



# Roundwood News

December 2019

## IRA reaches 30-year milestone serving members

By Eric Wareham, IRA Executive Director

2019 marks 30 years since the Intermountain Roundwood Association was established. That is an impressive milestone to reach for any organization – one that should be celebrated by its members.

The IRA was founded on common concerns facing the roundwood industry and the need for speaking with a single voice in pursuing public policy outcomes that benefit its members. In three decades, the IRA has built up a tremendous amount of institutional knowledge and experience over the course of its existence that make the association as relevant and important today as the day it first started.

As the new Executive Director of the IRA, my mission is to focus the efforts of the association to continue down the path first charted by its founding members. My background and experience, I think, make me uniquely suited to do that.

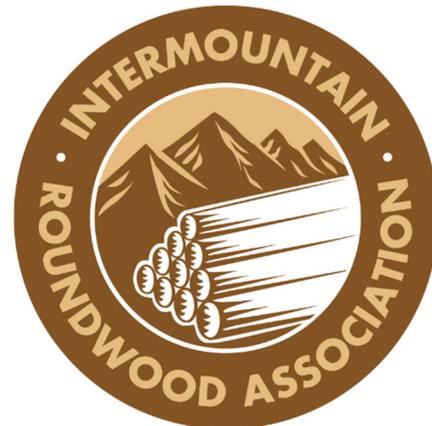
Many of you already know me from my previous experience as director of government affairs and general counsel for the Western Wood Preservers Institute. For those that don't, a little background.

I come from a fourth generation logging family in Oregon. Before and during law school, I held several posts in the Oregon legislature, ending my experience there in the office of the co-speaker of the House of Representatives.

I've also ran several statewide and national campaigns. My last campaign stint was running Ryan Zinke's congressional campaign in Montana. Now, I represent several industries in a government affairs and legal capacity and call central Montana home.

My heart still belongs in the woods and I enjoy the ability to stay connected to the industry by my involvement with the IRA. The mission of the association hasn't changed. I'm here to bring focus back to the motivation that got this association off the ground and lend some horsepower to it.

As a member driven association, I can't do that without the input and support of you. With your help, enthusiasm and dedication, we can chart a path for the IRA to be even more relevant and important to your successors and mine in another 30 years!



*Three decades of service*  
**1989 - 2019**

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## **Western roundwood study results released**

*By Dallin Brooks, WWPI*

The results are in for the first roundwood industry survey in nearly two decades.

Western Wood Preservers Institute and the Intermountain Roundwood Association jointly agreed to conduct a survey of roundwood manufacturers based on the last formal survey from 2002.

In addition, to better understand raw material supply for roundwood manufacturers, a survey of logging contractors in the western U.S. also was conducted. The survey was funded, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Forest Service. Industry consultant The Beck Group was retained to carry out the survey and summarize the results.

Roundwood (post and pole) manufacturers are a key market for small diameter materials harvested from private and public lands in the West. Additionally, roundwood products are frequently treated with preservatives to enhance their utility when placed into service.

Several conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the survey results:

- The roundwood industry is highly dependent on supply from publicly owned and managed lands. The industry should continue to work with land managers to assure continued programs for supplying adequate volumes of raw material.
- It appears the focus on precommercial thinning or fire mitigation of public lands is not resulting in volumes or sizes sufficient for roundwood posts and poles, even though demand for the material exists at prices considerably higher than allowed by most other small-diameter utilization technologies.
- Logging contractors are willing and able to supply roundwood manufacturers with raw material, but they are constrained by limited volumes of appropriate material from the bids they win.
- As the relatively even product size mix demonstrates (between 20% to 30%), roundwood manufacturers can consume any sizes between 2 to 7+ inches in diameter.
- Raw material shortages are the biggest constraint to roundwood manufacturers and loggers, The U.S. Forest Service, state forests and private land owners need to consider further means to help loggers bid underutilized small diameter roundwood or precommercial thinning for post and pole markets.
- An estimated 20% yield loss when converting raw roundwood logs into posts and poles provides an opportunity for chips, firewood, mulch and other by-products sales to be generated.

- Less than 50% of logging firms reported they had sold material to post and pole manufacturers within the last year. Clearly more education needs to be done with loggers about the post and pole market.
- Loggers reported sizes consistent with the roundwood manufacturers with 3” to 8” sizes. Anything larger than 8” is considered a saw log and has a higher value. However, these sizes are also desirable for pulpwood, biomass and other devalued products.
- Loggers and roundwood manufacturers both stated the average haul distance was around 65 miles. Thus, distance plays a small role in determining if posts and poles are going to be part of a bid for a stand and it shows the significance of relationships between roundwood manufacturers and nearby loggers.
- The average delivered price to post and pole markets was \$61 per green ton, ranging between a low of \$50/green ton and a high of \$72/green ton. These values are significantly higher than published pulpwood prices, which typically range between the low \$30s and \$40s per green ton, per RISI Log Lines and industry log price reporting services for the western U.S.