

FRA REGION ACTIVITY REPORT

WESTERN Region



ISSUES & TRENDS

COVID-19

Navigating through the unprecedented pandemic year was difficult for everyone. Forest products companies everywhere had to adapt to many challenges, including supply chain interruptions, essential business designations differing by state, adapting to work in socially distanced environments with masks added to required PPE, travel bans, and employee absences due to contact tracing protocols. Freight logistics were especially challenged with COVID-19 absences exacerbating an already existing driver shortage.

Wildfires

2020 was the most active fire year on record for the Western U.S. More than 10.3 million acres were burned in 2020. Compare this to 2019, where 4.7 million acres burned. Besides the need for a workforce to fight the fires, there is also a great need to quickly utilize as much of the burned timber as possible. This is not only to ensure that some of the loss can be recovered but also to guarantee that the land will be reforested. It is very challenging to sell – and use – the burnt logs, chips, and bark. Some mills lost considerable merchantable timber inventory, affecting their long-term timber supply after salvage is completed.

Markets

2020 saw a robust year for housing starts, despite the economic effects of the pandemic. Lumber markets enjoyed some record pricing during the year, with the start of 2021 showing similar market optimism. There was also a depression in markets for residual chips, in contrast to strong lumber production. Pulp and paper sectors had a contraction during the same time

period, with a loss of some mills and production of some grades; packaging grades have remained strong.

FRA ACTIVITY

Mapping the Course Meeting

January 23, 2020 – Mapping the Course, Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA. FRA's Western Region (WR) met as part of the Mapping the Course conference.

Safety Webinar

March 3, 2020 – ***Webinar: 7 Insights into Safety Leadership***. As part of FRA's webinar series, the WR coordinated with David Libby, Partner at Krause Bell Group, on this webinar. David Libby presented on specific actions people can take at the workplace to implement safety leadership and discover what it takes to create a culture that is more supportive of safety.

Fall Meeting

September 29-October 2, 2020 – The WR Policy Committee and other FRA members from the West met virtually to discuss items relevant to the region. Presenters included:

- A national update from FRA President Deb Hawkinson.
- *The Century of Forests and Forest Products* – Carlton Owen, U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities.
- *Forest Industry 2021: A Financial Outlook* – Brooks Mendell, Forisk Consulting.
- *New Zealand Trade Considerations* – Andrew Cocking, Port Blakely.
- *Community Engagement: Stewardship Successes in Oregon* – Teresa Loo, Port Blakely.
- *Future of Work* – Michael Braun, University of Montana.
- *Dash Cams – A Manufacturer's Perspective* – Kyle Bruny, Ltyx.
- *Dash Cams – A Trucking Company's Perspective* – Bryce Lemmons, Signature Transport.

ON THE HORIZON

May 13, 2021 – Mapping the Course, Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA – depending on when COVID-19-related concerns abate.

Fall 2021 (Date TBD) – FRA Western Region Fall Meeting, Salem, OR – depending on when COVID-19-related concerns abate.