

## **FEDERATED WOMEN IN TIMBER.....by Holly McKenzie**

Federated Women in Timber recently descended upon the lovely town of Coeur d' Alene, Idaho for our annual Fall meeting in early October of 2009. Typically our Fall meetings rotate around to the different States where our most active members are located. Last year we were in Minneapolis, Minnesota and next year we will likely meet in Montana. Anyone is welcome to attend one of these meetings but voting is restricted to leadership members only. When we met with the Federated Women in Idaho, we had 20 members present representing California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota.....It was determined that we would travel to D.C. in 2009 during March 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>. The annual meeting allows us to share information from the State and Chapter level amongst one another. This sharing helps to promote learning and ideas for fund raising or information distribution.

We were saddened to learn that our once very strong Lake States Chapter is struggling with leadership and funding problems and could not join us for the Fall meeting. They may not be able to travel with us to Washington D.C. in the upcoming year either. The Lake States have suffered a heavy toll in job losses as paper companies struggle in this economy. Our Lake States Ladies have been a real asset to us in past years and we hope they are able to rebound soon. Every direction we look, there are job layoffs, closures of mills and lumber distributors, loggers without consistent work, and the lowest prices we've seen on logs in many decades. Some experts predict a trend toward recovery in late 2010 and we all hope and pray they are right.

The recovery of the housing market is the most critical change that will improve the Forest Products Industry economic situation. In the absence of that, however, there are other areas we may work toward to promote sales of our wood based economy. That of "renewable energy" and biomass utilization is under consideration.....though it may only be affordable if the government would step in and subsidize it as readily as it does wind and solar energy. Renewable energy development costs money and nobody has that right now. We may also attempt to maintain some jobs through subsidized fuel reduction projects and thinning programs designed to reduce our risk of wildfire U.S. Communities. It needs to be done, it often costs money to get it done, but nobody is arguing that it also costs a tremendous amount of money to fight wildfire once they start, thereby making this a good investment even if it isn't self sustainable from a commodities standpoint.

There is also the concept of "Buy Local Support" where we may all reduce our carbon footprint and help our neighbors and community by using products that are grown and manufactured **LOCALLY!!!** This very old concept from centuries past has vanished in the wake of railroads and cheaper overseas labor, however, there is renewed interest in it for the food movement. Many U.S. citizens may also help their local loggers, truckers, mill workers, tree farmers, lumber retailers, etc. by seeking out locally grown logs and lumber for all their home improvement needs. Whether you are building a home, remodeling your abode, putting up a barn or new shop, or just a tree house or chicken coop.....it is important to support your local wood products industry. Remember, we are still importing almost 43% of our wood from other Nations and we grow almost every product right here in the good old U.S. It is difficult to compete against the less expensive labors of other nations, the more lax environmental protective standards, the lack of OSHA laws, the government subsidized log programs, and the lack of labor unions.....but you are doing your community a great favor when you make a concerted effort to purchase U.S. ....or better yet, locally manufactured and grown forest products for your family!!! Think about it!!! Please!

As mentioned in a previous article, our Annual Washington D.C. trip is an intensive week where we take personal stories of the timber industry and our forest communities to share with U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, (BLM and Park Service) officials, as well as Congressmen and Senators. The ladies also make cold calls to each and every congressional and senate office to visit with aides and drop off packets full of information and position papers. The following papers were determined to be the most current issues, however, some papers may be dropped or added as issues change.

**2010 Position Papers Written by Federated Women in Timber  
Washington D.C.(week of April 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>)**

1. Equal Access to Justice and the Tester Wilderness Bill - Idaho, Serena Carlson.
2. Biomass and Renewable Energy - Montana, Carol Jump and Jan Jeuf.
3. Climate Change....Healthy Forests - Black Hills, Druse Kellogg.
4. Carbon Sequestration / Cap and Trade - California, Julie Clausen.
5. Water - California, Helen Horn.
6. Sustainable Forestry - Oregon, Melissa Fullerton.
7. Forest Facts about forest ownership and acres available for forest management across the Nation.....Montana and Oregon.

Our government and citizens must take a more common sense approach to how we manage our forestlands and Federated Women in Timber, along with her affiliate State Chapters.....is continually here to spread that message. If you wish to join FWIT or just have questions about us, please feel free to contact me at [hmckenzie@centurytel.net](mailto:hmckenzie@centurytel.net)

We can set you up with a local Chapter in your State or you can be part of Women in Timber at Large. For regular updates or more contact information, please log onto [womenintimber.org](http://womenintimber.org)