

**COUNTY OF SHOSHONE**

700 Bank Street, Suite 120  
WALLACE, IDAHO 83873

December 4, 2013

RE: Federal Lands Interim Committee

Honorable Chairmen and honored committee members I thank you for the opportunity to testify at this important Federal Lands Interim Committee Hearing. I am Larry Yergler, Chairman of Shoshone County Board of Commissioners.

First some facts: 74% of my county is under federal ownership.

That forest is the IDAHO Panhandle National Forest and encompasses the 5 Northern Counties.

As a commissioner from Shoshone County, I took an oath of office to preserve the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and protect the economic stability of my County.

Next year due to insufficient Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funds and the anemic revenue provided by the present state of management of National Forest Lands, Shoshone County will not be able to fund our county road budget. In fact we will have over \$1 million shortfall.

During the decade of the 1970's federal forests in my county contributed annual timber harvests of over 70MMBDFT and our school districts were some of the richest in the state. Now they struggle to pass a levee for building maintenance.

Under the present state of forest management the annual ASQ of the IPNF is 280MMBDFT but because of her budget, our forest supervisor will only offer 40MMBDFT for forest in all 5 counties.

The present state of management does not allow me to provide health, safety and welfare nor community stability needed for Shoshone County to survive.

The 1987 IPNF Forest Plan is being revised and we are in the new **OBJECTION** Phase of this revision.

All 5 Northern Counties offered comments for directive input in May of last year, a draft Record of Decision (ROD) has been released and any objections to the ROD will be ironed out in this phase.

Shoshone County submitted a 27 page letter with an additional 120 pages of supporting documents.

We are dismayed as well as concerned about:

1. The lack of consideration for the input provided by knowledgeable elected officials who listed policies which provided forest management while ensuring community stability.
2. There was no attempt to coordinate this plan as directed under NEPA and resolve conflicts which may exist before release of the plan for public comment.
3. The attitude presented by forest service staff in a comment on Wilderness, which all 5 counties opposed. Jason Kirchner Information Officer for the service quote about adding additional wilderness in Modified B Plan stating "if it walks like a duck, and talks like a duck, then it probably is a duck." I am disappointed

that something as contentious as this issue is responded to in a first grader type attitude.

The new IPNF Plan places more emphasis on natural management or a (passive approach) of the forest first and only then considers benefits such as timber harvest to create revenues to, access to the forest, mineral extraction, and so on to be accomplished as “the Budget Allows.”

I am concerned that asking Congress for money to do passive management of the forest is the wrong way to manage the forest and that emphasis on timber harvest must be a priority.

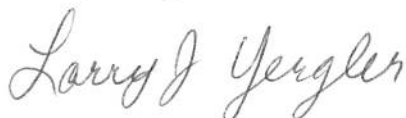
Active management of the forest achieves the healthiest state of the forest, the healthiest state of wildlife habitat, it creates jobs, it protects watersheds, and it offers economic factors to provide community stability.

Our forests must be managed for State and local benefits and it is time to manage by State and local government.

For the HEALTH, SAFETY and WELFARE for the citizens of Shoshone County and Idaho it is time to transfer the federal lands to the State of Idaho.

Thank you for your considerations,

Larry Yergler

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry J. Yergler".

Chairman, Board of County Commissioners  
Shoshone County [bocc@co.shoshone.id.us](mailto:bocc@co.shoshone.id.us)