

COLORADO'S FOREST CRISIS

Colorado's forest crisis is unprecedented in U.S. history. Annual mortality now exceeds annual growth by more than 200 percent. Statewide, Colorado forests hold more than one billion dead trees, ten times the number of standing dead trees in California.

How bad is it? Picture a solid block of wood 300 feet long and 160 feet wide – the dimensions of the playing field at Bronco Stadium.

Now look upward in your mind's eye. The block stretches 5,544 feet into the sky.

This towering wood block represents the amount of timber that dies annually in Colorado's federally-owned national forests – 266,113,000 cubic feet.

Beetle mortality currently accounts for 6.7 billion cubic feet of standing dead timber in Colorado. Were all this dead and dying timber available for harvest [it isn't] and

were it all usable [it isn't] you could construct 1.2 million 2,400 square foot homes. For reference, about 1.2 million new single-family homes and apartment units were constructed in the U.S. in 2016.

Suffice it to say, beetle and drought-killed timber in Colorado national forests is fueling the largest wildfires in state history, destroying watersheds, wildlife and fish habitat, water quality and outdoor recreation sites at an unprecedented rate.

The bar graphs on the cover of this report – depicting gross growth, mortality, and timber offered for sale in conjunction with forest restoration projects – quantify a precipitous decline in Colorado forest health driven by drought, climate change and beetle infestations. Adding to the crisis is Colorado's abysmal lack of wood processing infrastructure, a challenge that makes urgently needed forest restoration work nearly impossible.

For an informative answer to the “what can Colorado do about this crisis” we invite you to read Lyle Laverty's March 8, 2017 testimony before the Colorado Joint House Agriculture, Livestock, Natural Resources and Energy Committee. It appears on Pages 2-3 of this summary.

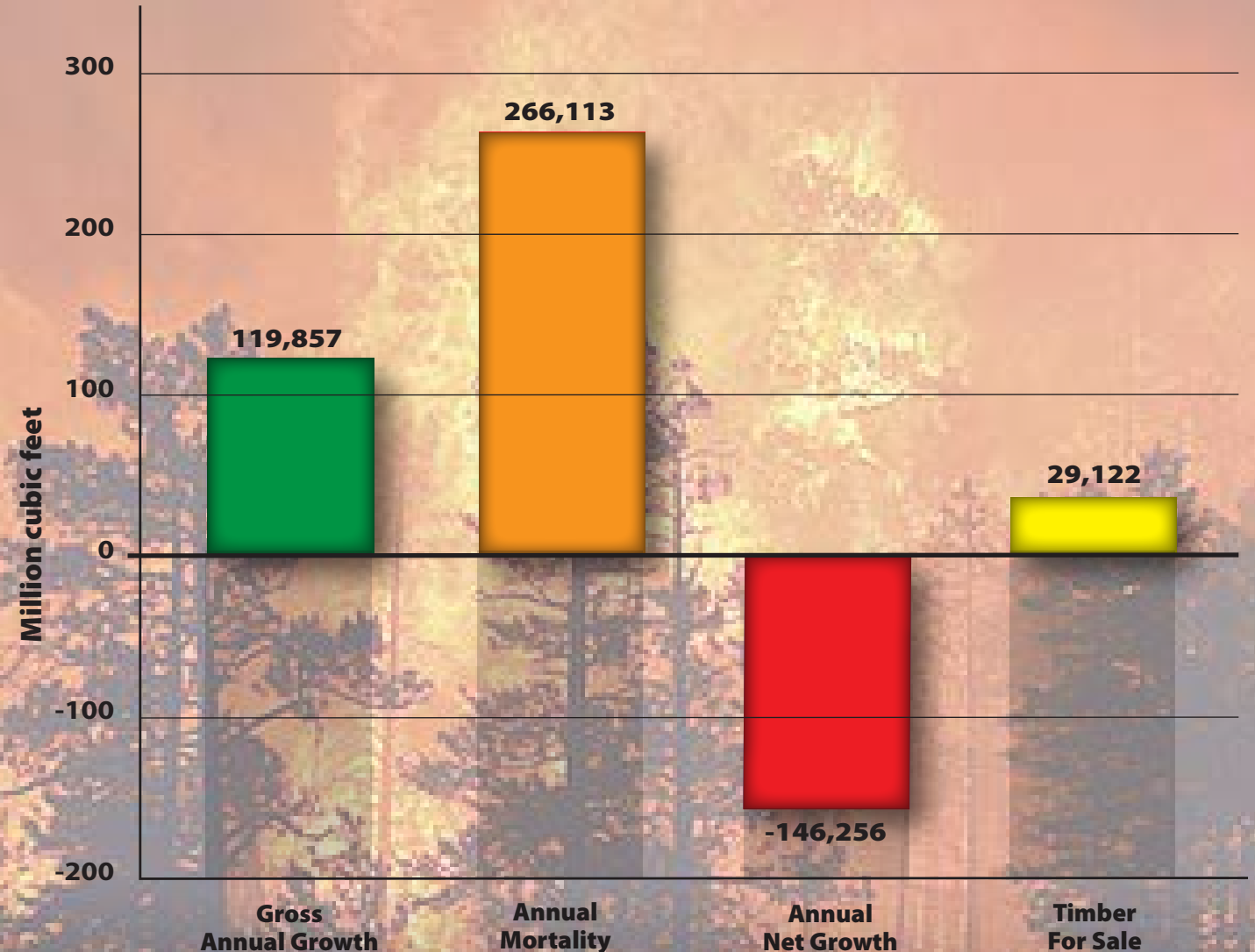
Mr. Laverty lives in Denver and is a former Director of Colorado State Parks, former Assistant Secretary of the Interior and a former Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region, based in Lakewood, Colorado. He is on the short list of candidates the Trump Administration is considering for Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. To learn more about his views concerning management and conservation of the country's national forests Google www.evergreenmagazine.com and read the Evergreen Foundation's recent interview with Mr. Laverty.

Jim Petersen, Founder and President, the Evergreen Foundation

Area of Beaver Creek fire 2016



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Testimony of Lyle Laverty
 Past Chair, Colorado/Wyoming Section
 Society of American Foresters

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Before the Joint House Agriculture,
Livestock, and Natural Resource
Committee and Senate Agriculture,
Natural Resources, and Energy
Committee On Annual Forest Health
Survey Report March 8, 2017

Chairwoman Arndt and Chairman
Sonnenberg and members of the Joint
Ag Committee. Thank you for the
opportunity to share some perspec-
tives on Colorado's Forest Health
Conditions and the challenges we
face. For the record, I am Lyle
Laverty, immediate past chair of the
Colorado Wyoming/Section of the
Society of American Foresters. The
Society of American Foresters (SAF),
with approximately 12,000 profession-
als working across all segments of the
forestry profession, promotes
science-based sustainable manage-
ment and stewardship of the nation's
public and private forests.

I have had the honor of serving as
Assistant Secretary of the Interior,
Associate Deputy Chief of the US
Forest Service responsible for the
implementation of the National Fire
Plan, Director of Colorado State Parks
and Regional Forester for the Rocky
Mountain Region. I am a Society of
American Foresters Certified Forester
and a member of the Association of
Consulting Foresters. I was recently
appointed by Senate President
Grantham to serve on the Forest
Health Advisory Council. It's an
honor for me to be here today.

I have assembled some of Colorado's
forest inventory data in a perspective
that may help visualize the magnitude
of the forest health situation in
Colorado. Our forest's conditions are

not good. In fact, our conditions are
terrible. The most recent update of
forest inventory data for Colorado's
National Forest System lands shows
recent mortality is more than twice
the annual growth, over 266 million
cubic feet. Simply stated, we are losing
more than we are growing. If we
stacked this material on the field of



Bronco's stadium, this mortality
would equal a block of wood covering
the field, rising approximately 5,500
feet into the Denver's skyline. To help
put this in another perspective, this
pile of wood would be nearly eight
times the height of the Republic Plaza
building. If we add mortality from
Colorado's private land forest's, the
pile stretches to 1.25 miles high!

Due to beetle mortality, there is
approximately 6.7 billion cubic feet of
standing dead timber on Colorado's
National Forests. What does this
mean? This volume would provide
the timber resources to construct over
1.2 million single family homes! For a
variety of reasons, insect infestations
have killed over a billion trees in
Colorado! California has captured
media attention with their 67 million
dead trees. Fires such as the nearly
40,000-acre Beaver Creek Fire on the
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests

this summer are inevitable. Suppres-
sion costs alone for the Beaver Creek
fire to American tax payers are
estimated to be \$38 million.

Colorado's forests are treasures and
provide a broad range of values and
benefits, including clean air and
water, forest products, wildlife habitat
and premier settings for outdoor
recreation. Managing forests is about
managing change. Forests, like all
other ecosystems, are constantly
changing. Sustaining the health,
resilience and productivity of Colora-
do's forests is critically important to
maintaining these values and benefits.

Colorado's Forests at Risk

An extended drought cycle, combined
with unnatural stocking levels created
stress levels generating severe moun-
tain pine beetle and spruce bark
beetle outbreaks. Decades of success-
ful fire suppression and other factors
have led to unnatural fuel accumula-
tions. Wildfire potential has increased
dramatically with large fires of higher
intensity fueled by excessive woody
material.

People love to live in the "wilderness"
and have moved increasingly to
wildfire prone areas of Colorado.
These new settler's dream homes
become one of Colorado's worst fire
protection problem in the wild-
land-urban interface. A mixture of
flammable vegetation and homes
makes the interface a "design for
disaster." When wildfires occur
firefighters often have to sacrifice
natural resources to save people and
homes.

Active management of Colorado's
forests can create a diversity of
species, age and size classes, enhanc-
ing the ecological integrity and
productivity of our forests. Dan

Casey, President of the Colorado
Timber Industry Association, pointed
out, the importance of managing
these young stands. stands that
provide essential habitat for Colora-
do's wildlife. I believe it is imperative
that we implement prescriptions in
the Southern Rockies Lynx Amend-
ment for pre-commercial thinning of
young lodgepole stands to ensure the
resiliency and diversity of this import-
ant habitat.

Decision we make today will have
profound implications on the health
and resilience of our forests in the
future. Choosing to passively manage
has consequences we need to carefully
consider. Wrong choices today will
lead to unacceptable outcomes for
future generations, your grandchil-
dren and mine. The impacts of
inactive management on our forests
are real. Big fires like Hayman, Waldo
Canyon and Buffalo Creek will
happen again unless we actively
address the wildland fire fuel picture.
Protecting our watershed is among
one of the most important matters
concerning forest health. Watersheds
destroyed, valuable timber resources
consumed, habitat lost, shortened
lives of reservoirs by siltation all have
value and must be considered in our
collective decision process. Part of
the decision process should be to
consider the cost of management
inaction to actively manage our forest
to reduce the unusual risk of insects
and wildfire.

The Budget Challenge

You have heard this before. Wildfire
funding. I want to personally thank
you for encouraging the Congress to
quickly adjust the present approach to
wildfire budgeting. The current
approach cripples the agency's ability
to actively manage our National

Forests. Funding constraints to cover
ever increasing suppression costs is
the greatest impediment to active
management of our National Forest
System lands.

Each time the agency transfers money
out of non-fire accounts to pay for fire
suppression there are significant and

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lasting impacts. When funds are
transferred, these programs such as
timber management, recreation, trail
and road maintenance, wildlife and
hazardous fuel mitigation projects are
not implemented. Additionally, these
transfers adversely impact local
businesses and economies, costing
people jobs and income. Thanks again
for your support.

Summary

Colorado's forests are in poor health.
With active management, these lands
can be returned to good health.
Active management of Colorado's
forest resources will improve the
resiliency of these lands, reduce
effects of wildfire, create jobs and
improve community economies
throughout Colorado.

There needs to be active management
of Colorado's forests, using all the
tools in the toolbox such as expedited

NEPA and Good Neighbor Authority.
We need strong state government
support to help move our forest lands
to a more desirable condition, a
condition of health and resilience.

We need to think creatively to estab-
lish and support markets for our
timber resources. Wood competes,
unfairly, with other energy sources,
sources highly subsidized by you and
me. A bold action to show state
support for Colorado wood utiliza-
tion would be for you to require all
new building or other projects funded
with state funds to use Colorado
forest products if they are available.
The time is right to rebuild the forest
products industry in Colorado with
an infrastructure essential to main-
taining healthy forests and water-
sheds. The current atmosphere in the
federal government is encouraging
the reestablishment of basic industries
with high paying family wage jobs.
It is time to take advantage of that
opportunity.

Your leadership to create an invest-
ment environment in Colorado where
market forces can properly function
will significantly help address our
forest health conditions and revitalize
Colorado's rural communities. We
absolutely need a viable forest prod-
ucts industry in Colorado to assist in
addressing our current and future
forest conditions. Actively and
sustainably managing Colorado's
forest resources will create healthy
forests, healthy watersheds and
healthy communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity
to share these perspectives with you.
I would be pleased to answer any
questions you might have for me.