



MEMORANDUM

To: D.C. Delegation, NWCCOG Council, and CBBC Steering Committee
From: Gary Severson
Date: March 2, 2009
Re: Summary of Washington, D.C. trip . February 23 . 26, 2009

A delegation of NWCCOG Executive Committee Members and Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative (CBBC) Members ventured to Washington, D.C. on February 23 . 26, 2009 to request assistance from key federal government officials in the Legislative and Executive Branches in addressing the impacts of bark beetles. The delegation was comprised of:

John Rich, Jackson County Commissioner
Bob French, Summit county Commissioner
Peter Runyon, Eagle County Commissioner
Patti Clapper, Pitkin County Commissioner
Dirk Ramsey, Mayor, Town of Walden
Tom Clark, Mayor, Town of Kremmling
Clint Kyhl, USFS Bark Beetle Incident Commander
Sloan Shoemaker, Executive Director, Wilderness Workshop
Ron Turley, Western Area Power Administration
Tony Cheng, Director, Forest Restoration Institute at CSU
Gary Severson, Executive Director, NWCCOG

The NWCCOG and CBBC Members were joined by:

Jeff Jahnke, Colorado State Forester
Ben Pearlman, Boulder County Commissioner
Dan Gibbs, Colorado State Senator
Christine Scanlan, Colorado State Representative

The following is a summary of the trip to Washington, D.C. regarding bark beetles on February 23 . 26, 2009.

February 24, 2009

1. **United States Department of Agriculture.** Dr. Ann Bartuska, Acting Under-Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment (regular job - Deputy Chief for Research USFS), Hank Kashdan, Acting Associate Secretary (regular job . Associate Chief, USFS).
 - a. Announced that Colorado will receive one of the first three fuels reduction grants in the amount of \$5,000,000 coming from the stimulus package for clearing state, county

and forest road rights-of-way across national forest system lands in Jackson, Grand and Routt Counties.

b. Requested a letter of invitation to USDA Secretary Vilsack to visit Colorado to observe and discuss the bark beetle situation in response to House Joint Resolution 08-1033.

c. Reviewed draft letter from Colorado Congressional delegation.

d. We were strongly encouraged to make certain that ~~%woody~~+biomass be included in the biomass energy discussions and decisions.

e. We stressed the need for expedited actions in the administrative management of stimulus funds and in the processes to get those funds to work on the ground.

2. **USDA Forest Service.** Gail Kimbell, Chief of USFS, Jim Hubbard, Deputy Chief of USFS for State and Private Forestry, and Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief of USFS for National Forest System.

a. Chief Kimbell committed to visiting Colorado in response to House Joint Resolution 08-1033.

b. Announced that Colorado will receive one of the first three fuels reduction grants in the amount of \$5,000,000 coming from the stimulus package for clearing state, county and forest road rights-of-way across national forest system lands in Jackson, Grand Counties.

c. Complimented NWCCOG and the CBBC for keeping this issue in the forefront and encouraged us to keep working with national forests to identify strategic acreage for treatment.

d. Stated that the measurement for all projects funded through the stimulus package will be jobs, not acres.

e. Stated that the measurement for all projects funded through USFS budget will be acres.

f. Discussed wood utilization of dead trees with focus on Grand and Jackson Counties and spoke of the need to assess available volume of wood and use that number to size appropriate industry.

g. Reviewed draft letter from Colorado Congressional delegation.

h. We stressed the need for expedited actions in the administrative management of stimulus funds and in the processes to get those funds to work on the ground.

February 25, 2009

3. **Colorado Congressional Delegation.** Senators Udall and Bennet, Representatives Salazar, Polis, Markey, DeGette, and staffs of Representatives Perlmutter, Coffman, and Lamborn.
 - a. Pledged unity of the Colorado Congressional delegation on the bark beetle issue.
 - b. Agreed to sign NWCCOG's letter to Secretaries Salazar, Vilsack, Chu, and Napolitano. (signed copy attached)
 - c. Agreed to assign one staff member from each Congressional office to a bark beetle legislative group led by Doug Young of Senator Udall's office to rewrite the Unified Colorado Bark beetle Bill for re-introduction into this Congress. The revised bill will seek broader involvement from other affected states and ~~weak~~ barriers in first bill. This bill will not ask for changes to NEPA, but will seek aggressive utilization of authorities in NEPA and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).
 - d. NWCCOG and the CBBC were requested to work the legislative group in drafting the legislation.
 - e. The Colorado Congressional delegation will seek the re-authorization of the Colorado Good Neighbor Act.
 - f. We stressed the need for expedited actions in the administrative management of stimulus funds and in the processes to get those funds to work on the ground.
4. **United States Department of the Interior.** Ken Salazar, Secretary of Interior.
 - a. Secretary Salazar assured us that he is well aware of and committed to addressing bark beetle issues on lands administered by the Department of Interior. However, Secretary Salazar wondered how much of the two million acres could be treated and to what level of effectiveness. We acknowledged that we know that not all two million acres can be treated, but that through collaboration between local, state and federal governments strategic acreages can be identified to help provide a level of protection to human life, public infrastructure, and critical water supplies. Secretary pledged the cooperation of Department of Interior agencies to collaborate in the endeavor.
 - b. Secretary Salazar spoke of the new energy economy of renewable energy sources including wind, solar, and biomass. We stated that whatever method is utilized to generate electricity, the generated electricity needed to be placed on the existing grid for transmission and distribution and that the exiting lines were in jeopardy as they crossed beetle killed forests. Secretary said that was a very good point and stated that he wants to be known as ~~Mr.~~ Grid+ and pledged to work with us to expedite the protection of existing transmission and distribution lines.
 - c. We stressed the need for expedited actions in the administrative management of stimulus funds and in the processes to get those funds to work on the ground.

d. Secretary Salazar stated that the ~~take away~~ he had from our meeting was that our expedited efforts need to be ~~sur~~gical in their scope and pledged to assist us in those decisions on lands administered by the Department of Interior.

February 26, 2009

5. **United States Department of Homeland Security.**
6. **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.**

Most of the NWCCOG and CBBC delegation had to return to Colorado the evening of February 25, but Representative Scanlan, Commissioner Clapper and Clint Kyhl attended the meetings on February 26th. A summary of those meetings will be sent separately.