



**WESTERN FORESTRY
LEADERSHIP COALITION**

CWSF FOREST PRODUCTS COMMITTEE

2024 Annual Report and 2025 Work Plan

LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

The Forest Products Committee leadership team for 2024 included:

- Archie Gray (ID), Chair
- Dave Bruton (KS), Vice Chair
- Kim Slezak (NE), Secretary
- Bergen Eskildsen (UT), Past Chair
- Gerry Gray (UT), State Forester Advisor
- Neil Simpson (CWSF), CWSF Staff Liaison

The Forest Products Committee leadership team for 2025 includes:

- Dave Bruton (KS), Chair
- Kim Slezak (NE), Vice Chair
- Vacant, Secretary
- Archie Gray (ID), Past Chair
- Gerry Gray (UT), State Forester Advisor
- Neil Simpson (CWSF), CWSF Staff Liaison

MISSION STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

The Forest Products Committee (FPC) was established to address forest products and biomass utilization opportunities and challenges of regional significance. In particular, the committee supports sustainable forest management and other forest-based benefits by working with the Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) leadership to maintain and enhance markets for traditional and non-traditional forest products. The establishment of this committee offers the opportunity for the sharing of information across the Western U.S. on utilization issues, representation at the regional and national meetings, and the creation of recommendations for the CWSF's consideration and action.

2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2024

- Held the 2024 Annual Meeting in Coeur d'Alene, ID (April 9-11, 2024). The meeting was attended by six states and the Marshall Islands. It featured presentations on tribal timber management, workforce development, urban forestry/urban wood utilization, discussions on policy/federal funding opportunities, and

non-traditional financing methods to retain and recruit industry. The meeting included a workforce development presentation from the University of Idaho, and committee members were able to try out their state-of-the-art logging equipment simulators being used to train high school and college students. A field tour was also conducted to the City of Coeur d'Alene's composting facility. Some attendees participated in an optional tour of the Idaho Forest Group's sawmill in Chilco, ID.

- Authored blog post highlighting the meeting.
- Initiated planning for a Ponderosa Pine Utilization Symposium. Rather than contract out a fifth Emergent Market Report, the Committee has coalesced around the utilization of ponderosa pine as a top concern of many Western states and has begun planning a ponderosa pine utilization symposium. The Committee has formed a planning committee and issued a Request for Information to potential attendees and meeting facilitators.
- Authored a blog post for Forest Products Week. The post highlighted the committee's ongoing work and the planning efforts for the Ponderosa Pine Symposium.
- Committee members shared information related to Wood Innovation Grants. Information was shared amongst states and the USDA Forest Service during formal meetings and informally through connections made at committee events. The information helped individuals provide industry partners support during the grant application process and enabled successful wood innovation grant applications that will expand wood utilization markets in the West.
- Dave Bruton and Kim Slezak represented the CWSF Forest Products Committee at the Hardwood Industry Needs Summit, May 8-10, 2024 in Memphis, TN. The event, coordinated by the National Hardwood Lumber Association and Forest Service, focused on establishing ways to sustain and strengthen the demand for hardwood lumber and the hardwood industry overall. Many hardwood mills have shut down over the years, and many alternative non-wood products have been introduced into the marketplace as replacements. The fact that trees are a natural, renewable resource doesn't seem to resonate with the general public. Kim and Dave reported back to the FPC on efforts to educate the public about the benefits of forest products and ways to strengthen lumber markets, which is a focus of this group.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY STATE FORESTERS

- Recommendation for State Foresters to approve the Forest Products Committee's 2025 Work Plan.

2025 WORK PLAN

MEETING(S) AND CALLS PLANNED FOR 2025

- Annual Meeting - In-person for 2025, to be held in conjunction with the Ponderosa Pine Symposium. Program content will include committee business, USFS partner updates, utilization, and engagement (tours) with area wood products manufacturing facilities. Details are still being discussed to ensure high attendance.
- Ponderosa Pine Symposium - currently in the planning stages with a target date of fall 2025. Over the last several years, the ability to market ponderosa pine has decreased. The Committee will plan and host a symposium to discuss the challenges, success stories, and next steps to better utilize ponderosa pine. CWSF will contract certain portions of the planning and facilitation utilizing funding from the Forest Service Wood Innovations Grant.
- Quarterly membership and leadership team meetings.

KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, AND OUTCOMES PLANNED FOR 2025

- Compile data and stories from Wood Innovations Grants. Success stories may be utilized in a blog post, report, or other CWSF product. Unsuccessful applications may be utilized as a training opportunity to discuss and document ways to strengthen applications.

- Provide grant training to industry members to enable successful wood innovation grant applications, which will expand wood utilization markets in the west - Utilizing Wood Innovations grant funding.
- Seek opportunities to provide training and support ongoing workforce development programs for the timber industry.
- The leadership team will engage in direct outreach to encourage and recruit active participation in the Forest Products Committee.
- Peer-to-peer learning opportunities (Wood For Life Initiative, BIL/IRA funding, etc.).
- Committee to facilitate the identification of biomass and wood utilization funding opportunities resulting from national BIL, IRA, Shared Stewardship, and USDA 10-Year Wildfire Strategy.
- Host a Ponderosa Pine Utilization Symposium.
- Contribute FPC activities to the Council Newsletter and blog; and seek opportunities to highlight state success stories utilizing communication tools such as blog posts, the FSC website, and the CWSF BIL/IRA webpage.
- Presentations of data/reports on capacity building in the forest products sector (e.g. University of Montana's BBER).
- Seek opportunities to strengthen coordination and communication with other committees on joint topics of interest.