

Policy Analysis Group

Jay O'Laughlin, Director

(208) 885-5776 jayo@uidaho.edu

www.uidaho.edu/cnr/pag

University of Idaho

College of Natural Resources

Kurt Pregitzer, Dean

(208) 885-6442 kpregitzer@uidaho.edu

To: Federal Lands Interim Committee of the Idaho Legislature

From: Jay O'Laughlin



Date: August 21, 2013

Re: Follow-up from August 9, 2013, committee meeting

Because of many questions that were raised during the August 9, 2013, committee meeting about the potential effects of timber harvesting on other resources, I am attaching for your consideration Policy Analysis Group Report No. 19, *Toward Sustainable Forest Management: Part II – The Role and Effects of Timber Harvesting in Idaho*. Published in 2000, it provides a comprehensive synthesis of information about the effects of harvesting timber in Idaho, especially on wildlife and water quality, that I feel is still relevant. Because it is a book-length report (174 pages), I have sent a box of them to LSO staffer Katharine Gerrity so she can distribute a printed copy to each committee member. In addition, the report can be viewed and/or downloaded from our website at <http://www.uidaho.edu/~media/Files/orgs/CNR/PAG/Reports/PAGReport19>

I would like to add the following perspectives. It is fair to say that “timber primacy” dominated the Forest Service’s set of multiple-use objectives from the 1950s through the 1980s, a direction set primarily by the U.S. Congress in the budget process, and driven by the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) determinations made by the agency. Although today’s situation cannot be described as timber primacy, the management of national forest timber, whether active or passive, affects other resources either positively or negatively. Today the Forest Service is removing approximately 5% of the annual growth on its timberlands to improve conditions. These removals are converted into useful consumer products such as lumber and paper, and also energy. The remainder is added to timber inventory, in some places resulting in uncharacteristic accumulations of fuel for wildfires that can negatively impact wildlife habitat and water quality.

College of Natural Resources Policy Analysis Group – University of Idaho
Established by the Idaho legislature in 1989 to provide objective analysis of the impacts of natural resource proposals.

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Boise, Idaho

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Boise, Idaho

Cecilia Seesholtz, Supervisor
Boise National Forest
Boise, Idaho

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