



March 24, 2010

USDA Forest Service
Attn: Patricia Brumm
Forest Products Laboratory
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726-2398

Re: Support for West Range Reclamation's Woody Biomass Utilization Grant Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support for West Range Reclamation's proposal for a woody biomass utilization grant. The purpose of this letter is to:

1. Introduce the Front Range Roundtable (Roundtable), a multi-organizational stakeholder group on whose behalf we are submitting this letter; and
2. Express our support for West Range Reclamation's proposal for a woody biomass utilization grant (WBUG).

The Front Range Roundtable (www.frontrangeroundtable.org) was founded in 2004 to serve as a focal point for diverse stakeholder input into efforts to reduce wildland fire risks through sustained fuels treatment along the Colorado Front Range. The Roundtable is a collaborative effort involving more than 150 representatives from more than 50 different organizations, including state and federal agencies, local governments, environmental and conservation organizations, the academic and scientific community, industry and user groups, and individuals organized to address forest health concerns, forest product utilization, and the use of biomass for energy in the ten Colorado Front Range counties. After a lengthy deliberative process, the Roundtable identified 1.5 million acres of forest land in the ten-county Colorado Front Range area in need of treatment to reduce the risk of wildfire to communities and/or restore healthy ecological conditions. Approximately 400,000 acres meet both of these goals. The identification of these consensus acres was founded on sound ecological science and input from local communities.

In 2006, the Roundtable released a report recommending ten substantive initiatives for policy, funding and economic actions that will facilitate more timely and effective accomplishment of priority forest treatments. At that time, the Roundtable recommended that the USFS enter into a long-term stewardship contract on the Pike-San Isabel and Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests in order to reduce per-acreage treatment costs and provide more supply predictability to biomass utilization markets. Recognizing that a number of roadblocks to accomplishing needed treatments existed, including the significant cost, the Roundtable recommended that one of the keys to reducing these costs, making forest management more palatable to local communities and increasing collaboration, is to facilitate the utilization of woody biomass that is produced through implementing priority treatments.

The Roundtable was pleased that the USFS entered into a long-term stewardship contract on the Pike-San Isabel and Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests with West Range Reclamation, and the members would like to see the stewardship contract implemented successfully. Part of successful implementation requires that the contractor, West Range Reclamation, have the equipment needed to pursue woody biomass utilization to the greatest extent possible. West Range Reclamation's request for WBUG funding is intended for the purchase of a new delimeter/debarker and an additional log loader. Putting this new equipment to use should result in:

- An increase in the number of green tons processed;
- An increase in the amount of utilized woody biomass;
- Increase per hour production, creating cost savings that can be passed along to landowners through reduced costs/per acre as well as more complete utilization of the non-sawtimber biomass; and

- Reducing or eliminating the need to burn slash thereby avoiding the many issues including cost, pollution, and possible soil modifications, surrounding slash burning treatments.

The purchase of a new log delimeter/debarker will allow West Range Reclamation to provide lower cost forest management services to the USFS by allowing them to operate more efficiently as they work to increase the use of the woody biomass. Supporting the creation of the Front Range long-term stewardship contract was an important early step in the Roundtable's efforts to reduce fire risks and restore forests. Supporting West Range Reclamation's request for WBUG funding is a natural progression of our interests in ensuring that this long-term stewardship contract is a success. We encourage the Forest Products Laboratory to award West Range Reclamation's funding request for the purchase of a new log delimeter/debarker.

The Front Range Roundtable appreciates your consideration in these matters.

Sincerely,

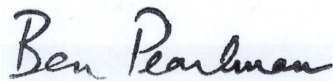
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