to millions of California homeowners. And by concentrating on the removal of smaller diameter trees, we can restore a sustainable level of green sawlog production and in so doing, we will retain critical habitat components and areas for the California Spotted Owl and other important species. All of this is only accomplishable, however, if the Forest Service is willing to comply with the law and adopt an ecosystem approach that offers an adaptive management component to manage all of the Sierra Nevada watersheds for all of their resource values.

We encourage the Committee to support the Forest Service in its efforts to develop an EIS for the California Spotted Owl and to comply with the law and to seek an ounce of prevention before a pound of cure is needed. The process that is being conducted by the Forest Service allows for the full participation of all citizens and, as such, should be fully supported. We would urge that the data from the broader, more comprehensive SNEP scientific team be fully coordinated with the draft EIS. We would also urge that the Forest Service be required to test risky fire prevention strategies in several demonstration projects before trying unproven methods throughout the Sierra Nevada. Finally, the Forest Service should prioritize areas needing fuels treatment so that the most protection for the largest number of citizens is achieved with the fewest amount of dollars.

WILDFIRE AND SALVAGE LOGGING

Recommendations for Ecologically Sound
Post-Fire Salvage Management and Other Post-Fire Treatments
On Federal Lands in the West

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PREFACE

This paper offers a scientific framework of principles and practices that are provided to guide development of federal policy concerning wildfire and salvage logging and other post-fire treatments. A common thread throughout the recommendations is that most native species are adapted to natural patterns and processes of disturbance and recovery in the landscape and that preventing additional human disturbance (and reducing the effects of past disturbance) generally will provide the best pathway to regional ecological recovery. We assume that maintenance of viable populations of native species across their native ranges and the protection of critical ecosystem functions and services are desired objectives of federal land management, as stated in relevant legislation.

Land management practices in the interior Columbia and upper Missouri basins have profoundly impacted forest, grassland, and aquatic ecosystems. Watersheds and forests have been degraded (e.g. ecosystems fragmented, habitats simplified or lost, disturbance regimes altered). At every level of biological organization – within populations, within assemblages, within species, and across the landscape–the integrity of biological systems has been severely degraded. This

degradation is best seen in the marked reduction in the biological diversity in the region.

The entire range of land management practices is implicated in this regionwide decline. Streamside development, logging, grazing, mining, fire suppression, removal of beaver and large predators, water withdrawals, introduction of exotic species, and chronic effects of roadbuilding have cumulatively altered landscapes to the point where local extirpation of sensitive species is widespread and likely to continue. Areas dominated by healthy populations of native species of vertebrates are exceptional. Many of these changes began long before the establishment of wilderness areas and other protections, and therefore, the majority of the region has been impacted.

Western ecosystems have evolved with, and in response to, fire. While some have argued that fire is the major imminent "threat" to the health of the region's forest ecosystems, it must be recognized that there are a number of threats to the integrity of ecosystems in the interior west. In view of the multifaceted human disturbances that pervade the region, it is highly inappropriate to focus on fire to the exclusion of other significant threats to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem integrity, such as inappropriate levels and methods of logging, grazing, mining, and roadbuilding.

Land management based on controlling fire will not set the region on a course toward recovery, especially when conceived in a crisis mode. Rather, it will be necessary to take an approach based on fundamental principles of ecosystem patterns and processes, something the current crisis mode is not conducive to. The objective of this document is to propose guidelines concerning wildfires, salvage logging, and other post-fire treatments, particularly from an aquatics perspective, that maintain or improve the integrity of ecosystems and landscapes and maintaining the ecological processes that support sustainable resource extraction and utilization.

If historical land uses have contributed to the decline in forest ecosystem health, then the pattern of human land use must be changed for regional ecological recovery to occur. By narrowly concentrating on forest health (often a euphemism for tree health, recently referring to carbon cycling), federal land managers have embarked on an ambitious attempt to address forest management in ways that risk neglecting watershed health and the ecology of aquatic ecosystems. The problem is not that we do not have the knowledge to control all disturbances. The problem is we have tried to control all disturbances rather than letting them play out–the forests

depend on disturbances to maintain their integrity just like rivers depend on floods and droughts coming along in irregular patterns. Human disturbances, unlike Mount St. Helens or El Niño, tend to be incessant, and thereby may produce conditions outside the evolutionary experience of native species. In view of the extent and persistence of human disturbance throughout forest and watershed ecosystems, continuing to simply manage fire risk without controlling the adverse effects of logging, grazing, roadbuilding, and mining is unsound resource management; it is an approach that without careful thought could lead to further damage rather than to the intended goal of protecting forest and stream health, as such an approach addresses the symptoms rather than the causes. Because we are currently unable to understand and control all human perturbations, we must instead seek to manage the human impacts on these systems. However, given our imperfect knowledge of ecosystem processes, functions, and disturbance regimes, we face high risks of exacerbating the degradation that already exists, especially in aquatic ecosystems. Rather than focusing on fires -- before or after their occurrence-- managers should focus on the pattern and consequences of current and proposed human manipulations and disturbances of all types at the landscape level.

The current policy framework

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) allow greater liberties to be taken following fire than in other aspects of land management. On National Forests, post-fire salvage activities are treated differently than other logging in the course of environmental review. Salvage may be conducted on lands not otherwise eligible for logging; may exceed allowable sale quantities and maximum logging area rules; may be exempt from anti-clearcutting rules; and may be exempt from most forest plan standards and NFMA standards, e.g., soil protection and water quality standards. Furthermore, some salvage activities are exempt from NEPA review and administrative appeal.

New policies are forming. Two ongoing federal land planning processes which address fire and salvage policies on federal lands in the region are in progress – The "Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project" and "The Western Forest Health Initiative." Most recently, there have been Congressional salvage initiatives and amendments. In addition there are a host of site-specific initiatives and projects being implemented on accelerated timetables in reaction to 1994 fires. Our recommendations apply to both regional and site-specific initiatives.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRE MANAGEMENT AND SALVAGE LOGGING

Ongoing human activity and the residual effect of past activity continue to threaten watershed ecosystem integrity.

Throughout the west, many scientific assessments of current conditions have come to remarkably similar conclusions: a century and a half of logging, grazing, roadbuilding, mining, water withdrawals, channelization, introduction of exotics, and streamside development have degraded watersheds, modified stream flows and temperatures, altered ecosystem processes, and removed ecosystem elements with the result that sensitive native species have frequently been extirpated or limited to refuges. The ability of ecosystems to recover has been substantially compromised. These conclusions have been reached by a wide variety of observers and over a wide range of scales. (Nehlsen et al., 1991; Johnson et al., 1991; Frissell 1993; FEMAT 1994; Henjum et al., 1994; McIntosh et al., 1994)

Forests of the interior west can be viewed as a sea of relatively recently altered ecosystems surrounding a few "islands" of relative ecosystem integrity (Frissell 1993a). In this context, attempting to continue to manage fire and its consequences without altering or controlling other threats to ecosystem integrity, including logging, grazing, roadbuilding, and mining, is scientifically and pragmatically unsound.

Fires are an inherent part of the disturbance and recovery patterns to which native species have adapted.

Western ecosystems evolved with and in response to fires. Fires are a part of the pattern of disturbance and recovery that provides a physical template for biological organization at all levels. Fires reset temporal patterns and processes that, if allowed to proceed undisturbed by additional human impacts, provide dynamic and biologically critical contributions to ecosystems over long time frames. The "patchiness" of fire is a desirable characteristic, and many species depend on the environmental influences that fires create.

While fire suppression and other practices has doubtlessly increased the likelihood of high intensity fire in some places, it is important to recognize that this increased risk does not exist equally across the landscape. Certain forest types (low elevation ponderosa pine, for example) may currently be susceptible to burning in ways that have not been seen for centuries, but in other areas (the higher elevation and moister, mixed-conifer forest types for example) the fire situation is probably not too different from historical patterns.

The historical and paleoecological record reveal periods of time when fire occurrence was frequent, others when scarce. We need to acknowledge that some forests are simply going to burn. We also need to accept that in many drier forest types throughout the region, forest management may have set the stage for fires larger and more intense than have occurred in at least the last few hundred years.

There is no ecological need for immediate intervention on the post-fire landscape.

With respect to the need for management treatments after fires, there is generally no need for urgency, nor is there a universal, ecologically-based need to act at all. By acting quickly, we run the risk of creating new problems before we solve the old ones. Ecologically speaking, fires do not require a rapid human response. We should not talk about a "fire crisis" but rather of managing the landscape with the anticipation that fire will eventually occur. Given the high degree of variability and high uncertainty about the impacts of post-fire responses, a conservative approach is warranted, particularly on sites susceptible to on-site erosion.

Existing condition should not be used as "baseline" or "desired" conditions upon which to base management objectives.

In landscapes disturbed by human activities, it is ecologically inappropriate to use current conditions as the baseline for analysis. To do so effectively ignores the chronic or continuing effects of past management activities. Analysis of sediment impacts, for example, that accept existing conditions as the baseline are highly inappropriate because these have been increased over natural background levels for 50-100 years in many cases. There is considerable evidence that current conditions are insufficient to maintain viable populations

of many native species, including sensitive and declining trout, salmon, and other fishes (FEMAT 1993; PACFISH 1995; Frissell 1993b, Reeves and Sedell 1992; and others).

Fire suppression throughout forest ecosystems should not automatically be a management goal of the highest priority. The overall management goal must be to preserve (and reestablish) the fire and other disturbance regimes that maintain ecological systems and processes, while protecting human life and property.

Making fire prevention a high priority management goal is a commitment to continuous fire suppression and a prescription for long-term "addiction." Such an attempt requires continual high cost inputs, and fails to capitalize on the self-repairing and self-perpetuating capabilities of ecosystems. Attempts to perpetuate a certain "state" or forest condition are unsustainable. Land managers should be managing for the naturally evolving ecosystems, rather than perpetuating artificial ones we have attempted to create. By imposing management schemes structured to optimize timber production at the expense of other ecosystem attributes, we have suppressed certain disturbance regimes, e.g. fire, while potentially increasing the effects of others, e.g., floods. The net result is a loss of ecosystem function and loss of the values that ecosystems provide including high quality water and abundant fisheries. Our actions have led to increased probabilities that various series of natural events will be increasingly viewed as catastrophic. Therefore, we need to consider the whole landscape, not just the forest.

The region's ecosystems, not just forests, are under severe strain.

Virtually all western landscapes, including forests, have been subjected to severe disruption by human activities. The conceptualization that we face a problem only of forest health misrepresents the problem and misdirects our attention from appropriate remedies. From a watershed perspective, the region suffers an ecosystem health problem, but the primary cure rests in curtailing human activities known to be damaging and counterproductive, and repairing or restoring roads that act as permanent sources of adverse impact. Fire influences but does not obscure this basic template.

LAND MANAGEMENT AFTER FIRES

Research results and new knowledge regarding the management of forest ecosystems increasingly indicates that dramatic changes in human impacts and fire management policies are needed. As an overriding principle, we seek ways of decreasing human impacts while allowing natural disturbance regimes to reestablish their historical influence in maintenance of the diversity and productivity of regional landscapes. Instead of focusing on effects of the fires, land managers should focus on the sources of the anthropogenic disturbances and the departure from natural disturbance regimes. Land managers should particularly examine current consequences of human disturbances at the landscape level.

POST-FIRE PRINCIPLES

We recommend that management of post-fire landscapes should be consistent with the following principles:

Allow natural recovery and recognize the temporal scales involved with ecosystem evolution. Human intervention should not be permitted unless and until it is determined that natural recovery processes are not occurring.

Human intervention on the post-fire landscape may substantially or completely delay recovery, remove the elements of recovery, or accentuate the damage. Many such adverse consequences are difficult or impossible to predict or foresee in specific situations. *In this light there is little reason to believe that post-fire salvage logging has any positive ecological benefits*, particularly for aquatic ecosystems. There is considerable evidence that persistent, significant adverse environmental impacts are likely to result from salvage logging, based on many past cases of salvage projects, plus our growing knowledge of ecosystem functions and land-aquatic linkages. These impacts include soil compaction and erosion, loss of habitat for cavity nesting species, loss of structurally and functionally important large woody debris.

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Protect soils. No management activity should be undertaken which does not protect soil integrity.

Soil loss and soil compaction are associated with both substantial loss of site productivity and with off-site degradation. Decreased infiltration, increased overland flow, and excess sedimentation all directly contribute to the degradation of forest soils and the off-site degradation of aquatic systems and reduced survival of aquatic species, including salmonids. Reduction of soil loss is associated with maintaining the litter layer. Although post-burn soil conditions may vary depending upon fire severity, steepness of slopes, inherent erodibility, and others, soils are particularly vulnerable in a burned landscape. Soil and soil productivity are irreplaceable in human timescales; therefore, post-burn management activities that accelerate erosion or create soil compaction must be prohibited.

Preserve capabilities of species to naturally regenerate.

From an ecological perspective, there is frequently no need for artificial regeneration. Artificial reintroduction of species will circumvent natural successional changes, are often unsuccessful and will have unanticipated side effects even if successful. If native species are failing to reestablish naturally, that failure will frequently be associated with other reasons than the absence of seed sources or colonists. If warranted, artificial regeneration should use only species and seed sources native to the site, and should be done in such a way that recovery of native plants or animals is unhampered.

Do not take actions which impede natural recovery of disturbed systems.

Delays in recovery may increase the likelihood of extirpation of stressed populations, or may alter the pathway of recovery altogether. As a practical example, areas that have experienced the effects of a severe burn and are likely to exhibit high erosion should not be subjected to additional management activities likely to contribute to yet more sedimentation. Efforts should focus on reducing erosion and sedimentation from existing human-caused disturbances, e.g., roads, grazing, salvage logging.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON POST-FIRE PRACTICES

Salvage logging should be prohibited in sensitive areas.

Logging of sensitive areas is often associated with accelerated erosion and soil compaction (Marston and Haire 1990), and inherently involves the removal of large wood which in itself has multiple roles in recovery. Salvage logging may decrease plant regeneration, by mechanical damage and change in micro-climate. Finally, logging is likely to have unanticipated consequences concerning micro-habitat for species that are associated with recovery, e.g., soil microbes. Salvage logging by any method must be prohibited on sensitive sites, including:

- in severely burned areas (areas with litter destruction),
- on erosive sites,
- on fragile soils,
- in roadless areas,
- in riparian areas,
- on steep slopes,
- or any site where accelerated erosion is possible.

On portions of the post-fire landscape determined to be suitable for salvage logging, limitations aimed at maintaining species and natural recovery processes should apply.

Dead trees (particularly large dead trees) generally have multiple ecological roles in the recovering landscape including providing habitat for a variety of species, and functioning as an important element in biological and physical processes (Thomas 1979). In view of these roles, salvage logging must:

- Leave at least 50% of standing dead trees in each diameter class.
- Leave all trees greater than 20 inches dbh or older than 150 years.
- Generally, leave all live trees.

Because of soil compaction and erosion concerns, conventional types of ground-based yarding systems (tractors and skidders) should be generally prohibited. New equipment or techniques may be suitable where it can be

demonstrated that soil integrity will be protected, that is, where acceleration of soil erosion and increased soil compaction can be demonstrated not to occur, and where there is no impairment of hydrologic and biological soil integrity. Helicopter logging and cable systems (particularly those that provide partial or full suspension) using existing roads and landings may be appropriate as may be horse logging; however, even these methods are not without potential problems and could locally increase runoff and sediment. Therefore, they must be actively monitored and avoided where sedimentation is already a major problem for salmonids or other sensitive aquatic species. Any activity that disturbs litter layers or soil surface horizons, either pre- or post-fire, can accelerate soil erosion and sediment delivery to aquatic systems.

Because of the wide range of chronic ecological effects associated with roadbuilding, the building of new roads in the burned landscape should be prohibited.

Roads are associated with a variety of negative effects on aquatic resources, including disruption of basin hydrology and increased chronic and acute sedimentation. Under no circumstances should new roads be introduced into sensitive areas, including roadless or riparian areas. Outside of these areas, road building should be avoided except where new road construction may be necessary to complete a larger program of partial or complete road obliteration. In such instances, offsetting benefits must be demonstrated. These may include cases in which a new road segment has been demonstrated to be necessary to enable the obliteration of other roads that cause significant potential or existing adverse environmental impacts.

Active reseeding and replanting should be conducted only under limited conditions.

In general, active planting and seeding has not been shown to advance regeneration and most often creates an entirely new, exotic flora. In addition reseeding is associated with additional problems and costs. Therefore, such practices should be employed only where there are several years of evidence that natural regeneration is not occurring. For example, native species from regional stocks that may enhance fire resistance of a site may be planted if the effect is not to homogenize the landscape, (e.g., alder in southwestern Oregon and Northern California).

Introduction of non-native species or exotic genotypes of native species should be prohibited from all reseeding/replanting programs. Seeding grasses into burned forests has been shown to disrupt recovery of native plants and is likely to create more problems than it solves (Amaranthus et al 1993). The use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers should generally be prohibited. Spot-specific hand application of herbicides only for the removal of exotics may occasionally be considered if there is evidence that such action is likely to lead to long term reclamation of the site.

Structural post-fire restoration is generally to be discouraged.

Frequently, post-fire restoration efforts involve the installation of hard structures including sediment traps, fish habitat alterations, bank stabilization, hay bales, weirs, check dams, and gabions. Such hard structures are not generally modeled or sited on the basis of natural processes, and their ability to function predictably may be particularly low in dynamic post-fire landscapes. Hard structures have high rates both of failure and of unanticipated side effects. Therefore, structures are generally an undesirable and unsuccessful method for controlling adverse environmental impacts.

Sediment management should focus on reducing or eliminating anthropogenic sources prior to their initiation (e.g., improve stream crossings to prevent culvert failure), and protecting and maintaining natural sediment control mechanisms in burned landscapes, particularly the natural recruitment of large woody debris on hillslopes and in streams. The goal should be to reestablish the natural post-fire background quality, quantity and timing of sediment, including the presence of large woody debris, and this level should be considered the baseline.

Post-fire management will generally require reassessment of existing management.

For example, the condition of a transportation system (i.e., pre-existing roads and landings) should be reassessed after a fire. By increasing runoff, erosion, and sedimentation, fires may increase the risks posed by existing roads. Therefore, post-fire analysis is recommended to determine the need for undertaking road maintenance, improvement, or obliteration. There is some urgency to this reassessment as the longer appropriate treatments are put off, the more likely it is that failure will be triggered by a large runoff event.

Additionally, post-fire livestock grazing should be altered or eliminated to allow natural recovery processes to occur.

Continued research efforts are needed to help address ecological and operational issues.

There is a need to research certain questions in order to guide post-fire management decisions. For example, some people argue that salvage logging is needed because of the perceived increased likelihood that an area may reburn. It is the fine fuels that carry fire, not the large dead woody material. We are aware of no evidence supporting the contention that leaving large dead woody material significantly increases the probability of reburn. There is a regional need for retrospective analysis concerning the probability and effects of "reburn". Sites exist throughout the western United States where the risk and consequences of reburning of already burned landscapes may be retrospectively addressed. This analysis must precede any management recommendation based on the probability of reburning.

Research is needed on the role of dead wood in terrestrial ecosystems – in particular, how much wood should be left on a particular site and across the landscape to provide for the full range of ecosystem processes and the needs of species. Some whole watershed retrospectives should be developed. Continued research is needed on the fire ecology of forest and riparian areas.

Although historical research and experience has highlighted the adverse effects of ground based heavy equipment, roads, and harvest in riparian areas, new research efforts are needed to evaluate the environmental effects of alternative post-fire/salvage operations, roading activities, and site preparation.

Additional information must be provided to the public regarding natural fires and post-burn landscapes to provide balance to the "Smokey Bear" perspective of fires and forests.

Although post-fire landscapes are often portrayed as "disasters" in human terms, from an ecological perspective, fire is part of the normal disturbance regime and renewal of natural forest ecosystems. An increased appreciation and understanding of natural disturbance regimes in the ecology of forest ecosystems is needed by the public, and the public's land managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fires should be allowed to burn naturally when feasible. In some drier forest types that may be prone to intense fires and that are irreplaceable wildlife habitat, prescribed fires or underthinning to remove fire ladders (leaving the larger, fire resistent trees) may be considered to reduce fuel loads. Fire suppression may also be necessary to accomplish the short-term goals of protecting human structures and lives. Prescribed burning may be a useful tool in reducing fuels around developed areas and may make it easier to protect those areas. Large fires will likely be necessary (and inevitable) to maintain or restore some landscapes -- particularly lodgepole and spruce fir forests -- in the western United States to their historical patterns (Baker 1992, 1994; Turner and Romme 1994).

Policies should be developed to reduce the number of human structures within areas with high potential for fires. New structures must be discouraged in fire prone areas. If healthy forests are to be recovered, then one has to be able to manage those without undue concern for human structures. Fire suppression policies across forest ecosystems should not become hostage to the encroachment of inappropriate human developments in fire-prone areas.

Fire suppression activities should be conducted only when absolutely necessary and with utmost care for the long-term integrity of the ecosystem and the protection of natural recovery processes.

The use of surface water from small streams and ponds has not proven generally effective in fire suppression. Pumping from small streams and rivers increases the risks to aquatic ecosystems from post-fire events. When pumping is utilized, it should be conducted from sufficiently large streams and lakes that the effects on aquatic biota are negligible.

Fire suppression activities should not include bulldozing stream channels, riparian areas, wetlands, or sensitive soils on steep slopes or using such areas as access routes for vehicles and other ground-based equipment.

Fire lines created by mechanical equipment should not be permitted in riparian zones, sensitive soils on steep slopes, or other ecologically sensitive areas.

Virtually no fire suppression should be permitted in wilderness areas.

When land ownerships are mixed, the federal land management agencies should establish policies to prevent conflicts between re-establishment of natural disturbance regimes on federal land and the protection of private property.

For example, federal agencies may decide to purchase easements or issue insurance policies under procedures analogous to flood insurance that would reimburse those landowners who had practiced proper forest management for the value of lost timber from natural wildfires. These policies should obviously be prospective. Recent fires only underline the need for these policy changes.

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The California Spotted Owl

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Testimony Before the House Resources Committee

United States House of Representatives

by

Mr. Craig Thomas

Representing:

The California Ancient Forest Alliance

June 6, 1995

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Introduction:

Chairman and Honorable members of the House Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

My name is Craig Thomas
I live in El Dorado County in Central Sierra Nevada 50 miles east of Sacramento

I have a degree in cultural ecology--which is the study of the interaction between human culture and the ecological landscape

I earn my living as a remodel carpenter

I am here today representing the California Ancient Forest Alliance, a coalition of grassroots and national environmental organizations concerned with the protection of the last remaining remnants of ancient forest, the wildlife that depend upon that habitat, and the maintenance of healthy Sierran watersheds which nourish the huge agricultural industry in California and provide clean drinking water to the urban populations throughout the Sacramento and San Jaoquin Valley's, the San Francisco Bay Region, and the Los Angeles Basin.

There has been much discussion in the local communities of the Sierra Nevada foothills regarding the CAL-OWL EIS--there has also been much misinformation....

How We Got Here

We strongly support past Regional Forester Ron Stewart's decision to implement the California Spotted Owl (CASPO) Interim Guidelines by amending the forest plans of the Sierra Nevada region with new regulations that protected that key habitat components of the California Spotted Owl--large trees (greater than 30"), large snags, and large down logs. These are major habitat elements of the late-seral or old-growth forest which are in serious decline due to past timber harvest practices.

The CASPO Interim Guidelines also maintain a relatively high level of tree canopy closure in the stands selected (or preferred) by the owl.

I hope that the members of the committee recognize that the California Spotted Owl is a Management Indicator Species (MIS) in the Forest Plans in

the Sierra Nevada and as such "stands in" as a representative for a habitat type commonly known as the late-seral forest. These are the older, more mature forest stands which have been depleted and isolated due to fragmentation of this habitat type resulting from extensive high-grading and clear-cut logging in the past two decades.

When the people of our Nation, through the Congress, passed the National Forest Management Act in 1976, they acknowledge the need to set thresholds for the protection of biological diversity in the management of our public lands so that future generations (our children and our children's children) inherit a landscape that is not degraded but rather they inherit ecosystems that are vibrant and full functioning. As stewards of these lands we must hold ecosystem health and true, long-term sustainability as paramount values.

The viability standards in the National Forest Management Act and the implementing regulations (36 CFR 219.19) require that wildlife habitat be managed to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species well-distributed throughout the planning area.

This is our societies way of putting into law, a land stewardship ethic that helps to guarantee future generations a healthy, ecologically intact landscape and continued healthy economies which depend upon those environments.

The Forest Service in Region 5 (California) acted in a timely and responsible manner by first seeking the best scientific knowledge available regarding the historical patterns and the current condition of Sierran forests. The California Spotted Owl Technical Assessment Team, composed primarily of highly respected research wildlife biologists, presented their findings in the California Spotted Owl Report (PSW General Technical Report-133, July 1992). The Spotted Owl Technical Report made an assessment of the owl's current status, followed by discussion of the general biology and ecological relationships, habitat use, demographics and population change, and the biology of the prey base. Part III of the report focused on the historical perspectives of Sierran forests (human influence on the landscape), fuels and fire management in relation to owl habitat, and projected trends in owl habitat.

The Forest Service in Region 5 recognized (as was the case with the Northern Spotted Owl in Region 6) that the Spotted Owl Habitat Area (SOHA) strategy allowed the continued fragmentation of habitat and the isolation of individuals which would likely lead to the extinction of the species.

The California Spotted Owl Report (CASPO Report) made two clear recommendations (1) reverse the trend created by historic timber harvest

practices that have lead to a decline in the number of large old trees which are the owls preferred habitat and, (2) respond to the unnatural build-up of forest fuels and begin to reduce the risk of stand-destroying fires.

The reason why the CASPO Interim Guidelines are in place---the Forest Service in Region 5 has responded proactively to prevent the "train wreck" which occurred in the Pacific Northwest, both in preserving the future management options for the owl (prevent listing under the Endangered Species Act) and in addressing the need for the "thinning from below" logging prescription and the reintroduction of fire and its role in the Sierra Nevada ecosystem.

Fuels build-up and fire risk---myths and solution

The past and current fire and fuel situation

Fire has been a key part of the forest ecology in the Sierra Nevada for millions of years. Sierran forests are often spoken of as "fire-adapted ecosystems". Throughout time, fire has been a key ecological process determining forest stand characteristics such as species composition and stand density and overall forest health.

Historically, lightning fires burned freely throughout the Sierra Nevada whenever conditions were right (fuel continuity & dryness). Native Californians intentionally lit fires to maintain open forest conditions in both the Oak woodlands and the Pine/Mixed Conifer forests of the lower and middle elevations.

Various estimates have been given by researchers and fire experts as to how regularly fire burned through any particular patch of forest. Researchers have suggested fire frequencies of every 5-10 years in the drier Ponderosa Pine forest (Martin, 1982) and 6-15 years in the moist mixed conifer forests (Wagener, 1961). No matter what the averages may have been, the fact that fires burned without controls means that the forests were in very different shape (in terms of stand density & species composition) prior to fire suppression than they are today.

First, unlike arson fires or accidental wildfires that often start during incredibly hot, dry weather conditions, most lightning fires would have started during late spring/early summer or fall seasons---times when lightning naturally occurs in the Sierra Nevada. Spring lightning fires generally are controlled by moist fuels, green grasses and lush vegetation (both which slow the spread of fires and lessen their intensity). Fires that started in the fall with dry fuel moisture conditions burned much hotter.

No matter when the fires started, if a recent fire had burned through that particular stand of forest within a few years previously, there would have been very low levels of fuels to carry the new fire or provide a fuel ladder up into the crowns of trees.

Although there were always occurrences of stand replacing fires in the Sierra Nevada the forest looked much more open or park-like, dominated by fire-tolerant species and a greater number of large, old trees. This vision of the sierran forests changed dramatically during the era of fire suppression and high-grade logging.

The last 150 years---the impacts of logging practices and fire suppression

Commercial logging in the Sierra Nevada began with the Gold Rush, in 1849. From the onset "High-Grade" logging practices took the biggest and the best of the Ponderosa Pine stands in the lower elevations.

"As the lower elevation pine forests became depleted and the transportation network increased, logging in the mixed conifer forest increased. By the turn of the century, Leiberg (1902) estimated that over 40% (i.e., 1,022,890 acres) of the forest of the northern Sierra Nevada had been entered for harvest. Approximately 30% of the standing timber was in areas practically inaccessible for harvesting (Leiberg, 1902), at that time."

Following the removal of the large, dominant, overstory trees (Ponderosa pine, and to a lesser degree Jeffery pine, Sugar pine and Douglas fir) across the Sierran landscape there was (and is) a dramatic increase in the success of shade tolerant species (predominantly White fir and Incense cedar). Open stands of fire resistant, thick barked Ponderosa pine were replaced with dense stands of shade tolerant species. Drought and disease resistance decreased along with fire resiliency. When you combine changes in tree density and composition, increases in logging slash and the elimination of the natural, low intensity, regular fire regimes that existed in the Sierran forests we see a trend toward much hotter stand replacing fires.

As fires began to burn in areas of high timber value, fire suppression efforts began, especially close to communities. It was not until the 1920's and 1930's did fire suppression begin to effectively control fire across the national forest lands.

"At the onset of the fire suppression era, most fires were easily suppressed, again due to low fuel loads and general open forest condition, the result of the frequent burning of the previous period. However, conditions for, and the risk of, severe stand-replacing fires increased under

the fire suppression policy, though the actual number of stand replacing fires remained low. The combination of logging slash build-up and the understory tree growth created fuel ladders between the ground and overstory trees, a stand structure conducive to severe stand-replacing fires. As a result, the first large-scale, widespread crown fires began to appear."--Cal Owl EST Workshop Proceedings

Twentieth Century Fire Regimes

"Twentieth century fire regimes bear little resemblance to those of presettlement times, largely because of human activities since the mid-1800's. One marked difference has been the annual acres burned. For example, using the a conservative mean fire interval of 20 years for the 586,000-acre Eldorado National Forest, we would expect a mean of 29,000 acres to burn annually. In fact, 13,944 acres burned during the period from 1970 through 1990--an average of only 644 acres burned per year (CASPO Technical Report July 1992)."

When the owl team states, "with a fire interval of 20 yrs. you would see 29,000 acres burn annually on the Eldorado NF", remember that they are predominantly talking about pre-settlement fire regimes of frequent, low intensity ground fires which functioned to greatly reduce "fuel ladders" and the abundance of "coarse ground fuels". Because of the low amount of acres burned Sierra-wide, these two key components of fuels loading and fire spread continue to increase in our forested lands.

It took 100 years of human activity (past logging practices and the alteration of the natural role of fire in the ecosystem) to create the forest health problems we see in the Sierra Nevada today!

There are no quick or easy solutions to this complex problem.

The following are some important suggestions to help solve the forest health problems in the Sierra Nevada:

1) As the Forest Service begins implementing Ecosystem Management in Region 5, the landscape level planning decisions regarding timber harvesting must include funding for fuels reduction work (clean up of past activity fuels, re-introduction of prescribed fire at regular intervals) so that understory thinning and fuels reduction work is applied to the same piece of ground at the same time with the goal of increased forest health. Traditionally fuels specialist have "chased clear-cuts" cleaning up logging debris as best they could with poor budgets. This must change! Under Ecosystem Management planners are beginning to coordinate these activities. It makes sense ecologically and it is much more cost effective.

2) Fire suppression, although important, is not the long-term solution to reducing the risk of catastrophic fire in the Sierra Nevada. The Forest Service must shift it's focus from total fire prevention to a goal of increasing fire resiliency. The agency must request and Congress must grant increased funding for natural fuels treatments. This effort must be coupled with intensive "thinning from below" logging prescriptions to return Sierran forests to a stand structure more similar to the open forests of pre-settlement times.

The California Ancient Forest Alliance and the California Forestry Association have worked hard, through the Congressional appropriations process, to get Congress to see the long-term economic and ecological sense in increasing the "Natural Fuels Budgets" for the Forest Service in Region 5.

3) Either way we pay! If we choose not to rebuild fire resiliency into our forests we will be faced with increasing numbers of large, catastrophic wildland fires. We pay the fire fighting cost of the California Division of Forestry, we pay the operations and maintenance costs of major water purveyors who must repair damaged turbines and dredge silted reservoirs receiving the eroded soils washed from burned-over forest land, we pay to replace the property lost from wildfires. Federal fire prevention dollars don't come close to paying the full bill for a large wildland fire. Rebuilding fire resiliency in our forests is the only long-tern solution.

3) As the saying goes, "there are three main causes of wildland fire--men, women and children." Whether accidental or intentional, human population and the increased road density in rural forest lands are the primary cause of wildland fire today. Just as ecosystems know no political boundaries, the risk of large wildland fires is more than a Forest Service problem.

Currently, at the local county government level, there is little effort to curb the huge increase in population in the rural forested foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Therefore the Forest Service must focus its thinning and fuels reduction work in that urban/wildland interface where there is, by far, the highest fire risk.

4) The fuels and fire priority for the Forest Service in Region 5 for the next two decades, and certainly the planning horizon of the CAL-Owl EIS, must be to focus on that urban/wildland interface and the major travel corridors and high use recreation areas of the Sierran forests. The Forest Service fire history maps and the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project fire history data will be most useful in this process.

Except for prescribed burning, the last remaining roadless areas and stands of old-growth in the Sierra Nevada are the last place to spend scarce fuels reduction dollars. These areas have a lower fire frequency

and because of the dense canopies, higher relative humidities and reduced wind velocity, are less flammable under most conditions (CASPO Technical Report 1992 p-248). These lands are also farthest from the urban interface.

5) Salvage logging alone is not the answer. Salvage logging without an aggressive fuels treatment plan to treat the resulting heavy ground fuels will not make our forests or our communities more fire safe. (See attachment #1) This December 7th, 1994 letter from the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Forest Supervisor states the problem most clearly. "What is apparent to me now is the large salvage sale contracts are NOT a major part of addressing the large acreage and urban inter-mix needs. Planning and attempting to market several salvage sales ranging from 100 acres to 7,000 acres, has shown (since 1989) the value of salvageable material *will not bear the cost of an adequate treatment for fuels reduction and long-term forest health.* Where salvage sales break even we see a sub-merchantable stand remaining that is over-stocked and unacceptable fuel loading." (emphasis added)

Although salvage sales remove tree "boles" (the main stem) from the forest environment, there is actually an increase in coarse ground fuels as a result of the salvage operation. These coarse ground fuels are what leads to rapid fire spread and crowning into adjacent forest stands. We can no longer accept entry into our public forest lands without accompanying aggressive fuels treatments, done simultaneously, and fully budgeted into every timber sale entry. This process must be monitored to insure we are achieving increased ecosystem health.

Ecological sustainability or a healthy economy---is this our only choice?

Government Prediction Comes True: Timber towns in trouble in the 1990s...

Below are excerpts from a U.S. Forest Service publication, An Analysis of the Timber Situation in the United States, 1952-2030 (USDA Forest Service, Forest Resource Report No. 23, December 1982). (see Attachment #2) This Regan-era Forest Service study analyzed regional trends in public and private timber supplies, as part of the agency's responsibilities to report to Congress under the Renewable Resources Planning Act and the National Forest Management Act. The study says candidly that timber harvest in the west was and is above the sustained yield level, and that the cutting levels are not only liquidating the old-

growth, but are also logging the "growing stock" faster than its annual net growth. The USFS predicted a timber shortage on the West Coast in the 1990s through the year 2010.

"For the Pacific Coast, it will mean closed mills and reduced timber-based employment and income. The impacts are likely to be particularly severe where timber is the chief source of economic activity." (p.156)

" The projected reduction in softwood timber harvests in the Pacific Coast has implications that go beyond the impacts of the affected ownerships. Such reduction in harvests will result in closed mills and losses in employment and income, with associated disruptions in many timber dependent communities in our forested rural areas. There will also be intensified pressure for the accelerated harvesting of old-growth stands on the public ownerships and especially on the National Forests, which contain most of the remaining old-growth timber." (pp. 186-187) (emphasis added)

"Accelerated harvest of old-growth timber on Federal lands in the West-"

"The general policy on the National forests has been the sale of timber to a quantity equal to or less than that which can be removed from each Forest annually in perpetuity on a sustained yield basis. This assures the timber from second growth stands will be available to provide a relatively even flow of timber from National Forest lands in the future."

"The President has directed the Department of Agriculture, consistent with existing requirements, to use maximum speed in updating land management plans on selected National Forests with the objective of increasing the harvest of mature timber through departure from the above policy taking into account relevant economic and environmental implications. This could temporarily increase the volume of timber available for industry. This course, which has been supported by some members of the timber industry, some dependent communities and other associated interests, could offset for a time at least part of the expected decline in the harvest of timber from forest industry ownerships in the Pacific Northwest. However, harvests above the even flow level could not be maintained and the dependent industries and communities would sooner or later be faced with a drop in harvests." (p.243)(emphasis added)

WHY IS ANYONE SURPRISED BY THE TIMBER CRISES? IT WAS PLANNED.

The fate of western timber towns was sealed in 1982, before the northern spotted owl was designated as a Management Indicator species, much less listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Knowing that adverse economic effects would lie ahead for timber-dependent rural communities throughout the Pacific Coast states even if nothing were done, the Reagan Administration made a conscious decision to "depart" from sustainable logging rates, thereby guaranteeing that the crisis would come sooner and be more severe.

The problem was that the harvest level "departure" did not remain consistent with environmental laws; the monitoring of land, water, and wildlife conditions that NFMA required as feedback on management decisions never occurred, and the feedback loop was never closed by the Forest Service. The Endangered Species Act was invoked because the agencies did not practice adaptive management, i.e., informed management decision-making, early enough for the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and numerous salmon stocks. A socio-economic "trainwreck" resulted for rural communities and companies dependent upon a long-term, sustained yield of federal timber from those forests. The tragedy is that the dislocation and disruption caused by federal timber programs were unnecessary and were clearly foreseen. Insisting on going back to the past forest liquidation philosophy is only asking for more problems.

A far more preferable course of action for timber-dependent rural communities would be to begin today to seek Federal, state, and private funding for land and watershed restoration projects, replanting programs, and wildfire prevention efforts (fuels reduction treatments). Many of these programs are already part of the National Forests' plans; they just haven't been funded. Other Forest-Plan programs for monitoring and baseline data collection have also not occurred, thwarting professional, informed decision-making. The Forest Service has repeatedly explained its failure to implement these aspects of the Forest Plans as due to a lack of funding by Congress.

We as a nation can no longer use a strict economic model in the management of our forest ecosystems. The illegal and unsustainable harvest volumes of the 1980s did great damage to the forest environment and the communities dependent upon an even flow of timber.

What are the economies of the Sierran communities today?

In general, communities throughout the Sierra Nevada are not timber dependent. The California Spotted Owl Policy Implementation Planning Team (PIP) reported that of 19 counties in or partially in the Sierra Nevada, only two had more than 10% of the workforce in direct timber jobs (PIP 5-27). The two were Plumas and Sierra, with Lassen next at 8%. Only three counties, Plumas, Sierra, and Alpine had federal 25% fund payments of more than 10% of the county schools budgets, with Lassen fourth at 5.85%

(PIP 5-34). Except for 3 or 4 counties, local economies are diverse in the Sierra and not timber dependent. For example, (see Attachment #3) in Tuolumne County, payments from logging provide 1-3% of the schools budget, and about 4% of the workforce depends on national forest wood for employment.

Payments to Counties at Record Highs in 1992:

Logging has never provided economic stability to local communities, rather it has always been boom or bust. Payments to counties are based on the revenue logging generates which is a function of both volume logged and the value of the wood. Because the price of wood has been high, payments to counties in the Sierra Nevada in 1992 were 50 to 100% greater than any year in the last nine, even than in the late 80's when logging levels reached a high of about 1.2 billion board feet on public land in the Sierra.

Timber Harvest Fluctuations

Using data compiled from the California State Board of Equalization, the State Controller, the California Employment Development Department and the United States Forest Service, it is clear that the amount of timber is by no means steady from year to year, but rather fluctuates dramatically in a cyclical fashion over time.

For example: The amount of timber harvested annually in the Sierra Nevada more than doubled from approximately 700 million board feet (MMBF) in 1982 to 1,700 MMBF in 1989, after plummeting between 1979 and 1982. Then between 1989 and 1993, the total timber harvest in the region declined by about one third from 1,730 MMBF to approximately 1,100 MMBF. These trends of timber harvest on public lands are partially offset by increased harvest on private lands.

Finally, these cycles of timber cutting appear to follow macroeconomic factors such as changes in interest rates and housing starts. In the early 1980's interest rates were very high and the nation experienced a deep economic recession. Correspondingly, housing starts and the demand for timber fell sharply. Conversely, as interest rates eased in the mid-80s the economy grew and the demand for timber increased.

Employment and Income

Not surprisingly, timber related employment in the region follows the same cyclical patterns associated with the macroeconomic factors driving timber harvest levels.

During the period from 1984 through 1992, timber-related employment in the Sierra Nevada region increased from 8,094 jobs in 1984 to 8,552 jobs in 1992, fluctuating between approximately 8,000 and 10,600 jobs. Employment during the recent period from 1989 to 1993, however, declined from 10,580 jobs to 8, 552 jobs. Nevertheless, the average annual employment during the recent period was greater than the 9-year average since 1984.

In addition, although timber-related employment in the Sierra Nevada region declined during this recent period, these job losses were more than offset by increased employment in other sectors of the region's economy. Although 2,028 timber-related jobs were lost in the region between 1989 and 1992, a total of 38,018 new jobs in other sectors became available during the same three years. That is, for every timber-related job lost in the Sierra Nevada, 19 new jobs became available. Many of these new jobs were related to tourism and recreation--occupations that are reliant on a healthy environment.

Similarly, timber-related income has consistently accounted for roughly one (1) percent of the total regional personal income for each year between 1984 and 1993 in the Sierra Nevada. Moreover, despite recent fluctuations in the actual number of jobs, timber related income in the Sierra Nevada has almost doubled over the past decade, going from approximately $175 million in 1982 to $325 million in 1992. (see Attachment # 4)

Is the Industry Really Hurting?

It is clear that the timber industry is changing in California. The days of the small sawmills, dependent upon public lands timber are coming to an end. The large mills with a sizeable landbase, multi-product orientation, and the ability to process small diameter logs will be a necessary part of the effort to return California's forests to a healthy condition. The industry must respond to the ecological needs of the Sierran forests which include the "understory thinning" of small to medium size trees and the associated fuels work.

In a recent article in the Sacramento Business Journal (Oct 24, 1994) (see Attachment #5) "both Louisana-Pacific and Greogia-Pacific (both have mills in the Sierra Nevada) are reporting excellent third quarter earnings in 1994." L-P reported record third quarter profits for 1994.

Several factors played into the company's success including the relatively high price of wood and the increased production of an engineered

wood product called oriented strand board. Oriented strand board is made by gluing pieces of young trees together and is used in many of the same applications as plywood. "It's a very high-margin, low-cost material which now accounts for half of Louisana-Pacific's earnings", said Evanda Lynn, a paper and forest products analyst for Dean Witter Reynolds in New York.

Georgia-Pacific is also experiencing similar robust growth. G-P has more than doubled its operating profits on sales of building products in the past five years. "While we expect short-term fluctuations in building products prices, the long-term outlook for this business is very good," said Pete Correll, chairman and CEO of Georgia Pacific Industries.

The article further states, "[E]ngineered wood products are also a bright spot on Georgia-Pacific's balance sheet. The company has annually dedicated up to $400 million--a quarter of its $1.6 billion yearly capital spending program--to increasing its production of laminated veneer lumber. This framing product consists of thin sheets of wood from a log that are then glued together, using up to 30% more of a log than conventional lumber," said Ken Haldin, a spokesman with Georgia-Pacific. (emphasis added)

"With fewer resources the industry has been responsive and innovative. We are making more with less," he said.

Although reductions in volume do have an impact on the lives of timber workers in the Sierra Nevada, these impacts must be viewed in terms of the long-term economic trends of the nation and the shift towards a multi-product orientation in the large industrial sawmills. Although the logging tools of the future may look different than today, there will always be a strong demand for skilled woodsworkers to do the complicated "selection" logging being proposed in the Cal-Owl EIS.

The CAL-OWL EIS PROCESS

Key Points:

1) Although the California Ancient Forest Alliance strongly supports the Forest Service in its move towards Ecosystem Management we are very concerned with the high degree of unsupported assumptions in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). While the CASPO Interim Guidelines were based on the detailed, 285 page, Spotted Owl Technical Report, there has been no new information gathered about the owl to change the decision in the Interim Guidelines. The Forest Service cannot arbitrarily revoke the CASPO policy, with no scientific basis.

2) Top agency scientists have urged caution in the testing of untried experiments such as the "3-tier" approach common to Alternatives C and D. They have also stated opposition to entering the remaining roadless areas. "I believe that no commercial timber harvest or road construction should occur in released roadless areas for at least a decade, probably 2 decades, to give us time to assess the need for the various resource values. A very small portion of truly "uncut" forest remains in the Sierra Nevada, and its integrity as an ecosystem needs to be fully understood." (comments of EIS from Jared Verner, Research Wildlife Biologist Feb 17, 1995)

The DEIS proposed no strategy for the protection of these last remaining uncut stands.

3) The DEIS does not coordinate with the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project: In response to a request from Congress for more information about old growth and other ecosystems in the Sierra, the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) was created. This is a much broader, more comprehensive ecological assessment of the Sierra Nevada due to be completed by December 31, 1995, less than seven months away. The DEIS should incorporate the data and analysis of the SNEP report. These two efforts address the same ecosystem yet are not adequately coordinated.

SNEP data and analysis is critical for the CAL-Owl DEIS to consider. While the Forest Service mapping efforts have used the highly unreliable and out-dated Boston University vegetation inventory maps (only 63% valid for accurately mapping vegetation size class on the Eldorado National Forest) in the EIS effort, the public has seen SNEP data presented at two public meetings that shows a level of analysis far superior (both in old-growth mapping and fire research) than any being used in the CAL-OWL EIS. In order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the DEIS must consider this new and significant information in the SNEP report. Considering the programmatic nature and level of importance of the CAL-OWL planning effort and the timeframes of the final decision it is imperative that the Forest Service wait and consider the SNEP information.

4) The assumptions about fire are unsubstantiated: The DEIS incorrectly assumes that the risk of fire is uniformly severe throughout the Sierra Nevada. Data from SNEP shows that fire risk is lowest in the higher elevation old-growth and roadless areas. The fire modeling is also inadequate and is surpassed in vigor by the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project. The is no landscape level planning effort recommended in the

document to deal with the areas of highest fire risk--the urban/wildland interface.

5) The preferred strategy (Alt C) is risky and should be tried in a few watersheds on an experimental (adaptive management) basis prior to being implemented across the range. The three tiers or zones have different levels of management intensity although they are applied across all watersheds in the Sierra. This one-size-fits-all strategy has no relationship to conditions on the ground. It fails to reflect major topographic differences between National forests. The DEIS fails to disclose the relationship of owl sites to the three zones.

6) The DEIS fails to adequately protect owls where caution is critical. The preferred alternative suggests the logging in Protected Activity Centers and SOHA's will be acceptable after 10 years. It assumes that with the removal of protections for 30" trees there will be enough suitable habitat in place (40" and above trees) at the end of the decade to maintain a viable population of owls. Currently the owls exist in the only remaining suitable habitat left in the Sierra. The DEIS fails to disclose whether there will be sufficient suitable habitat left in the mid-slope when logging begins in the PACs and SOHAs.

7) The DEIS fails to incorporate a comprehensive Aquatic Conservation Strategy. Unlike the President's plan for the Northern Spotted owl forests, the DEIS only provides reasonably protections for larger rivers. The smaller streams with only 150' protection and the smaller order channels will still be subject to intensive logging pressure.

Water is the most important "product" leaving the Sierra Mountain range. The Sierra Nevada is California's watershed. These smaller order streams have suffered from decades of intensive logging and grazing impacts. The DEIS must include site specific Standards and Guides for the protection and rehabilitation of damaged watersheds.

8) Logging levels under the DEIS are no surprise. Logging levels under the CASPO policy were projected to be about 358 MMBF for the Sierra region (DEIS, 2-41). Under the preferred alternative the levels would reach 416 MMBF. Comparisons using the late 80's or Forest Plans as a baseline are unrealistic as they are based on unsustainable, illegal levels, supported by out-dated information and discredited policies.

It is our sincere hope that the CAL-OWL EIS process will use the best available scientific information, including the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project data.

We encourage the agency to use caution, on a small scale, to test the untried theories of a 3-tier approach before implementing them across the landscape.

The DEIS must be more site-specific to the existing landscape and conditions.

The DEIS must disclose its assumptions and basis for claiming the 3-tier strategy will protect Owls, Old-Growth Forests and their dependent species.

Finally the DEIS must focus its fuels reduction efforts with a true landscape level approach, on the urban/wildland inter-face...the area of highest fire risk.

Thank you very much.

Information sources:

CAL-Owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement USFS
The CASPO Technical Report USFS
The CASPO Environmental Assessment USFS
The CASPO Policy Implementation Planning Team Report (PIP)
The Natural Resources Defense Council
The Wilderness Society
The Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, Twain Harte, Ca
Friends Aware of Wildlife Needs, Georgetown, CA

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
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870 Emerald Bay Road, Suite 1
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Reply to: 5100/2400

Date: December 5, 1994

Richard A. Wilson, Director
CA Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RECD DEC - 7 1994

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I have read with great interest and highly support, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Ranger Unit Chief Hank Weston's August 25, 1994 proposal for "FEMA Funding Request, Lake Tahoe Fuel Management Project." I understand this proposal has recently reached your office.

All seven resource managing agencies have cooperated the past four years in identifying priorities and cooperative efforts to respond to the massive mortality and significant decline in Lake Tahoe's forest health. As you know, the situation continues to decline with near 30% of the stand being dead.

What is apparent to me now is large salvage sale contracts are NOT a major part of addressing the large acreage and urban interface needs. Planning and attempting to market several salvage sales, ranging from 100 acres to 7,000 acres, has shown (since 1989) the value of salvagable material will not bear the cost of an adequate treatment for fuels reduction and long-term forest health. Incline Village paid $1,000/acre over timber values, and we've experienced $200 to $500/acre estimated costs over values. Where salvage sales reach break even, we see a sub-merchantable stand remaining that is over-stocked and unacceptable fuel loading.

Hank Weston's proposal, I believe has the ingredients of funding and crews to help the Lake Tahoe region begin to address the total job. Without this type of support, we're in a losing battle.

If I can be of any further help in discussing Hank's proposal and our situation in Tahoe, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

ROBERT E. HARRIS
Forest Supervisor

cc: LTUSGFAP Members
R5 Regional Forester (w/enclosure)
Lloyd Keefer Coast-Cascade Region Chief
Hank Weston, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Ranger Unit Chief
Steve Harcourt, South Lake Tahoe CDF Forester
Jon Kennedy, RF Rep-Sacramento (w/enclosure)
Joan Reiss, Sierra Club (w/enclosure)
Rochelle Nason, League to Save Lake Tahoe (w/enclosure)
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An Analysis of the Timber Situation in the United States 1952-2030

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Forest
Resource
Report
No. 23
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Table 7.4—*Timber product output from nongrowing stock sources as a percent of timber supplies in the United States, by softwoods and hardwoods and section, 1952, 1962, 1970, and 1976, with base level projections to 2030*

(Percent)

Species group and section	1952	1962	1970	1976	Projections				
					1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
SOFTWOODS									
North	13.3	12.6	12.6	12.6	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
South	8.4	8.7	4.5	5.0	5.5	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.0
Rocky Mountain	5.8	5.6	4.7	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Pacific Coast[1]	12.4	11.6	8.9	8.6	15.5	13.9	12.5	11.2	10.2
United States	10.4	10.0	7.0	6.9	9.5	8.7	8.1	7.9	7.6
HARDWOODS									
North	23.5	17.7	11.9	16.5	17.0	17.5	17.5	18.0	18.0
South	19.0	18.9	13.9	11.9	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.5	16.0
Rocky Mountain	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)	(*)
Pacific Coast[1]	14.3	11.5	6.1	11.3	11.9	11.9	12.4	12.5	12.8
United States	20.9	18.5	13.9	14.0	15.2	15.6	15.9	16.4	16.7

[1]Includes Alaska.
*Hardwood timber harvests are too small for accurate estimation of output originating from nongrowing stock sources.

to rise to 15.5 percent in 1990. Beyond 1990, the part of timber supplies coming from non-growing stock sources falls, as old-growth stands become less important as a proportion of total inventory.

In the Rocky Mountains, nongrowing stock sources provided 4.5 percent of the softwood supply in 1976. This is assumed to increase slightly, then remain essentially unchanged through the rest of the projection period.

Non-growing stock sources provided about 12.6 percent of the softwood timber supplies in the North in 1976. This is projected to drop to about 10 percent by 1990 and remain there through 2030. The proportion of softwood non-growing stock output in the South is low—5.0 percent in 1976. This increases slightly over the next several decades.

Hardwood forests contain large volumes of rough and rotten trees and tops and branches. Hardwoods also make up most of the urban forest, fence rows, and other similar sources of nongrowing stock timber supplies. As a result, a substantial fraction of hardwood roundwood supplies, 14.0 percent in 1976, have come from nongrowing stock sources since 1952.

With increasing demand for fuelwood and improvements in techniques for harvesting and processing hardwood for pulp and paper, non-growing stock is expected to continue to be an important and, in most regions, a growing part of hardwood timber supplies. In the North, for example, the proportion of hardwood timber supplies originating from non-growing stock rises from 16.5 percent in 1976 to 18.0 percent in 2030.

Other Assumptions. In addition to the basic assumptions described above, the projections of changes in the timber resource rest on a variety of other assumptions. For example, the continuation of a host of past behavioral patterns on the part of timber owners is implicitly assumed in the harvest equations. Constraints associated with multible use and the protection of the environment, and owner attitudes toward non-timber benefits as reflected in the historical response of harvest to price increases and inventory changes, are assumed to continue. Responses to such factors as the economic availability of timber, species composition, tree grade, accessibility, and operability are also assumed to continue much the same as in the base period used in making the projections.

Some conditions existed during the historical period which may not persist in the future. For example, there has been continual conflict about the use and management of commercial timberlands in public ownership. Harvesting has frequently been halted (or at least slowed) on lands when a status change was being considered, even before they were actually taken out of the commercial timberland base.

In recognition of the uncertainty about these and all other assumptions, a series of projections based on differing assumptions on commercial timberland area and radical growth and mortality rates, has been prepared. These projections, discussed at the end of this chapter, demonstrate the sensitivity of the projections to changed assumptions and provide some sense of the range over which the projections might reasonably be expected to vary.

Projected Changes in Timber Resources in the United States

Projections prepared under the assumptions described above show substantial changes in all of the important measures of the timber resource—timber supplies, net annual growth, and inventories (tables 7.5 and 7.6). There are also sizable shifts among the geographic sections and the major ownerships (tables 7.7-7.10).

Trends in Timber Supplies. In 1952, roundwood harvests[6] amounted to 10.9 billion cubic feet. Harvests were slightly lower in 1962 but they subsequently increased to 12.8 billion cubic feet in 1976. The trends in harvests of sawtimber products are similar to those for roundwood—output rose from 49.1 billion board feet in 1962 to 62.9 billion in 1976. Most of the increases between 1972 and 1976 was composed of softwoods harvested on forest industry and farmer and other private lands in the South.

Roundwood supplies[6] are projected to increase to 21.2 billion cubic feet in

[6] Harvests as used here are estimates of the trend levels of timber products harvested in 1952, 1962, 1970 and 1976. Supplies as used here are estimates of the volume of timber products that would be harvested in the projection years under the assumptions specified above.

Table 7.5—*Timber removals, net annual growth, mortality, supplies of roundwood products, and inventory of growing stock in the United States, by softwoods and hardwoods, 1952, 1962, 1970, and 1976, with base level projections to 2030*

(Million cubic feet)

Item	1952	1962	1970	1976	Projections 1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
SOFTWOODS									
Removals from growing stock									
Roundwood products	6,752	6,593	8,096	8,850	9,389	10,101	10,664	11,084	11,396
Logging residues	734	701	901	812	731	682	629	599	578
Other removals[1]	283	329	320	382	2,139	995	766	712	620
Total	7,770	7,624	9,318	10,044	12,259	11,777	12,059	12,395	12,594
Net annual growth	7,684	9,543	11,239	12,285	13,240	13,470	13,472	13,382	13,224
Mortality	2,628	2,730	2,476	2,303	2,470	2,608	2,719	2,795	2,850
Roundwood supplies[2]									
From growing stock	6,752	6,593	8,096	8,850	9,389	10,101	10,664	11,084	11,396
From other sources[3]	785	736	605	661	980	958	943	950	938
Total	7,536	7,329	8,701	9,511	10,369	11,058	11,607	12,034	12,334
Inventory of growing stock[4]	424,946	440,882	449,790	455,779	468,521	490,216	508,550	522,314	532,252
HARDWOODS									
Removals from growing stock									
Roundwood products	2,658	2,488	2,950	2,833	4,145	5,085	5,939	6,795	7,378
Logging residues	757	648	722	585	776	831	844	827	753
Other removals[1]	674	1,197	1,054	761	817	788	724	690	568
Total	4,089	4,333	4,726	4,180	5,738	6,704	7,508	8,312	8,699
Net annual growth	6,229	7,149	8,519	9,380	9,431	8,846	8,253	7,850	7,618
Mortality	1,239	1,561	1,502	1,622	2,078	2,297	2,405	2,423	2,385
Roundwood supplies[2]									
From growing stock	2,658	2,488	2,950	2,833	4,145	5,085	5,939	6,795	7,378
From other sources[3]	704	564	441	462	741	942	1,126	1,336	1,483
Total	3,362	3,052	3,391	3,295	4,886	6,027	7,065	8,132	8,861
Inventory of growing stock[4]	178,448	206,961	230,637	255,189	315,637	346,879	362,381	364,507	357,308

[1]Volume of timber removed in cultural operations such as noncommercial thinning and inventory losses resulting from the diversion of commercial timberland to other uses such as cropland, parks, and wilderness. The historical data are estimates of other removals in the indicated years. They do not include the removals associated with the diversion of commercial timberland, such as withdrawals for wilderness, that do not take place on a regular and continuing basis. The projected removals are annual averages for the decades preceding the indicated year and do include such removals.
[2]Data for 1952, 1962, 1970, and 1976 are estimates of the trend level of harvests and differ somewhat from the estimates of actual consumption shown in some tables in other chapters. For the projection years, the data show the volume that would be harvested given the assumptions of the study.
[3]Include roundwood products from rough and rotten trees, dead trees, limbs, and trees on noncommercial and nonforest land.
[4]Data for 1952 and 1962 are as of December 31. Data for 1970 and the projection years are as of January 1. Data shown under 1976 are as of January 1, 1977.

2030 and 83.1 billion board feet—levels that are, respectively, 66 and 32 percent above those of 1976. Nearly all of the projected increases are in the East, chiefly in the South. Some increase in supplies is projected in the Rocky Mountain section. On the Pacific Coast, there is not much change in projected roundwood supplies and a rather substantial decrease in sawtimber supplies.

With the exception of forest industry ownerships, where the projected decreases on the Pacific Coast are concentrated, there are substantial additions to supplies on all other ownerships. Most of the projected increase in supplies is on farmer and other private ownerships. This primarily reflects the large size of the commercial timberland area in these ownerships relative to the other ownerships and the responsiveness of these ownerships to increases in prices and inventories.

Trends in softwood supplies.—The harvest of softwood roundwood products has followed about the same trend as total harvests, rising 30 percent between 1962 and 1976 to a total of 9.5 billion cubic feet (fig. 7.2). This was paralleled by a 31 percent increase in sawtimber product output to 50 billion board feet (fig. 7.3).

Softwood supplies are projected to move up but at a slower rate than experienced from 1962 to 1976. By 2030, roundwood supplies rise by about 30 percent to 12.3 billion cubic feet and sawtimber supplies by 11 percent to 55.6 billion board feet. The greater increase in roundwood supplies results from increased use of smaller diameter trees, primarily for pulpwood and fuelwood.

Roughly equal shares of the 1976 softwood supplies came from the South and Pacific Coast and together they accounted for 85 percent of the softwood roundwood supplies in the United States. The remaining 15 percent was about equally split between the North and Rocky Mountains.

The Pacific Coast played a more dominant role in the supply of softwood sawtimber products in 1976, providing 50 percent of the total compared to 36 percent from the South. The importance of the Pacific Coast largely reflects the softwood inventory—that section has nearly three-fifths of the softwood sawtimber inventory mostly in the relatively large trees characteristic of an old-

Table 7.6—*Sawtimber removals, net annual growth, mortality, supplies of sawtimber products, and inventory of sawtimber in the United States, by softwoods and hardwoods, 1952, 1962, 1970, and 1976, with base level projections to 2030*

(Million board feet, International ¼-inch log rule)

Item	1952	1962	1970	1976	Projections 1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
SOFTWOODS									
Removals from sawtimber									
Roundwood products	35,339	34,662	42,943	47,051	43,183	45,824	48,095	49,911	51,311
Logging residues	2,584	2,633	2,444	2,276	1,942	1,787	1,635	1,548	1,491
Other removals[1]	1,248	1,402	1,491	1,509	11,243	4,894	3,537	3,269	2,798
Total	39,171	38,696	46,878	50,836	56,368	52,505	53,266	54,729	55,600
Net annual growth	30,170	36,976	44,272	49,692	52,812	55,875	57,935	59,016	59,197
Mortality	11,879	11,463	9,944	8,765	8,928	9,149	9,439	9,695	9,957
Roundwood supplies[2]									
From sawtimber	35,339	34,662	42,943	47,051	43,183	45,824	48,095	49,911	51,311
From other sources[3]	3,402	3,481	3,153	2,903	4,931	4,630	4,422	4,350	4,239
Total	38,741	38,143	46,097	49,954	48,115	50,454	52,517	54,262	55,551
Inventory of sawtimber[4]	2,066,203	2,032,757	2,001,673	1,985,408	1,921,103	1,951,140	1,996,665	2,040,293	2,078,748
HARDWOODS									
Removals from sawtimber									
Roundwood products	11,145	10,091	11,313	11,350	12,502	15,604	18,432	21,230	22,936
Logging residues	771	989	1,213	1,146	1,334	1,474	1,529	1,519	1,384
Other removals[1]	1,123	1,660	2,660	1,797	2,542	2,428	2,221	2,110	1,746
Total	13,039	12,740	15,187	14,293	16,379	19,507	22,183	24,859	26,066
Net annual growth	15,717	18,194	21,969	24,929	26,444	26,610	26,127	25,409	24,441
Mortality	2,943	3,665	3,183	3,423	4,361	4,902	5,219	5,323	5,261
Roundwood supplies[2]									
From sawtimber	11,145	10,091	11,313	11,350	12,502	15,604	18,432	21,230	22,936
From other sources[3]	779	842	1,102	1,552	2,210	2,855	3,457	4,135	4,577
Total	11,924	10,933	12,414	12,902	14,713	18,460	21,889	25,365	27,513
Inventory of sawtimber[4]	446,018	483,700	536,706	593,532	740,964	824,376	874,293	890,263	877,842

[1]Volume of timber removed in cultural operations such as noncommercial thinning and inventory losses resulting from the diversion of commercial timberland to other uses such as cropland, parks, and wilderness. The historical data are estimates of other removals in the indicated years. They do not include the removals associated with the diversion of commercial timberland, such as withdrawals for wilderness, that do not take place on a regular and continuing basis. The projected removals are annual averages for the decades preceding the indicated year and do include such removals.
[2]Data for 1952, 1962, 1970, and 1976 are estimates of the trend level of harvests and differ somewhat from the estimates of actual consumption shown in some tables in other chapters. For the projection years, the data show the volume that would be harvested given the assumptions of the study.
[3]Include roundwood products from rough and rotten trees, dead trees, limbs, and trees on noncommercial and nonforest land.
[4]Data for 1952 and 1962 are as of December 31. Data for 1970 and the projection years are as of January 1. Data shown under 1976 are as of January 1, 1977.



The softwood (southern pine) forests of the South can support higher levels of harvest in the decades immediately ahead.

growth forest. More than three-fifths of the softwood sawtimber in the Pacific Coast section is on the National Forests.

The relative importance of the South and Pacific Coast forests as sources of softwood timber is projected to change materially by 2030. The softwood roundwood supplies in the South are projected to rise by 47 percent to 6.2 billion cubic feet. The majority of the increase comes from the farmer and other private ownerships. Sizable percentage increases are also projected for the North and Rocky Mountains, but the volumes involved are relatively small in relation to the total national softwood supply.

In contrast to the outlook in the South, softwood roundwood supplies are projected to drop in the Pacific Coast, from 3.9 billion cubic feet in 1976 to 3.7 billion cubic feet in 2000. There is a subsequent rise back to 3.9 billion cubic feet in 2030. The major cause of the initial decline in the Pacific Coast is the physical incapacity of the forest industry lands to maintain current cutting levels. The old-growth inventory on these ownerships is rapidly being depleted and harvests from merchantable second-growth stands cannot be maintained at a level which will offset the decline in supplies from old-growth stands.

At the same time, National Forest harvest levels in the Pacific Coast section are constrained by even-flow harvest schedules and non-timber management considerations and are further influenced by major withdrawals of commercial timberland for wilderness designation. Supplies from the farmer and other private owners in the Pacific Coast are projected to increase, which

is a reversal of a 25-year downward trend in roundwood supplies from this ownership. However, the increases are not large enough to compensate for the drop on forest industry ownerships.

The supply projections for softwood sawtimber products have the same basic pattern as the roundwood projections, but the decline in Pacific Coast supplies and the changes in regional shares are more pronounced. The projected supplies from the Pacific Coast drop 13 percent from 25.2 billion board feet in 1976 to 22.0 billion in 1990. They continue to decline slowly thereafter to 19.6 billion board feet in 2030. In contrast, the supply from the South is projected to increase steadily to 27.3 billion board feet by 2030, 52 percent above the 1976 supply.

The result of these divergent sectional paths is that the large projected increases in softwood timber supplies from the South are partly offset by declines from the Pacific Coast, leaving a relatively modest net gain in the national total. By 2030, about half of both the softwood roundwood and softwood sawtimber product supplies are projected to originate in the South, 31 percent of the softwood roundwood and 35 percent of the softwood sawtimber product supplies will come from the Pacific Coast.

Changes of these magnitudes are certain to have major and long lasting impacts on the economies of the two sections. For the Pacific Coast, it will mean closed mills and reduced timber-based employment and income. The impacts are likely to be particularly severe in rural areas where timber is the chief source of economic activity. In the South, on the other hand, it suggests new timber-based industry and associated increases in employment and income.

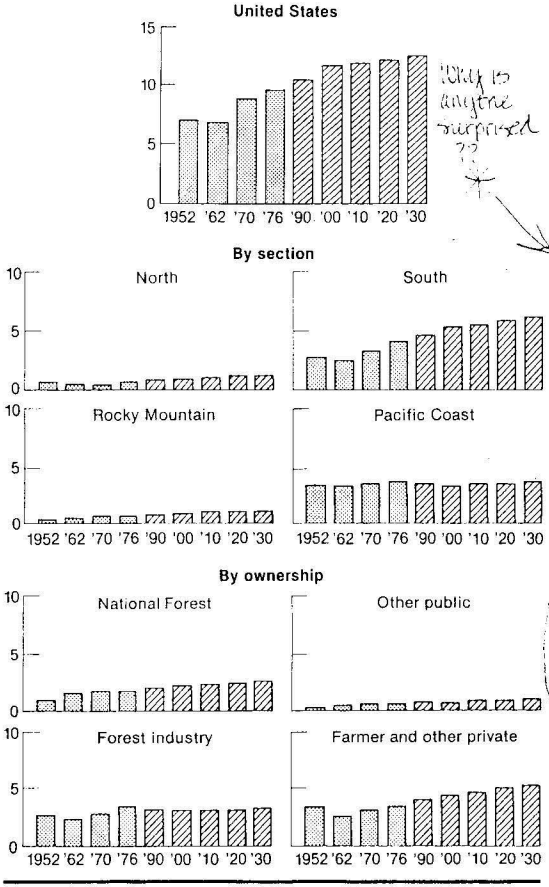
Since the projected drop in Pacific Coast supplies is concentrated on forest industry ownerships, and the major source of the increases in the South is farmer and other private lands, there is a sizable shift among the major ownerships as sources of timber. The shift is largest for softwood sawtimber products where the proportion coming from farmer and other private ownerships rises from 29 percent of the total in 1976 to 41 percent in 2030. During the same period, the proportion originating on forest industry ownerships falls from 38 percent of the total to 24 percent. There is a small increase in the part coming from the National Forests and very little change on the other public ownerships.

Trends in hardwood supplies.—In contrast to softwoods, the harvest of hardwoods was fairly stable between 1952 and 1976 at around 3 billion cubic feet of roundwood and 12 billion board feet of sawtimber products (figs. 7.4 and 7.5). The outlook is for substantial increases. Hardwood roundwood supply is projected to more than double between 1976 and 2030, rising from 3.3 to 8.9

Figure 7.2

Softwood Roundwood Harvests, 1952–76, with Projections of Supplies to 2030

Billion cubic feet



Tuolumne County + Stanislaus National Forest
Facts and Figures

Headline after headline in the Union Democrat refers to fears of the end of the local timber industry due to the possible reduction in national forest logging proposed by the Cal-Owl Plan. County Supervisor Ken Marks and others repeatedly claim that anywhere from 1,000 to many thousands of jobs will be lost---the County economy destroyed, and great numbers of children abused, women beaten, and County mental health services over-run... all because loggers will be out of work.

The truth is that government jobs are number one in employment, followed by tourism and services which provide the greatest number of jobs in private industry here in Tuolumne County as well as in neighboring counties. Logging provides only a tiny percentage of overall jobs.

Jobs and the timber industry

In 1994, State Employment Development Department statistics show that a high of 840 people were involved in the lumber and wood products industry in Tuolumne County, including both private and public forests. The County workforce was shown as 14,640 people. Thus, less than 6% of the workforce was employed in work connected to the timber industry. Given that, on average, about 1/2 of that timber-related workforce depends upon national forest timber, about 420 people depend upon public land logging and milling for their jobs, or less than 3% of the workforce.

If instead of the 88 mmbf now shown in the Stanislaus Forest Plan, a new Cal-Owl level of 30 mmbf were used, it is likely that over time, a corresponding reduction of 2/3 of the jobs dependent upon public forest logging might also occur. Thus, at that level, **approximately 2% of jobs in Tuolumne County might be lost by reducing logging levels to 30 mmbf.... the level approximated by the majority of alternatives in the draft EIS.** The situation in neighboring Calaveras County is even more obvious. Only @100 people are employed in work connected to the wood industry.

In both counties, the vast majority of jobs are in the service sector (related to tourism) and in government, the largest employer. 1991 figures for Tuolumne County show more than 3,000 jobs directly involved in motel, hotels, and restaurant service-type jobs. The addition of back-country guides, camping gear stores, ski rental places, and all the other forest-related recreational jobs would mean an even higher total.

Taxpayers and logging

While the U.S. Forest Service has used creative accounting to attempt to show a "profit" for timber harvest on the Stanislaus National Forest and other Forest Service lands, the reality is that logging on the Forest loses millions of dollars

most years for federal taxpayers. The latest timber program financial report (for 1993) released by the Stanislaus Forest claims that the timber program made nearly $4 million after payments to local counties. But statistics often tell conflicting stories.

On a cash-flow basis, the timber program actually lost money if payments to counties were considered. The Stanislaus Forest no longer releases a cash-flow accounting report as part of their timber report, but, when questioned, Forest economist Jim Schmidt provided rough figures that showed that the Forest Service had about $1.5 million more revenues than expenses prior to payments to local counties. After those payments were added in, the balance showed the Stanislaus timber program ended up more than $2 million in the red.

One of the ways the Forest Service analyzes the economics of the timber program is in their Economic Account . This Economic Account doesn't ignore as many of the actual expenses as the TSPIRS account does. Based on 1993, the Stanislaus Forest timber program had a present net value of $3,405,000. This was the first year in 5 years that the Stanislaus Forest timber program didn't lose money based on their own Economic Accounting. **Over that 5 year period, the Stanislaus Forest logged 680 million board feet of trees, but LOST more than $4 million during that total time period, even including the money made in 1993.** For federal taxpayers, the sale of timber on the Stanislaus Forest has consistently been a money loser, not even counting the environmental degradation and loss of wildlife values.

The reality is that the Stanislaus National Forest has subsidized the single dominant lumber company, Fibreboard Inc., for many years, at the expense of federal taxpayers and forest resources. Any proposal to reduce that subsidization will be bitterly contested by both those employed by the company or related logging or trucking firms, as well as those pro-timber supporters who are philosophically opposed to any reduction of jobs or profits in order to benefit the environment.

Devastation to Tuolumne County's economy?

Last year, the Jamestown Mine shut down, causing more than 300 people to lose their jobs. This is roughly equivalent to what would occur if the proposed reductions in national forest logging went forward. What happened?

Except for a few businesses that were heavily dependent upon the mining operation, almost no one but the employees saw any difference in the economic situation. Unemployment levels overall did not skyrocket. Abuse or jail population numbers didn't soar.. The same will occur if logging jobs are reduced.

Logging has always had its ups and downs. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, fire and insect salvage meant logging levels of 180 mmbf a year. Then logging dropped back down to the less than 100 mmbf level. A drop of more than 80 mmbf a year meant nothing at all to the job market overall in Tuolumne County.

Likewise, if one shift is laid off at the Standard Mill, the rest of the County's economy will move forward without even a hitch.

Schools and roads

The Superintendent of Schools has testified any reduction in logging, claiming that children will suffer. This is nonsense. **Receipt Act payments make up between 1-3% of the total school budgets in Tuolumne County. A 2/3 reduction in logging receipts might cost, at the very most, 2% of the schools' annual budgets.**

Most of the money that goes to the County Schools office is spent on one-day events like spelling bees, science fairs, and other activities, and most of that funding goes to support highly paid specialists at the County Schools office who run the one-day events. Project Forest is one program funded by Timber Receipts. Last year Project Forest put on a week-long training session for teachers to promote logging and timber management on the local national forest. The loss of such pro-industry programs would hardly hurt children.

Summary

Logging is a traditional industry in Tuolumne County. It's a heritage for many families. But it's not a mainstay of the economy. It conflicts continually with tourism and recreation. It damages the watershed values that produce extremely high levels of hydro and water revenues for the County and other agencies.

Tuolumne County supervisors and the local timber industry have grossly exaggerated the harm that would occur if logging is reduced on national forest lands. At most, only 2-3% of the work force would be affect. More likely, the main loss would be the eventual loss of one shift at the Fibreboard mill at Standard.

For tourism, recreation, watershed resources, wildlife, traffic, and quality of life, a reduction in logging will be a positive effect.

SIERRA NEVADA
TIMBER EMPLOYMENT
DATABASE

Employment & Payroll Data

Cumulative County Figures

SIERRA NEVADA TIMBER EMPLOYMENT & PAYROLL DATA

Total Sierra Nevada Employment and Payroll Data
Sierra Nevada Region (17 Counties)

Calender Year	Reporting Units (1) SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	Employment (2) SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	Total Timber	% of All Sectors	All Sectors	Payroll (3) SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	All Sectors	Average Payroll (4) SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26
1984	33	268	19	153	7,940	825	8,919	1.30%	687,007	$1,725,550	$172,017,285	$13,505,148	$10,815,581,000	$11,260	$21,664	$16,365
1985	39	309	21	184	8,677	1,116	9,977	1.42%	703,149	$1,963,906	$190,479,259	$19,537,584	$11,625,575,240	$10,673	$21,952	$17,507
1986	38	326	20	184	8,993	1,123	10,300	1.49%	691,140	$2,162,859	$206,642,850	$22,615,801	$11,639,198,765	$11,760	$22,979	$20,140
1987	63	446	21	235	9,576	1,262	11,073	1.53%	725,639	$2,655,387	$225,042,044	$26,009,010	$12,647,920,859	$11,280	$23,502	$20,607
1988	66	451	44	295	9,637	1,195	11,126	1.47%	755,092	$4,494,188	$229,907,942	$27,917,354	$13,758,443,792	$15,256	$23,857	$23,368
1989	58	438	24	334	10,246	1,203	11,782	1.52%	776,669	$5,317,839	$242,042,790	$28,421,209	$14,741,657,374	$15,938	$23,624	$23,627
1990	53	455	27	316	9,862	1,799	11,978	1.48%	808,742	$4,553,477	$246,004,821	$43,369,579	$16,334,821,799	$14,410	$24,944	$24,103
1991	60	504	32	265	8,846	1,691	10,801	1.33%	813,793	$4,776,779	$228,728,510	$39,036,739	$17,187,208,815	$18,043	$25,857	$23,090
1992	63	477	34	213	8,339	1,881	10,433	1.28%	813,142	$3,638,767	$225,444,171	$48,951,605	$17,728,465,167	$17,050	$27,036	$26,028

Sources: California Employment Development Department (EDD)
Employment and Payroll Data for Selected Counties

Footnotes (1) Average number of establishments reporting data to EDD.
Reporting units may be less than 1 on an annual basis due to seasonal fluctuations.
Cumulative figures may vary due to calculation factors in the original data.
(2) Average annual employment.
SIC Code 08 -- Forestry
SIC Code 24 -- Lumber and Wood Products
SIC Code 26 -- Paper and Allied Products
(3) Total annual payroll.
(4) Average payroll = total payroll / employment.

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SIERRA NEVADA TIMBER EMPLOYMENT & PAYROLL DATA

Total Sierra Nevada Employment and Payroll Data
The Northern Region (4 Counties) (Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, & Sierra)

Calender	Reporting Units (1)			Employment (2)			Total	% of All	All	Payroll (3)			All	Average Payroll (4)		
Year	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	Timber	Sectors	Sectors	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC	Sectors	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26
1984	5	64	0	23	1,883	0	1,905	10.97%	17,361	$484,436	$45,543,850	$0	$288,764,729	$21,451	$24,193	$0
1985	6	58	0	37	1,828	0	1,865	10.68%	17,467	$643,115	$46,655,681	$0	$302,280,273	$17,381	$25,519	$0
1986	6	61	0	35	1,847	0	1,882	11.88%	15,841	$630,505	$48,257,306	$0	$280,329,540	$18,101	$26,132	$0
1987	11	78	0	39	1,930	0	1,970	12.16%	16,194	$647,673	$52,097,360	$0	$299,000,786	$16,501	$26,988	$0
1988	12	72	0	47	1,912	0	1,959	11.69%	16,755	$795,900	$51,935,178	$0	$319,658,523	$16,785	$27,164	$0
1989	9	71	0	53	1,988	0	2,041	11.66%	17,509	$901,258	$54,645,331	$0	$336,689,994	$17,085	$27,484	$0
1990	10	67	0	67	1,864	0	1,931	10.87%	17,764	$1,468,975	$52,042,107	$0	$354,844,963	$21,980	$27,921	$0
1991	9	70	0	49	1,559	0	1,608	9.04%	17,791	$1,355,866	$46,011,077	$0	$376,766,868	$27,813	$29,518	$0
1992	8	70	0	40	1,575	0	1,615	8.78%	18,380	$1,037,761	$48,114,303	$0	$406,885,742	$25,944	$30,558	$0

Sources: California Employment Development Department (EDD)
Employment and Payroll Data for Selected Counties

Footnotes (1) Average number of establishments reporting data to EDD.
Reporting units may be less than 1 on an annual basis due to seasonal fluctuations.
Cumulative figures may vary due to calculation factors in the original data.
(2) Average annual employment..
SIC Code 08 -- Forestry
SIC Code 24 -- Lumber and Wood Products
SIC Code 26 -- Paper and Allied Products
(3) Total annual payroll.
(4) Average payroll = total payroll / employment.

SIERRA NEVADA TIMBER EMPLOYMENT & PAYROLL DATA

Total Sierra Nevada Employment and Payroll Data
The Central/Southern Region (13 Counties) (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Tulare, Toulumne, & Yuba)

Calender	Reporting Units (1)			Employment (2)			Total	% of All	All	Payroll (3)			All	Average Payroll (4)		
Year	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	Timber	Sectors	Sectors	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26	Sectors	SIC 08	SIC 24	SIC 26
1984	29	204	19	131	6,058	825	7,014	1.05%	669,646	$1,241,114	$126,473,435	$13,505,148	$10,526,816,271	$9,498	$20,878	$16,365
1985	33	252	21	147	6,849	1,116	8,112	1.18%	685,683	$1,320,791	$143,823,578	$19,537,584	$11,323,294,967	$8,985	$21,000	$17,507
1986	32	265	20	149	7,146	1,123	8,418	1.25%	675,299	$1,532,354	$158,385,544	$22,615,801	$11,358,869,225	$10,279	$22,164	$20,140
1987	52	369	21	196	7,645	1,262	9,103	1.28%	709,446	$2,007,714	$172,944,684	$26,009,010	$12,348,920,073	$10,235	$22,622	$20,607
1988	54	379	44	247	7,725	1,195	9,167	1.24%	738,337	$3,698,288	$177,972,764	$27,917,354	$13,438,785,269	$14,963	$23,038	$23,368
1989	49	367	24	281	8,258	1,203	9,741	1.28%	759,160	$4,416,581	$187,397,459	$28,421,209	$14,404,967,380	$15,722	$22,694	$23,627
1990	44	388	27	249	7,998	1,799	10,047	1.27%	790,978	$3,084,502	$193,962,714	$43,369,579	$15,979,976,836	$12,379	$24,250	$24,103
1991	51	434	32	216	7,287	1,691	9,194	1.16%	796,002	$3,420,913	$182,717,433	$39,036,739	$16,810,441,947	$15,838	$25,074	$23,090
1992	56	406	34	173	6,764	1,881	8,818	1.11%	794,762	$2,601,006	$177,329,868	$48,951,605	$17,321,579,425	$14,999	$26,216	$26,028

Sources: California Employment Development Department (EDD)
Employment and Payroll Data for Selected Counties

Footnotes (1) Average number of establishments reporting data to EDD.
Reporting units may be less than 1 on an annual basis due to seasonal fluctuations.
Cumulative figures may vary due to calculation factors in the original data.
(2) Average annual employment.
SIC Code 08 -- Forestry
SIC Code 24 -- Lumber and Wood Products
SIC Code 26 -- Paper and Allied Products
(3) Total annual payroll.
(4) Average payroll = total payroll / employment.

California Timber Harvest by County
County: **El Dorado**

Calender Year	Statewide Harvest (Net MBF)	Statewide Value ($)	Volume (Net MBF)	Percent of Total Volume	Percent Public	Percent Private	Public Harvest	Private Harvest	Value ($)	Percent of Total Value	Percent Public	Percent Private	Value of Public Harvest (Nominal $)	Value of Private Harvest (Nominal $)
1978	4,343,726	$682,051,000	180,303	4.15%	37.80%	62.20%	68,155	112,148	$18,667,000	2.74%	31.10%	68.90%	$5,805,437	$12,861,563
1979	3,913,663	$742,697,000	151,608	3.87%	42.10%	57.90%	63,827	87,781	$16,965,000	2.28%	34.50%	65.50%	$5,852,925	$11,112,075
1980	3,090,956	$565,756,000	150,676	4.87%	39.70%	60.30%	59,818	90,858	$17,033,000	3.01%	33.00%	67.00%	$5,620,890	$11,412,110
1981	2,671,849	$493,078,000	150,197	5.62%	35.60%	64.40%	53,470	96,727	$17,520,000	3.55%	31.80%	68.20%	$5,571,360	$11,948,640
1982	2,319,094	$296,117,000	129,623	5.59%	35.30%	64.70%	45,757	83,866	$7,470,000	2.52%	26.30%	73.70%	$1,964,610	$5,505,390
1983	3,357,804	$400,513,000	144,801	4.31%	43.70%	56.30%	63,278	81,523	$12,372,000	3.09%	38.50%	61.50%	$4,763,220	$7,608,780
1984	3,441,281	$439,511,978	135,992	3.95%	45.89%	54.11%	62,407	73,585	$12,129,417	2.76%	46.59%	53.41%	$5,651,095	$6,478,322
1985	3,812,944	$400,249,176	222,959	5.85%	47.41%	52.59%	105,705	117,254	$15,259,865	3.81%	51.57%	48.43%	$7,869,512	$7,390,353
1986	4,143,919	$465,560,548	293,425	7.08%	44.86%	55.14%	131,630	161,795	$21,777,160	4.68%	45.31%	54.69%	$9,867,231	$11,909,929
1987	4,500,199	$572,097,909	229,572	5.10%	59.92%	40.08%	137,560	92,012	$20,872,311	3.65%	58.28%	41.72%	$12,164,383	$8,707,928
1988	4,667,771	$680,140,145	223,741	4.79%	51.44%	48.56%	115,092	108,649	$23,252,508	3.42%	52.25%	47.75%	$12,149,435	$11,103,073
1989	4,429,845	$776,071,380	274,640	6.20%	55.21%	44.79%	151,629	123,011	$28,914,896	3.73%	43.45%	56.55%	$12,563,522	$16,351,374
1990	4,026,193	$900,310,712	326,548	8.11%	48.48%	51.52%	158,310	168,238	$49,215,704	5.47%	40.76%	59.24%	$20,060,321	$29,155,383
1991	3,185,610	$669,149,092	194,278	6.10%	58.47%	41.53%	113,594	80,684	$30,938,814	4.62%	58.32%	41.68%	$18,043,516	$12,895,298
1992	2,973,491	$907,213,745	152,350	5.12%	54.33%	45.67%	82,772	69,578	$34,102,867	3.76%	50.34%	49.66%	$17,167,383	$16,935,484

Source: State of California. Board of Equalization
Timber Tax Division
YTHR2 Report YT-36

Footnotes:

Contribution of Federal Forest Reserve Funds to Financing of County Operations (1)
Fiscal Years 1978 - 1993(1)

County: EL DORADO

Category	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980/81	1981 82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985 86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992 93
Revenues																
Grand Total Financing Sources (2)	$31 185 379	$30 712 115	$34 308 855	$39 030 173	$40 407 938	$42 925 959	$45 485 128	$48 819 291	$58 614 211	$58 784 135	$76 335 807	$80 330 534	$89 996 028	$97 951 109	$106 010 666	$112 646 471
Federal	$11 059 511	$9 538 955	$10 565 934	$11 256 718	$9 677 200	$9 184 808	$9 045 775	$8 556 392	$8 704 979	$9 378 136	$14 477 872	$12 403 781	$11 746 740	$14 682 639	$16 877 701	$20 070 185
% of Total	35 46%	31 06%	30 80%	28 84%	23 95%	21 40%	19 90%	17 53%	14 85%	13 63%	18 97%	15 44%	13 05%	14 99%	15 92%	17 82%
Forest Reserve Fund (3)	$945 855	$1 089 314	$1 282 797	$870 901	$1 529 934	$944 781	$1 010 651	$1 068 495	$689 829	$1 407 682	$1 543 613	$1 606 949	$2 014 473	$1 976 179	$1 902 874	$1 907 684
% of Total	3 03%	3 55%	3 74%	2 23%	3 79%	2 20%	2 22%	2 19%	1 18%	2 05%	2 02%	2 00%	2 24%	2 02%	1 79%	1 69%
% of Federal	8 55%	11 42%	12 14%	7 74%	15 81%	10 29%	11 17%	12 49%	7 92%	15 01%	10 66%	12 96%	17 15%	13 46%	11 27%	9 51%
Other Federal Funds (4)	$10,113,656	$8,449,641	$9,283,137	$10,385,817	$8,147,266	$8,240,027	$8,035,124	$7,487,897	$8,015,150	$7,970,454	$12,934,259	$10,796,832	$9,732,267	$12,706,460	$14,974,827	$18,162,502
% of Total	32 43%	27 51%	27 06%	26 61%	20 16%	19 20%	17 67%	15 34%	13 67%	11 59%	16 94%	13 44%	10 81%	12 97%	14 13%	16 12%
% of Federal	91 45%	88 58%	87 86%	92 26%	84 19%	89 71%	88 83%	87 51%	92 08%	84 99%	89 34%	87 04%	82 85%	86 54%	88 73%	90 49%
Expenditures																
Total of Financing Uses (5)	$31,453,644	$28,251,138	$34,209,689	$41,014,884	$41,724,955	$42,029,406	$42,923,928	$48,282,874	$56,516,397	$67,358,054	$73,326,314	$75,307,496	$86,692,327	$100,250,457	$108,806,069	$115,918,750
Roads	$4,187,325	$3,458,349	$4,546,719	$4,614,227	$3,648,990	$3,921,673	$5,230,925	$4,971,369	$5,706,325	$8,763,102	$11,121,135	$10,054,438	$13,270,673	$15,629,306	$14,805,972	$14,471,571
Forest Reserve Fund (6)	$945,855	$1,089,314	$1,282,797	$870,901	$1,529,934	$944,781	$1,010,651	$1,068,495	$689,829	$1,407,682	$1,543,613	$1,606,949	$2,014,473	$1,976,179	$1,902,874	$1,907,684
% of Total	3 01%	3 86%	3 75%	2 12%	3 67%	2 25%	2 35%	2 21%	1 22%	2 09%	2 11%	2 13%	2 32%	1 97%	1 75%	1 65%
% of Roads	22 59%	31 50%	28 21%	18 87%	41 93%	24 09%	19 32%	21 49%	12 09%	16 06%	13 88%	15 98%	15 18%	12 64%	12 85%	13 18%

Source: Annual Report of Financial Transactions Concerning Counties of California, Fiscal Years 1977-78 to 1992-93, Office of the State Controller, State of California, Sacramento, CA, Tables 6 and 7

Notes:

(1) California fiscal years run July 1 through June 30. For example, FY 1987/88 ran July 1, 1987 through June 30, 1988. Forest Reserve Fund Revenues shown for each fiscal year in this table may not be equal to payments made to counties as reported by the U.S. Forest Service. Any discrepancy is due to: (i) the USFS accounts for payments made to counties on a federal fiscal year basis (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30); and, (ii) this table only includes that portion of payments made by USFS designated for use by county schools.

(2) Grand Total Financing Sources is also referred to in some cases as Total Revenues.

(3) Pursuant to the Forest Reserve Revenue Act of 1908 (35 Stat. 251), the Forest Service is required to return 25 percent of the qualifying gross annual timber sale receipts from the national forests to counties on the basis of the amount of national forest acreage within the county. Under California law, one-half of the payment must be used for schools and the other one-half for roads. All of the data in this table refers to the one-half of the payment that is designated for use by counties for roads.

(4) Other federal revenues may include funds provided for Public Assistance Administration: Public Assistance programs, health administration, aid for construction, aid for disaster, revenue sharing, in-lieu taxes, and other.

(5) Total of Financing Uses is also referred to as Total Expenditures in some cases.

(6) It is not possible to accurately determine what portion of the Forest Reserve Revenue Funds are actually expended in each year. The numbers shown in this table assume that all Forest Reserve Revenue Funds distributed to each county were expended entirely for road purposes in the year distributed.

California Timber Harvest by County
County: **Placer**

Calender Year	Statewide Harvest (Net MBF)	Statewide Value ($)	Volume (Net MBF)	Percent of Total Volume	Percent Public	Percent Private	Public Harvest	Private Harvest	Value ($)	Percent of Total Value	Percent Public	Percent Private	Value of Public Harvest (Nominal $)	Value of Private Harvest (Nominal $)
1978	4,343,725	$682,051,000	118,977	2.74%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$17,774,000	2.61%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1979	3,913,663	$742,697,000	134,651	3.44%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$22,122,000	2.98%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1980	3,090,956	$565,756,000	81,871	2.65%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$11,424,000	2.02%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1981	2,671,849	$493,078,000	83,259	3.12%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$14,789,000	3.00%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1982	2,319,094	$296,117,000	35,902	1.55%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$3,068,000	1.04%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1983	3,357,804	$400,513,000	80,822	2.41%	NA	NA	NA	NA	$9,809,000	2.45%	NA	NA	NA	NA
1984	3,441,281	$439,511,978	68,239	1.98%	58.95%	41.05%	40,227	28,012	$6,102,182	1.39%	67.84%	32.16%	$4,139,720	$1,962,462
1985	3,812,944	$400,249,176	77,505	2.03%	40.06%	59.94%	31,049	46,456	$6,642,997	1.66%	39.28%	60.72%	$2,609,369	$4,033,628
1986	4,143,919	$465,560,548	74,612	1.80%	65.80%	34.20%	49,095	25,517	$7,071,058	1.52%	74.57%	25.43%	$5,272,888	$1,798,170
1987	4,500,199	$572,097,909	107,579	2.39%	55.58%	44.42%	59,792	47,787	$12,087,623	2.11%	58.55%	41.45%	$7,077,303	$5,010,320
1988	4,667,771	$680,140,145	120,415	2.58%	28.78%	71.22%	34,655	85,760	$18,142,196	2.67%	26.43%	73.57%	$4,794,982	$13,347,214
1989	4,429,845	$776,071,380	124,807	2.82%	31.08%	68.92%	38,790	86,017	$23,567,534	3.04%	28.60%	71.40%	$6,740,315	$16,827,219
1990	4,026,193	$900,310,712	174,420	4.33%	18.06%	81.94%	31,500	142,920	$33,965,942	3.77%	13.14%	86.86%	$4,463,125	$29,502,817
1991	3,185,610	$669,149,092	124,769	3.92%	32.09%	67.91%	40,038	84,731	$23,681,572	3.54%	28.97%	71.03%	$6,860,551	$16,821,021
1992	2,973,491	$907,213,745	109,291	3.68%	15.43%	84.57%	16,864	92,427	$34,297,404	3.78%	14.42%	85.58%	$4,945,686	$29,351,718

Source: State of California. Board of Equalization
Timber Tax Division
YTHR2 Report YT-36

Footnotes:

Contribution of Federal Forest Reserve Funds to Financing of County Operations (1)
Fiscal Years 1978 - 1993(1)

County PLACER

Category	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980/81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Revenues																
Grand Total Financing Sources (2)	$45,713,063	$40,221,113	$47,451,077	$57,261,136	$60,384,794	$62,805,134	$69,844,836	$77,582,273	$85,041,649	$90,374,035	$98,013,763	$109,849,870	$128,971,948	$138,709,016	$151,516,514	$153,413,402
Federal	$14,324,101	$11,306,074	$13,069,393	$15,471,481	$13,054,201	$13,337,200	$11,918,818	$13,153,701	$13,820,168	$13,357,956	$14,555,033	$16,149,455	$19,008,735	$20,307,278	$22,038,293	$19,780,117
% of Total	31.33%	28.11%	27.54%	27.02%	21.62%	21.24%	17.11%	16.95%	16.25%	14.78%	14.85%	14.73%	14.74%	14.64%	14.55%	12.89%
Forest Reserve Fund (3)	$522,880	$468,586	$559,465	$403,172	$409,434	$388,755	$568,044	$722,861	$465,368	$567,054	$830,978	$989,891	$910,569	$952,065	$819,017	$691,343
% of Total	1.14%	1.17%	1.18%	0.70%	0.68%	0.62%	0.82%	0.93%	0.55%	0.63%	0.85%	0.90%	0.71%	0.69%	0.41%	0.45%
% of Federal	3.65%	4.14%	4.28%	2.61%	3.14%	2.91%	4.77%	5.50%	3.37%	4.25%	5.71%	6.13%	4.79%	4.69%	2.81%	3.50%
Other Federal Funds (4)	$13,801,221	$10,837,488	$12,509,928	$15,068,309	$12,644,767	$12,948,445	$11,350,775	$12,430,840	$13,354,800	$12,790,902	$13,724,057	$15,159,564	$18,098,166	$19,355,213	$21,220,276	$19,088,774
% of Total	30.19%	26.94%	26.36%	26.32%	20.94%	20.62%	16.30%	16.02%	15.70%	14.15%	14.00%	13.83%	14.03%	13.95%	14.14%	12.44%
% of Federal	96.35%	95.86%	95.72%	97.39%	96.86%	97.09%	95.23%	94.50%	96.63%	95.75%	94.29%	93.87%	95.21%	95.31%	97.19%	96.50%
Expenditures																
Total of Financing Uses (5)	$41,491,344	$40,967,344	$48,103,150	$57,704,532	$58,915,084	$60,270,265	$59,017,175	$78,766,100	$78,910,951	$86,254,098	$94,422,101	$107,232,564	$119,472,899	$136,712,046	$154,992,153	$148,899,464
Roads	$4,181,670	$3,752,406	$6,711,437	$6,328,993	$5,260,686	$5,968,128	$4,410,598	$7,935,374	$9,357,187	$9,559,868	$9,771,414	$11,674,950	$12,708,770	$13,853,464	$15,262,266	$15,781,132
Forest Reserve Fund (6)	$522,880	$468,586	$559,465	$403,172	$409,434	$388,755	$568,044	$722,861	$465,368	$567,054	$830,978	$989,891	$910,569	$952,065	$819,017	$691,343
% of Total	1.26%	1.14%	1.16%	0.70%	0.69%	0.65%	1.03%	0.94%	0.59%	0.66%	0.88%	0.92%	0.76%	0.70%	0.40%	0.46%
% of Roads	12.56%	12.49%	8.34%	6.37%	7.78%	6.51%	12.88%	9.11%	4.97%	5.93%	8.50%	8.48%	7.16%	6.87%	4.06%	4.38%

Source

Annual Report of Financial Transactions Concerning Counties of California,
Fiscal Years 1977-78 to 1992-93; Office of the State Controller, State of California, Sacramento, CA
Tables 6 and 7

Notes

(1) California fiscal years run July 1 through June 30. For example, FY 1987/88 ran July 1, 1987 through June 30, 1988. Forest Reserve Fund Revenues shown for each fiscal year in this table may not be equal to payments made to counties as reported by the U.S. Forest Service. Any discrepancy is due to: (i) the USFS accounts for payments made to counties on a federal fiscal year basis (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30); and, (ii) this table only includes that portion of payments made by USFS designated for use by county schools.
(2) Grand Total Financing Sources is also referred to in some cases as Total Revenues.
(3) Pursuant to the Forest Reserve Revenue Act of 1908 (35 Stat. 251), the Forest Service is required to return 25 percent of the quality ng gross annual timber sale receipts from the national forests to counties on the basis of the amount of national forest acreage within the county. Under California law, one-half of the payment must be used for schools and the other one-half for roads. All of the data in this table refers to the one half of the payment that is designated for use by counties for roads.
(4) Other federal revenues may include funds provided for Public Assistance Administration, Public Assistance programs, health administration, aid for construction, aid for disaster, revenue sharing, in-lieu taxes, and other.
(5) Total of Financing Uses is also referred to as Total Expenditures in some cases.
(6) It is not possible to accurately determine what portion of the Forest Reserve Revenue Funds are actually expended in each year. The numbers shown in this table assume that all Forest Reserve Revenue Funds distributed to each county were expended entirely for road purposes in the year distributed.

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Sierra Nevada (17 County) Region: U.S. Forest Service Payments to Counties (1) (2)

County	National Forest	1976 Payment	1977 Payment	1978 Payment	1979 Payment	1980 Payment	1981 Payment	1982 Payment	1983 Payment
Alpine	Eldorado	$140,716	$207,703	$239,392	$278,173	$189,271	$332,334	$207,354	$217,309
	Stanislaus	$186,812	$577,587	$569,678	$412,369	$209,672	$415,479	$115,718	$374,655
	Toiyabe	$1,952	$17,892	$11,886	$12,019	$15,359	$13,204	$13,661	$12,298
	County Total	$329,481	$803,182	$820,956	$702,561	$414,302	$761,017	$336,734	$604,261
Amador	Eldorado	$204,050	$301,186	$347,988	$409,056	$278,326	$488,701	$304,917	$319,555
	County Total	$204,050	$301,186	$347,988	$409,056	$278,326	$488,701	$304,917	$319,555
Calaveras	Stanislaus	$133,291	$411,541	$405,796	$293,719	$149,343	$294,720	$82,073	$265,723
	County Total	$133,291	$411,541	$405,796	$293,719	$149,343	$294,720	$82,073	$265,723
El Dorado	Eldorado	$1,281,189	$1,891,708	$2,178,627	$2,558,280	$1,741,793	$3,059,861	$1,909,192	$2,001,653
	Tahoe	NA	NA	NA	NA	$7	$6	$6	$11
	Toiyabe	$0	$3	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2
	County Total	$1,281,190	$1,891,711	$2,178,628	$2,558,282	$1,741,803	$3,059,868	$1,909,200	$2,001,665
Fresno	Inyo	$2	$6	$8	$18	$20	$14	$18	$34
	Sequoia	$84,752	$129,448	$144,055	$213,054	$91,332	$104,374	$81,824	$128,147
	Sierra	$694,903	$1,791,115	$1,977,848	$2,458,752	$859,798	$1,307,242	$587,714	$1,631,197
	County Total	$779,657	$1,920,569	$2,121,911	$2,671,824	$951,151	$1,411,630	$669,556	$1,759,377
Kern	Los Padres	$302	$2,100	$2,419	$2,482	$3,105	$3,379	$4,474	$4,245
	Sequoia	$186,965	$285,566	$317,787	$469,868	$206,175	$235,617	$184,715	$289,286
	County Total	$187,267	$287,666	$320,206	$472,350	$209,280	$238,996	$189,188	$293,531
Lassen	Lassen	$1,053,833	$2,432,342	$2,272,679	$1,768,374	$2,284,720	$2,038,780	$1,238,706	$3,005,341
	Modoc	$32,807	$158,259	$345,208	$326,913	$144,416	$212,389	$70,143	$238,318
	Plumas	$34,948	$140,428	$125,722	$151,413	$133,694	$85,057	$40,798	$105,795
	Toiyabe	$12	$107	$71	$72	$92	$74	$82	$74
	County Total	$1,121,599	$2,731,136	$2,743,681	$2,246,772	$2,562,922	$2,336,299	$1,349,729	$3,349,528
Madera	Inyo	$1,628	$5,893	$7,692	$17,251	$19,269	$12,914	$16,763	$32,228
	Sierra	$290,012	$750,239	$828,621	$1,030,367	$360,300	$547,802	$246,282	$683,359
	County Total	$291,640	$756,132	$836,313	$1,047,619	$379,568	$560,716	$263,046	$715,587
Mariposa	Sierra	$73,646	$189,841	$207,097	$257,294	$89,973	$136,795	$61,501	$170,749

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1984 Payment	1985 Payment	1986 Payment	1987 Payment	1988 Payment	1989 Payment	1990 Payment	1991 Payment	1992 Payment	1993 Payment
$231,292	$148,851	$303,788	$332,935	$345,870	$433,385	$424,629	$410,168	$412,659	$475,927
$282,982	$291,877	$241,554	$488,947	$639,504	$553,724	$383,606	$273,401	$561,599	$562,951
$16,411	$15,917	$16,479	$13,470	$20,609	$21,540	$19,196	$21,244	$26,772	$21,618
$530,685	$456,644	$561,821	$835,351	$1,005,984	$1,008,650	$827,431	$704,813	$1,001,031	$1,060,497
$340,118	$218,887	$446,723	$489,584	$508,606	$637,298	$624,421	$597,848	$599,327	$689,147
$340,118	$218,887	$446,723	$489,584	$508,606	$637,298	$624,421	$597,848	$599,327	$689,147
$198,183	$201,526	$166,774	$337,408	$441,304	$382,109	$264,715	$183,242	$376,401	$377,307
$198,183	$201,526	$166,774	$337,408	$441,304	$382,109	$264,715	$183,242	$376,401	$377,307
$2,136,975	$1,379,647	$2,815,352	$3,087,209	$3,213,879	$4,028,929	$3,952,341	$3,805,733	$3,815,349	$4,387,512
$14	$9	$9	$15	$18	$16	$15	$13	$15	$11
$2	$2	$2	$2	$3	$3	$3	$3	$4	$3
$2,136,991	$1,379,658	$2,815,364	$3,087,226	$3,213,900	$4,028,947	$3,952,359	$3,805,749	$3,815,367	$4,387,525
$21	$24	$25	$18	$22	$27	$20	$15	$31	$26
$78,422	$114,441	$180,334	$122,734	$125,372	$140,114	$104,838	$100,907	$208,195	$252,028
$1,121,952	$1,275,118	$1,744,520	$1,665,516	$1,988,573	$3,022,126	$3,734,937	$1,999,201	$2,031,142	$2,290,651
$1,200,395	$1,389,583	$1,924,879	$1,788,268	$2,113,967	$3,162,267	$3,839,794	$2,100,123	$2,239,368	$2,542,704
$4,778	$4,763	$4,257	$5,385	$6,011	$5,832	$5,329	$5,812	$6,496	$6,503
$177,036	$258,346	$407,218	$277,151	$283,108	$316,398	$238,915	$240,797	$496,775	$601,365
$181,814	$263,108	$411,475	$282,536	$289,119	$322,230	$244,243	$246,609	$503,272	$607,867
$3,474,952	$2,428,459	$4,143,802	$3,796,679	$2,807,687	$3,647,376	$2,767,507	$2,815,440	$2,775,021	$1,492,960
$133,389	$160,666	$172,696	$332,276	$297,040	$304,500	$420,928	$306,740	$276,669	$261,298
$198,608	$96,751	$218,298	$151,720	$269,314	$224,335	$230,292	$196,506	$230,915	$88,505
$98	$95	$99	$80	$122	$127	$111	$122	$153	$123
$3,807,048	$2,685,971	$4,534,895	$4,280,756	$3,374,163	$4,176,338	$3,418,838	$3,318,808	$3,282,758	$1,842,887
$19,480	$23,083	$23,789	$16,931	$20,866	$25,995	$18,618	$14,260	$29,356	$24,341
$470,005	$534,169	$731,141	$697,833	$833,177	$1,266,207	$1,564,860	$845,783	$859,295	$968,902
$489,485	$557,252	$754,929	$714,764	$854,043	$1,292,202	$1,583,477	$860,043	$888,651	$993,243
$117,442	$133,497	$182,642	$174,361	$211,246	$321,040	$396,762	$212,627	$216,024	$243,579

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	Stanislaus	$132,430	$409,446	$403,892	$291,540	$148,235	$293,216	$81,654	$264,374
	County Total	$206,076	$599,287	$610,989	$548,834	$238,208	$430,011	$143,155	$435,122
Modoc	Modoc	$306,426	$1,477,292	$3,223,959	$3,053,100	$1,348,728	$1,984,112	$656,411	$2,230,225
	Shasta	$3,263	$13,460	$17,276	$15,435	$10,303	$15,243	$2,449	$178,014
	County Total	$309,688	$1,490,753	$3,241,235	$3,068,535	$1,359,032	$1,999,355	$658,860	$2,408,239
Nevada	Tahoe	$162,618	$532,688	$447,536	$527,961	$384,588	$307,982	$343,923	$571,882
	Toiyabe	$23	$208	$138	$140	$179	$154	$159	$143
	County Total	$162,640	$532,896	$447,674	$528,101	$384,767	$308,136	$344,082	$572,025
Placer	Eldorado	$122,813	$181,281	$208,681	$247,847	$168,637	$307,529	$191,878	$201,089
	Tahoe	$263,201	$864,478	$728,492	$871,083	$637,706	$511,340	$571,060	$949,570
	County Total	$386,014	$1,045,760	$937,173	$1,118,930	$806,343	$818,869	$762,938	$1,150,659
Plumas	Lassen	$373,887	$862,735	$806,124	$627,229	$810,373	$723,140	$439,360	$1,065,972
	Plumas	$944,511	$3,794,209	$3,391,104	$4,090,888	$3,619,953	$2,302,926	$1,105,801	$2,867,638
	Tahoe	$11,250	$37,605	$31,577	$36,917	$26,892	$21,478	$23,987	$39,885
	County Total	$1,329,648	$4,694,549	$4,228,805	$4,755,034	$4,457,218	$3,047,544	$1,569,147	$3,973,495
Sierra	Plumas	$38,090	$153,055	$136,240	$168,215	$148,530	$94,496	$45,326	$117,536
	Tahoe	$309,233	$1,157,638	$969,681	$1,141,690	$831,653	$664,236	$741,726	$1,233,357
	Toiyabe	$244	$2,232	$1,526	$1,543	$1,971	$1,695	$1,754	$1,579
	County Total	$347,567	$1,312,925	$1,107,447	$1,311,448	$982,155	$760,426	$788,806	$1,352,471
Tulare	Inyo	$6,565	$23,380	$28,056	$62,918	$70,275	$47,098	$61,152	$117,566
	Sequoia	$457,071	$699,261	$779,760	$1,128,876	$489,333	$559,243	$438,514	$686,768
	County Total	$463,636	$722,642	$807,816	$1,191,794	$559,607	$606,341	$499,667	$804,334
Toulumne	Stanislaus	$953,658	$2,949,886	$2,909,540	$2,103,346	$1,069,459	$2,116,283	$589,340	$1,908,308
	Calaveras Bigtree	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
	County Total	$953,658	$2,949,886	$2,909,540	$2,103,346	$1,069,459	$2,116,283	$589,340	$1,908,308
Yuba	Plumas	$34,448	$138,420	$122,240	$147,440	$130,186	$82,285	$27,170	$70,457
	Tahoe	$19,501	$68,037	$56,802	$66,877	$48,716	$38,909	$43,453	$72,254
	County Total	$53,949	$206,457	$179,041	$214,317	$178,902	$121,194	$70,623	$142,710
	Region Total:	$8,068,722	$20,634,627	$20,556,291	$21,645,886	$14,978,587	$17,052,614	$9,528,117	$19,076,328

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$199,419	$205,784	$170,303	$344,722	$450,869	$390,369	$270,437	$194,627	$399,787	$400,750
$316,860	$339,281	$352,945	$519,083	$662,115	$711,409	$667,199	$407,254	$615,811	$644,329
$1,248,730	$1,503,997	$1,616,605	$2,930,467	$2,619,705	$2,685,501	$3,712,317	$2,705,257	$2,440,045	$2,304,487
$7,646	$13,330	$14,506	$11,086	$15,841	$10,000	$22,608	$14,323	$15,712	$12,445
$1,256,376	$1,517,327	$1,631,111	$2,941,553	$2,635,546	$2,695,500	$3,734,925	$2,719,580	$2,455,757	$2,316,932
$730,538	$469,291	$526,300	$834,712	$1,022,796	$874,483	$871,042	$560,178	$617,985	$454,512
$191	$185	$192	$157	$238	$247	$216	$237	$298	$239
$730,729	$469,477	$526,492	$834,868	$1,023,033	$874,730	$871,258	$560,415	$618,283	$454,752
$214,029	$137,741	$281,114	$308,085	$320,055	$401,038	$392,935	$377,950	$378,886	$435,669
$1,231,693	$792,246	$852,995	$1,353,867	$1,659,727	$1,420,100	$1,415,793	$907,784	$1,003,800	$738,918
$1,445,722	$929,987	$1,134,109	$1,661,952	$1,979,782	$1,821,139	$1,808,728	$1,285,734	$1,382,686	$1,174,587
$1,232,540	$861,356	$1,469,776	$1,324,422	$978,898	$1,271,655	$964,791	$983,823	$969,699	$521,698
$5,388,386	$2,625,284	$5,965,360	$4,149,804	$7,367,379	$6,140,719	$6,307,578	$6,676,213	$7,845,255	$3,006,930
$51,002	$32,763	$35,221	$55,860	$68,448	$58,523	$58,293	$37,644	$41,529	$30,544
$6,671,928	$3,519,403	$7,470,356	$5,530,085	$8,414,725	$7,470,898	$7,330,662	$7,697,680	$8,856,484	$3,559,171
$220,648	$107,488	$242,523	$168,557	$299,201	$249,229	$255,848	$267,200	$313,988	$120,345
$1,577,123	$1,013,131	$1,097,605	$1,740,802	$2,133,104	$1,823,810	$1,816,623	$1,165,490	$1,285,762	$945,753
$2,106	$2,043	$2,115	$1,726	$2,621	$2,725	$2,379	$2,618	$3,288	$2,637
$1,799,878	$1,122,662	$1,342,244	$1,911,085	$2,434,926	$2,075,765	$2,074,850	$1,435,309	$1,603,038	$1,068,736
$71,061	$84,206	$86,919	$61,836	$76,206	$94,941	$67,996	$52,082	$107,216	$88,901
$420,284	$611,846	$964,248	$656,299	$670,404	$749,231	$560,598	$539,100	$1,112,931	$1,347,243
$491,345	$696,052	$1,051,166	$718,135	$746,610	$844,173	$628,594	$591,182	$1,220,146	$1,436,145
$1,444,004	$1,490,048	$1,233,184	$2,496,162	$3,266,582	$2,828,415	$1,959,451	$1,397,355	$2,870,334	$2,877,245
$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	NA	NA	NA
$1,444,004	$1,490,048	$1,233,184	$2,496,162	$3,266,582	$2,828,415	$1,959,451	$1,397,355	$2,870,334	$2,877,245
$132,267	$64,433	$145,380	$101,041	$179,355	$149,400	$153,367	$161,520	$189,804	$72,748
$92,393	$59,353	$63,305	$100,402	$123,029	$105,190	$104,775	$67,128	$74,055	$54,466
$224,660	$123,786	$208,685	$201,443	$302,384	$254,590	$258,143	$228,648	$263,859	$127,214
$21,279,116	$15,373,849	$24,409,550	$24,853,840	$29,608,209	$31,016,429	$29,482,907	$24,860,398	$29,518,532	$23,388,603

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Contribution of Federal Forest Reserve Funds to the Financing of County Schools (1)
Fiscal Years 1989 - 1993 (2)

County: **EL DORADO**

Category	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93
Revenues					
Total	$106,282,937	$114,793,784	$126,591,724	$133,013,658	$136,567,497
Federal	$6,499,117	$5,386,090	$8,048,816	$8,395,097	$9,153,416
% of Total	6.11%	4.69%	6.36%	6.31%	6.70%
Forest Reserve Fund (1)	$1,606,950	$0	$1,976,180	$1,902,874	$1,907,683
% of Total	1.51%	0.00%	1.56%	1.43%	1.40%
% of Federal	24.73%	0.00%	24.55%	22.67%	20.84%
Other Federal Funds (3)	$4,892,167	$5,386,090	$6,072,636	$6,492,223	$7,245,733
% of Total	4.60%	4.69%	4.80%	4.88%	5.31%
% of Federal	75.27%	100.00%	75.45%	77.33%	79.16%
Expenditures					
Total	$106,155,753	$115,134,387	$133,641,775	$140,105,402	$141,240,332
Forest Reserve Fund (4)	$1,369,383	$0	$0	$0	$1,594,855
% of Total	1.29%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.13%
Fund Balance					
Total	$31,325,636	$31,033,181	$31,756,809	$29,024,052	$37,031,472
Forest Reserve Fund (5)	$24,455	$0	$21,873	$27,488	$12,914
% of Total	0.08%	0.00%	0.07%	0.09%	0.03%

Source: Information presented here derived from data provided by State of California, Department of Education, School Business Services Division, June, 1994.

Notes:

(1) Pursuant to the Forest Reserve Revenue Act of 1908 (35 Stat. 251), the Forest Service is required to return 25 percent of the qualifying gross annual timber sale receipts from the national forests to counties on the basis of the amount of national forest acreage within the county. Under California law, one-half of the payment must be used for schools and the other one-half for roads. All of the data in this table refers to the one-half of the payment that is designated for use by schools.

(2) California fiscal years run July 1 through June 30. For example, FY 1987/88 ran July 1, 1987 through June 30, 1988. Forest Reserve Fund Revenues shown for each fiscal year in this table may not be equal to payments made to counties as reported by the U.S. Forest Service. Any discrepancy is due to: (i) the USFS accounts for payments made to counties on a federal fiscal year basis (Oct. 1 - Sept. 30); and, (ii) this table only includes that portion of payments made by USFS designated for use by county schools.

(3) Other federal revenues may include funds provided for maintenance and operation, school construction, and child nutrition programs. In addition, these revenues may include drug/alcohol/tobacco funds, special education entitlements and grants, flood control funds, wildlife reserve funds, and other funds. Finally, these revenues may include funds derived from implementation of the following federal acts: Education Professional Development Act, Economic Opportunity Act, ECIA/ESEA, Joint Training Partnership Act, and the Vocational Education Act.

(4) It is not possible to accurately determine what portion of the Forest Reserve Revenue Funds are actually expended in each year. The numbers shown in this table assume that all Forest Reserve Revenue Funds distributed to individual districts and the County School Services Fund were spent in the year distributed.

(5) Includes Forest Service Reserve Funds (i) designated for economic uncertainties; (ii) designated for district -

Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)
County: **El Dorado**

Fiscal Year (1)	FS Acres (2)	Other Acres (2,3)	Total Acres (2)	Prior Year Payments(4)	Population	Ceiling	Alt. A (5)	Alt. B. (6)	Estimated Payment to County	Payment Section 6902	Payment Section 6904/5	Total Payment
1989	494,179	34,575	528,754	$1,543,748	50,000	$1,000,000	$0	$52,875	$52,875	$52,875	$145,032	$197,907
1990	494,406	34,495	528,901	$1,607,097	50,000	$1,000,000	$0	$52,890	$52,890	$52,890	$135,360	$188,250
1991	495,010	34,455	529,465	$2,014,638	50,000	$1,000,000	$0	$52,947	$52,947	$52,947	$154,808	$207,755
1992	495,548	34,455	530,003	$1,976,318	50,000	$1,000,000	$0	$53,000	$53,000	$53,000	$105,451	$158,451
1993	495,574	34,455	530,029	$1,903,046	50,000	$1,000,000	$0	$53,003	$53,003	$53,003	$58,034	$111,037

Sources: In Lieu Tax Payments to Local Units Govt -- PL 97-258 As Amended (USC 6901),
United States Bureau of Land Management, Denver CO.

Footnotes: (1) Federal fiscal year runs Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.
(2) These acreages are "entitlement acreage" for the purposes of calculated PILT payments.
(3) Includes BLM, BuRec, NPS, Army, COE, and FWS lands.
(4) Refers to payments from the Forest Service 25 percent fund & other Federal payments.
(5) Based on ($0.75 X eligible acres) - previous year's Federal payments.
(6) Based on $0.10 X eligible acreage.

California Timber Harvest by County
County: **El Dorado**

Calender Year	Statewide Harvest (Net MBF)	Statewide Value ($)	Volume (Net MBF)	Percent of Total Volume	Percent Public	Percent Private	Public Harvest	Private Harvest	Value ($)	Percent of Total Value	Percent Public	Percent Private	Value of Public Harvest (Nominal $)	Value of Private Harvest (Nominal $)
1978	4,343,726	$682,051,000	180,303	4.15%	37.80%	62.20%	68,155	112,148	$18,667,000	2.74%	31.10%	68.90%	$5,805,437	$12,861,563
1979	3,913,663	$742,697,000	151,608	3.87%	42.10%	57.90%	63,827	87,781	$16,965,000	2.28%	34.50%	65.50%	$5,852,925	$11,112,075
1980	3,090,956	$565,756,000	150,676	4.87%	39.70%	60.30%	59,818	90,858	$17,033,000	3.01%	33.00%	67.00%	$5,620,890	$11,412,110
1981	2,671,849	$493,078,000	150,197	5.62%	35.60%	64.40%	53,470	96,727	$17,520,000	3.55%	31.80%	68.20%	$5,571,360	$11,948,640
1982	2,319,094	$296,117,000	129,623	5.59%	35.30%	64.70%	45,757	83,866	$7,470,000	2.52%	26.30%	73.70%	$1,964,610	$5,505,390
1983	3,357,804	$400,513,000	144,801	4.31%	43.70%	56.30%	63,278	81,523	$12,372,000	3.09%	38.50%	61.50%	$4,763,220	$7,608,780
1984	3,441,281	$439,511,978	135,992	3.95%	45.89%	54.11%	62,407	73,585	$12,129,417	2.76%	46.59%	53.41%	$5,651,095	$6,478,322
1985	3,812,944	$400,249,176	222,959	5.85%	47.41%	52.59%	105,705	117,254	$15,259,865	3.81%	51.57%	48.43%	$7,869,512	$7,390,353
1986	4,143,919	$465,560,548	293,425	7.08%	44.86%	55.14%	131,630	161,795	$21,777,160	4.68%	45.31%	54.69%	$9,867,231	$11,909,929
1987	4,500,199	$572,097,909	229,572	5.10%	59.92%	40.08%	137,560	92,012	$20,872,311	3.65%	58.28%	41.72%	$12,164,383	$8,707,928
1988	4,667,771	$680,140,145	223,741	4.79%	51.44%	48.56%	115,092	108,649	$23,252,508	3.42%	52.25%	47.75%	$12,149,435	$11,103,073
1989	4,429,845	$776,071,380	274,640	6.20%	55.21%	44.79%	151,629	123,011	$28,914,896	3.73%	43.45%	56.55%	$12,563,522	$16,351,374
1990	4,026,193	$900,310,712	326,548	8.11%	48.48%	51.52%	158,310	168,238	$49,215,704	5.47%	40.76%	59.24%	$20,060,321	$29,155,383
1991	3,185,610	$669,149,092	194,278	6.10%	58.47%	41.53%	113,594	80,684	$30,938,814	4.62%	58.32%	41.68%	$18,043,516	$12,895,298
1992	2,973,491	$907,213,745	152,350	5.12%	54.33%	45.67%	82,772	69,578	$34,102,867	3.76%	50.34%	49.66%	$17,167,383	$16,935,484

Source: State of California. Board of Equalization
Timber Tax Division
YTHR2 Report YT-36

Footnotes:

THE SACRAMENTO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Streetwise: Weekly small-business feature debuts on Page 15

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Lumber stabilizes, but worries lie ahead

By LYNN GRAEBNER

For the first time since 1987, lumber production in the 12 Western states is expected to increase this year.

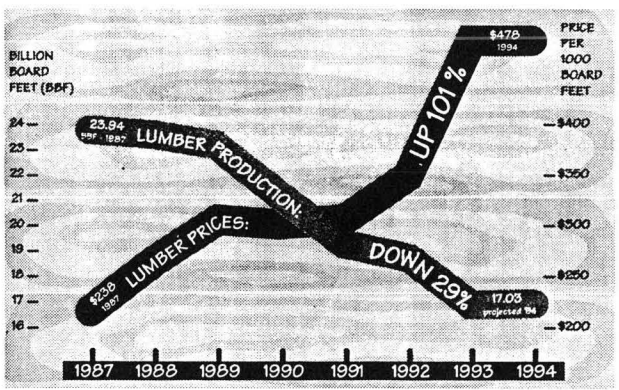
It's a modest gain of 0.2 percent, but it's being taken as a sign that a seven-year, 29 percent slide in production — and a 101 percent explosion in the price of lumber — may have reached their limits.

Despite logging restrictions on state and federal forest lands, lumber mills have managed to fill orders with timber from private land. To a lesser extent, lumber imports and the use of alternative wood products also have bridged the gap.

Logging on private land, however, is occurring at far too fast a pace, experts believe. That could trigger stronger government regulation of private timber sales.

While many small lumber companies have closed, the skyrocketing price of lumber has helped some of the large, sur-

Please turn to page 34



For six years, lumber production slipped dramatically, while prices jumped drastically

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Lumber production stops falling, prices stop rising — for now

Continued from page 1

viving companies to post record earnings this year, analysts said.

This year's expected 0.2 percent increase in Western state lumber production is a substantial improvement over the 10 percent decrease last year, reported the Western Wood Products Association in Portland, Ore.

But how long mills will be able to maintain current production levels remains to be seen, said Butch Bernhardt Jr., director of communications for Western Wood. The organization predicts a 4 percent decline in production next year.

"You can only pull the rabbit out of the hat so many times," Bernhardt said.

While logging restrictions to preserve wildlife habitat have caused many lumber companies over the years to depend more heavily on their own timber supplies and less on public forests, the logging of private forests has escalated.

Many loggers recently have gone door to door looking for trees on private land, said Gil Murray, president of the California Forestry Association in Sacramento.

"They all rushed out real scared this spring and bought up every stick they could find," he said. Now they are flush with timber, and prices are flat, he said.

Although there are no hard statistics available on how much timber has been logged on private, nonindustrial lands, most observers believe they are being cut at an unsustainable level, said analyst Evadna Lynn, who studies paper and forest products for Dean Witter Reynolds in New York.

Some are estimating that trees on these properties are being cut at a rate 40 percent over sustained yield levels, and that by 1996 and 1997 those supplies will probably run out, she said.

Sustained yield is a rate of logging that allows new tree growth to replace the amount harvested.

Increasingly, Canada is a source of wood used in the United States. Historically, wood from Canada has made up about 30 percent of the U.S. consumption. This year it accounts for about 33 percent of total use and 98 percent of the nation's imported lumber, Lynn said. During the first half of 1994, however, imports from Canada increased 13 percent, she said.

And while more wood is coming in, less is leaving the country. Log exports have dropped by half over the last five years, Bernhardt said.

A tighter supply has meant much higher prices.

While the price of construction lumber leveled out this year, it had zoomed upward since 1987, when supply began to fall.

In 1987, 1,000 board-feet of Douglas fir, which is used to frame houses, sold for $238 on average in the 12 Western states. This year it's going for $478, Bernhardt reported.

Lynn predicts lumber prices will increase only about 3 percent this year, but they're still high, having jumped 41 percent just last year.

Prices for the raw product, timber, have also gone up. But increases in finished lumber prices have had a very positive impact on the bottom lines for some lumber companies.

Both Louisiana-Pacific, based in Portland, Ore., and Georgia-Pacific, based in Atlanta, are reporting excellent third-quarter earnings this year.

Louisiana-Pacific had record third-quarter earnings with $95.1 million in net income, or 86 cents per share, on net sales of $818.4 million. That more than doubled the company's net income of $41.5 million, or 38 cents per share, on sales of $629.4 million for the third quarter in 1993.

Lynn attributes the higher net income to a combination of aggressive earnings growth of about 20 percent annually, due to reinvestment and to the high price of wood.

Another factor is the company's increased production of an engineered wood product called oriented strand board, from 2 billion board-feet in 1988 to 3.5 billion this year. Oriented strand board is made by gluing pieces of young trees together, and is used in many of the same applications as plywood. It's a very high-margin, low-cost material, she said, and now accounts for half of Louisiana-Pacific's earnings.

Louisiana-Pacific's earnings increase for the first nine months of 1994 is not as dramatic as the third-quarter hike, but is still impressive. For the year to date, Louisiana-Pacific reported net income of $262.2 million, or $2.38 per share, on net sales of $2.29 billion. That's up from net income of $194.9 million, or $1.78 per share, on net sales of $1.88 billion for the previous year. Nine-month earnings this year already surpass the company's record full-year earnings in 1993.

In California, Louisiana-Pacific has mills in Willits, Sonoma, Ukiah, Fort Bragg and Big Lagoon, near Eureka. Other building-products facilities in the state are in Arcata, Oroville and Red Bluff.

Georgia-Pacific has more than doubled its operating profits on sales of building products in the past five years.

"While we expect short-term fluctuations in building products prices, the long-term outlook for this business is very good," said Pete Correll, chairman and chief executive officer of Georgia-Pacific, in a news release.

Georgia-Pacific reported net income of $87 million, or 98 cents per share, on total net sales of $3.28 billion for the third quarter. Last year in the third quarter, it lost $36 million, or 42 cents per share, on net sales of $2.98 billion.

Most of the company's business is pulp and paper, which is recovering after several years of very poor prices due to oversupply and a sickly economy. But building products, which represent 16 percent of the company's assets, accounted for record operating profits of $262 million in the third quarter vs. $210 million for third quarter of last year.

For the nine-month period, Georgia-Pacific reported net income of $141 million, or $1.59 per share, on net sales of $9.44 billion, compared to net income of $2 million, or 2 cents per share, on net sales of $9.13 billion through nine months last year.

Lynn attributed last year's poor results to low paper prices and the company's high interest charges due to a high debt ratio. Increases this year are largely a result of increased lumber prices, she said.

In California the company has sawmills in Foresthill, Fort Bragg and Martell, near Jackson.

Engineered wood products are also a bright spot on Georgia-Pacific's balance sheet. The company has annually dedicated up to $400 million — a quarter of its $1.6 billion yearly capital spending program — to increasing its production of laminated veneer lumber. This framing product consists of thin sheets of wood from a log that are then glued together, using up to 30 percent more of a log than conventional lumber, said Ken Haldin, a spokesman with Georgia-Pacific.

"With fewer resources the industry has to be responsive and innovative. We're making more with less," he said.

The company reports sales of about $100 million per year on engineered lumber products and expects to quadruple that business by 1997.

The majority of Georgia-Pacific's timber comes from private lands other than its own. One-third of the company's wood comes from its own 6.2 million acres across the nation, about 5 percent from federal and state-owned forests, Haldin said.

Louisiana-Pacific depends on its own land for 14 percent of its timber supply. A very small amount, 10 percent last year, comes from state and federal lands and the balance from private, nonindustrial property, said Bill Hebert, the company's chief financial officer and treasurer.

Those companies that don't own their own forest land will have a tough time competing in the future. Many of the mills that have gone out of business in the last few years didn't have their own timber land, Western Wood's Bernhardt said, and that made them unattractive to potential buyers. Most of those mills have been shut down and their assets auctioned off, he said.

Since 1987, 49 sawmills and other wood products facilities in the state have closed. Only three of those have reopened, reported the California Forestry Association. Of those 49 closures, 37 have occurred since 1990, the year the northern spotted owl was listed as an endangered species.

Statement
of
Chris Conrad
Fibreboard Corporation

Before the
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Lands
Committee on Resources
House of Representatives

June 6, 1995

Oversight on California Spotted Owl

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Chris Conrad, a registered professional forester employed by Fibreboard Corporation at the Standard mill site located near the Sierra Nevada community of Sonora. I am a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley's School of Forestry and have been an active, hands-on forester for over 20 years. Before I get to the details of my testimony, let me take a few minutes to tell you about Fibreboard and the kind of forestry that we practice.

About Fibreboard

Headquartered in Northern California, Fibreboard Corporation is a leader in the building products industry, manufacturing wood and vinyl products and industrial insulation. In addition, the company owns and operates two California resorts: Northstar-at-Tahoe, an all season ski and golf resort and conference center, and Sierra-at-Tahoe, a day ski facility.

Fibreboard Wood Products Company—a wholly owned subsidiary of Fibreboard Corporation—is a fully-integrated manufacturer of lumber, hardwood plywood, moulding, millwork, and other wood products. These facilities rely upon a continuous flow of wood grown, harvested, and replenished in the public and private forests of the central Sierra Nevada Mountains. A portion of our wood supply comes from *selective* harvest of the 80,000 acres of healthy, productive forests which Fibreboard owns in the Sierra Mountains.

Fibreboard's private woodlands are a perpetual source of raw material for the many products which our society demands while meeting a full-range of diverse resource and wildlife needs. It is true that our forest lands are managed intensively for wood products. However, our experienced staff of forestry professionals also protect streams, conserve the soil, and nurture the many plant and animal species which thrive in our forests.

Historically, many of the trees which Fibreboard transforms into products for families in California and elsewhere have originated on national forest lands. Over the years, approximately 60 to 70 percent of Fibreboard's raw material supply has come from the Stanislaus National Forest. Recently, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) forest protection, timber management, and other vital programs have ground to a halt. As a consequence, we have had to obtain timber from alternate sources, sometimes going extraordinary distances to secure those trees.

A Rich Historical Heritage

Fibreboard is a company with a long and proud history in the forest products business. We trace our roots back to the post-California Gold Rush days of the last century. Our primary sawmill, at Standard, in Tuolumne County, has been in operation since 1920. (The mill has been updated many

times and is modern and efficient.) The fee timber lands which we own and manage were once part of the Standard and Westside Lumber Company holdings. The Westside lands supported one of the most famous narrow gauge logging railroads in the western states.

Fibreboard's Forest Management: An Eye to the Future

While we are justifiably proud of our rich historical heritage, Fibreboard is also a company that is mindful of our obligations to future generations. We manage our forests for the long-term using the following principles:

- ❑ We will sustain and improve the health and vigor of our forests and related resources.
- ❑ We will maintain a diverse mosaic of continuous forest cover across the landscape we manage through application of *selective* timber harvesting techniques.
- ❑ We will promptly reforest timber lands damaged by fire, insects, or other natural disasters.
- ❑ We will maintain timber land productivity at the highest possible level consistent with other resource management needs.
- ❑ We will balance timber harvests (removals) with growth to assure a sustainable flow of forest products and *to reduce fuel loads and the potential for stand-destroying fires.*

Operational Details

To implement these forestry principles, Fibreboard operates on our land as follows:

- ❑ All timber harvests are planned and supervised by professional foresters licensed by the state of California.
- ❑ Harvesting activities (performed by contract loggers) are supervised by Fibreboard and monitored by the State of California to assure compliance with the Nation's strictest forest practice rules.
- ❑ Individual and group tree selection timber harvest methods are applied to all timber lands except those needing rehabilitation. We *selectively* remove trees on some 8,000 acres per year. Areas are ready for reentry every ten years.
- ❑ We maintain and remeasure 350 permanent inventory plots to help us determine how much wood we are growing and how much we can harvest. Eighty percent of these plots have been in place for more than 30 years.

A Solid Record of Results

Mr. Chairman, we are very proud of the results we have achieved:

- *The timber inventory on our forest lands is approximately the same today as it was in 1977. Over that period of time, some 630 million board feet of timber was harvested.*
- Since 1973, we have planted over three million seedlings in our rehabilitation and stewardship efforts. As part of this program, over 9,000 acres destroyed by fire have been reestablished.
- Since 1989, we have pursued an aggressive thinning program to improve stand health and resistance to fire. During the last six years, we have treated in excess of 13,000 acres.
- Fibreboard's forests provide habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species including spotted owls. *Our surveys indicate that densities of California spotted owls in our managed forests surpass the levels found on adjacent federal lands which are dominated in large areas by old-growth timber.*

California Spotted Owls and Young-Growth Forests

Fibreboard began surveying for California spotted owls within its forests in 1989. We have surveyed for owls every year since then and will be conducting another survey this year. We follow established scientific protocols and are confident in the data that we have gathered.

The majority of Fibreboard's 80,000 acres has been selectively harvested at least three times. The last of the original old-growth timber was removed from most of these lands 20 to 30 years ago and healthy stands of young-growth predominate today. Despite the absence of old-growth, these forest lands have been shown, through intensive surveying work over the last five years, to be providing excellent habitat for the California spotted owl.

The densities of spotted owls found in Fibreboard's young-growth stands are *greater* than those being claimed by the Forest Service for adjacent national forest lands that are dominated in large areas by old-growth timber. We have approximately one occupied owl territory for every 1,000 to 1,500 acres of company-owned forest land. Current recognized densities on adjacent Stanislaus National Forest lands are approximately one occupied territory per every 2,500 acres. Nesting and roosting sites within the company's forests have proven to be abundant, and owl reproduction in young-growth timber has been shown to be high.

Present USFS Owl Management: A Prescription for Disaster

Professional foresters, such as myself, working for private companies know that intensive forestry and protection of the California spotted owl are *compatible* management goals. We have shown through solid field work that it is possible to have both more wood *and* more owls.

As professional foresters, we are *extremely* concerned about the present Forest Service policy designed to "protect" the owl. The current USFS management approach puts vast areas of the national forests off limits to timber harvest and precludes USFS field foresters from using the management tools necessary to protect these forests from catastrophic destruction, primarily wildfire.

Our message to you today is blunt: the national forests in the Sierra Mountains are on the verge of destruction. Forests that had been kept "open and park-like" in John Muir's day—through light ground fires set by Native Americans—have grown into dense thickets of highly combustible fuel that can turn into raging conflagrations with a single spark. These changed conditions have been dramatically documented by photo-historians. I am submitting for the hearing record some of the incredible recent work that has been done in this regard for the Sierras.

The high-risk national forest stands cannot be returned to an open and park-like condition simply through controlled burning. Controlled burns are a good tool in some, more open forest conditions, but are currently problematic in most stands given high fuel loads, Clean Air Act restrictions, and the risk such fires pose to the private property intermingled with the USFS land. Instead, forest thinning on a large-scale needs to be accomplished over the very short-term if these federal forest lands are to be spared destruction from major wildfires. *This thinning can only be done through timber harvest.* Unfortunately, current Forest Service policies (designed ostensibly to "protect" the spotted owl) are moving our national forests in exactly the *wrong* direction, by virtually eliminating timber removals.

Let me give you a specific example. The USFS instituted the original Spotted Owl Habitat Area (SOHA) concept in the early 1980s. That concept was continued through promulgation of the first-generation National Forest Management Act (NFMA) plans for the Sierra Nevada national forests, and through the California Spotted Owl (CASPO) Interim Guidelines. As a result of these policies —which preclude timber removal, fire hazard reduction, and most other management activities within a 1,600 to 2,600-acre circle around known owl sites—*nine of the 35 SOHA's within the Stanislaus National Forest have been severely damaged or totally destroyed by fire during the last eight years.* I am submitting for the record some photo-graphs that show what these "set-asides" for the spotted owl look like today.

No Alternative Balances Growth and Removal

Fibreboard's professional forestry team and our counterparts in other companies have closely examined the alternative management plans set forth in the Cal Owl Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released by the Forest Service in March 1995. We are amazed that none of the alternatives presented in the DEIS is based on the concept of removing as much wood from the forests as is grown each year. This is a fundamental and fatal flaw in a document that readily admits that continued fuel build-ups in the Sierra Mountain forests can only "be ignored at our peril." *Only by balancing forest*

growth and removal can we effectively address the fuel loading problems in the Sierras and prevent catastrophic wildfires.

This is an extremely simple concept, but it is apparently a very difficult one for Forest Service management to embrace. Perhaps the primary problem is political. A policy to balance growth and removal would require admitting that contemporary national forest management direction has been misguided. For obvious reasons, the Forest Service is reluctant to carry a new and unfamiliar story to the American public—a public that long ago assimilated Smokey Bear into its collective consciousness. Compounding this political problem is the fact that the story runs contrary to what the average citizen has (erroneously) been led to believe by the preservationists and the media. *The true story is that we have* not *been overcutting our national forests, but rather drastically undercutting them with increasingly disastrous results.*

Again, let's use the Stanislaus National Forest as an example. The Cal Owl DEIS projects an annual allowable sale quantity (ASQ) of only 27 million board feet (mmbf) for the Stanislaus under the Preferred Alternative (C). Growth on the Stanislaus' capable, available, and suitable lands (those destined for timber production) is 160 mmbf per year, while growth on the entire forested land base is 320 mmbf. *In other words, the Preferred Alternative targets removal of less than 10 percent of the annual growth on the Stanislaus National Forest.* (Even Alternative D, which has the highest timber outputs, targets for removal only 62 mmbf or about one-fifth of the yearly growth.)

By comparison, the current Stanislaus National Forest Plan set an ASQ of 88 mmbf. Annual harvest levels for the past 30 years have averaged approximately 130 mmbf, about 40 percent of growth. Given the serious imbalance between growth and removal, it is not surprising that the Stanislaus has lost some 160,000 acres to catastrophic wildfire in the past eight years.

For the Sierra national forests as a whole, the ASQ's projected for the various alternatives range from 114 mmbf to 732 mmbf. The DEIS states that "annual growth is approximately 1.7 billion board feet." [DEIS at 3-149.]

Obviously, Forest Service officials have not looked seriously at the concept of balancing "growth and removals," even though such a policy has clear advantages over the status quo. The agency's attitude is especially puzzling in light of the finding of their own scientists that: "the overly dense stands of trees and the increasing occurrence of high severity fires are highly important issues facing the Sierran ecosystem. **All other concerns are of secondary importance.** [DEIS at 3-18, emphasis ours] We continue to wonder why—if all other concerns are of lesser importance—the Forest Service fails to address the only means of effectively dealing with the problem, *i.e.* increasing timber harvests until growth and removals are in balance.

Other Flaws in the Cal Owl DEIS

In fact, in order to address the huge *backlog* of overstocked stands, the Forest Service should have looked seriously at alternatives where harvests *exceed* growth for a period of time. This is a legitimate professional forestry approach to the extreme overstocking problems found throughout the Sierra Nevada Range (and in other national forests in the West). Recently, a USFS land management planning officer on a national forest in the Sierra told me that to eliminate the runaway fuels build-up on national forest lands "we ought to cut more than we are growing for the next 25 to 30 years." We agree, and believe that his concept *should* have been considered as the Forest Service examined alternatives during the NEPA process.

Perhaps the most glaring (and ironic) flaw in the DEIS, however, is that the Preferred Alternative will *not* provide protection for habitat of the California spotted owl, the very species the plan is designed to defend. The selected alternative (in fact every alternative considered) *guarantees* that catastrophic fire will continue to be the major "manager" of spotted owl habitat in the Sierra Mountains. As the DEIS states, "The incidence of high-severity fires is expected to increase as fuels continue to accumulate. As a result, high severity fires are likely to eliminate large acreages of spotted owl habitat... at an increasing frequency. [DEIS at 3-229] As professional foresters, we submit that this is *not* acceptable national forest management.

Mr. Chairman, as an active member of the California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) and a past member of the Board of Directors of that organization, I have attached a CLFA response to Janice Gauthier, leader of the DEIS team. I ask that these comments be included in the record of this hearing. As you will see, the CLFA found numerous inadequacies with the DEIS.

This is a National Problem of Staggering Dimensions

National Forest System lands are today growing approximately 22 billion board feet (bbf) of wood annually. Current harvest is approximately 5 bbf. Not only are we allowing 17 bbf of wood to be added to the fuel loading on our national forest lands every, but we are foregoing substantial revenues. I have seen one estimate that indicates that the federal government gives up nearly a billion dollars in revenue each year by not selling the national ASQ. It is the height of irrationality to import lumber and other wood products from Canada, New Zealand, Chile, and elsewhere while our national forest lands are allowed to provide less and less to our Nation's economy.

The members of this subcommittee are to be commended for taking the lead in beginning to reform a management system for national forest lands that places those lands in jeopardy rather than ensuring that they are wisely cared for, to protect forest health, local communities, and wildlife and contribute to the needs of our Nation. You have stated that the federal forests must be managed, "more like a business." We agree whole-heartedly. No well-managed, profit-making, private-sector

company would allow 17 billion board feet of timber growth to remain unproductive. No such company would allow the timber to accumulate to the point where it becomes a threat to the forest itself. Nor would any of us invest in a company that would permit such a thing to happen.

Conclusion and Recommendations

We recommend that this committee strongly direct the Forest Service to withdraw the California Spotted Owl EIS because it is scientifically inadequate and incomplete. We also recommend that the Forest Service take a completely new look at forest health by addressing the issue of growth and removals. In the interim, since the DEIS has shown that the California spotted owl populations in the Sierras are not in immediate peril, the affected national forests should revert back to management under the land management plans (LMPs) in place prior to adoption of the CASPO Interim Guidelines.

With respect to the Interim Guidelines, the DEIS states that under Alternative A (*i.e.* the Current LMP Alternative), "suitable spotted owl nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat would increase 8 percent over the short term..." [DEIS at 2-16] There is clearly no risk to the owl from suspending the current CASPO guidelines—which have virtually eliminated all timber sales and have, thus, been choking our rural communities—until Congress can enact a comprehensive, long-term forest health bill.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion let me say that the real problem facing the national forests in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (and elsewhere) is *not* providing habitat for spotted owls; the real problem is the health of these forests themselves. It is time for common-sense to enter the debate. When a forest management system is focused on a single species—whether it be the spotted owl or something else—and it imperils that very species, the forest itself, intermingled private property, and the economies of local communities, then there is something very wrong with that system.

The forest management approach in use today on private forest lands successfully allows us to thin timber stands, reduce fuel loading, provide raw material for local mills and communities, and protect the forest from catastrophic fire. We need to transfer this approach from the private forests to those owned by the federal government and entrusted to the U.S. Forest Service for management. We urge you to make that happen.

Again, our communities and our national forest lands need a long-term forest health bill passed in the very near future or we are facing economic and physical disaster in the forests and rural communities in the West.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this statement. I am ready to answer any questions that you might have.



May 16, 1995

Ms. Janice Gauthier
California Spotted Owl EIS Team Leader
2999 Fulton Avenue
Sacramento, Ca 95821

Dear Ms. Gauthier:

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) represents approximately 740 licensed foresters and other resources professionals statewide. The membership consists of dedicated professionals employed by forest products companies, state and federal agencies as well as private consulting foresters.

As resource professionals, CLFA is very interested in the outcome of the California Spotted Owl EIS. The decision will have long term impacts over a very large portion of the State. Secondly, the effects of the final decision will be noticeable on both public and private forests and much of the rural population throughout the Sierras. Having reviewed the DEIS and supporting documents, CLFA submits the following comments. Our purpose is to bring to light critical issues, seek resolution to those issues and encourage prudent management of our public lands.

Finding: It is our determination that the purpose of the DEIS is questionable. Furthermore, the basis for the draft is critically flawed and is lacking support from conclusive scientific evidence. The forest practices of the past have resulted in diverse forest conditions that are favorable to the Spotted Owl and a multitude of other animals. For this reason, the Spotted Owl population is doing well and is in good condition. The draft states on page S-9 that, *"The California Spotted Owl appears to be abundant and well-distributed within the forests on the west slope of the*

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Sierra Nevada. It is possible that the owl is more abundant today in some areas of the Sierra Nevada than in the past 100 years or prior to Euro-American settlement." Management practices have generally improved habitat conditions since Euro-American settlement. Currently, the owl enjoys a relatively even distribution. This is not only apparent on the National Forest but also on adjacent industrial lands being managed primarily for timber production.

The purpose of the draft is to maintain viable populations of the California Spotted Owls. The document relies on the concerns listed in the technical assessment issued in 1993 in which the scientific team identified logging large old trees, reduction of snags and downed logs, as well as the danger from catastrophic fire as threats to existing habitat. However, the following quote indicates that there is more to the issue. *" Even if one wishes to debate the status of the California Spotted Owl, there is agreement that closed-canopy, multi-storied forests of large, old trees are in decline. This is of concern for other reasons besides the California Spotted Owl, and requires a change in management direction. This forest type is home to various other species in addition to the Spotted Owl".* (EIS team executive summary 1995)

While the maintenance of viable animal populations is mandated in the National Forest Management Act, the scientific team did not establish population viability as a concern in the Technical Assessment. In fact, they conclude there is evidence that the Spotted Owl population has increased over the last 100 years. This is due to the exclusion of fire and an increase in stand densities. The recent photo history conducted by George Gruell gives support to this evidence. The scientific team also failed to determine what a viable Spotted Owl population is. For the above reasons, with supporting evidence in the technical assessment, we question the scientific evidence that supports the basis for the drastic change in management proposed. Furthermore, the conclusions of the technical report did not link a reduction in large trees to a decline in the Spotted Owl population nor did it link logging large trees with a reduction in the numbers of any other species. The report did conclude the following about the Owl's current status. " *Their current distribution and abundance, however, do not suggest that they have declined either in their overall distribution in the Sierra Nevada or that they have declined markedly in abundance within any forest type.* " (Verner et al 1992). Therefore, it is our conclusion on this point that the

management changes proposed in this document are unwarranted and based on speculative conclusions interpreted from the technical assessment.

Finding: The DEIS only gives token consideration to the increasing risk of catastrophic fire which will result in reduced biological diversity over time, continued loss of productive timberland and Spotted Owl habitat.

The potential for catastrophic wildfire has become a very real problem facing the Sierra Nevada land managers today. Past policies which excluded fire from the forest, have created an abnormal buildup of forest fuels. This is recognized in the draft EIS. *"Fire exclusion practices are creating forest conditions that most likely will lead to large high-severity fires, as experienced during the past five years." (3-66)* Early in the process, this critical issue was identified as a primary concern in providing for the long term viability of the owl. A summary of the ecological support team workshop makes this statement. *" The general consensus of the workshop participants was that the overly dense stands of trees and the increasing occurrence of high severity fires are highly important issues facing the Sierran ecosystems. All other concerns are of secondary importance(3-18)."* The seriousness of fire risk is reiterated on page 3-232 under Spotted Owl Habitat. *" The risk of high severity fires is a primary concern in evaluating Spotted Owl management strategies."*

However, after reviewing the DEIS, it's quite evident that this issue has been given only token consideration and almost ignored completely in the development of alternatives. It is clear that very low level of fuels treatment proposed under Alternative C will fall far short of significantly reducing the fire hazard and meeting the goals of the draft.

The zoned approach selected in Alternative C will only aggravate the potential for large, catastrophic fires. Under this approach, no silvicultural treatment will be allowed in the lower third of all drainages. As stated in the DEIS. *" There will be no scheduled timber harvest or salvage of endemic mortality."(S-6).* The result of this hands off approach will be increasing development of fuel ladders, heavy canopy closure, and increasing number of snags, downed

wood and a greater potential for habitat loss. *"This increase in dead and down material indicates that fire intensities, fire size and fire suppression difficulty would increase under this alternative over time." (3-87).*

In the Riparian Zone, the prohibition of salvage of dead and dying trees and the resulting continued fuel accumulation is a recipe for loss of all important habitat elements in the zone to catastrophic wildfire. One biologist on the DEIS team naively states, *"Riparian areas can also act as wildlife refuges during wildfire and are often the first areas occupied by wildlife after stand-replacing fires."* (3-121). Yet throughout the DEIS the catastrophic wildfire threat to California Spotted Owl habitat, especially in riparian areas, is continually stressed as the key factor in owl survival. [*The incidence of high-severity wildfire is expected to continue to increase as fuels continue to accumulate. As a result, high severity fires are likely to continue to eliminate large acreages of Spotted Owl habitat ... at an increasing frequency."* (3-229), and *"Multi-canopied tree layers, large numbers of snags, and large accumulations of ground fuels are indications of high fire hazard."* (2-43), and *"A reduction in the risk of high-severity fires is also the key to the long-term maintenance of ... suitable owl habitat. Therefore, the results of this section must also be viewed in the context of the relative fire risks."* (3-232)] It is obvious that the relative fire risks were, in fact, not considered nor adequately addressed in the proposed management for the Riparian Zone.

In the Mid-slope Zone of Alternative C, all medium to large trees would be retained with 50 to 100 percent canopy closure. This zone would be in mid-to-late successional stages generally characterized by the term "continuous forest cover" (2-22). The proposed levels of light thinning and scattered group selection in the understory would be insufficient to establish regeneration of sufficient quantity and quality or promote even moderate growth of residual trees beneath the heavy canopy of large trees. *" Light thinning reduces fuel loading and maintains tree diameter growth, but has little or no ability to reduce the risk of crown fire."(3-191).* As a result of these unhealthy stand conditions, natural mortality will increase significantly over the long term, further increasing fuel loading and fire hazard. The DEIS states the cumulative affects of Alternative C quite well - *"Potential mortality, as a proxy for stand-replacement fires would*

increase throughout the analysis period. The increase in dead and downed material indicates that fire intensities, fire size and fire suppression difficulty would increase under this alternative over time. The late successional and riparian zone may be vulnerable to high intensity crown fire..." (3-87). Because of this extreme wildfire threat , the riparian and mid-slope zones proposed in Alternative C are unsustainable and entire watersheds will likely be destroyed with increasing frequency. This will likely result in a threat to the currently healthy California Spotted Owl population throughout the Sierran range.

The high levels of large trees retention over much of the forest landscape in nearly every Alternative proposed are unnecessary and unsubstantiated by scientific evidence of the owl's biological needs. The management actions, particularly the level of large trees retention, proposed in Alternative C are unsustainable over time and will only exacerbate annual habitat loss to catastrophic wildfire rather than maintain and increase the levels of desired California Spotted Owl habitat over time, as the DEIS purports.

The riparian zone receives a disproportionate amount of recreation activity than the rest of the forest. As a result, there is an increase in ignition sources. The bottom of these drainages are also subject to daily up canyon and down canyon winds which are capable of spreading fire throughout a drainage. Alternative C will create chimneys and a fuse of heavy fuel and fuel ladders conducive to high intensity fires in watersheds throughout the Sierrias. The problem is identified in the DEIS in the following quotes. *"The late successional and riparian zone may be vulnerable to high intensity crown fires in late fire season in dry years."(3-87). " Intense fires originating in the riparian zone may burn up through the upper slope vegetation."(3-87).*

Alternative C and several others rely of the construction of large fuel breaks along the ridgetops to stop the spread of large fires. This will provide a place for suppression forces to attack the fire. However, quite frequently, large fire will spread through spotting which commonly occurs up to half a mile in front of the main fire. While ridge top fuel modification will reduce the spread and occurrence of fire on the ridge top, it will do little to prevent fire spread through spotting from one drainage to the next.

In recent years, it has been recognized that the greatest risk to life and property is found in the urban interface. These areas will continue to experience growth in the future. For this reason, any program to reduce fire risk on forestland should place high priority on treatment of stands adjacent to these areas. The DEIS completely overlooks this important aspect to public land management, leaving mountain comunities at risk.

The CLFA believes the issues surrounding catastrophic fire are paramount to successful management of the Sierra. The proposed alternatives fail to meet the goal of reducing risk of catastrophic fire. In order to successfully manage for longterm viability of wildlife, the impacts of fire must be mitigated through stand management over the entire forest.

Finding: The alternatives proposed will contribute to the decline in Forest Health.

Currently, available inventory statistics indicate that volume and number of trees on the Sierra Nevada forests has been changing. With respect to the conifer species in particular, the volume of shade tolerant white fir and incense cedar has been increasing. The volume of shade intolerant ponderosa pine has been declining.

Harvesting certainly played a minor role in this species shift. However, it must be recognized that this is only a minor role in comparison with the dynamics of the successional forces which have impacted the forests with the exclusion of fire. With the absence of fire, understory trees have become established and remain as components of stand structure. In almost all instances, these understory trees are forced to compete for sunlight with a well-established overstory. In this environment only, the trees adapted to grow under shaded conditions dominate. In the case of the Mixed Conifer type in the Sierras, fir and cedar make up 52% of the total tree species composition province-wide. (Table 3.K.1, page 3-147 CAL-OWL draft IS). Ponderosa pine makes up only 8%.

The same table shows that even for the pine type, cedar and fir combine to make up 29% of the total species composition. Ponderosa pine in this type also makes up 29%. Clearly, there has

been a shift in species composition.

It is our opinion that the alternatives listed in the CAL-OWL report will all promote continuation of this trend. We agree with the statement from page 3-157 of the CAL-OWL DEIS, which reads as follows: *"As few as four well-spaced large overstory trees per acre can reduce height growth for the majority of ponderosa pine seedlings by over 50 percent". (McDonald)*

The alternatives presented in the report, in all cases, will result in retention of greater than four trees per acre across the landscape or would create opening sizes generally less than two acres in size which would not be conducive to maintenance of ponderosa pine vigor and growth to insure recruitment through the regeneration to small sawlog phases of stand reestablishment.

This is clearly true of Alts. E, F, & G which, in general, do not even provide meaningful regeneration opportunities. Alts. B and C, to the extent that they provide for openings up to 2 acres in size, could offset this trend only if opening sizes are kept to the maximum 2 acre size and only if the acreage regenerated is accomplished under short enough rotation lengths to insure that tolerant species don't come to dominate the understory. Given the current proposed rates of treatment and the selected rotation age of 200 years, we believe the opportunities to maintain pine through management activities is speculative at best.

Alt. A and D do appear to have the best chance of maintaining the ponderosa pine component because in both cases a full range of silvicultural options is available. However, we are doubtful that the agency will be able to take advantage of the flexibility these alternatives have written into them from a political standpoint.

Ironically, the greatest offsetting influence and positive outcome of the alternatives from a ponderosa pine standpoint is that stand replacement fires will increase over time. Ponderosa pine seedlings should be able to compete well in these situations. Much will depend on available seed sources and the Forest Service infrastructural capability to respond and replant these types of areas.

Our discussions with members of the CAL-OWL team revealed that analysis of changes in species composition of the forest was never done. We consider this to be a fatal flaw in the draft document. Changes in tree species composition will impact associated resources, particularly some species of wildlife.

The CAL-OWL team should be directed to complete an analysis of changes in tree species composition over time. This analysis should be done for each of the alternatives included in the draft report. It should also be done for subsequent alternatives analyzed to fulfill commitments made by the Regional Forester to various interest groups.

Finding: The level of large tree retention proposed in all the alternatives goes far beyond what is scientifically required by the Spotted Owl at the expense of forest health and protection.
One of the basic tenants of the DEIS is that retention of large old trees (LOT) is important to the long-term maintenance of the thriving California Spotted Owl (CSO) populations now existing throughout the Sierran range. [*"The rapid disappearance of the large, old, decadent trees is the greatest concern" (3-127),* and *"It is assumed that the reversal or curtailment of adverse trends (e.g., the loss of large diameter trees) will reduce or stabilize associated pressures on the Spotted Owl" (3-232)]* However, further examination of the scientific basis for this tenant reveals that nearly every Alternative provides for many more large trees than are necessary.

Although there appears to be little agreement among biologists about the necessary characteristics of California Spotted Owl habitat, most agree that owls prefer large old trees for their nest and roost trees. [*"California spotted owls in the Sierra Nevada appear to select remnant trees ... for roosting and nesting places." (3-36)*] There is a lack of scientific evidence, however, that large old trees are a necessary component of foraging habitat. [*"Selectivity is stronger for nesting and roosting habitats and weaker for foraging habitats" (3-226),* and *"... foraging habitat used by the California subspecies appears to be much more variable than that used by its northern relative" (3-36)*] Biologists readily admit there is no scientific information available to guide the forest manager in identifying the preferred mix of nesting and foraging habitat. [*"The variety and array of patch sizes are as important as the number of acres (of*

suitable nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat), though the landscape patterns that are best for Spotted Owls are not known." (3-230) (emphasis added)] In fact, it is scientifically impossible to even establish the amount of suitable habitat as it exists today to determine whether more is even needed. [*"At the landscape scale, there is little in the overall distribution pattern of California Spotted Owls to suggest ways to distinguish between suitable and unsuitable habitat except in very broad terms. ... Given these difficulties, identifying and tallying total acres of suitable habitat is an inexact process, and there is much room for interpretation" (3-226)*] Even Dr. Verner himself recognized this fact in the original report of the Scientific Team. [*"The apparent variability in habitat use by the California Spotted Owl should temper inferences made about managing for functional habitat (Verner et al. 1992)."* (3-35)]

Why then, does every Alternative (except A and F) provide for retention of all large trees over most, if not all of the forested landscape? We question the scientific basis for this. Even the simplest overview of each of the Alternatives reveals the DEIS Team chose Alternatives which, from a scientific basis, provide for many more large trees than appear to be necessary for just the spotted owl. It does not appear the DEIS team took Dr. Verner's advice to "*temper*" their "*inferences made about managing for functional habitat*". Prudent science would indicate that several more alternatives need to be evaluated which provide for varying amounts of the landscape dominated by large trees for nesting/roosting habitat mixed in varying arrays with foraging habitat consisting of a variety of stand conditions.

In the preferred Alternative C, the level of retention of large trees limits the long-term sustainability of the proposed actions by prohibiting management of any consequence in the Riparian Zone and limited management actions in the Mid-slope Zone.

Finding: In the modeling of alternatives, the ecological assumptions used were not based on true stand dynamics found in the Sierra .

The ecological scenario of the "late-successional and riparian zone" appears fatally flawed. A critical review of this concept is needed by those familiar with Sierra stand dynamics and

silviculture. It appears that a static model of stand replacement is presumed; (e.g. understory trees grow up through the old growth stand and replace it over long time periods.) The use of the Forest Vegetation Simulation model (FVS) lends credibility to this, as the runs appear to show that stable structures can be produced in this manner.

However, our experience has shown that the "gap phase succession" concept better describes stand dynamics here (as recently described by Chadwick Oliver). Irregular even-aged groups grow up together then deteriorate and even-aged groups from other areas on the landscape become the "old growth." Understory trees of the quality which will produce old growth are more the exception than the rule. Gap phase dynamics were apparently not used in the FVS projections and Spectrum runs. It should be remembered that the FVS model does not handle clumping well as it is a distance independent model. False results can be obtained since trees are presumed to grow at even spacing in the model. Sierran stands are most often clumpy.

The consequence may be a false hope that these stands will be perpetuated over time. In fact, 80 years of experience shows they will not be. Examples are available to test this criticism. The North Fork of the Mokelumne Canyon, South aspect, from Highway 26 to Bear River was once covered with large Ponderosa and Sugar Pines. The area has had relatively little logging. Yet the pines are dying out and being replaced by canyon live oak, or sites held by bearclover. One area near Ellis road was dense enough to be good spotted owl nest area in 1985. After 10 years. in 1995, it more resembles P4P. This is one easily testable example. There are scores of others. The concern also extends to the midslope scenario.

To correct this problem, the silviculture and Forest Ecology of this document should be reviewed and even authored by Forest Scientists with experience in Sierran Silviculture.
The result of continuing with the false presumptions underlying this document will likely result in less old growth structure, not more.

A rigid and narrow definition of "Old Growth" has contributed to the view that the remnants of this structure are rare. Generally, the definition is; 6 or more large trees, 4 down logs, moss and

several tons per acre of woody debris. If any one component is in short supply, say one log per acre, the area does not qualify as "Old Growth," even if 12 large trees per acre are present. Hence, the need for the urgency and drastic action is heightened. Yet the accuracy of being able to detect these conditions with aerial imagery is low. One study done with experienced photo interpreters showed at least 80 percent success in predicting species, 80 percent size and 80 percent density. The high end of potential error then is over 48 percent. The best to be expected is 80 percent. Yet a zero tolerance is laid over habitat. Once the threshold is met, habitat is said to be inadequate. A realistic view of habitat is lost if one ignores coefficients of variation and applies zero tolerance imperatives. The results of this error are written into the Environmental Consequences Section and the Statement of Purpose. It cannot be stated with authority that Alternative C will result in any less suitable habitat converted to unsuitable, versus 5 percent. The coefficient of variation of numbers of large trees may often be 200 percent in one stand. Hence, how can such quantitative sounding estimates be made? (DEIS page 3-234)

Finding: The DEIS analysis assumes there is correlation between WHR types and Owl Habitat. This is false and is not supported by any statistical correlation.

The relationship between WHR type and desirable nesting/roosting stands is merely anecdotal with no statistical correlation. (There are two small exceptions.) Yet the modeling process assumes a strong relationship and the very foundations of the differences between alternatives depends upon it. This is not only our conclusion, but also the view of the two Mensurationists who pioneered the Boston system on National Forest Lands in California upon which the current habitat estimates are based.

In addition, an erroneous pessimistic estimate of the frequency of desirable structural groups has been made. Upon this presumed problem, (e.g. shortage of large trees [40'+]), the very purpose of this document rests. In fact, relic trees and aggregations are widespread and abundant, as a walk through most CAS lands on Ranger Districts would confirm. The root of this error is in the application of stratification used. This is alluded in Appendix B (page 11) *"...habitat classification rules are not sensitive to small localized aggregations of important habitat*

elements...." Inclusions of large relic trees in smaller sized stands would be classified with the strata as not favored habitat, even though, *"...owls may focus on large tree clusters for nesting in generally younger tree stands."*

Statistical credibility is further impuned by the method of using FVS tree lists to re-stratify Boston types into WHR stands. The original stratification was done to predict timber volume and growth over very large areas (entire forests). Within strata, heterogeneity was high. Small changes in plot locations within strata polygons can yield very different values of measured attributes. Differences between strata lose all meaning when this is done, as well as the credibility of conclusions based on the sample. Yet the resulting abstract stands are used to describe the existing problem.

Credibility is strained a bit further when these stands are aggregated for FVS model projections. The fantasy stands are grown into the future and become the basis for sustained yield estimates.

In our view, and that of Forest Service Mensurationists, these projections are no better than guesses. In fact, they are worse than guesses as they bear presumed reliability from having been run through a protocol of modeling. These are not the kind of estimates the Forest Service should be using to guide management of our forests.

Operational considerations of some of the planned silviculture also needs careful review. Spreading group selection and thinning of the matrix extensively over the mid-slope zone has potentially destructive consequences. The silviculture Development Unit at Redding has demonstrated problems with attempts at partial cutting (selection) on steep slopes. The pitfalls and limits of experience are alluded to on page 3-151 of the DEIS. Realistic and independent review of operational silviculture proposed in the DEIS is needed.

Implementation of extensive wide thinning and group selection in the upper-slope/ridge zone and somewhat in the mid-slope zone will greatly increase risk of significant brush and bearclover

precluding regeneration. Gophers alone can keep large areas deforested and pose a great potential threat to replacement trees.

Operational experience has demonstrated that the only way to consistently establish regeneration through to the pole stage in the Sierras is through intensive cultural practices including herbicides. The Forest Service does not do this well over extensive areas as Unit Area Control seemed to demonstrate. Further, with a few exceptions, Forest Line Officers have lacked the will and ability to efficaciously apply herbicides when needed for regeneration. For example, after 10 years, 60 thousand acres of the Stanislaus Complex remains untreated. And after 20 years, the Bonita and Flat fires remain untreated and deforested. The more complex and extensive silvicultural systems proposed under all the DEIS alternatives should be critically reviewed with this in mind. More simple scenarios can also produce large trees; e.g., regeneration mosaics.

Re-emphasis on the Silviculture Certification Program and Culturist Certification will be needed to make any of these alternatives feasible.

Finding: The development of alternatives fails to address current growth rates and result in significantly reduced outputs far below the LRMP level.

Layers of specialist imperatives with zero tolerance have been used to build the Alternatives in attempts to hedge all risk. It seems a lack of trust is a root of this problem. The authors assume that if a strict guideline is not applied, District managers will go to the limit in timber production at the expense of habitat.

Implementation of the preferred Alternative would radically affect timber production over what was resolved in the Forest Land Management Plans. For example, the 1989 Eldorado plan called for harvest of 137 MMBF annually; note that sustained yield is estimated at 158 MMBF. The preferred Alternative calls for 37 MMBF. When spread over the 340,800 capable, available and suitable (CAS) acres, the original LMP would result in harvest of 450 BF per year from stands

stocked at about 35 MBF per acre and growing at 650 BF per acre. Note that even with this harvest is the continued accretion of 200 BF/acre/year.

With good silvics, this growth could be concentrated or larger trees and would meet the objective of producing large tree structures, while also producing timber for the public. The high value of this harvest would fund a higher level of wildlife enhancement projects than with the proposed levels of harvest. It should be noted that most of what is known about the Spotted owl was funded by timber sale preparation dollars. The Eldorado Forest could be producing 65 million dollars per year (in commodities alone) if the level of cutting under the current LMP was continued. It now costs 22 million per year to maintain current staffing on the Eldorado.

The limited harvest levels do not address the fact that growth greatly exceeds harvest and that under the option with the highest harvest level, forest health will continue to decline and wildlife will be adversely impacted.

This report has several significant statements regarding the resiliency of nature and wildlife. *"The Sierran wildlife community, with few exceptions, has survived the major disruption and likely fragmentation of habitats experienced for nearly 100 years from the mid 19th through the 20th centuries. Had the Sierran wildlife community not been adapted to change, more species would probably been lost."* The Sierra Nevada can be managed. They should be managed on the largest land base possible in order to have the over-all least impact on any segment within the eco-system. This DEIS has resulted in several things, the owl is not endangered or threatened, the Sierras have the kind of forest cover suitable to a wide range of wildlife. Nature and wildlife are adaptable to change as the result of activities within the forests.

Finding: Based on the current status of the Spotted Owl, the harsh impact to rural communities is unwarranted.

As discussed in detail above and throughout the DEIS, the California Spotted Owl is quite healthy and its populations are thriving under a variety of habitat conditions throughout the

Sierran range. Although the DEIS predicts the Social & Economic impacts of each Alternative in some detail, adequate measures to mitigate the short and long term cumulative impacts are lacking. Even common sense should cause the decision maker to seriously question the feasibility of the majority of the DEIS Alternatives given the significant deleterious impacts on the affected counties and communities. The included analysis of the already high unemployment in the affected counties even points out that unemployment has been exacerbated to a yet unmeasured extent by the implementation of the Interim Guidelines. Many workers in timber and related industries have already lost their jobs because of the decreased available timber supply. Under Alternative C this trend will certainly continue. The decreased tax base, lowered level of Forest Payments, and lower demand for consumer goods because of higher unemployment, have already financially weakened county governments, schools, and local businesses, particularly in communities with one or more primary forest product manufacturing facilities. The further decline in timber production, vegetative management spending, and government jobs associated with all but Alternatives A and D, will likely put many communities and businesses over the edge resulting in long term and severe cumulative impacts. [*"A mill closure or equivalent employee layoff ... often poses severe hardships for displaced workers and their families and makes remaining co-workers anxious about their job tenure. A series of secondary effects often follows ... These unemployed workers and their families buy fewer consumer goods, and local retail stores and commercial services soon feel the impact. As timber production decreases, Forest Service receipts to counties decline and unemployed families and depressed local businesses also pay fewer taxes. The jobless must now depend more heavily on tax-supported services such as unemployment insurance, food stamps, and social services, at a time when some providers of these services are facing cuts in their budgets and staffing. ...Some communities report increased antisocial behavior following layoffs, such as theft, disorderly behavior, spouse and child abuse, and drug and alcohol abuse."* (3-324)]

The DEIS goes on further to describe the rapid decline in quality of life for communities that are forced over the edge. [*"Extended economic slumps tend to generate additional problems. When several layoffs occur at the same time, the well-being of an entire county may be affected. Extensive out-migration ... reduces property values and causes marginal businesses to fail.*

Departing homeowners, business people, and mortgage holders take additional losses. School enrollments decline ... and faculty may be laid off. County and city services ... are reduced as county and school budgets shrink. Family and friendship groups may be weakened, and churches and other community organizations may lose members and financial support." (3-324)]

In light of the healthy status of the owl and the known economic and social impacts the Alternatives will have on 23 California counties, CLFA finds the range of Alternatives in the DEIS unjustifiably narrow in scope and woefully unbalanced. The social and economic impacts from implementation of most of the alternatives will create long-term cumulative negative effects which may certainly be largely unmitigatable. CLFA urges the Forest Service to take its own advice in the DEIS and seriously rethink its proposed management scheme. *"Outcomes such as these demonstrate the importance of careful planning and mitigation to avoid or reduce possible adverse effects."* (3-324)

In conclusion, it is clear that the Sierra Nevada deserves much more than the expected resource damage and losses that will occur if any of these alternatives are implemented.
As resource professionals, CLFA finds that the preferred Alternative C is unacceptable and should be rejected based on the following determinations:

1. The impacts from catastrophic fire have not been given proper consideration in the development of the alternatives and the impacts of high intensity fire will reduce Spotted Owl habitat over the planning horizon.
2. The preferred alternative C will result in continued decline in forest health by converting stands to more shade tolerant species, and increased insect and disease activity.
3. The purpose and basis for the draft is flawed and not substantiated. Currently, the California Spotted Owl is plentiful throughout the Sierras and is not in danger of decline.
4. The methodology used in the modeling of alternatives fail to consider the true stand dynamics of the Sierra forests.
5. The impacts to rural communities has not been properly analyzed and mitigated.
6. The alternatives fail to consider the current growth rates resulting in reduced outputs.

We further find that the remaining alternatives do not contain all the necessary components that are needed for prudent management of the national forest. Therefore, the CLFA would like to propose the following action:

1. The Forest Service should return to the Land Management Plans and reinstitute the green sale program until a reasonable direction can be found.
2. Model the alternative as proposed by CLFA. We are currently working on the framework for another alternative. This alternative will focus on the health of the forest. It is our position that in order to lessen the potential losses from catastrophic fire and maintain viable populations of wildlife any solution must attempt to balance growth and removals. We will provide our alternative prior to the end of the comment period.

Thank you,

Michael T. Vroman

Michael T. Vroman

Chairman, Federal Issues Committee

