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# LOCALLY GROWN: CREATING RURAL JOBS WITH AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS

## OVERSIGHT HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# OVERSIGHT HEARING ON "LOCALLY GROWN: CREATING RURAL JOBS WITH AMERICA'S PUBLIC LANDS"

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**Thursday, July 15, 2010**
**U.S. House of Representatives**
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**
**Committee on Natural Resources**
**Washington, D.C.**

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The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:51 a.m. in Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Raúl Grijalva [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Grijalva, DeFazio, Herseth Sandlin, Luján, Bishop, Young, and Lummis.

Also present: Representative Minnick.

## STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BEN RAY LUJÁN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Mr. LUJÁN [presiding]. I would like to call this hearing to order. There are some old misconceptions about Federal lands in the West and the agencies which manage them. Some assert that our public lands are job killers and that the Federal land managers want to seize private land, halt industries, and harm economies. These accusations are wrong, and they undermine western communities by framing their struggles as a choice between economic development and conservation. That is a false choice, which ignores that many communities are successfully both.

Given that the folks actually live in the West that we are going to be hearing from today, we will be well served to listen to them. Their approach is not to tear things down, but rather to build consensus, and even collaborate with old adversaries. And their goal is to apply the principle that the long-term health of the community and the land, and the well-being of our rural communities are all linked.

We will hear today from public land managers, county commissioners, ranchers, and environmentalists, small business owners, and educators, and they will tell us about the ways that they are working together to chart a new path to prosperity using our public lands.

I know that this has not been an easy road at times, especially in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great

Depression. But for those communities that were dependent on just one commodity for their development, this evolution is extremely critical. We look forward to hearing your stories today, but we also need to learn from them. So I also invite the witnesses to share with us the challenges and obstacles that you have faced in implementing your projects. I want to hear your frustrations, but more importantly, I want your input on how we can better support your efforts.

Whether doing a round-up, battling a wildfire, or confronting a flood, rural communities are well suited to teamwork, and they always have persevered. Today, as they forge novel partnerships to create sustainable jobs, revive communities, and restore the unique western landscape, they are riding a new and promising chapter in the rich history of the American West.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for traveling so far today in what I know is a busy time of year to join us, especially in this humidity. I understand that Ms. Troy, who is on our third panel, even left a Salmon River rafting trip to come testify today. Now, that is sacrifice.

I look forward to hearing from you today, and I now turn to the Ranking Member for any opening comments that she may have.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CYNTHIA LUMMIS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING**

Ms. LUMMIS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too want to welcome the panelists. We are delighted that you would join us today. I find some irony, I must admit, in the fact that we just passed a bill moments ago by the full Natural Resources Committee that will actually kill jobs on Federal lands, and now we are having a hearing on how to create jobs on Federal lands. That does seem to be the tone that we are fighting on the minority side of the aisle this year.

So I am looking forward to hearing what opportunities you see, in spite of the tide of job killing bills that are coming out of this Congress, on how we might repair some of the damage being done these two years, and how we might go forward in a direction that really does solidify a commitment to multiple use on public lands. And again, I am really delighted that you are here. Thank you very much for joining us.

Mr. LUJÁN. Ms. Herseth Sandlin.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I too want to thank all of our witnesses on the first panel and the second panel for the insights you are offering to our Subcommittee. As I often hear when I visit forest communities in the Black Hills of South Dakota, one of the things that would do the most to create rural jobs while improving both forest health and increasing our energy independence would be to increase the production of renewable energy off of our Federal lands.

We have enormous resources here as it relates to biomass, either for co-generation or advanced biofuels. In the Black Hills National

Forest, for example, only 15 percent of the 100,000 tons of dry slash that is removed from the forest every year, only 15 percent of it is used. The rest of it is piled up and burned. So I think we all can agree that that defies common sense. I mean, I hope we could agree that that defies common sense, in light of energy independence goals, healthy forest management, the amount of time that we can put into a forest plan that can address some of the concerns that some might want to raise without completely eliminating the option and allowing the Department of the Interior to put together the maps, as they have been doing, for where the wind energy may be on Federal lands, where the solar energy may be on Federal lands, where other resources are that we could extract on Federal lands. They should be able to do it for biomass as well.

So when we have valuable forest resources going to waste rather than being put to work to create domestic energy and rural jobs, you can imagine the frustration of us since a very inappropriate definition was adapted in December of 2007, instead of an expanded definition for biomass like we successfully passed in the 2008 Farm Bill as it relates to renewable biomass. And it would go a long way in addressing this issue.

So I look forward to—I know, Mr. Laurance, you include discussion of this in your testimony. I will be interested to hear from our Administration officials if we are any closer to supporting a definition from all of you in support of renewable biomass that works for our Federal forests. And I yield back and thank the Chairman for the recognition.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much. And I will tell you, as this Congress moves forward to see what needs to be done to make sure we have good partnerships, where we are creating jobs, working on legislation to address the impacts and needs of what has happened in the Gulf, but as we look at energy around the country, there are good partnerships out there, and we are going to hear about some of those today.

So with that, I am looking forward to the testimony, and we would like to begin with Mr. Jay Jensen, Deputy Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## STATEMENT OF JAY JENSEN, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Mr. JENSEN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting us today to discuss how USDA is using partnerships and collaboration to create jobs and prosperity in rural communities and near public lands.

The USDA Forest Service, as the nation's second largest public land manager, manages 193 million acres of forest and grassland, directly providing not only clean air and water, but jobs and livelihoods for hundreds of thousands of Americans. Rural Development, whose $31 billion in loans, grants, and guarantees in 2009 equates to being one of the largest banks in America, plays an instrumental role in financing essential development for communities in and around our public lands.

It is a privilege to be part of this historic partnership that we are charting here, as these two agencies have never worked as closely with common purpose on our forested lands. By building business relationships, we are accelerating innovation and investment, creating jobs and growth, while fostering a stewardship ethic that spans differences among citizens and interests.

After recreation on the national forest system lands, which provide 224,000 jobs and accounts for over $14 billion in gross domestic product, timber management and related production is the second highest economic value derived from Forest Service activities, accounting for approximately 4.5 billion in GDP in 2005. Further, we need to update these numbers, but the last comprehensive analysis in 2002 of all Forest Service activities found that the agency sustained or maintained more than 473,000 jobs and contributed 23.7 billion in GDP.

Building on this, it is our strong belief that we are on a course to accomplish even more work on national forest system lands today and produce more jobs from those lands over time as the agency carries out the All Lands Landscape-Scale Forest Restoration vision championed by Secretary Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Tidwell.

I understand you will hear other testimony today in support of this, and outlining that we can create and maintain on average 20 jobs for $1 million invested in forest restoration. It is clear we need to build an economy around forest restoration, a forest restoration economy, if you will. We need to maintain what little forest management infrastructure we have left in our communities, both the human infrastructure and the brick and mortar infrastructure, and build new infrastructure around emerging opportunities and markets like woody bioenergy to economically sustained communities, while simultaneously restoring our forests.

The path to get there is through collaboration and partnerships. Community-led efforts are playing a central role in delivering these benefits, while stewardship contracting, and the President's Fiscal Year 2011 proposed integrated resources restoration budget line item are key administrative tools to get there. The authority to enter into 10-year stewardship contracts is particularly important, as it gives the private sector the certainty it needs to finance necessary infrastructure investments. Clear, consistent, and predictable tools are key.

Additionally, the $690 million integrated resource restoration line item is an essential new tool needed to get more work done, as it allows greater agency flexibility to tailor projects. A prime example of this is our current work in southeast Alaska. The USDA Forest Service and Rural Development are working in partnership to deliver jobs through a transition framework on the Tongass National Forest.

Through this framework, a team of agency officials is coordinating with communities and interests to diversify the region's economy and to foster job growth based on a broader suite of forest restoration goods and services than has been attempted in the past. To bridge this transition, the agency is combining existing timber contracts with several long-term stewardship contracts to supply the existing forest products industry.

Another example is the 4 Forest Restoration Initiative in Arizona. The initiative is a landscaped-scale restoration effort being collaboratively developed to protect communities from wildfire. Emanating from the successful collaborations that brought us the first major long-term stewardship contract, the 150,000-acre White Mountain Apache-Sitgraves stewardship contract, this second generation collaborative seeks to restore approximately 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forest. This is exactly the type of effort envisioned by Secretary Vilsack, and provides the kind of predictability needed for business investment.

One more example can be found in the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas. Restoration of short-leaf pine, bluestem grass ecosystem habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker has been a focus for several years. But through collaboration and a focus on science-based projects, regular timber sales are occurring, providing a predictable, good supply to the mills in the region. Forest restoration goes hand in hand with economic development.

And my testimony today would not be complete without mention of the work supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Americans are heading back to work this summer, with the $1.15 billion provided to the Forest Service as it hits the ground. Hundreds of projects are underway, such as the Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership, a public-private partnership in southwestern Idaho investing 9.75 million in sawmills, a pellet mill, and dry kiln infrastructure.

And President Obama is serious about jobs on public lands. The recently launched America' Great Outdoors Initiative in predicated on collaboration and partnerships. The agenda is grounded in finding the most successful local initiatives across the country to spur conservation on public lands while simultaneously promoting economic opportunity.

These are just a few examples that I was glad to share with you today, and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

[The joint prepared statement of Mr. Jensen and Mr. Vasquez follows:]

**Joint Statement of Victor Vasquez, Deputy Under Secretary, Rural Development, and Jay Jensen, Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment, United States Department of Agriculture**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting us today to discuss rural job creation and the importance of collaboration among individuals, interest groups, and communities and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development and Forest Service agencies.

Today we will discuss the value of partnerships and community collaboration in job creation, and provide examples of successful collaborative economic diversification efforts of the Forest Service and USDA Rural Development throughout the United States. We believe that collaboration can leverage the unique capabilities of each agency; can accelerate our efforts to assist rural communities in creating prosperity and jobs; can develop shared land stewardship through citizen engagement; and can be an effective tool to bridge differences among interest groups and to consider the needs of the public.

Our USDA strategy includes working collaboratively across interests and jurisdictions to support locally driven regional economic development strategies, to increase economic opportunity, and improve the quality of life in rural communities. We have held listening sessions around the country to develop ideas to stimulate the economy. These collaborative efforts help create jobs and economic prosperity in renewable energy production, recreation and tourism, regional economic planning, infrastructure development, and natural resource management.

**RECENT EFFORTS**

Our agencies accomplish much of our work through collaboration with a diversity of partners, leveraging millions of appropriated dollars annually that creates and maintains rural jobs.

Our most recent data for fiscal year 2009, the Forest Service entered into 8,931 grants and agreements with partners, under which it contributed $1.02 billion, and leveraged $461.8 million, for a total value of partnered efforts of $1.48 billion. The Forest Service distributed American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 (ARRA) contracts and grants in FY2009 totaling $1.12 billion. In that same year, including substantial additional investment made possible by the ARRA and leveraged funds, Rural Development provided over $31 billion in loans, grants, and loan guarantees for rural housing, community facilities, infrastructure, and business development.

**SOME EXAMPLES**

**The Southeast Alaska Transition Framework—**Last summer, we visited southeast Alaska, visiting native communities and attending listening sessions with local officials and residents. While there, we co-hosted two economic diversity workshops to better understand how USDA can support a diversified economy and range of opportunities for Southeast Alaskan. At the close of these workshops, USDA regional staff committed to hold similar workshops in every community in Southeast Alaska; those sessions have brought about new ideas and possibilities for leveraging the agencies of the USDA and have become a blueprint for Rural Development and the Forest Service to work in local communities all across the nation. The following initiative was the result of this trip.

The Forest Service and Rural Development in Southeast Alaska have formed a team to help local communities transition to a broader economic base, based on a suite of goods and services that can provide diversified jobs and community stability, where timber historically provided the backbone.

The transition is based on shifting management emphasis towards multi-year stewardship contracts and young growth management. This strategy is supported by both the timber industry and environmental groups as a way to maintain the health and diversity of the forest, and meet market demand. The USDA team will coordinate with State and local governments, tribal entities, local stakeholders, non-profit and for-profit organizations to diversify economic opportunity and create and maintain jobs on a broader suite of goods and services. The first of several long-term stewardship contracts will be implemented by the Forest Service in 2011 which will give the existing forest products industry the needed supply to maintain current jobs while Rural Development works to retool and transition to the new framework. Next steps include development of a Strategic Plan, infusion of Rural Development program funding, and targeting business and infrastructure needs to help stimulate growth of new businesses and job creation.

**The Appalachian Regional Development Initiative—**Rural Development is collaborating with the Forest Service, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and a host of additional federal agencies on the Appalachian Regional Development Initiative, which seeks to provide federal support for regional economic development efforts across Appalachia, including those focused on sustainable natural resource development, recreation and tourism, and green job creation. Over the past six months, an Interagency Working Group hosted five listening sessions across the Appalachian region to gather feedback from local stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities to diversifying and strengthening their regional economies. The Working Group gathered additional public comments through an online outreach page, and a team of government economists crafted a holistic assessment of the region's economic assets and challenges to development in the region. In the coming months, we will announce a new federal strategy for supporting development efforts in Appalachia, focusing on supporting comprehensive, community-driven planning with sustainable natural resource development.

**Stewardship Contracting**—The Forest Service through stewardship contracting has the ability to enter into 10-year contracts, enhancing industry's ability to create and maintain jobs. The private sector now has the kind of certainty needed to work closely with financial institutions to secure the types of loans and financing to build the infrastructure needed, both human and brick and mortar, to economically sustain communities while simultaneously restoring our forests.

Stewardship contracts help meet local and rural community needs through collaborative planning and implementation and contribute to the sustainability of rural communities by improving forest health and natural resource resiliency, providing opportunities for local income and employment, and fostering greater public involvement in project stages. In FY 2009, the Forest Service entered into 141 stewardship

agreements and contracts on 88,304 acres, including vegetation treatments for product, health, and fuels reduction, wildlife habitat and watershed improvement, road improvement, and utilization of forest biomass for energy production. The President's FY11 budget supports the use of this tool to facilitate greater accomplishment in the forest and greater economic development in communities.

**Secure Rural Schools—**The Forest Service will have 118 Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act Resource Advisory Committees (RACS) fully functional by the end of the year in 33 states. These groups collectively select projects that will benefit national forests and nearby communities. Oftentimes, these projects are contracted, and thus, help local communities economically. In selecting the projects, RAC committees collaboratively learn each other's views, interests and desires for national forest management and come to agreement on projects to recommend. The result has been an unequivocal success. Investment in such a collaborative process is a key ingredient to finding project success. As testament, not one project selected by RACS for funding has ever been appealed or litigated.

**National Forest Scenic Byways Program—**Two of the goals of the National Forest Scenic Byways Program are to support and enhance rural community economic development, and to increase public awareness and understanding of national forest activities and the importance of sustaining healthy, productive ecosystems. The National Forest Scenic Byways Program, with 137 national forest scenic byways, is a success because it unites rural communities, empowers collaboration among diverse partners, and offers travelers a way to "make the journey as important as the destination." We have found that tourism can be greatly increased as well. On the Kangamanus Scenic Byway in the White Mountain National Forest, approximately 6 to 7 million visitors enjoy scenic overlooks, hiking trails, and numerous historic sites. After Scenic Byway designation, local communities, citizens, and forest officials forge agreements on signage, tourism facilities, and roadside attractions and stops. Oftentimes, the new relationships prove to be a catalyst for new marketing and funding opportunities available through the National Scenic Byways Program and State transportation agencies. The emphasis on promoting community tourism has been one of the most popular aspects of byway designation with rural communities.

**America's Great Outdoors Initiative—**President Obama announced in April of this year his America's Great Outdoor Initiative to help craft a conservation agenda for the 21st Century. Administration officials are traveling across the country this summer to hear ideas, issues, problems, and solutions directly from local communities. This agenda is grounded in finding the most successful initiatives from across the country to spur conservation of our public and private land resources while simultaneously promoting economic opportunities. In fulfilling America's Great Outdoor Initiative, Secretary Vilsack and the USDA are finding that outdoor recreation provides opportunities for Americans to participate in stewardship activities.

Recently, Secretary Vilsack highlighted how outdoor recreation on National Forests and Grasslands alone directly provides 225,000 jobs and contributes over 14.5 billion to the economy. The outdoor economy is particularly important to rural America.

**Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR)—**The President's fiscal year 2011 budget emphasizes a new line item called Integrated Resource Restoration. The new line item has tremendous potential to create and maintain jobs through projects that are developed in collaboration with partners and communities. Recent studies show that for every one million invested in forest restoration and timber work on public lands, nearly 20 jobs are created.[1] This is one of the highest returns on the dollar of any federal investment.

**Four-Forest Restoration Initiative, Arizona**—National forest managers in northern Arizona have been working for years to reduce the threat of high-intensity, potentially-destructive wildfires to neighboring communities through a variety of means. The 4–Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), involving the Apache-Sitgraves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto National Forests, will provide economic opportunities to local communities through the utilization of small-diameter forest products, and is aimed at collaboratively designing a multi-decade restoration program. The project will use a variety of tools, including mechanical thinning and prescribed fire, to achieve landscape-scale forest restoration. Because of the landscape-scale of this restoration (approximately 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forest), the 4FRI is expected to lead to as many as 50,000 acres per year being treated over a 20-year period. This will reduce treatment costs and provide restoration-based work oppor-

[1] Max Nielsen-Pincus & Cassandra Mosely, *Economic and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon,* in Institute for a Sustainable Environment, *Ecosystem Workforce Program, Working Paper Number 24.* (Spring, 2010: University of Oregon Press).

tunities that will create long-term, quality jobs. This initiative will restore watershed health, improve wildlife habitat, conserve biodiversity, protect old-growth, restore forest structure and function, reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, and reintroduce natural fire into the ecosystem.

**Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition—**The Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC) is a collaborative group formed in 2002. The "coalition" is composed of representatives from environmental groups, the timber industry, forestry consultants, academics, and a wide range of other interests. The coalition has worked collaboratively with Colville National Forest staff on project level planning that has resulted in 22 projects being implemented without appeal or litigation on the Colville National Forest. This is an important accomplishment that helps maintain jobs.

The NEWFC objectives include: demonstrating the full potential of restoration forestry to enhance forest health, public safety and community economic vitality; designing and implementing forest restoration and fuels reduction which demonstrate innovative approaches to forestry; and demonstrating how a diverse coalition of stakeholders can work together to successfully promote restoration forestry and community protection from wildfire.

The NEWFC has engaged the local community and the larger "natural resource" community by bringing groups together based on common interests of forest health. The keys to the success of this process have been in the early engagement of groups and in extensive site-specific field visits.

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)**

ARRA's greatest impact is still ahead of us. The summer 2010 will be the most active season yet. The Forest Service was appropriated $1.15 billion for wildland fire management and capital improvement and maintenance projects in FY2009. With nearly all the money obligated, Americans are being put back to work. For Wildland Fire Management, an estimated 5,900 direct jobs were created, and for Capital Improvement and Maintenance, estimated direct jobs equals 6,500. For Wildland Fire Management, 298 projects have been completed for $500 million, and capital improvement and maintenance projects totaled $650 million for 407 projects. Examples of the program benefits include the creation of jobs in economically distressed areas, fuels reduction work, and the completion of numerous facility improvement, maintenance and renovation projects.

**Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership (ARRA)—**The Forest Service has been instrumental in promoting wood utilization in southwest Idaho. Much of this work is being accomplished through the Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership (WBUP), a successful public-private partnership funded by the Idaho Department of Commerce; Adams, Boise, Gem and Valley Counties; the Forest Service and other federal grants, and private industry. The mission of the WBUP is to work with the private sector to promote woody biomass supply, to identify and develop markets, to develop mechanisms and acquire equipment to get supply to those markets and to promote product and organizational development that will aid in the development of woody biomass businesses and markets.

The Partnership successfully competed for ARRA grants totaling $9.75 million to private businesses, including $4 million to Emerald Forest Products to complete construction of a sawmill and shavings plant that will create approximately 50 full time jobs. Of the grants, $2.75 million went to the Garden Valley school system in Boise County for conversion of the school's heating system to a woody biomass fueled plant. $2.5 million went to Evergreen Forest Products in Adams County for installation of a dry kiln at a local saw mill, resulting in the retention of at least 40 jobs in the County. Finally, $500,000 went to Treasure Valley Forest Products in Elmore County to expand its pellet mill, adding 15 new jobs at the mill.

**LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE NEEDS**

The diversity of collaborative efforts is growing. Clearly, one-size-fits-all approach is not always effective; communities and opportunities differ, and many of the strongest projects are conceived, principally financed, and led by partners in the private sector, the non-profit community, and local government. We have had great successes and believe that Regional efforts compound efficiency and energies. For example, in situations where interested individuals are engaged in the shared stewardship of their public lands, the Forest Service has a marked decline in both the incidence and costs associated with formal dispute, appeals, and lawsuits (as noted in the FY 2009 Environmental Conflict Resolution Report to OMB–CEQ, February 2010). Collaboration and partnerships take time, but often deliver long-term benefits and healthier communities.

USDA is working to improve both internal and external communications, enhance transparency and accountability, strengthen collaboration, and increase the ability of programs to reach flexibly across traditional Mission Area boundaries.

**CONCLUSION**

Our future success depends on working together—as communities sharing mutual interests, and as partners. The reality of federal budget constraints will create efficiencies, and collaboration will become more important than ever to find, create and leverage partnerships and private sector investments. Our successful collaborative efforts demonstrate that job creation, employment maintenance, and direct and indirect economic benefits are gained through these partnership efforts. In addition, community stability and cohesiveness, and important resource and infrastructure enhancement can be accomplished through partnership. We should make every effort to continue to support and expand these collaborative partnership efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these programs with the Subcommittee. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Jensen. And Mr. Victor Vasquez, Deputy Under Secretary, Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**STATEMENT OF VICTOR VASQUEZ, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to discuss USDA Rural Development's commitment to creating jobs and assisting in creating vibrant growing communities in rural America. I am very pleased to be here with Deputy Under Secretary Jay Jensen representing the Forest Service, our sister agency.

A healthy American economy depends on a prosperous rural America. Rural America supplies much of our nation's food, water, and safeguards our environmental heritage. Its role in establishing our nation's energy independence is growing every day, and our values are rooted in rural America. USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities; so, too, is the Forest Service. At Rural Development, we understand clearly that we cannot succeed if we work alone.

We administer over programs that provide electric, telecommunications, broadband service, water and waste water, affordable housing, essential community services, and business development assistance to rural communities, residents, and businesses. Everything we do, without exception, is in support of our local partners. Last year, and Mr. Jensen alluded to this, we provided over $31 billion in loans, grants, and loan guarantees, every penny of which represents an investment by us in the success of others. Our success is not measured by anything we achieve ourselves. It is measured by the success of our partners. From that perspective, let me say simply that collaboration is a core value at Rural Development.

Sustainable development also rests on a hard look at economic assets and opportunities. Federal grants and loans can jump start projects, but that alone cannot sustain communities over the long haul. One of our planning objectives is to encourage coherent regions with a commonality of interests to develop a first-rate, analytical perspective on the region's comparative economic advantages, and a realistic picture of economic drivers that can work for the region as a whole.

From this perspective, we recognize that rural communities working in isolation are far less effective than multi-community, multi-county collaborations that can pull resources, rationalize infrastructure investment, and efficiently deliver services. One of our goals is therefore to encourage and incentivize communities to participate in such cooperative efforts. And to support that effort, we are currently engaged in building a significantly upgraded community and economic development capacity within rural development itself. We have traditionally been very effective in supporting individual projects. Going forward, we want to ensure that each of the projects we fund is clearly placed within the context of a coherent community, a regional strategic plan, in order to maximize the return.

There are a number of compelling examples of such regional collaborations. One was mentioned earlier, and provided in our written testimony, the Southeast Alaska Transition Framework, where we are collaborating with the Forest Service to assist communities in developing a more diversified economic base.

In the dry forest zone in eastern Oregon and California, we have entered into a cooperative agreement with a nonprofit organization called Sustainable Northwest. This partnership is developing a regional model to increase the viability of sustainable forestry in rural communities. Sustainable Northwest will be conducting workshops and facilitating coordination among partners and stakeholders. They will be helping to generate increased private sector investment and sustainable, renewable energy generated from biomass.

Two thousand miles to the east, we are collaborating again with the Forest Service through the Appalachia Regional Commission and a host of additional Federal agencies on the Appalachia Regional Development Initiative, which seeks to provide Federal support for regional economic development efforts across Appalachia, including those focused on sustainable natural resource development, recreation and tourism, and green job creation.

On a national scale, we are working with four regional rural development centers to develop a new initiative called Stronger Economies Together, or SET. This program will provide training and technical assistance to local communities and counties that are working together in a multi-county planning effort.

The opportunities are there. The rural residents I have spoken with often say that at this point in time, there is more potential for economic growth in rural America than at any time in the past. Rural broadband, rural energy, renewable energy, the quality of life advances in transportation infrastructure, tourism and recreation, the agricultural and natural resources base, local and regional food system networks, emerging ecosystem markets—all of these are viable foundations for economic growth and creating jobs.

Our job is to make it happen. USDA is working at President Obama's direction to build a new rural economy, a more sustainable economy, with green jobs that can't be exported, an economy that better values conservation and the environment, an economy that offers a future for rural residents and their family. We are committed to the future of rural communities, and I know that we

all in this room are as well. And I want to thank you for the honor of being here today. Thank you.

[The joint prepared statement of Mr. Vasquez can be found on page 5.]

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much. And we are going to need to take a quick recess to go vote. We have one vote, and we will be right back. So I thank you very much for your patience. With that, one vote, and we will be right back. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. GRIJALVA [presiding]. Thank you very much. Let us reconvene the Subcommittee meeting, and let me thank my good friend from New Mexico, Mr. Luján, for assuming the responsibilities of starting the hearing. Thank you very much. We were interrupted by myself and the Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop, were busy with marking up oil spills and children's nutrition, and my apologies for not being here on time when the hearing began.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Grijalva follows:]

**Statement of The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

The Subcommittee will now come to order. Thank you.

There are some old misconceptions about federal lands in the west and the agencies which manage them. Some assert that our public lands are job killers, and that federal land managers want to seize private land, halt industries and harm rural economies. These accusations are wrong, and they undermine western communities by framing their struggles as a choice between economic development and conservation. That is a false choice which ignores the many communities that are successfully doing both.

The witnesses we have before us today have a different perspective – one that isn't so black and white, and one that stands in sharp contrast to this rhetoric. And given that these folks actually live in the west, we would be well served to listen.

Their response to the challenges in their western towns is not to pick a fight and lay blame, but rather to promote solutions. Their approach is not to tear things down, but rather to build consensus—and even collaborate with old adversaries. And their goal is to apply the principle that the long-term health of the public land and the well being of our rural communities are linked.

We will hear today from public land managers and county commissioners, ranchers and environmentalists, small business owners and educators. And they will tell us about the ways that they are working together to chart a new path to prosperity…using our public lands.

I know this has not been an easy road at times—especially in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But for those communities that were dependent on just one commodity for their development, this evolution is critical.

We look forward to hearing your stories today – but we also need to learn from them. So, I also invite the witnesses to share with us the challenges and obstacles you have faced in implementing your projects. I want to hear your frustrations, but, more importantly, I want your input on how we can better support your efforts.

Whether during a round up, battling a wildfire, or confronting a flood, rural communities are well-suited to team-work – and they have always persevered. Today as they forge novel partnerships—to create sustainable jobs, revive communities, and restore our unique western landscape—they are writing a new, and promising, chapter in the rich history of the American west.

I want to thank all the witnesses for traveling so far today, in what I know is a busy time of year, to join us here in this humidity! I understand that Mrs. Troy, who is on our third panel, left a Salmon River rafting trip early to come testify. Now, that IS sacrifice! So, thank you.

I look forward to hearing from you all today. And I now turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop, for any opening comments he may have.

Mr. GRIJALVA Deputy Assistant Secretary Sobeck, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior, thank you. The time is yours.

**STATEMENT OF EILEEN SOBECK, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ACCOMPANIED BY MICHAEL J. POOLE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, AND JOSEPH LAURANCE**

Ms. SOBECK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to have received the opportunity to testify today on the important role that lands managed by the Department of the Interior play in economic growth and the creation and support of private sector jobs. I am joined here today by Mike Poole, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and Dan Wenk, Deputy Director of the National Park Service. I would like to submit our written testimony for the record, and summarize our testimony in our statement here today.

The Department of the Interior is the steward of vast amounts of our nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. Resources managed by the Department, including by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation, are economic engines for the communities that surround them throughout the country.

In our role as steward, the Department has played and continues to play a vital role in renewing our economy and creating and supporting jobs that cannot be exported. We are creating jobs for thousands of young people, protecting our most treasured places, and inspiring the next generation to be good stewards of our lands and waters. Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, and public lands are supporting recreation and tourism jobs in gateway communities across the country. And the Department is moving to harness wind, solar, and geothermal power from public lands, putting Americans to work while supplying clean, affordable energy for our future. We are leading by example and demonstrating how the wise stewardship of our landscapes is critical to our economic well-being.

This is particularly true in rural areas. In a first of its kind economic report issued by the Secretary in February, it was estimated that in those states that are more than 50 percent rural, visitors to Interior sites support 200,000 jobs and $15.3 billion in economic activity. Communities surrounding the largest units of the national park system had on average almost four times faster population growth, almost three times faster job growth, and two times growth in real income than the Nation overall.

The report also noted that conservation activities can generate large numbers of jobs relative to other investments of government funding. For example, every $1 million invested in ecosystem restoration projects was estimated to support up to 30 mostly private sector jobs. Every $1 million invested in recreation projects was estimated to support up to 22 mostly private sector jobs.

The Department could not accomplish its mission without the collaboration and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders. My written testimony highlights several ongoing Administration initiatives that are supporting the creation of rural jobs, including the

Administration's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Youth and the Great Outdoors Initiative, our commitment to build a clean energy economy, and the creation of the Landscape Conservation Cooperative. And my written testimony shares several specific examples of successful collaborative conservation projects.

The America Great Outdoors Initiative, I would like to say just a few words about that. It has started a much needed dialogue about conservation in our nation. As part of this initiative, our Department, along with several others, is hosting listening sessions around the country to hear from ranchers, farmers, forest landowners, sportsmen and -women, state and local government leaders, tribal leaders, public lands experts, conservationists, recreationists, youth leaders, business representatives, heritage preservationists, and others to learn about some of the smart, creative ways that communities are conserving outdoor spaces and helping Americans go out and enjoy them.

Today, as we speak, Administration officials are assembled in Asheville, North Carolina to gather such public input. I myself attended a session in Grand Island, Nebraska on Monday, and I can assure you that we were listening there. Listening sessions will continue throughout the summer as part of our commitment to reach out to communities for good ideas about conservation. We are going into this process with open minds, and we are eager to learn about the efforts that ordinary Americans are making to conserve our land, water and wildlife. Our goal is to develop a conservation agenda for the 21st century that will incorporate and promote every positive aspect of conservation, including the creation of conservation-related job.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the testimony and answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sobeck follows:]

**Statement of Eileen Sobeck, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the Interior**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the important role that the lands managed by the Department of the Interior play in economic growth and the creation of private sector jobs tied to the landscape.

The Department of the Interior is the steward of our nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. Resources managed by the Department, including by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), are economic engines for communities around the country.

In our role as steward, the Department has played, and continues to play, a vital role in renewing our economy and creating jobs that cannot be exported. We are creating jobs for thousands of young people, protecting our most treasured places and inspiring the next generation to be good stewards of our lands and waters. Our national parks, refuges and public lands are supporting recreation and tourism jobs in gateway communities across the country. And, the Department is moving to harness wind, solar and geothermal power from public lands, putting Americans to work while supplying clean, affordable energy for our future. We are leading by example, demonstrating how the wise stewardship of our landscapes is critical to our economic well-being.

Of course, the Department could not accomplish its mission without the collaboration and cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders. We take pride in the relationships we have built with gateway communities throughout the country. We have embraced partnerships and active engagement to find common ground, and to conserve and make use of our natural resources. Community-based partnerships are essential to accomplishing land management goals and can help create new economic

opportunities for local businesses. Each year, the Department supports hundreds of partner organizations who participate in a wide variety of projects and efforts at the community, landscape, and national levels.

**Economic Impact**

In February of this year, Secretary Salazar released to the public and shared with Members of Congress a first-of-its-kind departmental report estimating that Interior programs and activities support more than 1.4 million private sector American jobs and more than $370 billion in economic activity across the country. The report, entitled "Economic Impact of the Department of the Interior's Programs and Activities," indicates that the Department creates and supports private sector jobs and economic growth in all 50 states. Furthermore, the report underscores the importance of investing in conservation and energy development, and the role these fields can play in getting our economy moving again.

The Economic Impact Report found that rural states especially benefit from Interior's programs and activities. In states that are more than 50 percent rural, it was estimated that visitors to Interior sites support 200,000 jobs and $15.3 billion in economic activity. For example, many of our national parks are located in remote, rural areas. Economic effects of parks on remote, gateway communities can be significant. One study found that communities surrounding the largest units of the National Park System had, on average, almost four times faster population growth, almost three times faster job growth, and two times faster growth in real income than the nation overall. (Power, T.M. "The Economic Foundations of Public Parks." *The George Wright Forum,* 2002)

The Economic Impact Report also noted that conservation activities can generate large numbers of jobs relative to other investments of government funding. For example, every $1 million taxpayers invest in ecosystem restoration projects was estimated to create up to 30 mostly private-sector jobs. Every $1 million invested in recreation projects was estimated to support up to 22 mostly private-sector jobs. While federally funded ecosystem restoration and recreation activities can support substantial numbers of jobs, the actual number of jobs supported by an individual project will vary based on that project's particular circumstances.

In testifying before you today, I would like to highlight several ongoing Administration initiatives that are supporting the creation of rural jobs. I would particularly like to discuss the Administration's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative, our commitment to building a clean energy economy, and the creation of the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. I will also share with you several examples of successful collaborative conservation projects.

**The America's Great Outdoors Initiative**

On April 14, 2010, President Barack Obama signed a Presidential Memorandum establishing the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and to reconnect Americans to the outdoors. President Obama inaugurated the America's Great Outdoors Initiative at a White House Conference held at the Department in April. The conference brought together leaders from communities across the country that are working to protect their outdoor spaces and focused on developing and supporting innovative ideas for improving conservation and recreation at the local level.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative has started a much-needed dialogue about conservation in our Nation. As part of this initiative, the Department is hosting listening sessions around the country to hear from ranchers, farmers and forest landowners, sportsmen and women, state and local government leaders, tribal leaders, public-lands experts, conservationists, recreationists, youth leaders, business representatives, heritage preservationists, and others to learn about some of the smart, creative ways communities are conserving outdoor spaces and helping Americans to go out and enjoy them.

Sessions have already been hosted in Montana, Maryland, South Carolina, Washington, California, and Nebraska. Today, as we speak, Administration officials are assembled in Asheville, North Carolina, to gather public input. Listening sessions will continue throughout the summer, as part of the Administration's commitment to reaching out to communities for good ideas about conservation. We are going into this process with open minds, eager to learn about the efforts that ordinary Americans are making to conserve our land, water and wildlife. Our goal is to develop a conservation agenda for the 21st Century – an agenda that will incorporate and promote every positive aspect of conservation, including the creation of conservation-related jobs.

**Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative**

The Secretary's Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative is forging connections between a new generation of Americans and the outdoors, introducing youth to the career opportunities associated with our tremendous landscapes, and very often carrying out maintenance projects in our parks, forests, refuges, and other public land units. As part of this initiative, young adults gain valuable experience, while meeting important Departmental needs. By joining conservation corps or filling temporary positions, young people help maintain and enhance trails, restore native plants while removing invasive species, and provide the public with educational information about the public lands.

At the FWS Great Lakes/Big Rivers Region, for example, youth work directly with fisheries resource professionals performing the daily duties and special projects necessary for FWS to accomplish its mission of protecting and enhancing aquatic species and their habitats, including caring for fish, building trails, maintaining grounds and facilities, and learning about daily activities at a fish hatchery.

This year, the Department will employ at least 12,000 youth—a 50 percent increase over the 8,000 employed in 2009. The Department also indirectly employs youth through other organizations, leveraging funding and human resources to impact more youth by providing them with meaningful employment opportunities. Similarly, the Department partners with numerous organizations throughout the country, including YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs, to engage youth through education and recreation programs related to our public lands..

The importance of the Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative is reflected in the FY 2011 budget proposal, which includes large increases not only in employment of teens and young adults ages 16–25 but also in education and recreation programs that engage youth of all ages.

**Renewables**

As part of securing America's energy future, we must move our nation towards a clean energy economy. At the Department, this means changing the way we do business by opening our doors to responsible renewable energy development on our public lands. We are facilitating environmentally-appropriate renewable energy projects involving solar, wind and waves, geothermal, biofuels and hydropower. These resources, developed in the right ways and the right places, will help curb our dependence on foreign oil, reduce our use of fossil fuels and promote new industries here in America. The development of these renewable energy sources will also create jobs in local communities.

The Milford Wind Corridor, in Milford, Utah is an example of one of these renewable energy projects. Secretary Salazar recently announced that construction will begin soon on Phase 2 of the Milford Wind Corridor, which the BLM approved earlier this year. When completed, Phase 2 will consist of 68 turbines with the capacity to produce 102 megawatts of electricity. Construction is scheduled to begin this month and be completed by the end of the year. The first phase of the Milford Wind Corridor consists of 97 wind turbines that have been generating commercial power since November 2009, producing 204 megawatts of electricity sold to the Southern California Public Power Authority. That's enough energy to power 44,000 homes. To date First Wind has invested more than $500 million in the Phase 1 project, which has created more than 250 development and construction jobs and resulted in more than $85 million in economic benefit to Utah.

The Arizona Restoration Design Energy Project is another innovative example of the Department's work to facilitate appropriately-sited renewable energy development. The BLM's Arizona State Office has engaged local communities in this unique, forward-looking partnership to identify Arizona sites that have already been disturbed (such as abandoned mines, landfills, and brownfields) and that could support renewable energy development. Nominations have come from the BLM, other Federal agencies, tribal, state, county and local governments. Privately owned lands were nominated as well. The BLM, along with the many Federal and state agencies that have joined as cooperating agencies, has taken the information and begun work on a programmatic environmental impact statement that will analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of developing such lands. This innovative project is intended to identify potential development sites for which there are fewer competing uses and values, while providing conservation benefits by taking development pressure off lands with higher resource values. The many construction, maintenance, and operation jobs that result from renewable energy development on such sites would provide additional tangible benefits to local communities as well as the regional economy.

And just last week, the Department entered into an agreement with the Department of Energy (DOE) to develop a 25-square mile Solar Demonstration Zone on

federal lands in Nevada to demonstrate cutting-edge solar energy technologies. This Solar Demonstration Zone will be located in the southwest corner of the Nevada Test Site, a former nuclear site, on lands owned by the BLM and administered by DOE. Before selecting the site for the Solar Demonstration Zone, the federal government consulted with relevant stakeholders, including state, tribal, and local governments, as well as local utilities. DOE and the Department will continue collaborating to effectively implement the project, which will serve as proving grounds for new solar technologies, providing a critical link between DOE's advanced technology development and full-scale commercialization efforts.

**Landscape Conservation Cooperatives Initiative**

The Landscape Conservation Cooperatives initiative is based on ecosystem-based multi-stakeholder, multi-jurisdictional partnerships across the country. It is focused on addressing existing and emerging natural resources management challenges including climate change, and promotes geographically-based, landscape scale conservation planning. The Department has begun, with its partners, to put in place Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). These cooperatives will facilitate regional conservation planning along with the Department's regional Climate Science Centers (CSCs). The CSCs and the LCCs will conduct and communicate research and monitoring to improve the understanding and forecasting of which elements of Department-managed land, water, marine, fish, wildlife, and cultural heritage resources are most vulnerable to climate change impacts and other environmental stressors, and how to make them more resilient. The CSCs will provide basic climate change science associated with broad regions of the country, and LCCs will focus more on applied science at the landscape level. Both CSCs and LCCs will be involved in integrating and disseminating data and helping resource managers develop adaptation strategies.

LCCs will enable resource management agencies and organizations to collaborate in an integrated fashion within and across land ownerships. LCCs will provide scientific and technical support to inform conservation using adaptive management principles and will engage in biological planning, conservation design, inventory and monitoring program design, and other types of conservation-based scientific research planning and coordination. LCCs will play an important role in helping partners establish common goals and priorities, so they can be more efficient and effective in targeting the right science in the right places.

In creating the LCCs, the Department has undertaken an unprecedented level of outreach to partners at federal, state, tribal, local, and private levels, through workshops, web seminars, and other venues.

Progress achieved to date illustrates not only the commitment, enthusiasm and dedication with which the Department has pursued this task, but also the success the Department has achieved in attracting partners to participate in LCCs.

The USGS, FWS, NPS, BOR, BLM and BIA are fully participating in this effort and have committed funding and staff support beginning in 2011 to the CSCs in order to encourage collaborative sharing of research results and data and to provide a direct link with the on-the ground work taking place in the LCCs. These partners and others will leverage resources available for climate change science.

**Collaborative Projects**

Finally, I would like to share with you some examples of the other types of collaborative projects that are being carried out by Department bureaus. These examples include projects that were recognized this year by the Secretary for excellence in conservation partnerships. This year, 24 projects representing the work of more than 600 groups and individuals nationwide were recognized with the Department's Partners in Conservation Awards.

**The Wyoming Front Aspen Stewardship Project**

The Wyoming Front Aspen Stewardship Project seeks to restore and maintain aspen stands that provide important large game habitat. This project began in September 2006 through an Assistance Agreement between the BLM's Pinedale Field Office and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and encompasses 9,000 acres of BLM lands. The project involves harvesting marketable products (sawlogs, Christmas trees, fuelwood, and biomass) during the summer months, while leaving a fuel bed on over 80 percent of the unit. During the following spring, prescribed fire is used to reduce the fuel loads and enhance aspen regeneration. Since 2007, three timber sales have taken place to reduce conifer encroachment into aspen stands. Totaling over 500 acres and $15,970 in receipts, these forest health projects have generated over one million board feet of timber products, 1,200 tons of biomass material, and 2,000 Christmas trees. Work within the project area has been conducted on a total of 2,146 acres, totaling $511,182. Combined, these projects have employed

80 people. For FY 2007 and 2008 the BLM contributed $317,000 for project implementation, with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation contributing $40,000, Wyoming Game & Fish contributing $105,500, and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust providing $100,000.

**New Mexico Candidate Conservation Agreements**

The BLM's Pecos District and New Mexico State Office, working with their counterparts in the FWS, have engaged stakeholders in the New Mexico ranching and oil and gas industries to launch a conservation agreement program created specifically for lease holders on public lands. In this innovative program, landowners, energy companies and ranchers join the agencies in protecting and restoring habitat for two candidates for Federal listing in southeast New Mexico, the lesser prairie chicken and sand dune lizard. The agencies work with the Center of Excellence for Hazardous Materials Management to administer voluntary Candidate Conservation Agreements for oil and gas lease holders on Federal lands and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances for state and private landowners to benefit the species. In return, in the event that one or both species are listed under the Endangered Species Act, companies and individuals operating on private lands receive assurances that their operations can continue, and operators on Federal lands receive a much greater degree of certainty that their operations would likewise continue. Over a dozen ranchers and two energy companies are taking actions under the program to reduce or eliminate threats to the species on all land ownership types. These efforts have produced conservation benefits, provided operational and job security in the ranching and oil and gas industries, and created new jobs in habitat restoration. The BLM estimates that 20–30 jobs will be created in the reclamation of abandoned oil field sites (dirt moving, site remediation, etc.) and restoration of habitat for the species by a variety of vegetative treatments (e.g., aerial spraying and mechanical treatments).

**Anchorage Youth Employment in Parks Program**

The Anchorage Youth Employment in Parks Program engages youth in career opportunities and outdoor experiences to protect and restore fish and wildlife and their habitats. This robust collaboration among the FWS, the Anchorage Park Foundation, the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, and over 100 public and private organizations is reaching out to youth in populations underrepresented in natural resource management jobs to foster the next generation of public land stewards through natural resources training, habitat restoration, and protection projects and outdoor activities. Every year over three dozen youth from Anchorage area schools are employed as crewmembers to build new trails, repair fishing platforms, improve public access to fishing and recreational areas, rehabilitate stream banks, replant riparian landscapes, clean up creeks, maintain rain gardens, and implement riparian forest health protection projects to help reduce habitat loss from destructive and invasive spruce bark beetles. These projects further the mission of the Department, support the goal to connect youth to nature, and help the FWS meet its trust responsibilities for migratory birds, pacific salmon, and other inter-jurisdictional fish. In recognition of its achievements in collaborative conservation, this program received a Partners in Conservation Award from the Department this year.

**Circle of Flight Program**

In 2009, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Circle of Flight Program, provided support to 21 tribes and two tribal organizations that collaborated with other government and private entities in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to protect, restore, and/or enhance 20,000 acres of wetlands; restore and/or re-seed 1,500 acres of wild rice; establish, plant, and maintain 700 acres of upland waterfowl nesting cover and prairie grasslands; construct and install 200 waterfowl nesting structures; and conduct valuable waterfowl habitat research. The Program's many projects encouraged Native American youth to get involved in a number of activities, including wild rice planting, harvesting seeds, monitoring, and data collecting. In this way, these young people experience traditional ties to the land and natural resources while gaining appreciation for their treasured natural environment. These projects not only help Native Americans exercise traditional and cultural uses of the natural environment, but also give all citizens greater opportunity to enjoy our natural resources and natural heritage. In recognition of its achievements in collaborative conservation, this program received a Partners in Conservation Award from the Department this year..

**Modoc County, California Partnership**

Through its partnership with the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, Modoc County, CA, is developing and implementing the Sage Steppe Ecosystem Restoration Strategy to restore the health of public land in a 6.5 million acre planning area for the benefit of the residents of Modoc County and the people of the United States. The partnership is working to improve the condition of the public land while providing for rural economic development and domestic energy production on thousands of acres within the 6.5 million-acre, multi-jurisdictional planning area. In recognition of its achievements in collaborative conservation, this partnership received a Partners in Conservation Award from the Department this year..

**Conclusion**

Our national parks, refuges and public lands continue to be economically important to rural communities throughout the West. In these areas, land use activities, such as grazing, mining and forestry, remain key sources of rural jobs and income. At the same time, uses such as outdoor recreation and conservation have gained, and continue to gain, in economic importance to rural communities.

The collaborative spirit is at the heart of the initiatives supported by the Administration. Our ability to successfully achieve our mission depends upon our ability to work collaboratively with gateway communities and other stakeholders, and partnerships are a key component in this success. Through our partnerships, the Department is working to resolve conflicts over land management, put good conservation practices in place on the ground, contribute to economic opportunities in our Nation and our communities, and create jobs for the American people.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, Madame Secretary. Let me now ask Mr. Joseph Laurance, Douglas County Commissioner, Roseburg, Oregon. Welcome, and, Mr. Commissioner, the time is yours.

## STATEMENT OF JOSEPH A. LAURANCE, DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER, ROSEBURG, OREGON

Mr. LAURANCE. And good morning, and thank you, Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Subcommittee. I am Joe Laurance, County Commissioner for Douglas County, Oregon. My county is a little larger than the State of Connecticut, has the largest and oldest stands of Douglas fir timber in the world. When I left home Monday, five forest fires were burning on the million-acre Umpqua National Forest. I need your help to save my forest, and your forest as well. The NACo Resolution you find in today's written testimony can do that if you care as deeply as I do for this nation's forests.

Twenty years and 20 days ago, the Northern Spotted Owl was listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. It was then thought that loss of old growth habitat through logging was the culprit causing a declining population. In response, Federal timber harvests were vastly curtailed. The Umpqua National Forest in my county saw an annual harvest of 397 million board feet in 1988 reduced to 4 million board feet in 2002. In the years since, a policy of benevolent neglect of Federal lands has seen Spotted Owl numbers continue to decline through habitat destruction caused by increasingly numerous and intense forest fires, and through predation by the Barred Owl, which favors this new unmanaged forest habitat. Federal policy, which has been multiple use of the forest with an emphasis on industrial harvest, sought a new strategy, which has yet to be formulated in all of these intervening years. The resolution presented to you provides that needed new strategy, not only for Oregon, but for all of our nation's Fed-

eral forests, from Appalachia to Alaska. Federal forest managers would now have a clearly defined desired forest condition that must be obtained within a specified time. If this becomes the intent of Congress, the Forest Service with BLM would join with private industry to restore forest health and rural economies without drawing on the national treasury.

The plan I describe would restore your forest and mine to the natural historic condition created by American Indians through 7,000 years of applied ingenuity. That forest was one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems ever known. It was created by fire, yet protected from fire. A 250,000-acre study nearing completion on the Umpqua Forest will show precisely what the natural historic condition was immediately prior to European-American habitation. The study area would seem to be an excellent candidate as a pilot project to provide specific information related to healthy forest restoration, as envisioned by the resolution I have described.

The resolution anticipates that significant volumes of biomass will be generated through forest restoration efforts. Three weeks ago, I witnessed a demonstration of biomass utilization in the midst of 10,000 acres of insect-infested pine on the Umpqua National Forest. BioChar Products of Halfway, Oregon, converted a bone dry ton of biomass into 120 gallons of bio-oil—while producing 400 pounds of Bio-char, which is a rich growth medium.

By means of this technology, my county could produce 120 million gallons of bio-oil and 400 million pounds of Bio-char every year for at least 20 years, and probably in perpetuity from the slash and fuels reduction material we now burn.

I wish to thank in particular Committee Member Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and Peter DeFazio for their efforts to permit biomass and fuels reduction efforts on Federal forest lands. I would ask you to support definitions for renewable biomass, such as found in the Baucus-Tester discussion draft and the 2008 Farm Bill.

Forest restoration is a complex and controversial topic that should be further discussed. I would be delighted to participate in other hearings regarding that subject. Much of the efforts described here have had their genesis in Title II and III projects funded through the Secure Rural Schools Act, which also provides vitally needed support for 4,000 school districts and 700 counties nationwide. I ask for your continued support of Secure Rural Schools legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the Committee, for permitting me the honor of appearing before the House Subcommittee for National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Laurance follows:]

**Statement of Joseph Laurance, Douglas County Commissioner, Douglas County, Oregon**

Federal fiscal savings realized from this effort could contribute to offsets required for "Secure Rural Schools" funding, so vital to the educational and service needs of over 700 counties and 4000 school districts nationwide.

At a meeting of Oregon county commissioners last summer, I complained to my colleagues that while endless debate continued in congress about how federal forests should be managed, fires were ravaging federal timberlands in my county and throughout the western United States. The worldwide financial crisis that was draining the national treasury made re-authorization of "Secure Rural Schools" funding seem doubtful, threatening many of Oregon's 36 counties with social and

economic ruin. Bad news just kept coming with the word that unemployment in Douglas County had reached 16.4% and if unreported joblessness was considered, was probably greater than the 19% experienced here during the height of the "Great Depression". Talks were ongoing in Copenhagen about greenhouse gas emissions while the three fires in my county burned toward an eventual total of 20,000 acres, equal to the greenhouse gasses emitted by one million cars in a year's time. My fellow commissioners suggested that I craft a solution to the problems you of this body are all too familiar with. The resultant resolution has been carefully considered by commissioners from across the western United States who helped in its preparation. It has been unanimously adopted by the Association of Oregon Counties, Western Interstate Region of Counties, and the National Association of Counties (NACo) Public Lands Committee and is expected to be adopted by NACo at its annual national conference next week.

Twenty years and twenty days ago the Northern Spotted Owl was listed as threatened under the federal "Endangered Species Act". It was then thought that loss of old growth habitat through logging was the culprit causing a declining population. In response, federal timber harvests were vastly curtailed. The Umpqua National Forest in my county saw an annual harvest of 397 million board feet in 1988 reduced to 4 million board feet in 2002. In the years since a policy of "benevolent neglect" of federal lands has seen Spotted Owl numbers continue to decline through habitat destruction caused by increasingly numerous and intense forest fires and through predation by the Barred Owl which favors this new "unmanaged" forest habitat. Federal policy, which had been multiple use of the forest with an emphasis on industrial harvest, sought a new strategy which has yet to be formulated in all these intervening years.

The resolution presented you provides that needed new strategy, not only for Oregon but for all of our nation's federal forests from Appalachia to Alaska. Federal forest managers would now have a clearly defined desired forest condition that must be obtained within a specified time. If this becomes the "Intent of Congress", the Forest Service and BLM would join with private industry to restore forest health and rural economies without drawing on the national treasury.

The various Fire Regime Condition Classes described within the resolution indicate the extent of departure from the natural, historic conditions prior to fire exclusion or suppression. Typically, this departure occurred as native peoples were progressively displaced by European Americans during the westward expansion. Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 1 is similar to the forest which European explorers first found here. That forest had been modified by fire for more than 6 thousand years to provide the native inhabitants with what were then life's necessities. These included abundant wild game from the most productive and diverse wildlife habitat ever known on this continent. Similarly, the regular burning of competing vegetation permitted propagation of nut bearing trees and other food producing plants. Additionally, the historic "Healthy Forest" promoted pristine rivers, streams, and lakes that provided an abundant harvest of fish and waterfowl. Within FRCC 1 the risk of losing key ecosystem components to fire is low, while vegetation species composition, structure, and pattern are intact and functioning within the natural historic range.

FRCC 2 is a moderate departure from natural, historic conditions described above, with a moderate risk of losing key ecosystem components. Fire frequency, intensity, and size are increased with moderate increases in density, encroachment of shade tolerant tree species, or moderate loss of shade intolerant tree species.

FRCC 3 is the highest possible risk of catastrophic fire with dramatic changes to fire size, intensity, severity, and landscape patterns. High increases in density are typically associated with high mortality as a result of disease or insect infestation. These areas typically need high levels of restoration through hand or mechanical treatments. For purposes of this discussion, the full range of treatments available for active landscape scale management would be employed including fuels reduction, thinning of selected stands, and harvest where needed. These treatments must be successfully implemented before prescriptive fire can be used to maintain optimum forest conditions.

Of a total national forest system of 191 million acres, information provided by the Forest Service and derived from the 'LANDFIRE Project" list an FRCC 3 total of 40,677,000 acres nationwide. FRCC 2 is said to be 72,553,000 acres; FRCC 1 is listed at 83,230,000 acres. Other information regarding Fire Classes is drawn from a 2007 report of the Inspector General of the USDA which lists FRCC 3 at 73,000,000 acres while other sources suggest FRCC 2 at 55,000,000 acres and FRCC 1 at 63,000,000 acres.

The total acreage of fuels reduction on the national forest by means of mechanical treatment to for 2008 (the last available figures) totaled 1.2 million acres. Treat-

ment required based on the figures above for the defined time period would amount to between 2 million and 3.65 million acres for reduction of FRCC 3 to FRCC 1 during the first 20 year period and between 2.75 and 3.63 million acres for a reduction from FRCC 2 to FRCC1 during the second 20 years.

More specific information regarding the work required and the costs associated will be forthcoming this August from a Title III study of 250,000 acres of Forest Service lands in my county which will identify, with scientific precision, the characteristics of that "anthropogenic" forest in the year 1800, immediately prior to the European American presence. These characteristics will closely approximate the natural, historic conditions described in FRCC 1 in a forest where all three classes now exist.

The study referred to is titled Upper Pre-Contact Reference Condition Study and is revealing a mosaic forest, heavily populated by people, who actively managed and maintained their travel ways, their camp sites, and their hunting and gathering grounds. These areas tended to be more open with fewer and larger trees together with a wide diversity of species. The forest we are finding on those sites today are more dense with the majority of the trees less than 150 years old and far fewer of the oaks and pines, although we find a profusion of relics of their existence.

The study area would seem to be an excellent candidate as a pilot project to provide specific information related to healthy forest restoration as envisioned by the resolution described earlier.

One example of a locally grown effort at forest restoration while creating rural jobs is Communities for Healthy Forests, Inc. CHF is a non profit organized in 2004 after devastating fires in Oregon galvanized Douglas County, Oregon community leaders into action. While attorneys, judges and elected officials deliberated upon what course of action to take on the millions of acres burned forest, the health of our rural communities and the health of the forests surrounding them were ignored. The decision to debate environmental policy in the face of an emergency becomes a decision to limit any restorative action. Economic opportunities of removing dead material to fund replanting and other restoration activities are lost as are the multitude of jobs these activities could support. The fire-killed material left on site becomes fuel for the next fire, and carbon to be emitted into the atmosphere, adding to the greenhouse gas emissions.

In contrast, actively restoring these insect and fire damaged forests can put local people to work. Putting people to work to restore overgrown forests can reduce the fire hazard; sustain healthy growing forest conditions resistant to catastrophic fire and insect attack. As scientists like Dr. Thomas Bonnicksen and many others tell us, these were the conditions our forests contained for thousands of years due to the influence of Native Americans, conditions and people which were sustained for thousands of years.

This active management is widely supported as shown by polls conducted by Communities for Healthy Forests as well as The Oregon Forest Resources Institute. The vast majority of Oregonians agree that we must act if we are to sustain our beautiful forests, our rural economy and the communities which are capable of sustaining them.

Similar projects have been undertaken by The Douglas Forest Protective Association who has provided job skills training for 2000 youth since 1971. Among their number is our current County Sheriff. Tasks being completed by area youth include fire training and fuels reduction projects. These youth will also be in the fire line in a few days time.

The Oregon Youth Conservation Corp has provided similar opportunities for an average of 400 youth per year for the past decade. Our local Phoenix School has done the same for 200 area youth this most recent school year with 250 expected to participate next year.

The resolution anticipates that significant volumes of biomass will be generated through forest restoration efforts. Three weeks ago I witnessed a demonstration of Biomass utilization in the midst of 10,000 acres of an insect infested pine forest. BioChar Products of Halfway, Oregon converted a bone dry ton of biomass into 120 gallons of Bio-oil while producing 400 lbs. of Bio-char, a rich growth medium. By means of this technology, my county could produce 120 million gallons of Bio-oil and 400 million pounds of Bio-char every year for at least 20 years and probably in perpetuity.

I wish to thank in particular Committee members Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and Peter DeFazio for their efforts to permit biomass and fuels reduction efforts on federal forest lands.

Forest Restoration is a complex and controversial topic that should be further discussed. I would be delighted to participate in other oversight hearings regarding that subject.

Much of the efforts described here have had their genesis in Title II and III projects funded through the Secure Rural Schools Act, which also provides vitally needed support for 4000 school districts and 700 counties nationwide.

Thank you for permitting me the honor of appearing before the House Subcommittee for National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

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**A NACo Resolution to Promote Healthy Forest Ecosystems and Reduce the Release of Green House Gases through Active Management of the Nation's Forests.**

**Issue:**

Each year catastrophic wildfires throughout the nation contribute to global warming, jeopardize the national treasury, threaten fish and wildlife habitat, degrade both water and air quality, and cause devastation to forest dependent communities through loss of life, property, jobs, and the nation's timber resource. Federal Forests should be actively managed to reduce the threat of wildfire and the release of greenhouse gases. Restoration and conservation of our National Forest will insure a sustainable economic and environmental legacy for future generations.

**Proposed Policy:**

NACo urges Congress to enact legislation to direct and enable federal forest management agencies to reduce Fire Regime Condition Class 3 (FRCC 3) to the standard of FRCC 1 in all federal forests by the year 2030, and to reduce FRCC 2 to the standard of FRCC 1 in all federal forests by the year 2050, through the means of active landscape scale management, fuels reduction, and immediate post-fire restoration.

**Background:**

Some 73 million acres or 38% of the nation's federal forests are at "a high risk of ecologically destructive wild land fire" according to a 2007 report of the Inspector General of the USDA. An average of 7 million acres of forest has burned each year for the past 10 years in the US, primarily on federal lands. An estimated 47.5 Million Metric Tons of greenhouse gasses were released last year in the US through forest fire. An Executive Order of Oct.5, 2009 directs federal agencies to "consider and account for. . .emissions of greenhouse gases resulting from Federal land management practices". With this resolution, NACo joins the White House in an effort to reduce greenhouse gasses caused by forest fires on federal lands.

**Fiscal Urban/Rural Impact:**

The cost to taxpayers to fight these fires exceeds $1 Billion each year. The value of the timber thus consumed costs taxpayers $10.5 Billion every year. If Congress enacts this legislation, then directs federal land management agencies to implement the resultant policy, thousands of communities throughout the nation would experience significant social and economic recovery with the creation and return of forest based employment as well as the many other benefits of multi-use forest management. Urban areas would benefit from reduced taxation which now serves to support neighboring distressed rural communities. The nation would benefit from reduced greenhouse gas emissions, increased carbon sequestration and storage, improved fish and wildlife habitat, enhanced air and water quality, greater quantities of biomass based energy and forest products derived from federal lands serving to increase the national treasury, and an ultimate reduction in the cost of federal land management, half of which is devoted to fire suppression each year.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Commissioner. Let me begin with Deputy Secretary Vasquez first of all. Mr. Vasquez, let me welcome you to the Subcommittee. I think this is the first time Rural Development has been before the Subcommittee, so welcome. And if you could just give the Committee a little background on how Rural Development and the Forest Service came to start this new partnership under this Administration.

Mr. VASQUEZ. The beginning of this really came out of some internal policy discussions. The Secretary had given us a major charge to begin to look at regional innovation across rural America, and charged all the mission areas to begin to have discussions

about how we collaborate to implement that. So we had some initial discussions with the Forest Service about some of the issues that they were facing in Alaska, and we took a trip to southeast Alaska and had two major regional meetings, and met with various nonprofit organizations and advocate organizations and operators, and had pretty much a half day or longer session getting the information and input.

The realization of that meeting was that there was truly some positive and I think constructive information that was gleaned from that, and in a sense that innovation could come from the region, from the population and the organizations from the bottom up. We went back to Washington, had a sense of the things that came up in that group, and decided to go out and do focus groups in the 32 communities surrounding the Tongass Forest. From that, we gained even more information and realization that there are communities thinking about woody biomass. They are thinking about alternative energy. They are thinking about aquaculture. All kinds of things came out of these focus groups; specific projects that came out, a lot of what I would consider low-hanging fruit and projects that we felt that we could respond to.

But what came out of this that resonated was that there was a need to begin to look at a more comprehensive regional and economic approach to the response of not just the Tongass, but economic activity within the region because we found that there was a diversified economy that we needed to pay more attention to and look at how we could strategically invest, and look at how we use the natural resource base as a means to advance the region in a more diverse way. So from that, we have kept meeting, and currently now we are meeting with not just the Forest Service, but I meet biweekly with all of the Deputy Under Secretaries from across the entire missionaries of the entire Department to begin to look at how we work with each other across all mission areas.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Mr. Jensen, I am also interested in the expanded use of the stewardship contracting. We have been told repeatedly, though, however, that there are major barriers, such as the cancellation ceiling. What options are you considering to deal with this problem, either administratively or legislatively.

Mr. JENSEN. Thank you for bringing this up. Obviously, you heard it is a key part of our testimony here today. Stewardship contracting is core to getting the jobs and getting the work done that we need to do in the Forest Service. I think the county commissioner at the end of the table here very clearly painted a picture about what is at stake—that our lands are not in the best of condition in a lot of places. Stewardship contracting, as you are highlighting here, is the key to solving that.

We are running into some problems, and we are finding ways to address some of these administratively, looking at new ways to restructure some contracts. But there is also a challenge with this cancellation ceiling you just noted, which basically requires money to be put on the front end of contracts to ensure and guarantee that those that are investing in any of the resources that are part of this long-term contract, if we need to break that, there is money to pay them for those investments.

That tends to be a little bit of a hurdle for us in terms of trying to come up with the type of money needed to guarantee that contract. So we are looking at various options. We haven't been able to firm up on an exact solution, but there are different ways to perhaps look at different ways to commit that money on the front side, or perhaps when the actual change in the contract occurs, and we would be happy to work closer with you to figure out what that might look like.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. My time is up. Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the panel, both panels who will be here. The fact that you all were sitting for so long, I apologize. It is part of the horrible time-management plan we have in Congress, and one of the systemic changes that need to take place.

In like manner to the second panel, because I was expecting you to be done by now. I won't be here either. So I apologize for leaving you. It is not that I am offended by any of you, yet. It is just that I am—I apologize. It is the way we manage things around here. And I also apologize for missing the first two presentations. I did want to hear those because I have not had the opportunity of reading the supplied written testimony. I will get to that.

I do have a couple of questions for you, although based on what we have heard in the past—Mr. Jensen, let me start with you, and I will try and go through this as quickly as we can. From the very few internal documents that have been turned over by the Department of the Interior related to the so-called brainstorming sessions you had on coming up with land management plans that included new national monuments, your name has appeared on several of those e-mails and agenda items. Can you tell us what specific proposals regarding the Forest Service were in the treasured landscape documents?

Mr. JENSEN. The Forest Service is not involved in any conversations around designating land monuments on Federal lands. There had been early discussions around America's Great Outdoors, and I don't know if the different terminologies are getting mixed up in between, but the Department of Agriculture is not involved in any of that.

Mr. BISHOP. But you were part of those brainstorming sessions, or not?

Mr. JENSEN. No, I was not.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. If indeed some of the Forest Land was carved out to those monuments, is there any way that you could ensure that existing multiple use would not be implemented or impacted by it? Because obviously the documents we have seen so far, the term multiple use has never been used.

Mr. JENSEN. It is hard to guess what might be in something that is not something that is real right now. So I can tell you that the Forest Service very much believes in the multiple use mandate and mission, and we would be looking toward that in any sort of decisions that move forward.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you. You need to go back and make sure where your name shows up. It would be helpful to you.

Mr. JENSEN. OK.

Mr. BISHOP. If I could ask Ms. Sobeck—I hope I didn't mispronounce that—from Fish and Wildlife Services. Your agency is directly involved in reintroducing wolves in many areas of the West, including New Mexico. Ranchers are complaining about the impact of the wolf pack on their herds. Kids in Catron County are being stalked as they are now going to school, and there is a growing sense that Fish and Wildlife Service is disregarding public safety and welfare by that management practice.

Has the Fish and Wildlife Service studied the economic impact of your wolf management program in New Mexico or anywhere else?

Ms. SOBECK. I do not know the answer to that, but I would be happy to get to you, especially with respect to the New Mexico plan. I do know that we are very concerned about wolves and public safety, and the Endangered Species Act does have provisions to make sure that human life is protected.

Mr. BISHOP. If you would get back to me on the specifics of that, I would be very grateful.

Ms. SOBECK. Yes. We would be happy to do that.

Mr. BISHOP. We will put it on the list of documents we are waiting to see. Just philosophically, should the management activities be changed if you find a detrimental impact on the local economy?

Ms. SOBECK. The determination about whether or not to list a species is—the criteria are set out in the statute, and the economics of the impact on local communities is not one of the criteria for listing, but it is one of the criteria for—economic impact is one of the criteria for designation of critical habitat, if any.

Mr. BISHOP. So is that it ought to be and is not, or it should be, or it is?

Ms. SOBECK. I think economics should be a factor at appropriate points within the framework of the Endangered Species Act and its regulations.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Laurence, I have only got 40 seconds to ask the commissioner. I apologize for that. You gave a good recommendation as to what has happened to the Spotted Owl in reality. Economically, what has happened to Douglas County since that was listed as an endangered species?

Mr. LAURANCE. We went from one of the more comfortable governments in the State of Oregon—the timber economy, which has been the economy of my county, is a 10-percent remnant, and that largely because private lands have stepped into the gap. In the documentation that I brought with me, you will see that we are cutting 1 percent. In the year 1988, we cut 397 million board feet off of the Umpqua National Forest. By 2002, that had dropped to 4 million, again 1 percent. It has come up a little bit, but again, we are a 10 percent remnant, and we have all of the associated social pain that you can imagine.

Mr. BISHOP. I appreciate that. Thank you. Maybe you can share that document with Fish and Wildlife. It would help you in implementing the local economy into your deliberations at some time.

Mr. LAURANCE. Thank you.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Chairman, again I apologize, and to the second panel. I am not trying to be rude by leaving, but Mr. Grijalva is

happy I am. But to the second panel, I am not trying to be rude by leaving, but I am, and I do apologize to you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. See you later. Mr. Luján.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. A couple of questions, Mr. Chairman. First I will start with Deputy Under Secretary of Rural Development, Mr. Vasquez. As you know, communities in New Mexico take a great deal of pride in the uniqueness of our culture and our traditions. Many of our farmers and ranchers depend on our distinctive irrigation systems known as acequias to the land grants that were granted over 500 years ago. And I want to emphasize that, over 500 years ago.

Can you go into additional details regarding your Department's efforts to reach out to unique regional systems to better support them? And they should be included in consultation when they are in areas that may be impacted.

Mr. VASQUEZ. I can tell you from the rural development perspective and what I mentioned in our testimony, is that first and foremost, we take the perspective of local residents and local, I guess, strategies and innovation, of the utmost importance. So, yes, we would welcome the opportunity to consult with groups on how to respond to the uniqueness of what is used in agriculture in those areas.

It may be that we would end up partnering with other mission areas, but we can start with rural development to look at what it is that needs to be responded to and how we could go about framing it.

Mr. LUJÁN. I appreciate that very much, Mr. Under Secretary, as we look to grants that may be able to be accessed, but also accessed when there is designation, especially with some of our forest lands. That is something I am very interested in. Deputy Under Secretary, Mr. Jensen, thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee again as well. As you know, many rural communities have limited access to the Internet. I am particularly interested in what you are doing to help increase that collaboration and what we can do to see continued access, especially in rural communities, from economic purposes.

Mr. JENSEN. And you said to the Internet? I might defer to my counterpart here, Secretary Vasquez, as Rural Development has some pretty fascinating things going on around broadband.

Mr. VASQUEZ. We are looking. We are going through round two of reviewing proposals for broadband expansion, and to date, it has been pretty much covered in most of the states. But if there are areas that we need to pay particular attention to through our Rural Utility Service, we would be more than happy to meet with those communities to look at how we can provide technical assistance to move in that direction.

Mr. LUJÁN. I appreciate that very much. And then also looking at Rural Utility Service to see how we can strengthen it, as opposed to programs that may be proposed for reductions. These are important programs to rural America, who wouldn't have power—we wouldn't have telecommunications if it weren't for it, and so we need to strengthen those programs.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Sobeck, what are you doing to protect hunting and fishing activities across the country, especially in

New Mexico? How can we work closer with our state officials to plan, maintain, and protect access to hunting and fishing?

Ms. SOBECK. Congressman Luján, we consider the hunting and fishing community to be essential partners to the Fish and Wildlife Service on our refuge lands, and with respect to the migratory bird resources that we manage. So we have multiple partnerships with the hunting and fishing community. We consider them essential partners and work with them on a regular basis, inventing many, many of our programs. And we look to them for ideas and inspiration about how to increase access to hunting and fishing opportunities, both on Federal lands and private lands. We know that protection of vital habitat has been attributable in large part to the support of the hunting and fishing community, and we need to make sure—I heard this this week in Nebraska—that there is a new generation of hunters that value their access to the land and their relationship to resources. And I think that those opportunities and the conservation and recreational goals of our agency are very closely aligned.

So I don't have any specific examples with respect to New Mexico, but I know that we have had some America Great Outdoors listening sessions. They are planned to be held in your state, and we will be looking for any suggestions. We are truly listening to the local groups and want to hear their ideas about how to accomplish the goals that you described.

And so I think that we have very closely aligned interests in that area.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And as we look to continue this discussion, again the city of Santa Fe will be celebrating its 400th anniversary this year, land grants that date back 500 years, traditional access and uses, whether it was gathering wood or woods with Piñon or some of our small producers that have used the land for grazing as well, hunting and fishing, proud traditions back home that I know that, Mr. Chairman, we will be able to make sure we are addressing and looking to improve the economic activity around the country. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. If I may, Mr. Luján, the 500-year anniversary of Santa Fe——

Mr. LUJÁN. Four hundred.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Four hundred? In comparison to Plymouth Rock, more or less.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Chairman, they are celebrating the 400th anniversary in the city, and I am not sure where we are with Plymouth Rock, but I can guarantee you it is not 400.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I honor the City of Santa Fe, but I think it actually is 400 past Plymouth Rock. I think that was 1492, but maybe I am wrong. So anyway, to the subject at hand. First, to the Department of Agriculture; either one of you can answer this. You know, I was involved with a coalition, and we had some quite lengthy discussion and struggle with Chairman Waxman to include in the so-called cap and trade bill, which I did not support, language for biomass utilization on Federal lands, and making it eligible for the same tax credits that you can get off private lands. And as I understand, the Administration supported that initiative.

But now, we have the Environmental Protection Agency proposing to reclassify the utilization of biomass in defiance of all their past positions in terms of the carbon cycle, and to in fact essentially potentially classify it the same as fossil fuels, coal. And I am just wondering, since you both talk about woody biomass utilization and some examples and how productive this could be—and certainly Commissioner Laurance makes a great case and brought a pilot project to the Umpqua National Forest there—are you concerned, have you engaged with, are you tracking the EPA? Does the left hand of the Administration know what the right hand is doing here?

Mr. JENSEN. The left hand the right hand are firmly shaking and trying to figure out how to get that handshake to get on the same page. The Department of Agriculture—this issue you raise is absolutely essential that we figure out how to create the kinds of good, positive, sustainable incentives to use, in this case, woody biomass, if we are dealing with the Forest Service. So this question, I think, in particular around how you define renewable biomass is a really key one. There is a public lands component to it. There is a private lands component to it. It revolves a lot around the sustainability of that resource.

The Secretary has testified that the 2008 Farm Bill definition is an appropriate and comprehensive place to look at how to approach that issue.

Mr. DEFAZIO. As I understand from some discussion with some of the environmental groups, they have two concerns. One is scale, and the other is—there are some delusional environmentalists who believe that after we do all of the fuel reduction, which most people would agree is necessary so we don't torch up our green forests with fuel conditions that never should have existed, that have been poorly managed—some think that, well, after you finish that, you will then install capacity, and you will go back, and you will cut down the big old trees. I said, so we are going to cut down a $20,000 Douglas fir or $30,000 old growth ponderosa, and turn it into $200 worth of wood chips. I am not certain how to deal with that. But I think in terms of the scaling and the sustainability, you could deal with it through stewardship contracts and prescriptions over the land base. And the other thing I would observe is that you don't have the budget to do the fuel reduction.

I mean, GAO says we are losing ground. Actually, we are becoming more and more fire prone every year because of accumulating dried fuels and woody biomass that shouldn't be there, and it is going to burn catastrophically in most places. So this, I think—and I don't know if you have any studies on this, but I believe that if you entered into larger scale contracts, say to feed a project of appropriate scale, to reduce woody biomass, you probably would get a cheaper bid price on that work. I would assume you could stretch your dollars further. Don't you think that is so, if there were some product to come out of there, as opposed to piling it up into slash piles and burning it next winter?

Mr. JENSEN. There are economies of scale, and that is very much one of the key beliefs and thoughts that we have got in trying to get more work done, create those economies of scale so we can get more done with fewer dollars.

Mr. DEFAZIO. OK. Well, I am glad to see we are on the same page there, and I would do anything I can to help you with that. I organized a letter of about 60 Members of Congress expressing concern with this potential reclassification or new classification to the EPA administrator, and we expect to be meeting with her to discuss that.

The other issue you raised, which is also critical, is you talk about the Secure Rural Schools and the fact that it has provided beneficial projects across the West. And I guess what I would like to know is I am sending a letter just now to the President signed by—I am trying to remember how many, how many people in our letter; 58, another 60 Members of Congress—regarding the long-term prospects for Secure Rural Schools and the projects you discussed here, the resource advisory committees and those projects. And I am wondering—I discussed this with the President earlier this year. He referred letters both to the Secretary of Agriculture, since that is Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior, and said that they should follow up with me on my concerns about some longer-term plan. And I haven't heard anything yet.

Mr. JENSEN. I am glad you are beginning the discussion because reauthorization of that bill is up in 2012, and it has been a very important tool and lifeblood for these rural communities and counties that are surrounded a lot of times by public lands. So we have seen tremendous success. The types of projects that come out of that bill have led toward some of the best work that is out there that is not appealed, that is not litigated. And so we are looking forward to engaging that conversation. We are very glad that you are bringing it up, and look forward to continuing that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I would change the tense, not bringing. I have been persistently—I brought up with the President as a candidate, then brought it up—but, most recently, personally brought it up with him a few months ago. And I would hope to get some response to the referred letter by the President. As he said, he would ask both secretaries to engage on that issue.

I want to, Mr. Chairman, if I could, just apologize to the next panel because I have a lunch with the Majority Leader at noon to discuss manufacturing jobs. Rural jobs are very important. Manufacturing jobs are important, too. I am a bit conflicted, and there is a member of the next panel who I think has much to tell us about that, and I will try and get back. But I just want to apologize in advance.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me follow up with a couple of questions. And if I can invite Dan Wenk up for a question, and also Mr. Poole from BLM up for a question, I would appreciate that. Thank you very much. Mr. Wenk, we have heard assertions constantly that national parks negatively impact rural communities, yet we also hear how important parks are to businesses and economic activity, particularly in gateway communities. Can you give us some hard numbers on what effect a Grand Canyon, a Zion, a Yellowstone have to the surrounding areas? And if you would, please, if you don't mind, identify yourself for the record.

Mr. WENK. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can. I am Dan Wenk, the Deputy Director of the National Park Service. The Deputy Assistant Secretary Sobeck talked about the national impact in terms of dol-

lars and jobs of the national parks across the country. But if I could add to that, if I just took one area of the country, which would be the inter-mountain region, visitors spent more than $2.5 billion in the gateway communities surrounding the parks. There are 91 parks across eight states in the inter-mountain region. More than $2.5 billion, which supported more than 51,000 local jobs and contributed approximately $1.6 billion in added value. That is the net value added to the region's economy in the preferred measure of how an industry or an activity contributes to the economy.

Specific examples to your question. Visitor spending in National Park Service payroll in the Grand Canyon supported more than 11,500 jobs and contributed approximately $307 million in value added. Rocky Mountain National Park supported almost 5,000 local jobs and contributed over $140 million. Yellowstone supported almost 7,200 jobs, and contributed approximately $305 million in value added. Glacier supported more than 2,200 jobs and contributed approximately $75 million in added value.

Just a couple more facts of note. In the State of Arizona, visitor spending accounted in payroll accounted for $680 million and about 18,000 jobs. In Utah, $500 million and 12,500 jobs.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. And now, Mr. Poole, we have also heard—and thank you, and if you could identify yourself for the record as well. But we have heard a lot recently about the loss of energy jobs in Utah specifically. But according to your testimony, the Milford wind corridor project has created 250 jobs in the area and brought more than $85 million in economic benefit. So it looks like you are working with the private sector to create jobs. And can you talk about this and other opportunities that you can tell the Committee about?

Mr. POOLE. Yes, I can, Mr. Chairman. That is the Milford Project in Utah. It is divided in two phases. BLM authorized phase one in 2009. At that time, we authorized approximately 100 wind turbines, producing about 200 megawatts. We are in the process of authorizing phase two for an additional 70 wind turbines and an additional 100 megawatts. Those figures are correct. Our estimates is it has resulted in about 250 jobs, about $85 million in revenue to the State of Utah. And the overall investment being made by the company is about $500 million.

Currently, we have what we call fast track projects, 34 projects bureau-wide. This includes many aspects of our renewable portfolio. That is solar, that is wind, that is geothermal. That is also either upgrade or to new transmission, all of which will be producing jobs and additional revenue, for the most part in proximity to rural communities throughout the West.

Mr. GRIJALVA. One quick question for the commissioner. I was particularly interested, and these partnerships are, I think, important, and particularly in our part of the country. But I was interested in how your project has worked out the partnerships with the local tribes. I think that is not only interesting, but very important.

Mr. LAURANCE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Shortly after I took office in 2007, I was talking to Senator Wyden, and we talked about these issues—about how there is dissension—and he said if I could bring together a local collaborative group to discuss these issues and seek solutions, it made his job as legislator an easier

job. In recognizing that, I looked at about 100 influential members of my community on all sides, environmental advocates, timber industry, government, Federal land managers, and vetted through that 100-name list, and came up with about 35 names who spoke with authority for those organizations they represented, but were careful listeners as well. And the result of those conversations over the course of three years has developed the resolution that you see before you.

It is interesting that among the people who first talked to me, for instance, about pre-European conditions that we talk about, the first with me is Javier Goirigolzarri, a forestry consultant. Speaking with me about this very thing was Paul Beck, a timber manager for a local timber company; as well as Ken Carlon, a professor at our local college, and also the president of probably the most influential environmental organization in my county; as well as Steven Rondo, resource manager of the Umpqua—the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Indian Tribe.

And it is interesting that in conversations, it was always directed toward the tribe. And we wanted their buy-in. And they helped shape a vision that harkens back 150-200 years in their oral tradition. And it is interesting that this has become vitally important to them. We are identifying heritage sites, many of which remain sacred and only known, as we discover them, to that tribe in this study.

And interesting aside is that my son, who is working for the Forest Service, who has had a lifelong interest in native plants, has a variety of every plant used by the local Indian tribe in prehistory growing somewhere on my place—some of them look like weeds, but he promises me they are not. So that collaboration is very rich, and I think beneficial to my entire community.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Mr. Jensen, Ms. Sobeck, I have other questions that I will submit in writing to you. And I appreciate your response to the Committee. Mr. Jensen, I won't ask you about meetings or anything like that. If you do have an independent thought on your own, please keep it to yourself. Anyway, thank you very much, and I invite the next panel up.

Mr. JENSEN. Thank you.

[Pause]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Let me welcome the panel and turn to my colleagues that have joined us today for introductions of individuals on the panel. Let me begin with Mr. Luján, sir.

Mr. LUJÁN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Today, Mr. Chairman, I am proud to introduce two panelists, one on the second panel, which we have before us today, and one that will be speaking on the third panel. Mr. Lee, thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee today. This is an important topic to many folks back home in New Mexico, and especially to the Committee. I worked closely with the Cattle Growers' Association in the past, and I am familiar with the important concerns, and many opinions shared by our stockmen.

I believe like you that in the creation of Federal land, local communities' concerns should be kept in mind. I was proud that while developing language for my Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act, I met and spoke with members

of the Cattle Growers' Association and the New Mexico stockmen to ensure their concerns were listened to so that access for traditional uses was protected.

Preservation of land must take into consideration our way of life. Everyone can work together, but that means ideas have to be shared, and respectful discussion must play a big part. To that end, I believe that we agree in protecting the land, while approaches may differ on the best methods of preserving our culture, traditional uses, and access, I believe that it is important for the Subcommittee to hear the unique concerns of our community in New Mexico, and how we can work together as we protect traditional uses for our farmers, ranchers, acequias, and land grants, and manage our public lands.

Once again, thank you for joining me today, Mr. Lee. And, Mr. Chairman, if I may, with the introduction of our second guests that we will have on the next panel, I have the pleasure of introducing a constituent from Taos, New Mexico, Ms. Rachael Mondragon, the founder of Urban Interface Solutions. Ms. Mondragon has worked closely with state and Federal lands for much of the past decade, in both the Carson National Forest and the Cimarron State Forestry Office. Ms. Mondragon has dedicated herself to protecting our rural communities through wildfire suppression field work, and front office respectively.

Her skill in the Carson National Forest suppression crew enabled her to continue wildfire prevention and continue with her fire department as a crew boss. Building upon her knowledge of forest and work experiences, Ms. Mondragon developed Urban Interface Solutions, a diverse company that tackles such projects as landscape scaling and hazardous fuels reduction planning and implementation efforts. These experiences have equipped Ms. Mondragon with a unique perspective or protecting our wildlife while creating business and industry locally.

Through her hard work, dedication, independent business spirit, and endurance, Urban Interface Solutions is a successful company that was granted $450,000 to work cooperatively with the Taos Pines Ranch through the collaborative forest restoration program. Her work with Federal agencies and grants through these are additional evidence of the benefits of joint work between private industry and Federally protected land, and how they can work together for the betterment of our communities.

Thank you for joining us today, Ms. Mondragon and Mr. Lee. I look forward to the testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, sir. Now also let me ask unanimous consent for Mr. Minnick to join us at the dais, if he so chooses after his introduction. If there is no objection, so ordered; and also extend to him the opportunity to introduce one of your constituents, sir.

Mr. MINNICK. I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am here to acknowledge an Idahoan who is going to testify in your next panel, Kristin Troy of Salmon, Idaho. She is the Executive Director of the Lemhi Regional Land Trust, and you will be hearing from her shortly, and also to introduce Joyce Dearstyne. Joyce is on this panel, second from my left. She is the Executive Director of Framing Our Community. This is a small business incubator and value-

added job skills and training organization that is unique because of its location. Joyce started this organization and runs it in Elk City, Idaho, which has to be one of the most remote cities—it is a town of a little over 1,000 people—in the lower 48. The city is perched very near rim of the main Salmon River overlooking the second deepest canyon in North America.

There is some dispute, Mr. Chairman, over whether the deepest is in your state or my state, but this is second in any event. And it is surrounded by the largest wilderness area on three sides, the largest wilderness area in the lower 48. It is a center of productive forest land that is managed by the Forest Service on a multiple uses basis. Elk City was a typical mill town, had a single employer, and the mill closed in 2005. The city was very fortunate to have Joyce there and Framing Our Community, her organization, which stepped in, and has kept that town on the map.

It has done it by her ingenuity using a very limited amount of Federal dollars, by becoming a small business incubator that has drawn in a number of forest-based conversion options. They produce specialty lumber. They produce wood fiber for a cogeneration operation that Joyce is in the process of starting, and a whole bevy of training organizations that promote healthy forestry.

She has started training programs which deal with watershed restoration, which is a key to stewardship sales in this very rugged back country area; natural disaster response; and even a program called Artists in the Woods. And it is truly remarkable. She has turned this community, instead of drying up and blowing away, into one of the most vibrant back country communities in my state. She has also reached outside her community and is an active participator in the Clearwater Collaborative, which is a group that Senator Crapo of my state has put together to come up with a—bring interest groups together and come up with a cooperative land management plan that hopes to present you a forest management plan, including some new wilderness in Idaho, likely next session, and she is a member of a group that is involving Idaho and Washington, the North Idaho and Eastern Washington Jobs Workforce Development Group that is a partnership that brings in and promotes economic development throughout this rural region. She epitomizes what we need to do as a Federal Government in stimulating the kinds of economic development that will keep our rural and forested areas alive in this country.

It is a pleasure for me to welcome Joyce Dearstyne.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Congressman. And let me again welcome the panel. Let me begin with Cassandra Moseley, Director, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon. Doctor. welcome. I look forward to your testimony.

## STATEMENT OF CASSANDRA MOSELEY, PH.D., DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Dr. MOSELEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. Thank you for letting me be here today. I want to talk about the ways we can create jobs through the restoration and maintenance of our public lands.

As the Chairman said, I direct the Institute for Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon. And today, I want to offer some job creation principles, some promising strategies, and a few key recommendations. I am going to leave the specifics to the panelists with muddy boots.

National forests and other public lands are critical to securing clean air, water, biodiversity, and carbon, and yet our public lands face a significant need to recover ecosystem function, reduce fire hazard, prepare for and adapt to climate change. These needs create an economic opportunity for public lands communities. Investments in forest and watershed restoration create jobs, jobs at a rate similar to infrastructure projects such as buildings and roads. In a recent study, we found that in Oregon, forest and watershed restoration creates between 15 and 24 jobs per $1 million invested. Forest restoration can also generate woody biomass that can be used for wood products and energy, and this can add additional business and employment opportunities.

The central challenge is to translate this economic opportunity into economic reality for public land communities over the long term. During the recession, Federal policy has been appropriately focused on stimulating the economy by creating immediate jobs. However, in many public lands communities, they have longer term underlying economic weaknesses that will not be resolved when the national economy recovers. Moving forward, a focus on job quantity rather than job quality can create economies that fail to support families and their communities, and leave out western rural communities altogether because their population densities make it difficult for them to find enough local workers to take advantage of these sorts of strategies.

So what does it take to transform the need for forest and watershed restoration into rural wealth, businesses, and jobs? We need agreement about how these lands are managed, agency capacity to act on these agreements, and businesses and a trained workforce to do the work. Over the past 15 years, communities and their agency partners have developed a number of key strategies to create these conditions. One of the key strategies is collaboration.

Since the mid-1990s, diverse collaboratives of agency and community partners have worked to resolve conflict over Federal land management. By starting small and using demonstrations and field tours monitoring, collaborative groups have built trust to move toward landscape-scale restoration.

Second, alongside collaboratives, many western communities have created community-based organizations that have emerged to facilitate these groups, work with agencies to plan and implement projects, and undertake business and workforce development.

Third, turning to the land management agencies, stewardship contracting has become a key tool for undertaking public lands restoration and creating a diversity of local benefits. For example, on the Fremont National Forest, a 10-year stewardship contract is being used to implement broad agreement about forest restoration and keep the local sawmill opening, saving milling and logging jobs.

A fourth strategy has been integrated value-added manufacturing and biomass utilization. In these efforts, community groups

co-develop and co-locate small diameter wood processing facilities, electrical, and heat generation, and these projects are energy efficient, scaled appropriately to local conditions, and structured to allow communities to capture as much benefit as possible.

And finally, we are seeing the emergence of regional economic development strategies and networks. Although community-based approaches to development promised to maximize local benefit in places dominated by public lands, larger scale politics and markets greatly affect the ability of community-based efforts to succeed. And increasingly, local organizations are working across communities to develop markets, capital, and facilities.

So how can Congress and the Federal Government accelerate conservation-oriented economic development? Let me offer a few suggestions. First, I would recommend the reauthorization of stewardship contracting. Second, I think we need a grant program to allow the national forests and community partners to foster community business and agency capacity to integrate public lands restoration and rural community development. And finally, the Forest Service needs budget structures that allow them to effectively and efficiently conduct integrated restoration on national forest lands.

So thank you again for holding this important hearing. The ecological health of public lands and the economic prosperity of nearby communities are inextricably linked. While there is still a lot of work to be done, Federal agencies and their community partners have been developing strategies to improve the health of both the communities and the lands. I look forward to any questions you have. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Moseley follows:]

**Statement of Cassandra Moseley, Ph.D., Ecosystem Workforce Program, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today about the ways we can create and retain jobs through the restoration and maintenance of public lands. I want to discuss how well-crafted federal land management, contracting, and economic development policies can support high quality jobs, foster robust small enterprises, and create wealth in rural public lands communities.

I direct the Ecosystem Workforce Program in the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon. Founded in 1994, the Ecosystem Workforce Program seeks to build ecological health, economic vitality, and democratic governance in rural forest communities in the American West. We address these interconnected issues with applied research and policy education related to rural communities and federal forest management. I am a founding participant of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, a group that is focused on finding policy solutions that link the long-term health of the land and well-being of rural communities. Over the past nine years, I have undertaken a number of studies about the rural community benefits of Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contracting, the working conditions of federal contract forest workers, and the use of stewardship contracting.

Today, I am going to discuss:

1. Historical precedents for the Forest Service role in creating local economic benefit
2. Opportunities to create jobs in public land communities today
3. Strategies for creating conservation-oriented economic development
4. Place-based and regional strategies and examples of what is working
5. Challenges limiting public land communities' participation in and benefit from the conservation of public lands
6. Recommended policy changes

**1. Caring for the Land, Serving the People: Historical precedents for the Forest Service role in creating local economic benefit for public land communities**

When beginning a conversation about how public lands can play a role in creating prosperity in rural communities, one can easily ask whether this should be a focus or obligation of these agencies. It is worth briefly considering the founding of the Forest Service. At the turn of the 20th century, Teddy Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and other Progressives advocated for forest reserves and later the Forest Service as agencies that would conserve timber, water, and rangelands immediately and into the future. As part of this vision, they saw local economic well-being as a fundamental part of national forest management. The first regulations of the National Forest Reserves (the 1905 Use Book) laid out "protecting local residents from unfair competition in the use of forest and range" as a central purpose of the reserves. Since then, Congress has repeatedly created programs to focus the Forest Service's attention on the creation of local economic benefit from sustainable management of the national forests. In the past 60 years, we have seen the Sustained Yield Forest Management Act of 1944, which authorized the Forest Service to create units where sustained yield timber harvest was to benefit the local community; special salvage timber sale and small business timber sale programs; and obligations under the National Forest Management Act to analyze the economic impact of management. More recently, appropriations associated with the National Fire Plan, Secure Rural Schools, and stewardship contracting all focus the attention of national forests on creating local community economic benefit while managing lands for the long term good of the Nation. For a century of its history, the Forest Service has had to simultaneously address national interests and local benefits; and balance current needs and long-term well being.

**2. Forest and watershed restoration and biomass utilization: Opportunities to create jobs in public land communities today**

Now more than ever, we understand the key roles that national forests and other public lands play in securing clean air, water, biodiversity, and carbon now and into the future. Federal lands also provide places for recreation, retreat, renewal—critical roles in a nation that struggles to unplug and unwind; and even more significant for today's youth, who are facing an epidemic of obesity.

Despite their importance, our national forests and other public lands face a significant and growing need for management to recover ecosystem function, reduce fire hazard, and prepare for and adapt to climate change. These lands and forests need hazardous fuels reduction, improved wildlife and fish habitat, road decommissioning and maintenance, and updated recreation facilities. Although funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) have helped to reduce the backlog, much still needs to be done. The need to actively restore our national forests and grasslands is great, as is the need to create economic opportunity for the businesses and workers in communities who live adjacent to public lands.

Investments in forest and watershed restoration create jobs and economic impacts similar to investments in infrastructure projects such as building roads and bridges. In a recent economic impacts study, we found that forest and watershed restoration activities create between 15.7 and 23.8 jobs per $1 million invested in Oregon. The economic multipliers are in the range of 1.4 and 2.4.[1] Employment numbers tend to be higher for labor intensive activities such as hand thinning, tree planting, and site preparation and lower for equipment-intensive jobs such as construction of instream habitat and mechanical thinning, selective logging and the like. However, the equipment-intensive jobs usually created more total economic impact. The majority of the companies we interviewed were quite small—nearly two-thirds had annual revenues less than $1 million.[2]

Forest restoration activities such as hazardous fuels reduction and thinning have the potential to generate small diameter trees and other woody biomass that can be used to create wood products and energy. These products are wide ranging and include posts, poles, furniture, animal bedding, landscaping projects, paper, and engineered wood products and energy including heat and electricity. Developing utilization businesses located near the national forests can reduce treatment costs for the federal government and other landowners, as well as create local business and employment opportunities.[3]

**3. Restoration and biomass utilization: Strategies for creating conservation-oriented economic development**

As ARRA winds down over the coming year, the central challenge will be to translate the economic opportunity of forest and watershed restoration and the utilization of byproducts into economic reality for rural communities over the long term. Dur-

ing the recession, federal policy has been focused on stimulating the economy by creating immediate jobs. In many ways, this is an appropriate strategy for encouraging recovery and avoiding deflation. However, many public lands communities have longer-term, underlying economic weaknesses that will not be resolved when the national economy recovers. Beyond short-term stimulus, many rural public lands communities need to develop economically. There are several key dimensions of successful conservation-oriented economic development:

- *Wealth creation and retention:* The development of local businesses that provide restoration and stewardship services or energy products need to be scaled to meet local market demand and be part of an integrated economy that includes value-added manufacturing and local ownership to ensure that the money generated circulates through the local economy.
- *Diversity and adaptability:* In small rural economies, the businesses that can provide a diversity of services and evolve as needs change will be best able to withstand changes in economic or environmental conditions. In natural resource-based economies, seasons, natural disturbance, and commodity markets are constant sources of change. In the face of climate change and the need for renewable energy development, creating integrated, diverse strategies will allow rural communities to withstand change and perhaps even prosper because of it.
- *Robust small businesses:* Local ownership and hybrid ownership models that create not only jobs but also local business opportunities can help create local wealth along with jobs.
- *High quality jobs:* Focusing on high quality jobs is critical to overall community well being. Job creation efforts that focus on securing a large number of jobs do not always consider whether those jobs will enable workers to support their families. Equally problematic, rural communities often do not have the population available to take advantage of large-number-low-quality-job strategies, so the jobs and the economic benefits will go to outsiders. Strategies that focus on creating high quality, longer duration jobs will better help rural businesses strengthen their efforts to create more sustained positive economic impacts.

**4. Place-based and regional strategies and examples of what is working**

What does it take to transform the need for forest and watershed restoration into rural wealth, diverse and flexible enterprises, and jobs? Across the West, communities and their agency partners have been working together to foster economic development around forest and watershed restoration and biomass utilization. Over time, a set of strategies are emerging that foster success. These include:

- Collaboration
- Community-based organizations
- Best value and stewardship contracting and contractor development
- Promotion of quality jobs
- Integrated value-added manufacturing and biomass utilization
- Regional strategies and networks

*Collaboration*

Since the mid-1990s, collaboratives that include front line staff from federal agencies, local government officials, local citizens, environmentalists, and industry representatives have emerged in the West to resolve conflict over federal land management, find common ground, and develop and implement projects. By starting small, using demonstrations and field tours, and monitoring project implementation, many collaborative groups have built sufficient trust to move toward landscape-scale restoration. Now, established collaborations are taking on increasingly large and complex projects. Initially, collaboration can be slow to develop. Strengthening and expanding collaboration is an iterative process, where each project builds on the last. But the benefits of collaboration include innovative solutions to complex problems, reduced tensions, and more financial and technical resources to implement a project. These collaborative approaches are critical to the effective and efficient management of our public lands and to restoring social harmony in the communities that have born the brunt of conflict over national forest management. Collaboration has proved itself to be an essential strategy to developing and implementing durable solutions.

*Community-based organizations*

Alongside collaborative processes, in many western communities, community-based organizations have emerged to help facilitate collaborative groups, assist the agencies with project planning and implementation, and support business and workforce development for both restoration and value added manufacturing and biomass

utilization. Organizations such as such as Wallowa Resources (Enterprise, OR), Lake County Resources Initiative (Lakeview, OR) and the Watershed Research and Training Center (Hayfork, CA) develop partnerships with local entrepreneurs, agencies, and community leaders to strengthen small local business development and to increase the flow of benefits from forest management to local communities and workers. In addition, regional organizations such as Sustainable Northwest are playing a pivotal role in networking these organizations, providing technical and facilitation assistance, and helping entrepreneurs access urban markets. Place-based, regional, and even some national organizations have become essential in achieving conservation and rural development objectives. These are the entities that create neutral forums of diverse stakeholders for the agencies, provide technical assistance to support local community and business efforts, and foster innovation and hope that federal agencies cannot create on their own.

*Best value and stewardship contracting and contractor development*

Direct Federal employment, procurement contracts, timber sales, stewardship contracts, and cooperative agreements are the central ways that the Forest Service generates economic activity through land management. Examining ARRA awards in the West based on recipient location (rather than project location) suggests that the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and the Interior have been the lead funders in many of the hardest hit-rural counties in the West. This is despite the relatively small amount of ARRA funding obligated to land management agencies, suggesting that funds from these agencies can and do reach businesses in the rural West.[4]

The ways contracts and agreements are structured impacts whether local contractors can readily compete for them. Best value contracting, in particular, can reward contractors who perform high quality work, have well-trained workers, or use low impact equipment. In addition, for much of the last decade the Forest Service has had the authority to consider local benefit when awarding stewardship and many service contracts. These authorities can help increase awards to local contractors.[5]

In addition, cooperative agreements between land management agencies and community-based organizations, especially in communities with limited contracting capacity, can help increase local benefit. For example, in Hayfork, California, where there are virtually no contractors left, the Watershed Research and Training Center and the Shasta Trinity National Forest have entered into cooperative agreements for restoration projects that employ and train local workers. This approach serves to create local jobs now while building local workforce capacity for the longer term.

In addition to best value contracting and cooperative agreements, stewardship contracting has become a very effective tool for undertaking public lands restoration and creating a diversity of local benefits. For example, in Northern California, the BLM and Forest Service have entered into ten-year stewardship agreements with the Trinity Resource Conservation District to collaboratively mange the Weaverville Community Forest. These agreements have turned a conflict into a broadly-supported strategy to reduce fire hazards, while improving recreational opportunities, protecting cultural resources, and sending logs to the local sawmill. On the Fremont National Forest, a 10-year stewardship contract is being used to implement broad agreement about forest restoration and keep the local sawmill open, saving dozens of milling and logging jobs. In Central Oregon, stewardship contracting has enabled contractors to acquire new equipment and identify new markets for biomass utilization. In Southwest Oregon, the Rogue Siskiyou National Forest has used stewardship agreements to quickly implement ARRA projects and create more than 35 jobs conducting hazardous fuels reduction. Over the last several years, Forest Service Region 6 has invested in training their staff, members of collaborative groups, and contractors in understanding how to use tools like stewardship contracts. These initial steps and leadership from the Regional Office have positioned national forests in Region 6 to take advantage of stewardship contracting authorities.

*Promotion of quality jobs*

Poor job quality has been a long-standing problem for labor-intensive workers such as those that work on thinning and tree planting projects. Often Hispanic migrants, these workers are subject to frequent verbal abuse and safety and labor violations. Changing these conditions requires shifting the dynamics in the labor and contracting markets. In recent years, the Forest Service and Department of Labor have come together to collaborate to increase enforcement of labor, safety, and contracting regulations. More recently, Region 6 of the Forest Service has begun to collaborate with state and Federal agencies and worker organizations to pursue more consistent enforcement and create a cultural change within the agency that supports staff in recognizing and acting on labor and safety violations as they would timber theft or abandoned camp fires. Although there is still a long way to go before

labor-intensive forest workers will experience consistent changes in their working conditions, these recent steps are promising.

*Integrated value-added manufacturing and biomass utilization*

A number of biomass development strategies are emerging, which integrate value-added manufacturing, and electrical and heat generation. These approaches create projects that are energy efficient, scaled appropriately to local forest conditions, and structured to allow public land communities to capture as much benefit as possible. In Wallowa County, for example, a number of business, nonprofit, and county partners are developing an Integrated Biomass Energy Campus. Already, it has created 14 new jobs utilizing woody biomass that otherwise would have been left in the woods after thinning to be piled and burned. With planned additions to the campus, including a new combined heat and power plant that will provide electrical and thermal energy to the co-located companies, total employment will rise to 26–30 jobs (nearly 1% of non-farm workforce in the county) and annual biomass purchase will increase to 50,000 tons – value of about $1.2 to $1.5 million annually. This project will support additional jobs in the woods and help sustain the economics of private working forestlands. This new local market will help support about 7,000 acres of forest restoration/fuel reduction annually. This model reduces transportation costs, creates partnerships, and has the potential to provide sustained community economic development.

*Regional strategies and networks*

Although community-based approaches to economic development promise to maximize local benefit, in communities dominated by public lands, the reality is that politics and markets operating regionally and nationally greatly affect the ability of community-based efforts to succeed. Increasingly, community-based organizations are realizing that they need to work across communities and regionally to affect economic development locally.

For example, the Ecosystem Workforce Program, Sustainable Northwest, Wallowa Resources, and the Watershed Research and Training Center are collaborating on a regional economic development project focused on sustainable forest stewardship in a dry forest zone covering 15 counties of eastern and southern Oregon and northern California. By strengthening community-based organizations and regional networks, the project will develop a model to increase the viability of sustainable forest stewardship in which rural communities participate and prosper. Our strategy involves: (1) creating multiple value streams supporting sustainable forest stewardship; (2) developing integrated biomass utilization and renewable energy; (3) building community and business capacity to achieve forest and economic resilience; (4) creating the policy conditions to support sustainable forest stewardship on public and private lands; and (5) documenting and communicating lessons in the zone, regionally, and nationally.[6] Grants from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the USDA Rural Development, and several other sources are funding this project.

**5. Challenges limiting public land communities' participation in and benefit from the conservation of public lands**

This model of integrated land management and economic development—collaborative land management planning and implementation, robust community-based organizations and networks, healthy adaptable contracting and wood/biomass processing businesses—is showing promise across the West. But, this model faces considerable policy challenges. For example:

- Collaborative agreement about how and where to conduct forest and watershed restoration exceeds the financial and organizational capacity to plan and implement projects within the land management agencies, private sector, and nonprofit organizations involved in this work.
- Local entrepreneurs seeking to develop businesses that use biomass for wood products and energy production face a number of barriers including lack of access to capital, concerns about biomass supply, viable local ownership models, and need for risk sharing.[7]
- High-speed Internet connections have become a de facto requirement of contracting with the federal government. However, many rural businesses in the West that wish to work with the government are hampered by lack of broadband.
- Although the Forest Service's Washington Office and Region 6 Office have provided direction and training for front line personnel to collaborate, and we are seeing increased front line commitment to collaboration, there remain institutional structures—particularly systems of budget formulation and alloca-

tion and performance measures—that can create strong disincentives to collaborate.[8]

- Federal land management agencies and economic development agencies do not work together consistently. Through the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative, the Pacific Northwest developed successful models of sophisticated collaboration among state and federal economic development and natural resource agencies. Unfortunately, these networks have weakened over time due to sustained downsizing and reorganization and a lack of focus.
- Quality jobs continue to be allusive for many workers performing labor-intensive forest work, and the markets for manual thinning are highly competitive.

**6. Recommendations**

***A. Reauthorize stewardship contracting*** to allow for continued use of one of the most effective tools available to the Forest Service and BLM for undertaking forest restoration, encouraging business innovation, and creating local benefit.

***B. Support community-based organizations and collaboration in public lands communities*** by creating a grant program administered by the national forest system to allow national forests and community partners to foster community, business, and land management agency capacity to collaboratively work to integrate climate change adaptation, public lands restoration, and rural community development.

***C. Develop Forest Service budget structures that meet today's challenges*** by allowing for integrated management of national forest system lands. The President's proposed Integrated Restoration and Resource line item moves in the right direction.

***D. Develop strategies for performance evaluation that reflect the complexity of federal land management and the interconnected goals of ecological health and community well being.*** Over the past several years, the Forest Service has revamped their performance evaluation system, particularly associated with fire and fuels management. Their performance measures are more sophisticated and their data collection systems are more fully developed. Yet, this target-driven system of performance measurement fails to capture the complexity of the problems facing the agency and fails to credit the agency when they develop and implement innovative solutions to those problems. Moreover, the system, while better at measuring biophysical outputs and outcomes, still lacks measure of socioeconomic outcomes. The recent tracking system created to monitor ARRA jobs and economic impact outcomes could be part of a strategy to incorporate socioeconomic measures into the current accountability system.

***E. Focus on job quality as a central component of green economic development.*** We need to focus attention on equal access to worker protection across all types and classes of workers in order to create quality jobs for workers and a level playing field for businesses contractors. This will require sustained attention on the part of Congress, the Federal government, and worker organizations.

**Endnotes:**

[1] Max Nielsen-Pincus and Cassandra Moseley, *Economic and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon,* EWP working paper # 24, Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Available at, http://ewp.uoregon.edu/downloads/WP24.pdf<P>

[2] Autumn Ellison, Fraser Macdonald, Max Nielsen-Pincus, and Cassandra Moseley, *The Business of Restoration: A Profile of Restoration Contractors in Oregon,* EWP working paper # 23, Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon. Available at, http://ewp.uoregon.edu/downloads/WP23.pdf<P>

[3] Becker, Dennis, and Joel Viers. "Matching the Utilization of Forest Fuel Reduction by-Product to Community Development Opportunities." In People, Fire, Forests, edited by Terry Daniels, Matthew Carroll, Cassandra Moseley and Carol Reich. Corvallis, OR: OSU Press, 2007.<P>

[4] Max Nielsen-Pincus, Josef Gordon, and Cassandra Moseley, *Monitoring the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act in the 11 Western States,* EWP briefing paper #24, Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon, 2010. Available at, http://ewp.uoregon.edu/downloads/BP__24.pdf<P>

[5] Cassandra Moseley and Nancy Toth. "Fire Hazard Reduction and Economic Opportunity: How Are the Benefits of the National Fire Plan Distributed?" Society and Natural Resources 17, no. 8 (2004): 701–16.<P>

[6] Emily Jane Davis, Cassandra Moseley, and Max Nielsen-Pincus, eds. *State of the Dry Forest Zone and Its Communities.* Ecosystem Workforce Program, University of Oregon, 2010. Available at, http://ewp.uoregon.edu/downloads/DryForestZoneAssmt.pdf <P>

[7] Dennis Becker, Sarah McCaffrey, Dalia Abbas, Kathleen E. Halvorsen, Pamela Jakes, Cassandra Moseley, "Conventional Wisdoms of Woody Biomass Utilization on Federal Public Lands," *Journal of Forestry,* forthcoming.<P>

[8] For additional ideas how about to foster front line collaboration, see Cassandra Moseley, *Strategies for Supporting Front Line Collaboration: Lessons from Stewardship Contracting.* IBM Center for the Business of Government, forthcoming.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much, Doctor. Ms. Joyce Dearstyne, Executive Director, Framing Our Community, Elk City, Idaho. Welcome. I look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOYCE DEARSTYNE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRAMING OUR COMMUNITY, INC., ELK CITY, IDAHO**

Ms. DEARSTYNE. Good morning, Chairman Grijalva and Committee members. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to share our efforts in building community sustainability through restoration-based programs that grow value-added businesses. My name is Joyce Dearstyne, and I am the Executive Director of Framing Our Community, a nonprofit organization located in the Clearwater Mountains of north central Idaho.

My county is larger than the State of Connecticut. It is 83 percent Federally managed lands, and it depends on the natural resources that surround us for its economic base. Our strength lies in job creation in the woods and in the community. This is accomplished through an integrated program of work and delivered through our Jobs in the Woods and Small Business Incubator programs.

The Jobs in the Woods program creates educational opportunities and full-time jobs in the field of forest and watershed restoration and hazardous fuels reduction. Agency professionals teach unemployed workers and college and high school students employable skills, enabling workers to provide cost-effective services like boundary marking, timber cruising, fitting, pruning, piling of woody biomass, and collection of water samples for land management agencies. In the process, we restore health to our national forest, create wildlife habitat, and reduce wildfire danger.

As an example, our Sweeney Hill fuels reduction project reduces the risk of wildland fire danger to life, property, and the natural resources adjacent to our community. By removing insect- and disease-affected trees, we jumpstart the economy and employ and train local contractors and Youth Corps as they assist the agencies in meeting their land management goals. Stewardship contracts allow for these treatments, while partnership and assistance agreements allow for the agency staff to train willing workers.

The logs and slash that result from this project were sent to our small business incubator for the production of wholesale and retail products, and provide logs to the remaining lumber mill in our county, while low-grade materials are used to heat the incubator facility in our new dry kiln. Our business incubator provides necessary infrastructure for the startup and growth of businesses that utilize small diameter standing dead and other timber in the man-

ufacture of quality products, creating local jobs and diversifying our economic base.

Providing this infrastructure is also critical to reducing high fuel loads and removing woody biomass from our national forest at affordable rates. To increase the success, the program builds capacity through business development and management courses, access to micro loan programs, and marketing of products.

My region has been embroiled in conflict and gridlock, to the point of a zero cut and loss of industry capacity. That just doesn't work. We believe that solution-oriented collaboration is the way to reduce the conflict and the litigation that has adversely impacted the health and vitality of our forest and our communities. As a member of the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, I have seen lines of communication open among diverse stakeholders, from local community, environmental, and recreational organizations to county, agency, and tribal governments. Identification of common ground, mutual respect, and concern for the forest we all love has joined us in an effort to improve forest health and our rural economy.

I would like to highlight two promising initiatives. The first is the Great American Outdoors Initiative, which will help us prepare the next generation of Forest Service, BLM, and National Park employees by engaging and training rural youth during summer employment. Our Youth Corps works in the forest on fuels reduction, as well as assist disabled and senior citizens to create defensible space around their homes, maintains recreational trails, and improves aquatic and wildlife habitat.

The Forest Landscape Restoration Act is broadly supported by a wide array of interests that in the past rarely agreed on forest issues. It allows for landscape-scale treatments, provides consistent supply of raw materials necessary for private investment, and facilitates collaborative restoration. We are excited about the CFLR projects, and think that they will be a great tool to use in collaboratively restoring health to our forests and communities.

I would like to leave you with a few thoughts. The way we manage our Federal lands directly affects the well-being of our rural communities, and when our forests are healthy, our communities are stronger. For us, there is a direct correlation between these degraded forests and poverty in our rural communities.

We know this will take time, and its success depends on communities, land management agencies, environmentalists, industry, and others working together to find solutions and build these integrated programs. It will take Congress to provide the direction and authorities to conduct business in this new way, and to appropriate funds for agency budgets and allow those agencies to utilize existing programs like those in Titles II and III of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

Framing Our Community and the organizations that you will hear today on the panel are ready to conduct restoration-based business, and are excited to be working on this with you today. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dearstyne follows:]

**Statement of Joyce Dearstyne, Executive Director, Framing Our Community, Inc.**

Dear Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Joyce Dearstyne, Executive Director of Framing Our Community, a grassroots community-based organization with eleven years of experience in regional collaboration, working in federal partnerships and creating jobs in my community. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the potential of building rural prosperity in partnership with federal land management agencies and to share our hands-on experiences and perspectives regarding community involvement in restoration of our National Forests and on private lands. Framing Our Community (FOC), a nonprofit organization founded in 1999, is located in one of the largest counties—in size—in the lower forty eight states; 83% of our forest and rangeland is owned and managed by the Federal government. My town, Elk City, is surrounded by 12,000 acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management and 2.2 million acres of Nez Perce National Forest. Our community is, understandably, closely connected to these public lands and relies upon these resources not only for clean water, air and recreation, but also for jobs and is essential to our economic stability.

**Framing Our Community –who we are and what we do:**

Eleven years ago, the residents of Elk City formed Framing Our Community (FOC) to identify the community's desired path away from being "suppliers" for a commodity-based economy to entrepreneurs creating products with a higher margin of profit and offering ecological services that diversify our economic base. Focusing on value-added product development and increasing access to wholesale and retail markets will eliminate the boom and bust cycles of the past.

Our vision is to sustain a "Healthy Forest and Healthy Community." Our mission is to provide integrated programs that create jobs, improve forest and watershed conditions and increase educational opportunities. We are dedicated to working collaboratively to find solutions and end conflict over the natural resources that affect the prosperity of our community and others who share our challenges.

Our strengths are in job creation in the woods and in the community, improving forest and water conditions, as well as wildfire fuel reduction. We have succeeded by training 160 displaced workers and employing 158 workers in forest restoration and related skills so they can find work on federal land management projects. We employ these workers as part of FOC's field crew or contract their services to collect water samples and monitor the streams and rivers; conduct plant, wildlife and archeological surveys; thin overcrowded forest stands to remove diseased and insect infested trees and reduce fuel loads; and revegetate degraded sites with native seed plants. We have also partnered with landowners to perform work on private lands, further expanding the market for these services. We have reduced the risk for business start-ups through our business incubator program by providing manufacturing space, business development and management courses and marketing assistance. We have sought out technical assistance and partnerships to ensure our projects incorporate advanced engineering and can engage in the global market place. We have done all of this collaboratively working in tandem with land management agencies, regional nonprofits, environmentalists, recreationists and county government.

Over the past decade we have invested more than $3,000,000 in ecosystem improvements, community infrastructure, and economic development in North Central Idaho. National Fire Plan, Economic Action program, state and private foundation funds have built business infrastructure at our Small Business Incubator/Business Park and capacity through consultants and agency expert staff who teach forest restoration and ecosystem management services. We foster the production and marketing of products that result from these activities, and provide business and natural resource education for community youth and adults. We have created a variety of jobs in our community, including hiring organizational staff, employing a field crew, sub-contracting to local contractors, and assisting with the creation of small businesses, who in turn hire local people. Our 2009 projects included forest stewardship, water quality monitoring, conducting ecological and archeological botany surveys and inventories, value-added wood production and sales by artisans through FOC's E-commerce website (www.framingourcommunity.org). In 2009, we created 84 seasonal and year-around jobs.

**Five successful highlights from our projects and activities:**

*1. Natural Resource Education and FOC's Youth Corps*

FOC's natural resource education program focuses on the health and vitality of the surrounding rivers and streams with water monitoring and testing, replanting along waterways which are spawning and rearing streams for salmon, steelhead,

and bull trout. Displaced timber workers collect water samples for the Nez Perce National Forest under a five year agreement, while our youth engagement component focuses on college and high school students learning how to collect native seeds and cuttings, returning them to watersheds the following year. These plants are propagated by local nurseries and replanted to reduce sediment, pathogens and stream temperatures, improving aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Funding sources are scant, but our 2010 youth Corps has a workforce of ten. Corps members also assist disabled and older community members create defensible space around their homes. They educate landowners by distributing FOC's 2009 national award winning video "Are We Safe from Fire? Protecting Idaho's Communities." This video shows land and home owners how to protect families and property from wildfires.

*2. The Elk City Business Incubator*

We needed to build the infrastructure to train workers and contractors with the skills and knowledge that will make them competitive for work on public lands and we recognized the new role that we as a community-based organization had in facilitating the development of a newly focused private sector. In public lands communities, the private sector is reticent to invest in equipment needed to harvest and process material not traditionally used in the wood products sector due to an inconsistent program of work on federal lands. Community organizations, like ours, have stepped up to share the risk, enter into public-private partnerships to prove out new technologies and share the responsibility of working with a Federal agency. The Business Incubator was developed through a community-driven process and resulted in the establishment of an integrated wood utilization facility. We have focused on adding as much value to the raw material as possible to ensure we can capture the highest market value and in turn offer a better package to the Forest Service, enabling them to restore more acres within the confines of their budget. We have also created an integrated woody biomass utilization facility where value-added manufacturing is co-located with a small-scale energy facility. For example, using wood to create thermal energy – either in heat only or combined heat and power/biofuels applications – has more market value per unit energy than using it to generate electricity only. Creating this higher biomass value allows federal agencies and contractors to harvest and transport the material cost effectively and can reduce treatment costs per acre.

Additionally our business incubator provides the infrastructure for the startup and growth of businesses that manufacture quality products from small diameter and dead trees and other natural resources from the forest. Tenant businesses utilize small diameter and standing dead timber in the manufacture of quality products, creating significant economic benefits through job creation. Providing infrastructure for the manufacturing of value-added products and full utilization of woody biomass is critical to removing high fuel loads from our forests at an affordable rate. We are able to provide the infrastructure, offer low cost tenant fees, assist entrepreneurs with connections to brokers and markets, accessing micro-loan programs, assistance to attend trade shows, the ability to conduct e-commerce and print professional grade marketing portfolios. This past Spring we began offering entrepreneurs an 18 session business start-up course. The course is providing training and education to start a business, conduct market research, handle daily operations and human resources, access funding sources and understand finance options, and create a business and marketing plan. Our first class will graduate in November 2010; our second session starting this winter is already half full.

These endeavors improve the quality of life through economic development and the creation of year-around employment. Federal funding for this infrastructure has come from several programs within the USDA Forest Service including the National Fire Plan, Economic Action Programs, Woody Biomass Utilization, and State and Private Forestry Cooperative Partnership Program. A grant from USDA Rural Development enabled us to acquire a dry kiln to support the needs of our business tenants, preparing their products for interstate and international markets. But the bulk of the funds come from private foundation grants. The very successful Economic Action Program has not been funded in the past few years and no replacement program has emerged. Requests for manufacturing space from five new and growing businesses require a tripling of incubator space to accommodate production needs. This growth would increase local employment by approximately 15 percent. Since the closing of our timber mill in 2005, the incubator has helped our community reverse its out-migration and has seen the start of a restoration-based and value-added products economy, but without the continuation of a federal program similar to the Economic Action Program, success stories like this are likely to be rare.

*3. Training in natural resource stewardship*

FOC's "Jobs in the Woods" program creates educational opportunities and full-time jobs in the fields of hazardous fuels reduction and forest and watershed restoration. Natural resource professionals, unemployed timber workers and college and high school students learn how to apply treatments that restore health to our national forest and create defensible space on private lands. Where possible, this is accomplished with the use of low impact equipment that creates the least amount of soil and vegetative disturbance and at a low cost per acre treated. FOC has used turn of the century skills, like dry stone masonry, to repair wilderness trails and improve wildlife and anadromous fish habitat.

*4. Agreements and Stewardship contracts with the BLM and FS.*

FOC and the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service have entered into several stewardship contracts to reduce the risk of wildland fire to life, property and natural resources in Elk City and the surrounding area. By removing insect and disease affected trees and addressing existing challenges through the creation or saving of jobs we are jumpstarting the economy. The 54 acre Sweeney Hill project created four logging, eight restoration, four trucking and ten youth corps jobs.

FOC has entered into several "Partnership and Assistance Agreements," based on the Manpower Act, through which agency experts have trained and hired local workers to conduct boundary marking, timber cruising, thinning, pruning, hand piling and replanting of native species. Since 2003, FOC has provided the BLM with trained and qualified people for field data collection for the biological, botanical and cultural resources programs. These are primarily recent college graduates who are building their resumes and gaining work experience.

As an example, the South Fork Clearwater River Monitoring Project monitors water quality and aquatic habitat conditions along the mainstem of the South Fork Clearwater River. This monitoring plan addresses the sediment-related issues in the mainstem South Fork Clearwater River, regardless of the source of direction. Specific water column parameters sampled are suspended sediment, turbidity and bedload sediment, cobble embeddedness, particle size distribution, and pool depth. The fieldwork is conducted by two nonprofit organizations and lab work is conducted by the Elk City Water Laboratory; oversight and training has been done by federal and state agency personnel. Existing agreement authorities were used. This five-year project trained and employed 12 – 15 workers annually, monitoring of two additional rivers has created 9 months of employment.

*5. Local and regional collaborative efforts*

Collaboration is a great tool for resolving natural resource management conflict. It can break the gridlock, controversy, and litigation that adversely impact the health and vitality of our national forests and communities. It brings diverse stakeholders together (community, environmental, recreation, county and tribal governments) to solve a common problem or achieve a common objective. As a member of the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, I have witnessed the opening of lines of communication and growth of respect, identification of common ground and concern for the forests we all love. We have already seen the benefit of collaboration when an appeal was withdraw on a project reviewed and visited by CBC members. Conflict and litigation are down, moving treatments forward and using agency dollars for management rather than legal fees. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act is an excellent example of collaborative processes and funding of landscape scale projects designed by federal land management agencies and collaborative groups.

**Challenges we still need to overcome:**

Despite our successes, North Central Idaho continues to face significant economic challenges; unemployment remains at 12.8%, county budgets are declining, and our county poverty rates are 18.9% with community rates at 23%. In a landscape predominately owned and managed by the federal government, we will need increased and sustained investment to retain and create new infrastructure that fits the restoration and stewardship work needed on our public lands. We need technical assistance and support to catalyze entrepreneurs and create conditions that will offer our young people a reason to return to the community and be part of our future. Key challenges include:

- Reduced agency staff and budget capacity impacts small and micro businesses across Idaho. For example, the combination of reduced and inconsistent funding (delays in budget approval) and the shifting direction of federal agencies have made it very difficult for the private sector to prepare to serve the restoration economy.

- Lack of infrastructure for manufacturing that makes use of traditionally low-value species feasible and economically viable makes it hard for businesses to get started.
- Being located in a high poverty, remote location that is distant from transportation corridors makes accessing urban markets challenging.
- Having both inconsistent offerings of restoration work and unpredictable supplies of wood sources from the surrounding public lands (from restoration projects or traditional timber projects) creates an environment where it is difficult to update, reestablish or create new businesses.
- Having a relatively small population density, it is difficult to recruit and retain a skilled workforce when there is no consistent program of work on federal lands.
- Given the uncertainty in federal land management and the surrounding large federal ownership patterns it is very difficult to raise private capital to support retooling of existing businesses or entice new businesses to establish in communities like ours.
- Federal contracting is inconsistent in providing a level playing field for rural businesses to compete for restoration contracts. Large contracts are written in the name of efficiency, but limit the ability of small and micro-businesses to successfully compete. A greater emphasis on quality of the work, rather than lowest bid is needed. Best value contracting can help federal agencies ensure excellent value for the federal government and American taxpayers.

**Recommendations:**

I would like now to offer some recommendations on what can be done to overcome the challenges noted above, support the momentum of the successes we have had and promote opportunities through the U.S.D.A Forest Service and Rural Development, Department of Interior, and Congress to encourage job creation in the forest communities.

1. **Support the next generation of rural conservation leadership by supporting the President's Great American Outdoors initiative.** This could help to create the next generation of Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service employees by engaging and training rural youth during summer employment.
2. **Fully support and use existing programs to reach their potential.** Federal agencies should work together to invest and provide grants, loans, and technical support to public land community training programs; increasing access to capital for low-impact or innovative equipment that can improve forest management; and building appropriately scaled manufacturing and energy facilities that can serve local markets and feed into regional, national, and even global markets, if appropriate. Existing programs such as the Forest Service Economic Action Program, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, Titles II and III, and the Community Wood Energy Program (CWEP), should be fully funded and utilized.
3. **Level the playing field for rural businesses through improved federal contracting**. The agencies need to ensure that work offered on public lands is awarded on a best value basis, including criteria for local economic benefit. Awareness, clarity, simplification and training on the full suite of available existing contracting and new authorities should be provided to the field. For example, Partnership and Assistance Agreements are great tools for the agency to work with nonprofits, providing for cost effective services, training and local jobs.
4. **Support Investment in Conservation-based Businesses.** Successful conservation-based businesses will require investment— both on the land management and manufacturing sides—in new equipment, training and recruitment of new employees, and partnerships with communities and agencies. We also need to determine how the Small Business Administration targets forest-based businesses and whether they offer their services at the local level. The HUB Zone program seems to be one SBA program that is proving itself useful in helping local contractors win contracts.
5. **Invest in Research and Technology Development**. Creating a restoration economy necessitates that the public and private sectors develop new techniques and approaches to treat the land and handle restoration by-products. The Department of Energy needs to work with rural communities and help federal land management agencies with scalable energy solutions. For example, DOE's National Renewable Energy Lab needs to develop small-scale pollution control devices for wood-fired systems. The USDA Forest Service's Forest Products Lab in Madison, Wisconsin has been an excellent

resource and has worked with rural communities and businesses. To ensure the success of the Forest Products Lab, it is essential that Congress provide adequate support and direction to enable its employees to work with more communities and small businesses to:

- Test and develop value-added products
- Create and understand light touch management techniques and equipment
- Understand the impacts of restoration forestry.

6. **Foster and provide incentives for development of appropriately scaled energy facilities.** By investing in the building of small distributed power and synthetic fuel facilities we can encourage long-term sustainability, in which demand is less likely to exceed supply and will provide for long-term employment and stability. Specifically, Congress should:
   - Improve and extend production tax credits for new generation based on a minimum efficiency threshold to encourage the best use of wood for energy
   - Account for thermal energy in renewable energy legislation such as qualifying the thermal energy output of a small combined heat and power (CHP) facility to fill a portion of any Renewable Electricity Standards.
7. **Continue and Increase Support for the Forest Landscape Restoration Act**. The Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) of 2009 facilitates collaborative restoration of priority forest landscapes using the best-available science. The FLRA is broadly supported by a wide array of interests that in the past rarely agreed on forest issues. The forming of collaborative processes like the Clearwater Basin Collaborative have opened lines of communication and identified common ground among industry, environmental and community organizations. Across the nation, community stakeholders are anxious to begin the important work that will restore forest landscapes, help to revive local economies, and reduce wildfire suppression costs and risks. FLRA will help reduce the risk of fire and costs associated with fire management and it will stimulate local economies through the creation of jobs. We hope that CFLRA projects will be fully appropriated in the future ($40 million vs. $10 million in 2010) and more widely applied.
8. **Reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools legislation**: Look at reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Act with an eye towards economic development in those communities in or adjacent to National Forests. Title III Resource Advisory Council dollars could be used to transition the economic base of natural resource dependent communities. Currently these funds are used solely on the national forests to augment Forest Service budgets for wildlife studies, NEPA and other Environmental Impact Studies.

**Conclusions**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experiences in building sustainability through a restoration-based program that fosters the growth of value-added businesses. While many of the issues I have raised relate to appropriations, I believe it is important that the Resources Committee advocate for these important programs in addition to providing the Forest Service with direction and authority to conduct its business. The main messages we would like to leave with you are:

- The way in which we care for the land directly affects the well-being of rural communities.
- When our forests are healthy, our communities are stronger. For us, there is a direct correlation between degraded land and poverty in rural communities.
- We need to restructure the way we take care of the land to create a healthy interdependence.

This will take time and its success depends on communities, land management agencies, environmentalists, industry, and others working together to find solutions to building integrated programs and funding sources.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Wes Curtis, Vice President for Government Relations and Regional Services, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah. Welcome, sir. I look forward to your comments.

**STATEMENT OF WES CURTIS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND REGIONAL SERVICES, SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY, CEDAR CITY, UTAH**

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Wes Curtis. I am Vice President for Government Relations and Regional Services at Southern Utah University, and formerly a point person for two Utah Governors on rural affairs and public lands issues. And I appreciate this opportunity to talk to you about Southern Utah University's outdoor initiatives and partnerships as they relate to the public lands, job training, and the land management agencies in southern Utah.

Having been actively involved in Utah public lands issues for over two decades, I have learned that public lands are viewed by many in rural Utah as both a blessing and a curse. I have also come to recognize that regardless of how one feels about the Federal lands and their management, their existence and the agencies that manage them are a reality that we live with. And within that reality, in addition to the challenges, there are also many opportunities to be cultivated and developed. At SUU, we are trying to make the most of these opportunities.

Without our service region, we count three national parks, five national monuments, a national recreation area, numerous state parks, and millions of acres of BLM and Forest Service lands. Eighty to ninety percent of lands that surround us are public lands, and these lands influence our lifestyles, culture, and economy in many ways, both positive and negative, in ways subtle and overt.

Southern Utah University's location in the midst of these world class landscapes is one of the primary things that sets us apart from other institutions of higher learning, and we feel compelled to make the most of this unique setting, both for the enhancement of student experience and for the benefit of our regional community and economy.

At SUU, we are actively engaged in what we call our outdoor initiatives. These initiatives are directed at outdoor education, career training, and recreation opportunities for our students, working together in mutually beneficial partnerships with Federal and state agencies, providing assistance to local government in addressing public land issues, developing career path opportunities for students within Federal and state agencies, and within tourism and recreation industries.

We are also viewed in our region as a resource through the Federal land management agencies, providing them with research projects, artistic and scientific resources, and as a provider of numerous student interns to meet their staffing needs. We are currently working to bring all of these initiatives together under the umbrella of a Southern Utah University Outdoor Center, and have an appropriation request through Congressman Jim Matheson and Senator Robert Bennett to help us launch this center.

And with the focus of this Subcommittee on jobs related to the public lands, I want to talk about some of our career path training opportunities. These include, number one, a bachelor's degree in hotel, resort, and hospitality management, and also a bachelor's degree in outdoor recreation and parks and tourism. The hotel, resort, and hospitality management degree gives students skills in

the hospitality management industry, and they take jobs with hotels, resorts, food service operations, convention centers, and even in transportation.

The outdoor recreation degree has three distinct areas of emphasis, which allows students to specialize their focus depending on whether they want to pursue careers in public lands management, outdoor education, or tourism. In only its fourth year of existence, this program has already placed students in full-time jobs within the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, with private sector companies, and with state parks in two different states. And it is interesting to note that almost every one of these job placements through the outdoor recreation degree program has been the result of a student participating in an internship with the hiring agency.

Southern Utah University has emerged as a national model in the placement of student interns with Federal and state land management agencies. This is done through our inter-governmental internship cooperative, whose mission includes the development of public lands leaders for tomorrow. With grant funds through the National Park Service, including a shared National Park staff position, and in partnering with the Forest Service and BLM, we have placed dozens of students in paid internship positions, including such things as accounting, public affairs, visitor services, interpretation, forest management, and fuels reduction.

In fact, as we speak, over 90 students are benefitting from these full-time internship opportunities, including a National Park Service Service Corps crew. And as a spinoff of this, we now host a public lands employment day, a career fair that spotlights the numerous land management agencies, and helps students learn about the application process and how to apply for employment.

With that overview, I would direct your attention to my testimony, which highlights many of our other outdoor initiative projects and partnerships. And from that, I hope you will see that the scope of SUU's outdoor programs and initiatives is very much more than just jobs training. It is a reflection of the impact that the public lands have on our lives in this region of the West.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Curtis follows:]

**Statement of Wes Curtis, Vice President for Government Relations and Regional Services, Southern Utah University**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Sub-committee, my name is Wes Curtis. I am the Vice President for Government Relations and Regional Services at Southern Utah University, and formerly a point person for two Utah Governors on rural affairs and public lands issues. I appreciate this opportunity to talk to you about Southern Utah University's outdoor initiatives and partnerships as they relate to the public lands, career training, and the land management agencies in southern Utah.

Having been actively involved with Utah public lands issues for over two decades, I have learned that the public lands are viewed by many in Utah as both a blessing and a curse. The controversies and contentions surrounding the management of these lands are almost as expansive as the lands themselves. I have also come to recognize that regardless of how one feels about the federal lands and their management, their existence, and the agencies that manage them, are a reality that we live with, and within that reality, in addition to the challenges, there are also many op-

portunities to be cultivated and developed. At SUU we are trying to make the most of these opportunities.

Within the sphere of the Southern Utah University service area, we count three national parks (Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Capitol Reef), five national monuments (Cedar Breaks, Pipe Springs, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Grand Canyon Parshonts, Vermillion Cliffs), a National Recreation Area (Glen Canyon), numerous state parks, as well as millions of acres of BLM and Forest Service lands. Eighty to ninety percent of the lands that surround us are public lands, and these lands influence our lifestyles, culture, and economy in many ways—in positive ways and negative ways, in subtle ways and overt ways.

Southern Utah University's location in the midst of these world-class landscapes and natural resources is one of the primary things that sets SUU apart from other institutions of higher learning, and we feel compelled to make the most of this unique setting, both for the enhancement of the student experience and for the benefit of the regional community and economy.

At Southern Utah University, we are actively engaged in what we call our Outdoor Initiatives. These initiatives are directed at providing outdoor education, career training, and recreation opportunities for our students; working together in mutually beneficial partnerships with federal and state agencies; providing assistance to local government in addressing public lands issues and opportunities; and developing career path opportunities for students within federal and state agencies and within the tourism and recreation industries.

Within our region we are recognized and serve as a resource to the land management agencies, providing them with research projects, artistic and scientific resources, a liaison to local communities, and a provider of numerous student interns to meet their staffing needs. We are also about to launch a Demonstration Forest Project on SUU's 2,200 acre mountain ranch property, to serve as a living laboratory and model for best practices in such things as forest health, fuels reduction, and range management.

We are currently working to bring all of these various initiatives together under the umbrella of a Southern Utah University Outdoor Center, and have an appropriation request through Congressman Jim Matheson and Senator Robert Bennett to help launch this Center.

With that overview, I would like to highlight some of our numerous outdoor initiative projects and partnerships. Hopefully, you will see that the scope of SUU's outdoor programs and initiatives is very much more than just job training. It is a reflection of the impact that the public lands have on our lives in this region of the West:

First and foremost, Southern Utah University is a student-focused institution of higher education. With an enrollment of 7,500 students, we have a distinct niche within the Utah System of Higher Education. SUU is dedicated to giving students a private school type experience—with personalized instruction, small classes, highly qualified faculty, and experience based learning—within the public institution structure of Utah's higher education system.

Constantly cognizant of the grandeur of its setting, SUU has developed numerous academic and regional service programs that connect the university community to the surrounding lands and the economic, cultural, artistic and scientific opportunities they provide.

**Bachelors Degrees**

SUU offers two bachelor's degrees that have very direct connections to the tourism and outdoor recreation sectors of the state's economy. These are 1) a Bachelor Degree in Hotel, Resort, and Hospitality Management, and 2) a Bachelor's Degree in Outdoor Recreation in Parks and Tourism.

The Hotel, Resort and Hospitality Management degree gives students the skills and training for successful careers in hospitality management in such areas as lodging, retail, restaurants and recreational activities. These students take jobs with hotels, resorts, food service operations, convention centers and even transportation.

These students have also been involved in developing customer service strategies for large destination resorts, such as Ruby's Inn at Bryce Canyon National Park, and conducting extensive visitor profile research for the Utah Office of Travel and Tourism.

The Outdoor Recreation degree has three distinct areas of emphasis which allow students to specialize their educational focus, depending on whether they want to pursue career opportunities in public lands management, outdoor education, or tourism.

In only its fourth year of existence, this program has already placed students in full-time jobs within the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management,

the U.S. Forest Service, with private sector companies, and with state parks in two states.

**Internships—The Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative**

Almost every one of the job placements through the Outdoor Recreation degree program as been the direct result of the student participating in an internship with the hiring agency. Southern Utah University has emerged as a national leader and model in the placement of student interns with federal and state land management agencies. This is done through the Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative (IIC), whose mission includes the development of the public lands leaders of tomorrow by providing students interested in agency careers with internships and other service and learning opportunities.

With grant funds through the National Park Service—including a shared NPS/SUU staff position—and through working partnerships with the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and Utah Department of Natural Resources, the Intergovernmental Internship Cooperative has placed dozens of students in paid internship positions within the partnering agencies. These internships include on-the-job experiences in such things as accounting, public affairs, visitor services, interpretation, forest management and fuels reduction projects. Many of these are specific career path placements. This summer, over 90 students are benefitting from these full-time internship opportunities—including an NPS Service Corp crew.

**IIC's Public Lands Employment Day**

In cooperation with SUU's state and federal land management agency partners, IIC now hosts an annual "Public Lands Employment Day" career fair at SUU. While career fairs are the norm on college campuses, our Public Lands Employment Day spotlights the numerous land management agencies across our region and provides SUU students with the opportunity to learn about and begin the application process for agency employment, particularly in advance of the summer hiring season. Workshops on how to apply for federal jobs, along with other student training sessions provided by agency staff, are also part of this highly successful career fair.

**Experiential Learning and Outdoor Engagement**

Over the past year there has been much interest and excitement generated at Southern Utah University through the development of a new Academic Roadmap, under the direction of Provost Brad Cook. Central to this strategic academic direction is the soon-to-be-added experiential learning requirement for graduation. This will require that students participate in specific real-world learning opportunities as part of their SUU experience, and complete a capstone project through one of five Centers for Student Engagement.

In recognition of the importance of the public lands in this region, one of these five centers will be the Center for Outdoor Engagement. (Other Centers include Leadership, Civic Engagement, International Studies, and Creativity and Innovation.)

In addition to the broadened student experience opportunities that will be created through the Outdoor Engagement Center, SUU is also working with Bryce Canyon National Park to create a Semester in the Parks, giving students the rare opportunity to live and learn in a national park, with the park as their classroom. In fact, we already jokingly refer to Bryce Canyon National Park as our "eastern campus."

**Alliance for Education Agreements with the National Parks**

The genesis of many of the projects and partnerships of the SUU Outdoor Initiative can be found in the formal Alliance for Education agreements executed between SUU and Bryce Canyon National Park and with the Zion Group, consisting of Zion National Park, Cedar Breaks National Monument, and Pipe Springs National Monument.

These respective agreements establish a formal cooperative and mutually beneficial working relationship between SUU and the region's national parks and monuments. These partnerships provide a world-class education and research venue for SUU students and faculty. In return, the signatory National Parks and monuments get access to the resources and expertise of the University.

As an example of how this agreement furthers the missions of all the entities involved, SUU staff participated on the 2009 Zion Centennial Planning Committee, and SUU faculty, staff, and students planned and participated in numerous activities as part of the 2009 Zion Centennial Celebration.

**Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument (GSENM) Memorandum of Understanding**

Patterned after the University's successful Alliance for Education agreements with Bryce Canyon and Zion National Parks, the objectives of this Memorandum Of Understanding between SUU and Grand Staircase-Escalante NM are to establish a general framework of cooperation upon which mutually beneficial science, research, and education programs; service projects; training seminars; internships; and curriculum development opportunities and other activities may be planned and accomplished in such a ways as to complement the missions of the BLM, GSENM, and SUU, and in the best interest of the public. Since its signature in 2009, numerous activities have occurred at the Monument that benefit students, faculty, staff, monument employees and surrounding communities and their residents.

It is our contention that these unique agreements—the Alliances for Education and the GSENM MOU—positively enhance the University's relationship with our agency partners while formalize our commitment to providing service to the parks and monuments as well as the surrounding communities. In return, SUU students gain an undeniable competitive advantage in their post-education, professional endeavors.

**The SUU Mountain Ranch and Demonstration Forest**

Southern Utah University is fortunate to own 2,200 acres of mountain forest lands in Cedar Canyon, 12 miles east of the main campus, and near Cedar Breaks National Monument and the Ashdown Gorge Wilderness Area.

A resource management plan for the property has been developed over the past two years focusing on wise management of the property's forest, recreation, range, and grazing resources as well as its research and educational potential.

Through SUU's planning leadership, we have reached out to adjacent landowners—including the U.S. Forest Service—to complete a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. As a result of this wildfire protection planning effort, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds are being used this summer to implement the objectives of this plan using SUU student labor.

One of the outcomes of this planning process is a partnership between Southern Utah University and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to create a one-of-a-kind "demonstration forest." Utilizing the expertise of the State of Utah, along with participation from other universities, sections of this property will be managed as living models of forest health and range management best practices. Forest Service and private property owners alike will be able to view and understand state-of-the-art management techniques, and monitor them over time.

**Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU)**

SUU joins 25 non-federal partners along with seven federal natural resource management agencies to form the Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CPCESU).

The CPCESU creates opportunities for research, education and technical assistance to support stewardship of natural and cultural resources by federal agencies on the Colorado Plateau. The CPCESU ensures that the expertise of academic and non-governmental partners is made available to assist federal resource managers in accomplishing their agency missions. SUU students, faculty and staff from across campus have benefitted from this positive relationship, and SUU is recognized as one of the most active CESU members with nearly 20 contracts and agreements in place with agency partners in just the past four years. These agreements take advantage of SUU faculty and staff, and provide students with real-world experiences, to meet the research, work and service needs of the land management agencies.

**Intergovernmental Coordination—The Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council**

With the belief that communication and coordination between various levels of government can lead to improved cooperation and better solutions to issues facing southern Utah, Southern Utah University hosts and chairs bi-monthly field trips and meetings during which federal and state agency directors meet with local government officials from throughout the region under the auspices of the Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC).

SUPAC was established in 1994 by then-Governor Michael O. Leavitt to serve as a non-binding forum for discussion of issues, grievances, misunderstandings, and disputes among the participants, and to serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information relative to the planning processes and activities of the participants.

Over the years, this forum has proved to be very beneficial in improving intergovernmental relationships and establishing comfortable lines of communication between public land managers and state and local government leaders.

**County Resource Management Planning**

Southern Utah University is working with three counties within the region to develop County Resource Management Plans for the public lands within these counties. This is a nationally significant effort to collaboratively and pro-actively address planning and management issues from the local level, utilizing a planning model developed by SUU personnel.

This planning model mirrors in many ways the BLM's Resource Management Planning process, but it is driven by local government and by local perspectives on the impacts and management of public lands resources. It is important to note that these county planning processes are not done in a vacuum, but are done in collaboration with the land management agencies.

**The Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Implementation Program**

The Utah Prairie Dog—protected as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act since 1973—has long been a vexing issue for land owners and developers in parts of Southern Utah. Southern Utah University is playing a leading role in bringing together over 20 federal, state, and local partners as part of the Utah Prairie Dog Recovery Implementation Program (UPDRIP). The UPDRIP partners have two primary goals: The first is to recover the Utah prairie dog so that it no longer requires protection under the Endangered Species Act; the second is to allow landowners to develop lands historically inhabited by the prairie dog.

SUU houses and provides administrative support to the Director of UPDRIP within the College of Science. This proximity to the science faculty provides the director with convenient access to academic and scientific expertise to assist in developing and implementing a recovery plan for the prairie dogs.

**Zion National Park Artist in Residence**

The re-emerging Zion National Park Artist in Residence initiative is a new and exciting partnership between SUU's College of Performing and Visual Arts' Arts Administration Program, Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, graduate students in the Master of Fine Arts Program, and Zion National Park. Through the program development and arts expertise of these SUU entities, Zion has been able to re-establish this defunct program and artists from around the world have applied to be selected as an artist in residence. The new and improved Zion NP Artist in Residence Program hosted its first artist in early 2010 at the Park's recently restored Grotto House.

**Partners in the Parks**

Southern Utah University manages the Partners in the Parks program for the National Collegiate Honors Council. This program is currently recognized by the National Park Service as a 2016 NPS Centennial Initiative Project. This program gives honors students from across the nation the opportunity to have week-long academic and learning experiences within the National Parks.

**The Utah Rural Summit**

For the past 23 years, Southern Utah University has hosted the annual Utah Rural Summit. This Summit began as a forum for discussing public lands issues, and has since evolved to include economic and community development components as well. At the core of each Summit gathering is a public lands track, in which local and state leaders from across the state have the opportunity to engage in discussion with key leaders and experts on public lands matters from throughout the West.

**Zion National Park/Danxiashan World Geopark Sister Park**

SUU's Office of Government Relations and Regional Services has been an active partner with Zion National Park in the development of a "sister park" relationship with Danxiashan World Geopark in Guangdong Province, P.R. China. Higher education is a key component of this relationship, which includes Sun Yat-sen University and SUU. Visits to both parks and universities occurred in late 2009 and early 2010 by delegations from each country.

**Youth Science and Outdoor Education Director at SUU**

This position at SUU was created in early 2010. Along with oversight of the Cedar Mountain Science Camp program and the University's new Voyager Science Lab, positive success is also being achieved by working with local school districts and public lands agency partners to develop new programs such as the U.S. Forest Service's More Kids in the Woods program, National Park Service's First Bloom pro-

gram, and numerous other agency-desired partnership projects. In fact, assisting local public lands offices develop these agency-funded programs is a priority for this position. Local agency offices typically do not have the capacity to develop and/or manage these programs that can greatly benefit the community.

**Zion National Park/Danxiashan World Geopark Sister Park**

SUU's Office of Government Relations and Regional Services has been an active partner with Zion National Park in the development of a "sister park" relationship with Danxiashan World Geopark in Guangdong Province, P.R. China. Higher education is a key component of this relationship, which includes Sun Yat-sen University and SUU. Visits to both parks and universities occurred in late 2009 and early 2010 by delegations from each country.

**SUU Outdoors**

Founded in Spring 2003, SUU Outdoors is home to the publicly accessible Outdoor Center, which offers a wide variety of year-round trips, equipment rentals and training, and other outdoor resources and expertise. The Outdoor Center also manages the on-campus low ropes challenge course and the popular new indoor climbing wall. Other special events are scheduled throughout the school year such as gear swaps and the annual Warren Miller ski film. SUU Outdoors maintains many formal partnerships and affiliations including local organizations such as the Color Country Cycle Club, Cedar Mountain Nordic Ski Club, and the Southern Utah Climbers Coalition.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is evident that Southern Utah University plays a vital role as a partner and resource in public lands matters, bringing personnel, knowledge, talent and leadership to the table. SUU is fully engaged with the federal land management agencies, and with state and local government, in maximizing the opportunities for students, faculty, communities, and the regional economy that flow from our proximity to the vast and beautiful national parks and public lands that surround us.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, sir. Mr. Bebo Lee, New Mexico Federal Lands Council, New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association, Alamogordo, New Mexico. Welcome, sir. I look forward to your comments.

## STATEMENT OF BEBO LEE, NEW MEXICO FEDERAL LANDS COUNCIL, NEW MEXICO CATTLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION, ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO

Mr. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Bebo Lee. I live in southeastern New Mexico, and I am here before you today representing myself, the New Mexico Federal Lands Council, and the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association. I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on some concerns that have been raised by the people that live on Otero Mesa and by the Otero County Commission itself about the possibility of a national monument designation on Otero Mesa.

The lack of involvement of the local government and residents in the whole process has the potential of eliminating jobs rather than creating them. Grazing of livestock has occurred on Otero Mesa for over 100 years. The longevity of these businesses show the economical viability of the management practices. There are numerous families that have been grazing continuously on Otero Mesa at least 30 years prior to New Mexico becoming a state in 1912. They are proponents of multiple use, not limited use.

When word first came out about the possible designation of the national monument, the agricultural community again had concerns about their livelihood and their investments. We all wondered what happened to an open and transparent government. A

number of these individuals have been there through the creation of the National Forest condemnation of lands by the Holloman Air Force Base, the eviction of ranchers and condemnation of lands at White Sands Missile Range, the establishment and the eviction of ranchers of MacGregor Range, the elimination of all private holdings, and the establishment of the White Sands National Monument, which they were never compensated for, and the continued expansion of Fort Bliss Military Range. And they believe they were on the receiving end again possibly.

As was experienced in past actions, there has been no official notice of a possible monument designation given or an explanation why a designation is possibly needed. It has been rumored it is to stop further oil and gas drilling, which probably makes sense because the environmental communities have cornered the ranching industry since a producing well was completed on Otero Mesa. But they have not gained any inroads, probably because of the natural trust.

Several groups have proposed to make Otero Mesa a natural conservation area or wilderness, and have published considerable literature about Otero Mesa and the need to protect it. Most of these do not tell the whole story. Otero Mesa has been portrayed as 1.2 million acres of Federal domain. As you can see by a map provided, which is under Attachment A—I believe it is up over here on the left of me—there is New Mexico State Trust land and private property intermingled with Federal land. It would be difficult to get 1.2 million acres, even including all the state trust land and private property.

You may also notice there are a number of allottees who live on Otero Mesa and the surrounding areas, which are not geographically considered Otero Mesa. Was the New Mexico State Land Office or the private landowners notified about the possible designation? Shouldn't they be, as it will directly affect them if the state trust lands are traded out because of a monument designation? In the past, the New Mexico state land traded out their lands that were located within what is now MacGregor Range and Holloman Air Force Base. If the land is not swapped out, it would be landlocked and unable to generate income from wind or solar activities, leading of hunting rights, and the proposed wind and water projects, Attachment B, could be affected.

In turn, the improvements agriculture had made on state lands by the lessees would be under increased scrutiny from the BLM, Bureau of Land Management, subject to new rules and regulations and possible abandonment because they may not fit into the monument's position. For that reason, the local residents should know upfront about this and be involved in the whole process. The thought is, if a monument is designated, that eventually the special rules, permits, or not meeting the goals of the mission, livestock would be removed permanently, as is the case in some national monuments. If a monument is created, it would not allow for an economic way to maintain, repair, or make new improvements, and then cattle would be sold, which would incur a loss of jobs and a tax base for Otero County.

In a county with a limited tax base already because of Holloman Air Force Base, MacGregor Range, White Sands Missile Range, and

the Mescalero Indian Reservation, what would the Federal Government do to compensate Otero County's tax base with? Tourism? A study from the range improvement task force at the New Mexico State University suggests that tourism would not generate that much income, which is under Attachment C. The study shows agriculture returns two dollars for every one dollar that is spent in the local community.

These are some of the items that were discussed before the Otero County Commission passed ordinance 10-05, Attachment D, so that possibly the administrative and Federal agencies would coordinate with the county before any process starts and throughout an entire process if a designation is made. One of the questions that has arisen is why the Administration trying to protect Otero Mesa from or for. When the environmental groups first came to Otero Mesa, they started promoting to protect the area. They said it was as pristine as the savannahs of Africa. At the time, Otero Mesa was in the fourth year of an eight-year drought. If they truly believed this, would it not mean that the ranchers and the BLM had been good stewards of the land for over 100 years?

As I prepared to come before you today, I inquired about the total number of power lines and meters that would fall under the designation—yes, sir. Oh, I am sorry. Yes, sir. That is all I have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lee follows:]

**Statement of Don L. (Bebo) Lee, Alamogordo, New Mexico**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bebo Lee and I live in southeastern New Mexico. I am here before you today representing myself, the New Mexico Public Lands Council and the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on some concerns that have arisen by the people that live on Otero Mesa and the Otero County Commission itself about the possible National Monument on Otero Mesa, the lack of involvement of the local government and residents in the whole process as well as the potential for eliminating jobs rather than creating them.

Grazing of livestock has occurred on Otero Mesa for over 100 years. The longevity of these businesses shows the economical viability of their management practices. There are numerous families that have been grazing continuously on Otero Mesa at least 30 years prior to New Mexico becoming a state (1912). They are proponents of multiuse of the BLM lands, not limited use.

When word first came out about the possibility of a National Monument designation the agricultural community again had concerns (immediately) about their livelihood and investments. We all wonder what happened to having an open and transparent government. A number of these individuals, having been through the creation of the national forest, condemnation of the lands for Holloman Air Force Base, the eviction of ranchers and condemnation of lands on White Sands Missile Range, the establishment and eviction of ranchers of McGregor Range, the elimination of ranchers and establishment of San Andres National Wildlife Refuge, the elimination of all private holdings and the establishment of White Sands National Monument (which they were never compensated for), and the continued expansion of Ft. Bliss Military Range, know that (feel) they will be (are) on the receiving end again.

As was experienced in those past actions, there has been no official notice of a possible monument designation (has been) given or explanation why a designation is possibly needed. It has been rumored it is to stop further oil and gas drilling, which probably makes sense because the environmental groups have courted the ranch community to oppose oil and gas development since a producing well had been completed on Otero Mesa. But they have not gained any inroads because of the natural mistrust. Several groups have proposed to make Otero Mesa a national conservation area or wilderness and have published considerable literature about Otero Mesa and the need to protect it. Most of this does not tell the whole story.

Otero Mesa has been portrayed as a huge block of federal land consisting of 1.2 million acres. As you can see by the map provided (attachment A) Otero Mesa is intermingled with federal land, New Mexico State Trust land and of private prop-

erty. It would be difficult to get 1.2 million acres even including all the state trust lands and private property. You may also notice the number of allottees who live on Otero Mesa and the surrounding areas which are not geographically considered Otero Mesa.

Was the New Mexico State Land Office or private land owners notified about the possible designations? Shouldn't they be as, it will directly affect them if the state trust lands were traded out because of a monument designation? In the past, the NM State Land Office traded out their lands that were located in what is now McGregor Range and Holloman Air Force Base. If the land is not swapped out it would be land locked and unable to generate income from wind or solar activities, leasing of hunting rights and the proposed wind and water project (Attachment B) could be affected. In turn the improvements agriculture has made on state lands by the lessee's would be under increased scrutiny from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), subject to new rules and regulations and possible abandonment, because they may not fit into the monument's mission. For that reason the local residents should know up front about this and be involved in the whole process. The thought is if a monument is designated that eventually, through special rules, permits, or not meetings the goals of the missions, livestock would be removed permanently as is the case in some of the Monument Designations.

If a monument is created and the rules would not allow for an economical way to maintain, repair or new improvements then the cattle would be sold, which would incur a loss of jobs and in the tax base for Otero County.

In a county with a limited tax base already because of Holloman Air Force Base, McGregor Impact Range, White Sands Missile Range and Mescalero Indian reservation what would the federal government do to compensate Otero Counties tax base with, tourist dollars? A study from Range Improvement Task Force at NM State University, suggests that tourism will not generate that much income. (Attachment C)

The study shows agriculture returns $2.00 for every $1.00 that is spent in the local community.

These are some of the items that were discussed before the Otero County Commission passed Ordinance #10–05 (Attachment D) so that possibly the administration and federal agencies would co-ordinate with the county before any process starts and throughout the entire process of a monument designation.

One of the questions that have arisen is what is the Administration trying to protect Otero Mesa from or for. When the environmental groups first came to Otero Mesa and started promoting to protect the area they said it was like the pristine savannas of Africa. At the time Otero Mesa was in the fourth year of an eight year drought. If they truly believed this, would it not mean that the ranchers and the BLM have been good stewards of the land for over 100 years?

As I prepared to come before you today I inquired about the total number of power line miles and meters that would fall into and around the designated area. To my surprise I was told that the Department of Homeland Security would not release the number of miles and number of meters that would need to be serviced if the Monument was designated. How can you plan for routine maintenance, repair and expansion of the lines if you do not have a current data at the starting pointing? On this point, Dell Telephone Company has several hundred miles of fiber optic lines that will need to be serviced. People in rural communities rely on good communication on a daily basis for several different reasons one of which is emergency services. If a line is not working it literally could mean the difference in life and death.

There are gas lines running through the area as well as the potential for wind generation. What will a monument designation do to these projects?

There is a lot of misinformation regarding Otero Mesa. I would encourage Congress, the Administration and agencies to personally look at the areas and coordinate with the local government and residents before making a judgment.

Why is this designation being brought forward? To protect grass land, stop oil & gas development, protect wildlife and limit grazing or for the wild lands project? (attachment E).

Thank you again, for the opportunity to address the committee. I will stand for questions.

**Attachments:**

A. Otero County Map
B. Wind & Water Prospectus
C. Range Improvement Task Force Report
D. Otero County Ordinance
E. Wildlife Corridors Map

**[NOTE: Attachments have been retained in the Committee's official files.]**

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Lee, your full testimony is part of the record, and members of the Committee will have access to that full record. I want to thank you for your comments.

Mr. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Let me begin with some questions. Dr. Moseley, what can the land management agencies—because that is part of the partnership—do with their community partners to create the long-term jobs, not the project by project jobs, but the long-term jobs.

Dr. MOSELEY. That is a very important question. I think it is one of the critical questions we need to be asking ourselves. One of the realities of working outdoors is that the work is seasonal. Different kinds of activities can be done in different times of year. And so in that context, we really need to be thinking about how you string work together. And one of the things about contracting businesses or restoration businesses is that they are contracting firms. And typically, like many contracting firms, they have many projects, and part of their task is to string those projects together into a program of work. They keep their business open and their workers working.

So part of the task is in the hands of the contracting businesses themselves. But there is a lot that the Federal land management agencies can do as well. The way they structure their contracts has a lot to do with how this can function. One thing we learned from the study that we did of the forest and watershed restoration businesses in Oregon was that for these watershed businesses, working in the streams actually extended their work season, that in the height of the summer they often were not doing restoration work. They were doing construction work, but that the forest and watershed work added to a work season a seasonal work in other industries. So that is actually a very good sign of adding restoration.

In the case of the Forest Service and the BLM, one of the key things in rural communities is to think about how you structure contracts so that they are what we talk about as long and skinny rather than short and fat. You can have 20 guys work for a month, or you can have five guys work for four months, if I am doing the math right. And in a rural community, that longer, skinnier contract is really much more valuable because getting 20 people to show up for one month means that the next month those 20 people are going to be working in a different community. So that is a key piece.

I think the other key piece with stewardship contracting, the integration of the work on the ground and the removal allows you to put together into a single contract a large number of different activities. And as long as those activities are related to each other, you can have contracts where people can work over longer periods of the season, and you can add the removal, and then that has downstream job effects.

And then I would say, third, for the communities themselves, a key task is doing worker and contractor training so that those contractors and workers can't just do—aren't able to just do one thing. They can't just thin, but they can also do the timber cruising and

the surveys, and, and, and, so that you have a workforce both like on the business side and the workers who can do a variety of tasks. You can match that up with contracts where there are a variety of activities, and you keep them sized for the community, and you have a pretty good formula. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Yes. The question for me—because one of the points was that you mentioned at the beginning. They are not long-term, they are seasonal. And I think one of things we are probing with this hearing is how you——

Dr. MOSELEY. Right.

Mr. GRIJALVA.—extend the life of the job and the project. Ms. Dearstyne, you state that reductions in staffing and Federal agencies are impeding your ability to grow jobs in the private sector in your area. Can you explain that?

Ms. DEARSTYNE. Yes. It has been critical for us to have agency staff that is accessible and knowledgeable, and that has become more and more rare. Frequently, in our communities, we will find that a contracting or an agreements staffer is either 100 miles away or has very little experience. And it is hard to put agreements together with people who aren't sure what their authorities allow them to do. And it makes them nervous and risk-adverse.

We also find, because we do so much training on the ground, that when we started this in 2003, that we had easy and ready access to fish biologists, hydrologists, and fire management officers. And that again is becoming more and more rare for us. We are having to put training off for months and, in one case, reschedule it for the following year—just because of the availability of staff.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. We hear so much that you need to reduce, you need to cut back. And when you lose an investment, I think there is a corresponding loss on the private sector as well, and I appreciate your answer.

Mr. Curtis, in the testimony—and before I do that, I just wanted to say that Leigh von der Esch—did I say it right? Yes, thank you—of the Utah Office of Tourism will not be testifying today. She had to cancel at the last minute. Her written testimony is very compelling. I want to enter it into the record if there is no objection. And obviously, there won't be any, so it is in the record.

[The statement of Leigh von der Esch submitted for the record follows:]

**Statement submitted for the record by Leigh von der Esch, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism**

Good morning, I am Leigh von der Esch, Managing Director of the Utah Office of Tourism in the Governor's Office of Economic Development. It is my pleasure to speak to you regarding "Gateways to Prosperity: Managing Federal Lands to Create Rural Jobs." I am happy to be here to speak to you about two economic development efforts that are important to Utah on and around federal lands, tourism promotion and film production, both important economic development activities that create jobs and prosperity in our state.

Utah is known worldwide for its scenic beauty. We have an abundance of riches with our natural beauty showcased within 5 National Parks, 7 National Monuments, 2 National Recreation Areas, 6 National Forests and additional beauty found on thousands of acres of Bureau of Land Management land in addition to 43 State Parks and other state sovereign and state trust lands. Our summer advertising commercials reflect the myriad of activities that one can enjoy in Utah and on our public lands, from hiking and biking, fishing and kayaking, camping and wildlife view-

ing, and many other outdoor opportunities. It is truly a summer wonderland for the outdoor recreationist.

With over 19 million people visiting the state in 2009, tourism spending in the state accounted for $6.2 billion dollars to our economy. Traveler spending in 2009 is estimated to have generated $625 million in state and local tax revenues, and tax relief per household of the yearly amount of $703. In addition to having "The Greatest Snow on Earth" in the winter, with over 4 million skier days, our summer visitors account for approximately 80 percent of our visitation. Tourism is big business.

And Utah's scenic beauty is not just a destination for the traveler, seeking outdoor recreation or reflection; it is also a destination for the filmmaker.

Utah's locations have been the backdrop for the motion picture industry, originating even before director John Ford shot the iconic mittens of Monument Valley which has resulted in global recognition for that area of our state. Movies from "Stagecoach" and the "Searchers", and other John Wayne westerns, to "Geronimo", "Thelma and Louise", "City Slickers II" and "John Carter of Mars", have all relied on our scenery to move the narrative. "John Carter of Mars", is the largest movie ever shot on location in Utah and recently finished shooting by Disney/Pixar. The motion picture industry has brought over 800 movies to our state, and accounted for thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to our economy. But it hasn't always been easy shooting on location, and many films and commercials were lost to other jurisdictions due to slow and confusing processes and regulations.

Both tourism visitation and motion picture production provide "Gateways to Prosperity" and require mutual cooperation in working on and respect for our natural resources, in order to be successful economic development efforts as well as sustainable. Mutual agreement to generate any segment of our local and state economies requires communication and cooperation, as we have seen in so many communities throughout the west, no one single industry can be relied on to sustain an economy indefinitely. Prior to becoming the Managing Director of the Office of Tourism, I served for 20 years as the state film commissioner. Since so many of the movies shot in Utah are location specific, written to capitalize on the uniqueness and beauty of our landscapes, our office interfaced with public land agencies on a regular basis. Many times our interface was frustrating, when filming schedules collided with permit processing times. In the 1990's the perception, if not the reality was that you could not film on Utah's public lands, or if you tried, it would be costly and complicated.

Because of the regulatory perception, our motion picture production in the Moab and Monument Valley area decreased significantly in the 90's. Other states in the West were finding significant and similar frustrations and we all watched as movies that could easily be shot in the United States go to other countries for their productions, where permits to film were more manageable and predictable.

As Director of the State Film Commission and President of the Association of Film Commissioners International, I and others reached out to the public lands agencies to forge partnerships that allowed us to create forums to discuss the needs of the motion picture industry while in preparation for and during the shooting of films, television productions and commercial productions. As a result of those efforts, several of us participated in training sessions for film permitting, location monitoring and possible mitigation efforts that would assist the land agencies in their efforts to manage their respective natural resources, while assisting the motion picture industry.

The dialogue that was created between the motion picture industry and federal land managers, allowed the motion picture industry to recognize the multiple demands placed on our public land managers in the efforts they were making with underfunded capital projects and manpower shortages. It also created an understanding of industry needs by land managers. As a result of talking and understanding, I saw many instances where motion picture companies went beyond mitigation for their activities on public lands and left instead repaired roads and facilities in areas where they shot and other contributions to the local communities.

We need to continue to have dialogue about filming on public lands and forums to discuss mutual needs to assist filming on location. Filmmaking is a resource sustaining activity. Filming on location, like tourism, is big business. "John Carter of Mars", which I initially mentioned, resulted in $20,000,000 dollars spent in our state over the course of 4 months of preproduction and production and created jobs in rural communities in some of the least populated areas of the state. And for the gateway communities located near national recreation areas, national parks and BLM land, where the majority of the film's scenes were shot, those millions of dollars were left in lodging, grocery stores and lumber yards and hundreds of other purchases, in addition to being paid to hundreds of extras and crew hired locally.

Movies shot on location are also the biggest promotional billboard a state could hope for in showcasing our unique and breathtaking public lands. But we can't have that promotion or resource sustaining job creation unless we work together and regulate our public lands with a process that provides for clarity, consistency and a more expeditious process. We can work together and create a process of permitting and assistance on public lands, which can provide the appropriate stewardship of our natural resources.

As I mentioned earlier, tourism is big business in Utah and our visitation numbers are increasing. Our scenery in our National Parks and public lands is recognized throughout the world. Delicate Arch, in Arches National Park, is on our state license plates. Our state slogan, our brand, is "Utah Life Elevated". We believe our brand experience can be found any day of the year on our federal and state lands, and those public lands are showcased in our commercials, our travel publications and our calendars.

In Utah, we don't just provide the scenery for the experience; we also are providing the equipment. The Outdoor Recreation industry is a major economic industry cluster in the Governor's Office of Economic Development and we are growing outdoor recreation businesses and seeing them relocate to Utah in metropolitan and rural communities. They love to test, as well as enjoy their newest outdoor recreation equipment in our state.

Each January and August, Salt Lake City, Utah hosts the Outdoor Recreation Industry for their winter and summer equipment convention. In addition to bringing the latest outdoor equipment to Utah, the Outdoor Industry Association also brings those leaders in the outdoor industry who are working locally and nationally to encourage the next stewards of our public lands, as well as encourage healthy lifestyles of the young and the old through outdoor activities. Our own summer advertising kickoff included a "get out, get active, get healthy" message.

There is no doubt that our natural resources on federal lands are a gateway to prosperity. Parks and federal lands attract visitors that energize local economies, support jobs and economic growth. Quality of life is always an attribute cited for relocation of business.

We have to continue to invest in our infrastructure and continue to talk to all interested stakeholders of federal land use to continue prosperity.

The economy of the West has been evolving and tourism and motion picture making has played and can continue to play a part, along with other economic development efforts for economic prosperity. We can build on relationships between federal lands and local communities. We can work with environmental groups and businesses. Future prosperity requires all interests to reach out and work together. It all begins with communication, there are hundreds of successes we can share and thousands more we can create together.

Thank you.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. And also for the record, and correcting Mr. DeFazio, Plymouth Rock will be celebrating its 390th birthday, and not its 400th. But anyway. Thank you.

One of the points that she did make in her testimony, the state director, was that parks and Federal lands attract visitors, energize local communities, support jobs and economic growth. From your perspective, does the proximity to national parks and forests affect the economy of Cedar City? And to follow up, you have worked extensively on rural affairs for Governors of Utah, as you mentioned. How do national parks and forests help or hinder preserving the historic and rural culture that one finds in places like Cedar City? Those two questions.

Mr. CURTIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Answering your second question first, regarding preserving the history and culture of the area, that is an interesting question because the public lands and how they affect our culture, our lifestyles, and way of thinking is something that is really ingrained within us in this part of the state. It is part of our lifestyle. It is part of our way of thinking. And that is why people are so passionate for how these lands are managed, and of course, availing ourselves of these vast tracts of

public lands for various purposes is something that is very much a part of our nature.

But at the same time, many of our historic uses and the jobs associated with these lands are disappearing. The lifestyles associated with grazing, with logging, some of those kinds of things that are very much a part of our culture are no longer so much a part of that, and the new outdoor recreation economy is indeed new, and the technologies involved there, with ATFs and whatnot, with rock climbing type things, these are a very recent phenomenon, and it will be interesting to see how this becomes incorporated into our culture and our approaches to things.

In terms of the jobs themselves and how these lands affect that, of course, we know intuitively that these lands have a lot to do with what happens there, but it is hard to measure just how much these things factor into decisions by those who locate there with second homes or retire there, or bring businesses there. We do know that the tourism industry jobs are very much a part of our economy and very much appreciated. However, they are very much low-skill, low-paying, seasonal type jobs. In fact, our neighboring county, Garfield County, which relies more on tourism than any other county, the average monthly wage there is only 64 percent of the state's average wage.

So these jobs really—we seek for higher paying jobs than we find in the tourism industry. And in fact, we get more bang for our buck in terms of dollars spent per tourist visitor day from locally sponsored attractions like our Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City than we do from visitors who come to the public lands.

So I hope that answers your question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Lee, I don't have a question. Just thank you. And you remind me, when I had a much more pleasant job, and I was a supervisor in Pima County in southern Arizona, we put together something called a Sonoran Conservation Plan, in response to having to deal with an endangered species listing. And one of the components of that was ranches, because we felt that it was better in the long term to cooperate and set up partnerships with the stewardship that would be occurring on those ranches, and have occurred for generations, than getting into a protracted battle over the conservation plan.

The alternative was that ranches, as they decline in their profitability, begin to sell off their land for development. And that development then begins to encroach on the conservation strategy. It has worked very well, and I think particularly in the West, ranching and farming have to be integrated in the long-term conservation strategies. So I appreciate the work that your colleagues did in southern Arizona in helping us get that plan done, and I thank you for your testimony. And we will invite the next panel up.

[Pause]

Mr. GRIJALVA. Welcome. Thank you for your patience, and we are looking forward to it. Rachael Mondragon, owner, Urban Interface Solutions, Taos, New Mexico. As part of the introduction—you were already introduced by our colleague, Mr. Luján—my wife is from Penasco, up there north, and while she enjoys living in Arizona, she still considers us second class to northern New Mexico. So welcome, and we look forward to your testimony.

**STATMENTS OF RACHAEL MONDRAGON, OWNER, URBAN INTERFACE SOLUTIONS, TAOS, NEW MEXICO**

Ms. MONDRAGON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to speak to you regarding something that I have had the good fortune to personally experience and be part of, the positive relationship between rural economics and forest health restoration.

I decided to start my own business in 2005. I knew that like every person out there who embarks on that journey, I was taking a huge leap of faith. The reason I pressed on was because I was convinced that not only could I make it in this industry, but that if I worked hard enough, I could build my business to a point that I could have several people working with me and be able to bid on larger projects.

I wanted to take my business to the next level. When I started out, friends and family helped me, and I envisioned the day when I would be able to hire a crew and purchase the equipment that I needed to take on larger projects. That day came. I hired a crew. I began to purchase the equipment. My business was growing. And as much as I would like to tell you that hard work alone made all of this possible, I can't. I had help. The project that really opened the doors for me in my business were projects that I was able to implement on public lands. The contracts and programs that I was able to take advantage of provided me with the opportunities that I would never have had otherwise. These were the projects that introduced me to the power of partnership and collaboration.

I met the people who would later become resources for future projects, and it was then that I understood that there are many organizations, groups, and individuals out there that are working together toward common goals, and they seem to want to help each other. They call and e-mail each other. They meet at project sites, and they support each other. You don't find that very often in the private sector, but when the Forest Service or the BLM provide an opportunity for these resources to work together, it seems to happen, and it seems to benefit everybody, including the Forest Service and BLM.

A Forest Service CFRP grant awarded to the village of Questa allowed them to hire me as a contractor in 2005. Thirty other workers were also hired for that project. In a village of 1,800 people, creating that many jobs for that many people is significant. To date, I still look on that project and consider it to be my big break. Grants through the Forest Service that provide funding for contractors like me to work on public lands made it possible to purchase equipment that would otherwise have taken years to acquire.

The same equipment now makes me more competitive as a small business. I recently applied for and was awarded my own CFRP grant on the Carson National Forest. I now have the opportunity to create jobs for people in northern New Mexico for the next three years. And given the amount of work in the Urban Interface just in Taos County alone, I plan to keep this crew working for many years to come. This is sustainability, and that is what every business strives for. As a contractor, it is incredibly rewarding to be able to do that, not because it speaks to the success of my business

or allows me to make more money with a bigger crew, but because I am creating jobs in my community.

The work we are doing is rewarding. We are lowering the risk of wildfire next to a beautiful community. We are improving wildlife habitat. We are restoring health to a dense, overgrown forest. All of these are great accomplishments. But at a time when our economy is struggling to recover, and unemployment remains a concern nationally, it means the world to me that I am in a position to be part of the solution. Not only am I working, but so are several others who otherwise may not be. I am helping people to provide for their families.

In closing, I would like to say that I have been very fortunate to have been involved in some of these projects on public lands. As a contractor, they have opened doors for me that once were closed. There are other business owners out there like myself who are not looking for easy money or handouts. They are looking for the opportunity to be part of something that will help them build capacity and provide for the future success of their businesses. Our public lands hold the key to many of those opportunities. By fostering strong relationships with land managers and reinforcing the value of these partnerships through successful, responsible project accomplishments, we all stand to gain something for generations to come.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Mondragon follows:]

**Statement of Rachael R. Mondragon, Urban Interface Solutions, Taos, New Mexico**

My name is Rachael Mondragon, and I am the owner of a small company in Taos, New Mexico called Urban Interface Solutions. I will be testifying on July 15, 2010 before the House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands on, "Locally Grown: Creating Rural Jobs with America's Public Lands."

**Background:**

With the exception of living in Wichita, Kansas for the first six months of my life, I am a life long resident of Taos. I attended public schools in Taos, and I graduated from Taos High School in 1997.

In 2000, the country experienced catastrophic wildfires in many of the western states. At the time, I was working as a financial consultant for a national investment firm. It was then that I began to develop an interest in wildland fire.

In 2001, I left my job at the investment firm, and began taking courses that were offered locally by the Forest Service, BLM, BIA, and State Forestry. Once I completed the required courses to become a Wildland Firefighter, I signed up with the Carson National Forest's SWFF Program (Southwest Forest Firefighter). I went out as a crewmember on several crews, and had the opportunity to fight fire in several states, and in various fuel types. I developed a strong working knowledge of fire suppression tactics, fire behavior, tactical suppression operations, and a solid understanding of the Incident Command System used by the various interagency resources and Incident Command Teams. Later that same year, I took the S–212 Wildland Fire Chainsaw training, and became certified to operate a chainsaw on the fireline. That winter I attended the S–217 Helicopter Crewmember training so that I may begin working towards that qualification the following fire season.

In 2002, I took the S–131 Advanced Firefighter Training. I also took the S–260 Interagency Incident Business Management class, and decisively charted a course to make this a career.

I applied for a position with the Red River Fire Department, and was hired as a sawyer on their thinning crew. I obtained my "B faller" certification, and worked daily with a highly skilled, and well trained thinning crew on various hazardous fuels reduction projects. While working on this crew, I maintained my wildfire qualifications, and responded to wildland fires with the crew.

By my second year on the thinning crew, the Fire Chief promoted me to Crew Boss for demonstrating initiative, and leadership skills. I was then responsible for the program of work, scheduling, organization, mobilization and all logistical considerations for the entire crew on a daily basis.

At this point, I was also working closely with the Asst. Fire Chief to perform more of the administrative tasks associated with the projects that we were implementing. I began to understand the grant process, and many of the fiduciary responsibilities associated with the administration of these grants. This was a pivotal point in my career.

It was during my second year with the Red River Fire Department that I also began to look at the areas that we were treating more as ecosystems and landscapes, as opposed to "properties that we were thinning." My background as a firefighter had allowed me to witness first hand the devastating effects that can and will occur when fire meets an unhealthy, overgrown, dense forest. We weren't just thinning trees, we were improving forest health. By doing so, our work also restored watersheds, improved wildlife habitat, reduced diseases in stands, and reduced the risk of catastrophic wildfire. The benefits of the work we were doing were countless.

In 2002, I sustained an injury while on a training exercise with the Red River Fire Department. I was unable to work for some time after the accident. It was during the time that I was recovering from my injury that I began the business plan for "Urban Interface Solutions."

In 2005, I began my business, and it is the countless, positive, rewarding experiences to date, that I will be basing my testimony to this committee on.

**Socio-economic Benefits:**

When small businesses, or fledgling contractors can collaborate or enter into any type of partnership with any of the various land management agencies, everybody wins! Jobs are created, local economies thrive, and sustainability is made possible for contractors or small businesses.

This is quantifiable, and my business is a textbook example of how these partnerships can benefit an entire region in ways that may not be apparent to those unfamiliar with the various programs and grants responsible for these successes.

In 2003, the Village of Questa, in Northern New Mexico applied for and received a CFRP (Collaborative Forest Restoration Program) grant. I, along with several other local contractors, was hired as a subcontractor to perform the thinning work. Not only were over 30 jobs created locally, but also large quantities of firewood were processed and distributed to elderly people in the community through the local "Ancianos" Program. Local businesses benefited as a result of the contract crews working daily in the community. When the project was complete, 150 acres had been thinned to prescription specifications, marking the beginning of the implementation of the Questa/Lama Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) project, a 5,000 acre project planned by the Questa Ranger District of the Carson National Forest, adjacent to the area that in 1996 was ravaged by the "Hondo Fire", forcing the evacuation of three communities, and destroying several homes. The accomplishment of these critical acres cost the Forest Service little more than some technical and administrative support (maps, layout, site visits, etc.).

For those unfamiliar with the CFRP Program, it was established in 2001, and is unique to the State of New Mexico. It provides cost-share grants to stakeholders for forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process.

"Within its legislative authority, the Act provides Federal appropriations of up to $5 million annually towards cost share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives, including: wildfire threat reduction; reestablishment of historic fire regimes; reforestation; preservation of old and large trees; and increased utilization of small diameter trees. Projects must also include a multiparty assessment and efforts to create local forest-related employment or training opportunities."

This program helps small businesses. Not just by giving them a project to work on for a while to earn money, but also by helping them purchase equipment, provide crucial trainings for employees, increase and enhance their workforce, and develop the necessary experience to become and remain competitive in their respective industry. Sustainability, in the truest sense of the word.

This program helps rural communities. The emphasis this program places on core value objectives ensures benefits to the surrounding community. It requires applicants to include an education component, and a youth component. Schools and Boy Scout Troops become involved in these projects. Small diameter forest product utili-

zation is required and monitored. Socio-economic monitoring reports are required periodically throughout the project, quantifying the number of jobs created, and revenue being generated by the project.

The socio-economic benefits of this program are undeniable. Coupled with the biological benefits of restoration, CFRP has been a success. That success is leading to expansion and adaptation. I have recently learned of a new program of the Forest Service that seems to be modeled on the CFRP. This national program, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), has many of the same components that the CFRP has. Like the CFRP, the CFLRP requires the organizations that want to do restoration on federal land to collaborate with others in their community, to the extent that preference is given to projects that span ownerships. Like CFRP, CFLRP projects are evaluated by a panel; the first CFLRP panel will meet next week in Washington. The biggest differences are the CFLRP targets large landscapes—greater than 40,000 acres—with a strong emphasis on Forest Service land, and not just in New Mexico but anywhere in the US. The similarities are so great that people in New Mexico that are familiar with the CFLRP call it "CFRP on steroids." I trust it will be as successful as the CFRP.

**Forest Health Benefits:**

Each year Federal land managers spend a considerable amount of time and money to plan projects that once approved, they may not have the time, money, or resources to implement. This is a reality of declining budgets, reductions in workforce, or possibility shifting priorities.

Allowing contractors to work with our land managers through programs like the CFRP program, enables the work to get done sooner than it would have otherwise. Project oversight is still provided by the agency, so quality work is assured. As with any other contract, the scope of work is clearly outlined, and the contract is administered by agency personnel.

There are multiple benefits associated with this method of implementing these projects. The most notable is the fact that land managers are able to move forward with implementation of their projects before NEPA gets stale, and collectively we move towards improving forest health one project at a time.

On July 6, 2010, I met with Kendall Clark (Forest Supervisor, Carson National Forest) to discuss the CFRP projects that have been implemented on her forest, as well as her thoughts on the connection between rural economics, and the principal land management agencies in those areas. She felt that the CFRP Program created "capacity" that would otherwise not exist for implementing these projects in the region. She also felt strongly about agencies creating opportunities through collaboration with rural resources that would both meet the needs of the agency, and provide contract and job opportunities in these communities.

**Partnerships and Collaboration:**

Any program, project or process that allows multiple parties to combine resources and ideas, has a greater chance of success than any one entity working independently to accomplish the same goal.

My personal experience as a business owner is that the measure of success comes not with high profits, but with the quality of work that is produced. High quality work is easier to accomplish when you have the proper mix of skill sets involved. Often times that means collaboration and partnerships with others who share a common goal.

Fortunately for businesses like mine, there are many local groups and organizations who share the same desire to see quality work being performed on the ground, by people who care about the land. I feel that the resources available to me locally have played a significant role in the success of my business. In turn, I feel that they are able to consult with me and request assistance when they need it. The result is a strong, mutually beneficial working relationship, and the benefactor of this cohesiveness is the project or client.

The following are groups or organizations who I have had the pleasure of working with in various capacities on local projects. These are the people who contribute to the tremendous success of local projects, and actively seek out partnership opportunities to better serve the people of the Southwest Region:

*New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI):*

"The New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI), which is located at New Mexico Highlands University, is a statewide effort that engages government agencies, academic and research institutions, land managers, and the interested public in the areas of forest and watershed management.

The New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute is one of three Institutes formed by the Federal Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act

of 2004. Their partner institutions are the ecological Restoration Institute, located at Northern Arizona University, and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, located at Colorado State University."

Kent Reid and his staff have been instrumental in promoting training and supporting businesses like mine on several projects over the past few years. They have sent trainers and instructors out to project sites, and have supported my efforts both directly, and indirectly. Having resources like these available to businesses like mine can make the difference between success and failure for a business. It is a perfect example of why collaboration and partnerships are such an important part of land management.

*Rocky Mountain Youth Corps:*

"Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC) was created in 1995 to revitalize community, preserve and restore the environment, prepare young people for responsible and productive lives, and build civic spirit through service. Modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's, RMYC provides creative approaches to problems stemming from poverty, youth substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and violence. RMYC works with youth from various backgrounds, providing a strategy for young adults to better their communities and their own lives. With this in mind, they not only work to restore trails, watersheds, and fire safety corridors, they also use these activities as the means to positive youth development. RMYC has hired more than 1,900 Taos youth, between the ages of 16–25, providing them with employment readiness programs, violence and substance abuse prevention education, GED attainment, and continuing educational scholarships. These youth have completed over 200,000 hours of meaningful community service that have benefited hundreds of school children, low-income families, elderly citizens, local government and nonprofit agencies, and users of public land in Taos. RMYC members become heroes and heroines in the community, transforming negative images of youth into success stories about youth making a difference. By providing a safe, structured environment for learning that promotes citizenship, RMYC builds stronger communities in northern New Mexico."

**Local Culture:**

In rural communities such as those found in Northern New Mexico, you will not find big, industrial or commercial operations working on forestry projects. With all due respect to the big operations found in the Northwest, and in other parts of the country, many areas in the Southwest don't lend themselves well to the heavy equipment and industrial machinery used in areas where commercial timber is harvested by the millions of board feet.

The successful projects that I have been involved in were smaller, more manageable projects. The work was done by groups like the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Boy Scout Troops working with volunteers, and small contractors like myself. The end result was a completed project with attention to detail, and aesthetics. Having a sense of ownership in the area, the same local contractors who performed the work take great pride in the finished product.

Many of the local contractors have families that date back several generations in these rural areas. To them, it isn't just about cutting trees, and making money. It epitomizes the term "caring for the land". These are families that belong or once belonged to land grants, ranchers and farmers who were raised here, and families who have hunted, fished and camped on these public lands for generations. When I met with Kendall Clark on July 6, she commented on the value of sharing the stewardship of our public lands with those who have a personal connection to the land.

**Room for Improvement:**

As with any program, there is always room for improvement. The concept is great, but it is not without its flaws.

As I have spoken to my peers in preparation for this hearing, two topics seem to surface repeatedly.

The first is the evaluation and selection process. Granted, if it was easy to get through this process, everybody would be submitting applications. I understand that it has to be a stringent process, but it does seem that it has become more of a technical review with subject matter experts dissecting specific language in the proposal, rather than an objective evaluation of a proposal that may have merit with a few changes.

I realize that every applicant thinks that their project should be funded, and that it is a great project. My comments are directed more towards applicants who have a great idea for a project, but that may not be able to afford a grant writer, or be

able to articulate their idea in a manner that allows them to be competitive in the selection process.

There is a growing perception that the CFRP Program is developing into a "battle of the grant writers". Maybe there is a way to level the playing field for those who are more comfortable behind a chainsaw than a computer.

The second issue that surfaced repeatedly was the administration or oversight provided by the agency to the contractor. Several contractors mentioned that there is no formal opportunity to provide feedback relative to how they feel they were treated as contractors. In true collaboration there should never be a "take it or leave it" relationship. Most contractors are acting in good faith, and deserve the opportunity to not only provide feedback, but to have that feedback heard, and acted upon in the interest of improving the program. Agency officials should be responsive to contractors, and accept feedback positively and productively as it was intended. It could potentially lead to changes that create efficiencies in how the projects are implemented.

The last item was shared with me by Kendall Clark, who felt that two phases of funding in the grant process may allow for some monies to be used for the planning of the proposed project, with a second phase to be used for implementation. I would offer that a third phase could be planned for follow up or "maintenance" treatment several years later. This would ensure that the effectiveness of the initial treatment could be restored in the future.

I respectfully ask that consideration be given to my testimony, as it is intended to provide the members of this committee with possibly a different prospective than they may have previously had.

There are many like me who take great pride in the work that they do, and consider it an honor to be a part of any effort that moves us closer to healthier forests, and helps our land managers reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Partnerships, collaboration and programs like the CFRP and CFRLP are instrumental in making that possible.

Thank you.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Ms. Kristin Troy, Executive Director, Lemhi Regional Land Trust, Salmon, Idaho. Welcome, and thank you.

## STATEMENT OF KRISTIN TROY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEMHI REGIONAL LAND TRUST, SALMON, IDAHO

Ms. TROY. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for this invitation and the opportunity to share with you how the management of Federal land in my community is potentially retaining several generations of jobs, and is creating jobs in the process as well.

My name is Kristin Troy, and I am the Executive Director of Lemhi Regional Land Trust, which was started by ranchers, and is based in Salmon, Idaho. Salmon is also one of the most rugged—or excuse me, remote communities in the lower 48, and it is also one of the most rugged. We are flanked to the west by the Frank Church Wilderness, and to the east by the Continental Divide. Our county has about 4 million acres; 92 percent of those acres are publicly owned. And the cattle outnumber us by about seven to one.

Given that ratio of public-to-private land, our ranchers depend heavily on public lands for grazing. And ranching currently is one of our few natural resource industries to survive. And we know about challenges and survival in my county because as I grew up there, I watched as our timber mills closed down, as did our mines. And what I now know is that once that infrastructure and skilled labor is gone, starting over gets complicated and expensive. It is not unlike the decline of a species. Once you become threatened and endangered, you become complicated and expensive.

There is opportunity in all of this, though, and my organization embraces the idea that conservation and economic needs can in fact be compatible. And this is what I do. I work at the intersection of working lands and endangered species, and together with willing landowners and Federal partners, we are finding ways to keep our working lands working, while at the same time conserving land and water for the endangered Chinook salmon and Steelhead trout that make a 1,600 mile round-trip journey from Salmon, Idaho to the Pacific Ocean, and back again.

One of the groups we are working with is the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project that was started as a collaborative by ranchers in the early '90s. This group helps to prioritize projects that benefit fish, and they carefully consider both the ecological and social aspects of the project. One of the sources of fish funding for these projects is Bonneville Power Administration. And what works in that particular program is that we have a state point agency that helps to manage those funds. It is the Office of Species Conservation. And as the Governor's representative, they are really motivated to help craft projects that have community support and recognize the good return on investment by allowing for project implementation and administration costs. That is incredibly important in my world, and it is all too rare.

We are working on a large-scale land conservation project right now that has over $2.5 million designated to it, and $25,000 has been designated for hours of staff time necessary to make the project work on the ground. And that money allowed me to hire my first time local part-time employee. We have also utilized the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, and that was used to conserve a multi-family, multi-generation parcel of a ranch right at the base of the Continental Divide, by the way—really beautiful—and it gave that family an option to keep the ranch viable instead of subdividing.

While that is a really well-intentioned program, and we are really happy to use it, it does have a very steep cash match, or a steep match, I should say. It is a 50 percent cost share program; 25 percent of that needs to be cold, hard cash. And there is no mechanism in there for implementation or on-the-ground staff time. And while the land trust focus has been primarily on conserving private lands, a forestry collaborative in my community is working to achieve the same balance on public lands. They are trying to get past nearly two decades of gridlock on the Salmon-Challis National Forest, and they are focusing heavily now on forest health and local economic benefit. In fact, their first 13-acre Hughes Creek project has pumped $215,000 into our community, with 90 percent of that going directly to Lemhi County workers.

So I guess this story is meant to portray a few things. First of all, collaborative efforts and community-based organizations have a pretty unique ability to set politics aside and to focus on our landscapes, and to get our good work done. And like it or not, through this process, we really get to know one another, and we learn to trust one another, and that is what is working.

But please hear me when I say that community-based organizations are not seeking to become another arm of the Federal Government. We are valuable because we are small, nimble, efficient, and

we are tied to the land. I hope that Federal agencies can recognize us as valuable partners to get the work done in a really meaningful way. So thank you for this invitation and opportunity. I hope this has been helpful, and I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Troy follows:]

**Statement of Kristin Troy, Executive Director, Lemhi Regional Land Trust**

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you how the management of federal and private lands is retaining and creating jobs in my community.

My name is Kristin Troy and I serve as the executive director of the Lemhi Regional Land Trust, a non-profit organization that was founded by ranchers and is based in Salmon, Idaho. Salmon is one of the most remote communities in the lower 48, and it is also one of the most rugged. We are flanked to the West by the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and to the East by the Continental Divide.

**Context:**

Around 92 percent of Lemhi County is in public hands and managed by United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The remaining 8 percent of private lands are, as one would expect, situated in the valley bottoms along the Salmon and Lemhi Rivers. Given the small amount of private land we have in our valley, ranchers depend heavily on access to these public lands for grazing.

Ranching is one of the few natural resource based industries in our community that has survived. But that survival is tenuous at best for a variety of reasons – aging landowners, the rising cost of doing business, and pressure to subdivide.

I grew up in Salmon and in my lifetime, I watched as the mainstay timber and mining industries dried up and blew away. The lost jobs meant lost tax revenue, lost families, a drop in school enrollment, and an increase in despair. As with many other rural communities across the West, we are committed to finding solutions that will maintain working landscapes, blurring the line between public and private lands in light of overall conservation objectives. We know from the loss of our timber industry that once the infrastructure and skilled labor is gone starting over is complicated and expensive. In a way, the decline of a rural economic sector is not so different from the decline of a species. By the time you are threatened and endangered, you are complicated and expensive.

**The opportunity:**

Rural communities are the front line stewards of our public lands. My organization embraces the idea that meeting our conservation and economic needs can be compatible. This is what I do – I work at the intersection of working ranch lands and endangered species and together with willing landowners and federal partners, we are looking for and finding ways to keep our working lands working while at the same time achieve conservation goals. The community is behind our efforts to conserve our working lands and our rural lifestyle for social and economic reasons, but the outcomes have impressive ecological implications as well.

Although most of our county is public land, adjacent private lands harbor some of the richest wildlife habitat, including some of the most important habitat in the West for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout. These fish have traveled to the ocean and back – a round trip of about 1,600 miles – for thousands of years. Salmon were the staple for the Lemhi-Shoshoni tribe who inhabited the valley when Lewis and Clark came through the area, and salmon fishing continued to be part of the traditional way of life for ranching families who were early settlers. Today, dozens of landowners in this valley are voluntarily working with federal and state agencies and community-based organizations like Lemhi Regional Land Trust to make sure that when the wild salmon and steelhead return, they recognize home.

**Three project examples:**

In this context, I'd like to share some of my community's experiences with federal programs intended to motivate private landowners to conserve land for the benefit of threatened and endangered species, and the multitude of other wildlife that rely on intact pieces of land to thrive.

*Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project*

Lemhi Regional Land Trust is one of the organizations participating in a collaborative group called the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project. The group works together to prioritize projects meant to enhance this critical fishery. Members include fish biologists, ranchers, conservationists, agencies, and tourism industry rep-

resentatives, just to name a few. The group's recommendations put a powerful stamp of approval on proposals and let potential funders know that both ecological and social aspects of the plan have been carefully and thoughtfully considered.

One of these funders is the Bonneville Power Administration. Bonneville Power mitigates the impacts of the massive hydroelectric dams on the Columbia River system, allocating revenue to fund the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, established by Congress in 2000 to protect, restore, and conserve Pacific salmon and steelhead populations and their habitats. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) manages the program that provides competitive funding to states and tribes of the Pacific Coast region, including Idaho. We have successfully used some of this funding to help conserve private working lands adjacent to the Lemhi River. I would like to make a few comments about what worked with this federal program:

- When the funding is awarded to the eligible states, there is a state contact and in Idaho's case, this is the Office of Species Conservation. As the Governor's representative on these issues, the Office of Species Conservation is highly motivated to make sure projects have community support. Federal agencies with far away offices and staff might not share this same sensitivity.
- The Office of Species Conservation also manages other sources of federal funding, such as the Snake River Basin Adjudication Habitat Trust Fund, which allow funds to be used for project administration and implementation costs. This is incredibly important, and all too rare. We are currently working on a project to conserve land and water on two separate ranches located on valuable tributaries to the Lemhi River. Between three different funding sources, all public money, over $2.5 million dollars has been designated for this project and $25,000 for the hours of staff time necessary to make such a project work on the ground. Additional funds for long-term monitoring were allowed to make sure project benefits continue to be realized over time. In this example, the $2.5 million would not have gotten to the ground (or to the river) without the allowance of $25,000 in implementation funding.

*Saving Carmen Creek Ranch*

Another project involved the Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. In partnership with the Nature Conservancy, we used this program to purchase a conservation easement on a 300-acre parcel that is part of a multi-family, multi-generational ranch along Carmen Creek, an important fish-bearing tributary to the Salmon River just 5 miles from town. As one of the most scenic properties in the valley, the land was getting serious and focused attention from real estate developers. The three brothers who are the principals of Carmen Land and Livestock knew they valued the land for its productivity, its scenic qualities, and its undeniable importance to fish, birds, and other wildlife. The Farm and Ranchland Protection Program gave the brothers another option to keep their ranch viable other than subdividing.

The Farm and Ranchland Protection Program was vital in the preservation of not only the 300 acres along Carmen Creek, but also for the intact working ranch that will now endure for generations to come. However, Lemhi Regional Land Trust will only approach this funding source again with caution, because the significant costs for implementing the project cannot be recovered through the program itself (and the cash match requirement puts this well-intentioned program beyond the reach of many of the most vulnerable farmers and ranchers). This is one of the many federal programs targeted at communities like ours that lacks funding for implementation. This project, and so many others like it, could not have been accomplished without a community-based organization. [1]

*Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group*

While Lemhi Regional Land Trust's focus is mostly on conserving private lands in the valley, a partner organization is working to achieve this same balance on our public lands. Salmon Valley Stewardship and the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group are working to get past nearly two decades of gridlock on the Salmon-Challis National Forest, a forest that lately has retained more outside attorney jobs than community forest practitioner jobs.

The Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group is successfully building social agreement around the dual concepts of forest health improvement and local economic benefit. The group is carefully tracking jobs and revenue created by their first

[1] *Community-based Organizations: Strategic Assets for Western Conservation.* April 2010. Sustainable Northwest. http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/resources/rvcc-issue-papers/2010-issue-papers/Community-based%20Orgs%20Final.pdf

13,000-acre Hughes Creek project. Last I knew, even before the first commercial stick of wood has been cut, the project has put $200,000 into the local community, with more than 90 percent going to Lemhi County workers. Because the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group has placed importance on local economic benefit, they carefully monitor the project to ensure this benefit is realized. Surprisingly, few federal agencies—although endowed with millions of dollars—can report the same.

The diverse group is working hard to bring additional dollars to forest restoration work. The collaborative's coordination activities and support staff is completely funded by private philanthropies. The group's members have been successful in raising money and using volunteers to help implement their projects, but these funds and volunteer hours are not guaranteed, and therefore keep the successful efforts of these organizations in an ever tenuous financial state. Although leveraging funding and human resources seems to be the best hope for the Forest Service's future, the agency is willing but woefully unequipped to manage grants and agreements with community-based organizations. The Salmon-Challis National Forest shares one grants and agreement employee with two other national forests and her desk is 160 miles away. Because they are understaffed, agreements can easily take four months or longer to put into place, creating frustration and sometimes jeopardizing the funding the partner group brings to the table.

**The solutions:**

Public and private partnerships, as well as groups of diverse stakeholders working together to solve economic and environmental challenges, is the only way we can move forward with innovative solutions that will create pathways to prosperity and address our nation's conservation challenges.

Federal programs and the land management agencies need to better organize their business operations to be effective partners to rural community-based organizations, to fully utilize the federal programs that are currently in place, and to be truly effective and sustainable over time. For example, the time and resources it took to see our Farm and Ranchlands Protection proposal for the Carmen Creek easement from start to finish, as well as meet the monitoring requirements, far exceeded the amount of the grant or my organizations ability to raise funds from other sources; the program does not make good business sense. Federal programs need to recognize that getting money to the ground takes time, energy, and a degree of trust. Community-based organizations are often in the best position to offer these resources and in many cases can amplify the effect through public outreach, volunteer support, or leveraged funding. Some programs require a 50 percent match with half of that needing to be cold, hard cash. Flexibility that recognizes the value of in-kind match would remove significant barriers to these funding sources.

Collaborative efforts and community-based organizations have a unique ability to put politics aside and focus on these incredible landscapes. As we work together to find solutions, we get to know and trust one another. Going out on the range with a rancher or walking in the woods with a forester, you get a chance to hear the wisdom that comes from working and living on the land. Involving relevant members of the community in these important discussions as equals adds an element of respect that is too often missing outside the collaborative process.

In Lemhi County and all over the West, we are motivated to create a balance between our environment and our livelihoods. When we figure out how to keep enough water in the streams for fish but still allow the rancher enough to irrigate his hay while providing an option other than subdividing, we know we have succeeded in achieving this balance. We have retained not just a few jobs, but potentially several generations of jobs, and the vibrancy of our small towns.

Community-based organizations are not seeking to become yet another arm of the federal government. We are valuable because we are small, nimble, efficient, and tied to the land. My hope is that federal agencies can be enabled to recognize the importance of partners who are willing and able to get federal dollars on the ground in the most meaningful way possible.

**Recommendations:**

1. Make grant programs, such as the Farm and Ranchland Protection program, more effective by making them more flexible.
2. Match requirements for federal grants should take into consideration the economic context of the grantee—public land communities are high in poverty and unemployment, raising private match in this context is a serious challenge.

3. Integrate funding to support long-term monitoring to be performed by community-based organizations or other entities to ensure the long-term objectives of projects can be successful.
4. Recognize that increasing partnerships and collaborative efforts enhances the agencies' capacity.
5. Continue to support and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Landscape Restoration Act, which hold great potential for communities such as mine.

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to meet with you today. It is my hope that this testimony has been helpful and I am happy to answer any questions.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. Melanie Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Connections, Swan Valley, Montana. Welcome, and I look forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF MELANIE PARKER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTHWEST CONNECTIONS, SWAN VALLEY, MONTANA**

Ms. PARKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for inviting me here today to share my experience from Montana's Swan Valley. My name is Melanie Parker. I am the Executive Director of Northwest Connections. We are a not-for-profit business that hires and involves local people in citizen science. We engage in restoration. We lead collaborative planning efforts. We teach field ecology courses actually to young conservation professionals from all over the country.

I also help my husband operate a traditional hunting and guide service and manage our small private forest land. I am a mom, and I am the chair of the local school board. The unifying concept really at the end of the day that I came here to talk about more than anything else in my written testimony is the value to this country of conserving working landscapes. I really believe strongly that Congress and this Administration need to focus both their conservation efforts and their job creation strategies on investment in working landscapes.

So what are working landscapes? They are vast areas outside of designated parks and outside of wildernesses that still have high biological values. They are private lands and they are public lands. And they provide food, fiber, clean water, and wildlife habitat. They are lands that support the lives and the livelihoods of rural farms, rural ranches, and rural forest communities. They are lands on which millions of Americans rediscover the great outdoors: camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, climbing. Working landscapes are not parks, and they are not sacrifice zones. They represent in fact the next great challenge in conservation across the West. And that is to say, how do we use land and take care of it?

It is also a concept, this working landscape concept, that resonates quite deeply in rural communities. The Swan Valley, where I live, is one such working landscape, a vast area of checkerboard land ownership that stretches between two great wilderness areas to the south of Glacier National Park. Our working landscape has been threatened by two main factors, the divestment of our corporate land base into real estate development, and the shutdown of active management on our public lands. We are struggling to keep the land in landscape and the work in working.

So there are three keys to our success that I pulled from my written testimony that I wanted to underscore right now. The first

really is to communities like ours that are facing this divestment issue and the fragmentation in the real estate development. I really hope that this Subcommittee does support full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. And in addition, I will tell you that what really helps working landscapes in the West—and it has occurred in some places—is to use those funds not necessarily just for straight-up acquisition, but for easement projects. That has happened in my state. And if you could encourage that flexibility and that tool, I think that would even improve it.

Second, we need programs that invest in—you know, I guess I should back up and say—you probably saw this in my written testimony, but the way that we have utilized tools like that, right now, we are celebrating the conservation of 310,000 acres of former Plum Creek land in western Montana, and that is all the remaining corporate timberlands in my valley. So that is why I am kind of passionate about that one.

The second is the investment in programs that fund restoration and stewardship for a long enough duration that our business owners can make those investments, and also programs that are rewarding the kinds of collaboration that our communities are bringing to the table. So most notably right now, the collaborative forest landscape restoration program. Our community, along with communities in the Blackfoot and the Seeley Lake area just submitted a proposal that will cover—that will fund for 10 years, right, our partners, our Federal partners, $4 million a year for 10 years if we are successful. That is a big plus for our small businesses to be able to invest. And so those kinds of programs, I think, are really important. So I want to support full funding for CFLRP, but mostly I want to say it could be a template for other kinds of strategic investments.

Last, I want to underscore what others have said about the value of our community-based organizations. In the Swan Valley, the very first building block to economic success has come from pulling various stakeholders together to forge common ground because without the social agreement on what constitutes land stewardship in our specific site, we quickly get locked up in contentious appeals and litigation. We as citizens have formed organizations that have built the capacity to build that social agreement and partner with all our agencies and interest groups, but there are no Federal programs, or very few at least, that support community-based organizations. So we would really encourage that.

And just before I conclude, I would like to say I was thinking just as I was sitting back here that, actually, legislative tools that integrate those three things all in one place would actually really help us so that we are not chasing different things.

OK. So in conclusion, I hope that as you have listened to my testimony and those of my fellow panelists, you realize that we actually represent something very important. We are new voices. We are not the voices of industry, and we are not the voices of environmentalism. We are the third way. We are rapidly becoming the new way of doing business in the West. And now we are formalizing new networks that are more regional in nature. We are organizing. We are aggregating because we know something deep in our hearts. We know that land and people are inextricably

linked, and that our country—and that as a country we have to figure out how to protect resources and use them responsible. We are in it for the long haul. We hope you will partner with us. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Parker follows:]

**Statement of Melanie Parker, Executive Director, Northwest Connections**

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today to share my experience from Montana's Swan Valley.

My name is Melanie Parker and I live and work in a rural, forested valley in Western Montana. My husband has owned and operated a traditional hunting and guide service there for 33 years. My own background is in ecology and education. Together he and I formed Northwest Connections, a not-for-profit business that conducts citizen science, engages in restoration projects, leads collaborative planning efforts, and teaches field ecology courses to young conservation professionals from around the country.

The Swan Valley is situated between two wilderness areas about 100 miles south of Glacier National Park. The valley is home to grizzly bears, wolves, lynx, bull trout and many other threatened and sensitive wildlife species. This richness is in no small part due to the 4000 wetlands that are strung across the valley bottom. The culture of the Swan Valley is tied directly to the abundant natural resources. Logging and log home building, along with outfitting and other outdoor related businesses characterize the economy. Historically, the community had very close ties to the Forest Service, as the ranger station was located in the small town of Condon, but 20 years ago that ranger station was closed as districts were consolidated and now all of the Forest Service personnel who administer the Swan Valley live and raise their families in the Kalispell area 75 miles to the north.

Life in the Swan Valley has been dominated by the checkerboard land ownership pattern. As a result of the railroad land grants of 1864, nearly every other square mile has been owned and managed by corporate timber interests. In the mid-1900's, roads were improved enough in the Swan Valley to make commercial timber harvest viable. While it was the Forest Service who was most active in the middle part of the last century, it was Burlington Northern, later Plum Creek Timber Co., that extracted the bulk of the timber in the 1980's and 90's. Environmental concerns about the cumulative effects to the watershed, as well as a swell of environmentalism nationally, all but shut down activity on federal lands in the Swan Valley. This resulted in a landscape that we began describing in the late 1990's as the land of "too much and not enough" as nearly every acre suffered from either too much disturbance from road building and logging, or too little disturbance from the suppression of fire and the shutdown of active management.

If the diminished Forest Service presence and the accelerated harvest of corporate lands were not enough, just over ten years ago we began to face a new challenge: corporate timber lands increasingly put on the real estate market and sold off for development. All of these challenges have driven our community to organize, to define our own vision of rural prosperity, and to develop strong partnerships with governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to realize that vision.

The dramatic success for which the Swan Valley is gaining notoriety at present, is our project to stem the tide of real estate development. After a decade of hard effort, we are celebrating the conservation of 310,000 acres of Plum Creek Timber Co. land in Western Montana including all of the remaining corporate lands in the Swan Valley. We succeeded at building partnerships between local and national groups, and at putting together federal, state and private funding sources to secure these lands.

There are a lot of reasons this project has met with success, but I would like to highlight perhaps the most important and least visible reason. In rural communities all across the west we are speaking a new language. It is a language that has profound new meaning, and it is not the language of the past. We are talking more and more about the conservation of working landscapes. The conservation of working landscapes is something that resonates very deeply with rural communities and that vision is what has allowed us to garner such widespread political support for this Plum Creek lands project.

What are working landscapes? They are vast areas outside of designated parks and wilderness areas that have high biological values. They are private lands and public lands that provide food, fiber, clean water, and wildlife habitat. They are lands that support the lives and livelihoods of rural farms, rural ranches and rural forest communities. They are lands on which millions of Americans rediscover the

great outdoors: camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, climbing. Working landscapes are not parks, and they are not sacrifice zones. They represent, in fact, the next great challenge in conservation across the West which is to say how do we use land and take care of it.

When our community began struggling with the challenge of corporate timber land divestment, we did not know what the final outcome would be, but we did know that we wanted a working landscape, one where we could balance the use and care of the land. We had been weathering the boom and bust cycles for decades just like so many other rural communities across the West, the cycles that follow this country's alternating impulses to exploit or protect the resources of our region. Our community was not then, and is not now, interested in being the victim of this nation's polarizing wars on natural resource management; we are looking at every juncture for opportunities to chart our own destiny as leaders in a movement to prove that landscapes like the Swan Valley can provide good work, locally delivered resources and environmental stewardship.

And so now, in 2010, the Swan Valley finds itself in transition. The Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy have worked with us to purchase and convey much of the former Plum Creek lands in the Swan Valley to the U.S. Forest Service. That is a dramatic conservation success of the first order. But our success will only be complete when we establish a long term program of stewardship work on those public lands.

Our collaborative efforts in the Swan Valley have broken the gridlock on federal lands management and we have begun to see a few good projects employ local people, but our transition is tenuous at best right now. We have seen a steady erosion of economic vitality in recent years. The Swan Valley has roughly half the number of businesses it had 15 years ago, and only one third the number of children enrolled in the local elementary school. Our ability to retain and create family wage jobs tied to public land management has never been so critical

My testimony at this point divides into two segments. The first addresses the tools that are important to communities like ours to arrest the accelerating development of private lands that adjoin and are integrally connected to public lands across the West. These tools help communities secure the land base that support rural economic activity. The second segment addresses tools that can help us transition the old economies of extraction and protection into the new economy of stewardship.

**STEMMING DEVLEOPMENT PRESSURE**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is critical and I hope this congress supports full and permanent funding for the program. When Plum Creek put up their first "higher and better use" land sale in 1997 along the shores of Lindbergh Lake adjacent to the Mission Mountain Wilderness, the Trust for Public Land helped us secure LWCF dollars to acquire those acres and convey them to the Flathead National Forest. It continues to be an important program to our project and to many other landscapes and communities with which I am familiar.

Congress should give direction to federal and state agencies to make LWCF more flexible for the purchase of conservation easements on private lands. In many public lands dominated communities there is a strong desire to retain valuable private landholdings, and for those areas an easement option is essential.

In the Swan Valley, we have also made use of the Forest Legacy program as well as Habitat Conservation Plan programs to address development pressure and I see great value in maintaining and expanding those programs for western communities facing large scale land conversion issues.

Rural communities like ours are also very interested developing new forms of land tenure. Because most of the forces that determine our fate are external and remote—whether the land base is federal, corporate, or state land—we are interested in programs that will help us acquire and manage community-owned lands. In the Swan Valley we have one such community conservation area which we are currently hoping to expand. Two programs will help communities like ours. The first, the Community Forest and Open Space Program provides funds to local governments and qualifying non-profit organization to purchase community lands. The second is the authorization of the Community Forestry Conservation Act, which would give communities the ability to issue bonds to purchase land and secure the bonds with future sustainable timber harvest.

For the small private forest land owner who wants to stave off the temptation to sell or subdivide, we need to maintain programs like the Forest Stewardship Program within State and Private Forestry and the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program within NRCS. I have heard from several land owners that they would be more likely to use those programs if the matching requirement could be in the form

of donated value, rather than cash. The cash match is simply too expensive for most traditional rural land owners.

Investments in these kinds of programs are very strategic, and reduce costs to the American tax payer. I can tell you that the rural sprawl across every other square mile that we were facing in the Swan Valley would have meant huge increases in firefighting costs, as well as increased demands for wildlife recovery dollars. According to one Forest Service report if homes were built in only half of the private lands bordering public land the annual federal firefighting costs would range from $2.3 Billion to $4.3 Billion per year. Each of the programs I mentioned above help conserve working landscapes, curb future costs to the public, and secure the land base for rural economic activities.

**PROMOTING A LAND STEWARDSHIP ECONOMY**

In the Swan Valley, the first building block to economic success has come from pulling diverse stakeholders together to forge common ground. Without social agreement on what constitutes land stewardship in our specific site, we quickly get locked up in contentious appeals and litigation. There can be no economic stability for our community until all of the groups interested in our landscape can work hand in hand with state and federal agencies to chart a long term program of work.

Federal programs that link federal investment dollars to successful collaboration are key. This past year, communities in the Swan Valley, in Seeley Lake and across the Blackfoot Valley have submitted a proposal to the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). If we are successful, our federal agency partners will receive $4M/year for ten years to accomplish restoration work on public lands across 1.5 million acres. CFLRP is very good legislation that requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities and sketch out a plan for action in order to be successful. CFLRP should receive full funding for the next ten years. I should also be used as a template for other programs to invest in restoration and land stewardship across the west.

Collaboration is the foundation for economic prosperity in the west, and yet it lacks support from federal agencies and from most federal programs. In many communities like the Swan Valley citizens have organized themselves into non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that have the capacity to partner with government agencies, private land owners and other associations and interests. Federal programs to support NGO partners, however, are few and far between. The National Forest Foundation has been an important support system for many community based organizations in our region, and congress should fully fund their appropriations, but we also need to look for other opportunities to invest in local and regional collaborative conservation efforts.

Another key to success relates to the capacity of federal land managers to put the necessary staff time into collaborative conservation efforts. Right now federal employees have very few incentives to partner with our community organizations. Performance measures that put a value on collaboration in rural western communities need to be developed and strengthened.

In the Swan Valley we have faced additional challenges related to the remoteness of our federal agency staff and by the turnover in key leadership positions. Federal agencies should recognize the value of keeping land management professionals in place over time. The resulting trust and understanding that is built between agencies, NGO's and rural residents sets the stage for successful design and implementation of land stewardship projects.

Stewardship has become a key concept for us as it connotes both work on and care for the land. Stewardship contracting is one of the very best tools to come along in the past decade and it needs to be reauthorized and its use expanded across the West. In stewardship contracts, the government can choose the BEST contractor, not necessarily the one who delivers the highest dollar amount back to the government. This has really helped to incentivize our workforce to prove its capacity to do good work, not just fast work. We whole heartedly support the re-authorization of stewardship contracting and we hope to see the federal agencies use it as the dominant form of doing business.

All of this said and done, we are still faced with a situation where the American people are asking agencies like the Forest Service to do stewardship, but the agencies are still funded through old categories like timber. We need a new integrated budget structure that incentivizes holistic integrated stewardship. This year the President's budget recommended the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) line item. I have talked to many on my district, my forest, and across Western Montana who think IRR has great promise, but they have fears that their particular special interest—timber, fire, wildlife—will lose funding. We need to hammer out the right guidelines for such an integrated budget structure, and that may take another year,

but I do enthusiastically support such a budget structure reform and believe it will produce better projects that garner broader support.

**CONCLUSION**

In July 2010 I can report to you that we in the Swan Valley are making progress. We have built strong local and regional collaborations. Those diverse stakeholders have worked together to erase the checkerboard land ownership pattern and they have made strong progress in articulating goals for the restoration and stewardship of the entire landscape. Now we need federal agencies that are ready, willing and able to partner with us. And we need a firm commitment from congress to invest in the conservation and stewardship of working lands in our valley and all across the West.

I hope that as you listen to the testimony of all my fellow panelists you realize that we represent something very important. We are new voices. We are not the voices of industry and we are not the voices of environmentalism. We are a third way and we are rapidly becoming the new way of doing business in the West. It may not be visible to you at this hearing, but many of us now know each other. We didn't used to, but we started bumping into one another, telling our stories, and realizing the parallels. Now we are formalizing new networks. My group, Northwest Connections, is a member of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, convened by Sustainable Northwest. But for Sustainable Northwest's support, my voice and several others here would likely not be here today. Jim Stone's group the Blackfoot Challenge is also helping to coordinate a regional network known as the Partners for Conservation. We are organizing and we are aggregating, because we know something deep in our hearts. We know that land and people are inextricably linked and that until this country figures out how to protect resources and use them responsibly, we are sunk.

We are in it for the long haul and we hope you will partner with us.

Thank you.

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Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you very much. And just as a note, Ms. Parker, you need to be very careful. I started out as a school board member, and all your plans could go awry overnight.

Ms. Mondragon, one of the things you mentioned and you talk about generations of families living off the lands in New Mexico, and there is a checkered history of Federal land management and the conflict between communities, history, land grants. And so how do national forests fit into that preservation of the way of life that has been there for generations and generations in New Mexico, and particularly in some parts of the north?

Ms. MONDRAGON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, nationally, I can't really speak to how it would nationally. But I do know that, you know, in our area, it is very important to see and to have these lands that we can preserve. We can go out and we can thin. We help against wildland fire. We, you know, help preserve against some of the other diseases that the trees are now getting. And it really connects the community that for a long time—and still do; there are some areas that folks have a real hard time with because they feel that it is their land. They feel that, you know, my great grandfather owned that, and it was stolen from me, things of that nature. And so it really helps connect them back to the land and make them feel like it is still theirs, and they can help preserve it. They can help treat it so that it is healthier.

I am not sure if that answers your question. OK. Thank you.

Mr. GRIJALVA. In your written testimony, Ms. Troy, you mentioned saving the Carmen Creek Ranch. And it couldn't have been done, as you accurately pointed out, without community-based organizations. You started to talk a little bit about that. But what does an organization, community-based like yours, bring to the

table to help facilitate that conservation effort? And we can use the Carmen Ranch as the example.

Ms. TROY. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That particular program, we used the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, and within that program, one of the tools that we used for conservation in my community are conservation easements. Within Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program, we are able to use conservation easements to protect the land on the ground that will then keep the land in private land ownership.

What I think we were able to bring to the table is both capacity skills and the experience necessary to get what is a very complicated, long, perpetual document and agreement in place to create that land protection. Our local natural resources conservation service office is wonderful, but they don't have the kind of skills and experience to negotiate an agreement like that, I think, or the time really to do it. So that is what allowed that project really, I think, to get done.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Ms. Parker, what could Federal land management agencies do to assist new businesses and workers in learning not just about restoration, but also the stewardship on public lands and the long-term commitment to the development of that relationship between the Federal land management and those surrounding communities?

Ms. PARKER. OK. Thank you for the question, Chairman.

Mr. GRIJALVA. You know, your point about consolidating some of the legislative initiatives——

Ms. PARKER. Yeah.

Mr. GRIJALVA.—is a point well taken, and thank you. But——

Ms. PARKER. Yeah.

Mr. GRIJALVA. OK.

Ms. PARKER. And I hope I answer the question. Before I do, I want to acknowledge that I am actually a native of the great State of Arizona, so I am especially pleased to make your acquaintance. OK. Well, I guess I am going to break that into two things. First of all, I want to acknowledge that the learning goes two ways. It is not just Federal agencies sort of, you know, teaching the working contractors, which I know you know, but what we really appreciate and like is the kind of collaborative relationship where everybody standing around a circle, out in the winds, and we are learning from each other. And so I think just having—the Federal Government—just having a program of work where local contractors can access it over time creates that long-term relationship where that cross-learning is happening.

B, another thing Federal agencies can do that will help that is just to keep their people in place over time to develop those relationships with local communities. One of our big obstacles, actually, is the bungee jumping of Federal employees through our rural community. And so that breaks down that long-term trust building. So the learning is important there.

And then the third thing I just want to sort of throw in there, like Joyce, we also have quite a few youth volunteer corps programs that are scaffolding the next generation, not the people who are working right now, but the ones that are just behind them, into the programs where they are doing, you know, stream monitoring,

wildlife monitoring, those kind of things. And our Youth Corps program is not like an SCA type program, where you are building trails. It is more a knowledge creation program.

And so I would encourage Congress, as you are integrating with the Administration on the America Great Outdoors Initiative, to really look at some homespun youth corps programs in our rural communities, as well as the big national groups, because I think we are actually trying to promote our local youth into the workforce to stay there over time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. And you answered my other question.

Ms. PARKER. Oh, good.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Which was about youth. As a community-based organization having to bring diverse parties together for discussions—this is just my curiosity—do you find your role as an organization or as an individual leading that organization to be more of an arbiter of what is going on, or kind of more of a leader in a direction? Just a curiosity on my part?

Ms. PARKER. Who do you want to answer?

Mr. GRIJALVA. Either one, all of you, in fact.

Ms. PARKER. You go first.

Ms. TROY. Thanks. I think the short answer is it is certainly not always easy. But in our particular case, it is really important to understand that my organization was created by ranchers. So it is starting from the ground up. And the reason it is starting from the ground up is because there was a need for an organization like ours. We were seeing turnover of some of our really especially notable ranches in the community. And I think that really alarmed folks deep down, and, you know, really questioned whether our traditional way of life was going to stay intact.

So for my organization, landowners come to us. We don't go knock on doors. So that is how it starts. And then because we are trying to with some of this endangered species funding, when they come to us as a local group, we basically sit down, and I tell them, OK, here is the deal. This is Federal money, and it has strings attached. There are specific conservation outcomes that need to happen if we are going to use this money. And then the next question they ask me is, well, can we keep ranching. And, you know, another complicated answer is, yes, probably. But we need to figure out how to do that in a way that is compatible, you know, with these conservation objectives.

I think the next step is the really important one. I say, how do you think we can do that? And I think that is what is missing when we don't have a collaborative process in place. You miss that wisdom from the people who live and work on the ground, because, guess what, they have some of the best ideas about how to accomplish conservation on their particular ranch.

So at that point, then it goes to this larger collaborative, and we try to figure out if those are compatible, those two—if the landowners' goals and the goals of the program are in fact compatible. So it is a lengthy process.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you. Anybody else?

Ms. PARKER. No.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Well, I want to thank the panel, and in expressing my gratitude, tell you that, you know, some of us are very, very

passionate about conservation and preservation. And unfortunately, the discussions become an either-or proposition. And so I welcome your testimony because in reality, it is not. But sometimes you are forced to put up the barracks because that is what the war has been about, either-or. And so your testimony today, we don't all have to jump in, that there is another way to create dialogue, painful as it is sometimes, compromise. And particularly, I like the point that you made about the working landscape of the West. And it is absolutely true.

And so thank you very much. You know, sometimes our Federal land managers and our special places and public spaces are seen as job killers. They are seen as the enemy. And I don't believe that is true. We can revive many of the communities that you work with. But I think that also requires the Federal agencies, and the two departments, Interior and Agriculture in particular, to think outside the way they have been thinking about this for a long, long time. And as we begin to craft a response, not only to the Great Outdoors Initiative, reauthorizing the public school support, and reauthorizing other pieces of legislation, some of the input that we have had from people that are actually on the ground today is going to be very, very valuable. And so as we craft that legislation for the future, your input is going to be valuable, and it is going to be useful. So thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:20 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

**[NOTE:** The following individuals and organizations submitted documents for the record, which have been retained in the Committee's official files.]

- Bruell, Harry, President, Southwest Conservation Corps
- Cooper, Tom and Carol, Ranchers, Otero Mesa, New Mexico
- Damitz, Sean, Director, Utah Conservation Corps
- Stone, Jim, Rancher and Chairman, Rolling Stone Ranch and The Blackfoot Challenge
- Watson, Jay, Western Regional Director, Student Conservation Association
- The Wilderness Society

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