

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

May 25, 2018

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The Honorable Victoria Christiansen
Interim Chief
United States Forest Service
Yates Building, 4th Floor NW
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Vicki,

Congratulations on your appointment to Interim Chief of the United States Forest Service (USFS). I am proud of the work you accomplished during your 26 years at Washington State's Department of Natural Resources. As you take on your new role, I would like to partner with you on new and innovative approaches that will allow for better forest management, more jobs, and increased environmental restoration.

I write today to invite you to Eastern Washington to tour the Colville National Forest (CNF).

The CNF has become one of the most productive national forests nationwide. In 2018, we are expecting to sell over 150 million board feet of timber (MMBF). It is estimated that every MMBF creates four full time jobs and brings \$2 million to the local economy. By increasing timber outputs we not only provide more opportunity in rural areas but increase the health of our forests.

It is estimated that one third of federal forest land contains dead, diseased, or bug-infested timber. By encouraging thinning we are supporting a more resilient forest. I am proud to say on the CNF, we are working on innovative strategies with the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC). NEWFC is a cutting edge and highly successful collaborative that has been instrumental in increasing forestry restoration projects and developing a better way to permit projects.

Through this challenge I worked collaboratively with the coalition to come up with the A to Z concept. A to Z is a forest restoration project on 54,000 acres of forest land on the CNF. This innovative concept allows private funds to be used to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Although we believe the first project has been very successful, we would like to work with you to improve the concept. These projects decrease the fiscal burden on the USFS and have been overwhelmingly supported by the local community and region.

I am very proud of the A to Z project and invite you to tour the project.

To continue the important work on the CNF, I continue to look for a better way to increase timber production while improving the health of our forests. I was proud to lead on the forest management and

1314 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2006
FAX: (202) 225-3392

10 NORTH POST STREET, SUITE 625
SPOKANE, WA 99201
(509) 353-2374

555 SOUTH MAIN
COLVILLE, WA 99114
(509) 684-3481

26 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 2
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362
(509) 529-9358

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fire borrowing fixes in the recent Omnibus. We need the USFS to use every tool and implement those new authorities. In that regard, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the CNF's current issues and highlight the important work we have accomplished.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress