



### **School Fire Salvage Recovery Project: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

#### **Position**

The Inland Empire Society of American Foresters (IESAF) believes that the USDA Forest Service has correctly identified the purpose and need for action in connection with the School Fire of 2005 that burned 28,000 acres of the Umatilla National Forest in southeastern Washington. The agency's draft environmental impact statement for a salvage logging project adequately discusses the environmental effects of two alternatives that would allow salvage of dead and dying timber on either 34% or 15% of the burned area, depending on the criteria used to identify harvestable trees. These alternatives have considered the need to promptly regenerate forests in the burned area and to treat fuels from salvage logging. The IESAF believes that it is appropriate to act expeditiously in order to retrieve the highest economic value from the burned timber, and that either of the proposed salvage logging alternatives is preferable to the "no action" alternative. We therefore advocate a prompt decision process on a pace that will allow action to implement the final decision as planned in 2006.

#### **Issue**

The purpose of the School Fire Salvage Recovery Project is to harvest dead and dying trees resulting from the School Fire, and improve public safety within the burned vicinity, especially along roads and in recreations sites, by removing hazard trees (DEIS p. S-2). Most of the 28,000 acres of national forest land in the project area have a history of logging, roading, grazing and dispersed recreation going back at least 50 years, indicating that some values would be enhanced by removal of standing dead timber. There are an estimated 130 million board feet of standing dead timber in the burned area. The two alternatives would remove either 85 million or 39 million board feet. During the scoping sessions for identifying issues regarding this project, some groups and individuals preferred the "no action" alternative because they believe recovering economic value from dead trees is an inappropriate objective for public lands such as national forests. The IESAF disagrees, and believes that the project alternatives designed to recover the economic value of fire-killed timber in the School Fire salvage project area are appropriate. Furthermore, because the economic value of dead timber deteriorates rapidly, delays in implementing environmentally appropriate salvage logging projects should be avoided.



*Adopted June 5, 2006, by the Executive Committee of the Inland Empire Society of American Foresters (representing professional foresters in northern Idaho and eastern Washington state) and approved by the Forest Policy Department, Society of American Foresters, Bethesda, Maryland.*

*This statement will expire June 5, 2011, unless revised or extended by the Executive Committee.*

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Society of American Foresters, with about 15,000 members, is the national organization that represents all segments of the forestry profession in the United States. It includes public and private practitioners, researchers, administrators, educators, and forestry students. The Society was established in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot and six other pioneer foresters.

The mission of the Society of American Foresters is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The Society is the accreditation authority for professional forestry education in the United States. The Society publishes the *Journal of Forestry*; the quarterlies, *Forest Science*, *Southern Journal of Applied Forestry*, *Northern Journal of Applied Forestry*, and *Western Journal of Applied Forestry*; *The Forestry Source* and the annual *Proceedings* of the Society of American Foresters national convention.

