

**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Raul Grijalva**  
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**  
***Locally Grown: Creating Rural Jobs With America's Public Lands***  
**July 15, 2010**

**The Subcommittee will now come to order. Thank you.**

**There are some old misconceptions about federal lands in the west and the agencies which manage them. Some assert that our public lands are job killers, and that federal land managers want to seize private land, halt industries and harm rural economies. These accusations are wrong, and they undermine western communities by framing their struggles as a choice between economic development and conservation. That is a false choice which ignores the many communities that are successfully doing both.**

**The witnesses we have before us today have a different perspective – one that isn't so black and white, and one that stands in sharp contrast to this rhetoric. And given that these folks actually live in the west, we would be well served to listen.**

**Their response to the challenges in their western towns is not to pick a fight and lay blame, but rather to promote solutions. Their approach is not to tear things down, but rather to build consensus -- and even collaborate with old adversaries. And their goal is to apply the principle that the long-term health of the public land and the well being of our rural communities are linked.**

**We will hear today from public land managers and county commissioners, ranchers and environmentalists, small business owners**

**and educators. And they will tell us about the ways that they are working together to chart a new path to prosperity...using our public lands.**

**I know this has not been an easy road at times -- especially in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. But for those communities that were dependent on just one commodity for their development, this evolution is critical.**

**We look forward to hearing your stories today – but we also need to learn from them. So, I also invite the witnesses to share with us the challenges and obstacles you have faced in implementing your projects. I want to hear your frustrations, but, more importantly, I want your input on how we can better support your efforts.**

**Whether during a round up, battling a wildfire, or confronting a flood, rural communities are well-suited to team-work – and they have always persevered. Today as they forge novel partnerships -- to create sustainable jobs, revive communities, and restore our unique western landscape -- they are writing a new, and promising, chapter in the rich history of the American west.**

**I want to thank all the witnesses for traveling so far today, in what I know is a busy time of year, to join us here in this humidity! I understand that Mrs. Troy, who is on our third panel, left a Salmon River rafting trip early to come testify. Now, that IS sacrifice! So, thank you.**

**I look forward to hearing from you all today. And I now turn to the Ranking Member, Mr. Bishop, for any opening comments he may have.**