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== ANNOUNCEMENTS =====

Colorado Event Kicks off Planting of 60,000 Trees

In a two-day Colorado event that mixed "Living Classrooms" with Wildfire ReLeaf efforts, AMERICAN FORESTS joined with school children, vegetarian cuisine leaders, and an organic market chain to plant trees for a greater cause.

During tree-planting ceremonies at Carlos M. Cole Middle School in Denver, and Shepard Waldorf Elementary School near Boulder, Natural Touch® Veggie Foods and Wild Oats Markets announced a special partnership that will help and restore forest to fire-ravaged Colorado. Natural Touch and Wild Oats' donation to AMERICAN FORESTS will assist with local reforestation efforts after this year's record-breaking wildfire season and will plant Living Classrooms at the two participating schools. The donation will fund the planting of 60,000 trees around Denver and Boulder during the next two years. Proceeds raised from consumer purchases of Natural Touch® products at participating Wild Oats Markets during September 6-12 helped to fund the donation to AMERICAN FORESTS' the tree planting.

Linda Freybler, director of marketing for Natural Touch® said, "We strongly stand behind initiatives that support the health of our consumers and restore our nation's natural resources. We're honored to have partnered with Wild Oats Markets to make this donation possible."

AMERICAN FORESTS' Wildfire ReLeaf campaign is an ecosystem restoration and tree planting initiative designed to plant millions of trees in environmentally sensitive areas scorched by recent wildfires. AMERICAN FOREST plants native trees in areas that might otherwise take years to regenerate, such as along stream banks that provide critical fish and wildlife habitat and slopes threatened by erosion. Previous contributions by Natural Touch® helped AMERICAN FORESTS plant 20,000 trees nationwide during the past two years.

Jim Hubbard, Colorado state forester and Ralph Campbell, Colorado state urban forester, talked with students about wildfires and the importance of forest restoration. After each presentation, students planted on their school grounds AMERICAN FORESTS' Living Classroom. The program provides schools with trees directly descended from ones historic people, place, or events. Lesson plans connect the trees to history, environmental education, science, geography, mathematics and the arts.

Jennifer Barton, Cole Middle School's assistant principal, said she felt honored to plant the trees on their schoolyard. "We're all very excited," she said.

Land Use and Deforestation Rivals Greenhouse Gases in Changing Climate

According to an article in ENS-News, changes in land use may rival greenhouse gases in their contributions to global warming. That from a new international study that details the effects of urban sprawl, deforestation, and agricultural practices on regional surface temperatures, rainfall patterns, and atmospheric circulation. The report argues that these land surface changes may have more impact on climate than greenhouse gas emissions.

Most climate change studies have focused on how heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂), released by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are warming the global climate. However, other human activities which cause changes in land surfaces and vegetation may be even more important, say the authors of a recent study.

In the article, Roger Pielke, an atmospheric scientist at Colorado State University, said, "Our work suggests that the impacts of human caused land cover changes on climate are at least as important, and quite possibly more important than those of carbon dioxide. Through land cover changes over the last 300 years, we may have already altered the climate more than would occur associated with the radioactive effect of a doubling of carbon dioxide."

Deforestation - and reforestation - alter the amount of sunlight the land absorbs and the amount of moisture it releases.

Pielke and his colleagues noted that if CO₂ emissions continue at current rates, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations are expected to double by 2050. At the same time, land surface uses will continue to change.

Forests may influence the climate in more complicated ways than previously thought, the authors found. For example, in regions with heavy snowfall, reforestation or the growth of new forests would cause the land to reflect less sunlight, meaning that more heat would be absorbed. This could result in a net warming effect, even though the new trees would remove CO2 from the atmosphere through photosynthesis during the growing season.

Reforestation could increase the rate also transpiration in a particular area, putting more water vapor in the air. Water vapor in the troposphere, the lowest densest part of the earth's atmosphere, is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas warming, the researchers said.

As our cities expand and our population moves to increasingly urbanized areas, AMERICAN FORESTS recognizes the ecological value of urban trees as an important conservation issue. Though it is inherently understood that trees improve our environment, until recently it was difficult to quantify these effects. AMERICAN FORESTS has synthesized decades of proven research with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing technologies to accurately measure the value of urban trees.

AMERICAN FORESTS has conducted Urban Ecosystem Analyses in nearly 20 cities around the country documenting the loss of tree cover in our cities. These analyses report the value of trees not only in terms of their ecological benefits, but also in a language that decision makers understand—dollars.

If you're interested in learning more about deforestation and it's effects on CO2 emissions, and global warming, visit us at www.americanforests.org

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Group Convenes to Create the First Urban Forestry "Week-in-Washington"

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Three days may seem like a short time when trying to build a contingency on national urban forest policy. For urban forestry practitioners, however, it was a chance to collaborate, learn about the federal process, and work on budgeting skills.

From October 19-21, AMERICAN FORESTS held its first Urban Forests "Week-in-Washington." The program, developed with the Alliance for Community Trees (ACT) and funded by The National Tree Trust, brought together 20 urban forestry practitioners from around the country to encourage more active involvement in national policy issues.

Speakers from a variety of national groups engaged in forest policy issues, including: Kathy DeCoster, lobbyist for Trust for Public Land; Alice Ewen-Walker, executive director of the National Alliance for Community Trees; and, Anne Heissenbuttel, executive director of the National Association of State Foresters. In addition, Congressional staff speakers included Chris Topik of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and Tim Aiken of Congressman Jim Moran's (VA) office.

Federal representatives from agencies such as the Forest Service, HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) spoke about innovative programs and

resources for urban and community forestry work. Key programs included brownfields remediation, community development block grants, a heat island initiative, and smart growth.

After receiving this policy training, urban forestry participants were encouraged to schedule meetings with members and staff of the Congressional delegations from their home states. To help prepare for these meetings, the participants received some excellent advice from Joe Wilson, Executive Director of Greening Milwaukee, Alice-Ewen Walker of ACT, and Gerry Gray of AMERICAN FORESTS, on how to present their concerns to their Congressional delegates. They also identified three common points to address:

1. The impact on urban forestry groups and projects of "borrowing" done this year by the USDA Forest Service to pay for emergency wildfire suppression. Also, the need to repay these funds so that groups and commitments to projects can move forward, and the need to create a better mechanism for funding emergency wildfire suppression in the future.
2. To request \$50 million for the USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program in the FY 2004 federal budget, and to focus the increased program funding on local capacity building and cost share grants.
3. To request \$6 million for urban forestry research in USDA Forest Service's Research budget for FY 2004.

This event was patterned after the Community Forestry "Week-in-Washington," which AMERICAN FORESTS has cosponsored for the last five years.

A Game of Sudden Death

University of California researchers recently reported that two of the state's most valued trees--coast redwood and Douglas-fir-- are susceptible to sudden oak death.

In the summer issue of the magazine, AMERICAN FORESTS reported to you that scientists were trying to isolate living cultures of *Phytophthora arborum*, the fungus responsible for sudden oak death, from the branches and needles of coast redwood. Their fears were confirmed, and the tree was added to a growing list of species threatened by the deadly disease.

In addition to the redwood, Douglas-fir saplings have also shown symptoms of infection. According to The Forestry Source newspaper, the extent to which the disease will affect California's coast redwood and Douglas-fir--two trees vital to the state's forest industry--remains to be seen. However, within days of discovering the Douglas-fir connection to the disease, state officials said both species would be a focus of state and federal regulations aimed at preventing the spread of the disease.

Last April the federal government enacted a quarantine that bans the shipping of soil and plants from more than a dozen host species outside

the infected countries. State regulations prohibit plants, plant parts, unprocessed wood, and wood products from being moved within or from infested counties without the authorization of the local County Agricultural Commissioner.

On receiving news that redwoods and Douglas-fir are susceptible to the disease, California Governor Gray Davis (D) sent a letter to President Bush on September 4 requesting \$10 million to help fight the spread of the disease. In the letter Davis wrote, "The implications of this disease are enormous, including a major change in the environment and landscape of California, severe economic dislocation, and an increase in fire danger."

While the identification of redwoods and Douglas-fir as hosts for the disease is likely to have a negative effect on the state's forest products industry, industry officials have tried to take these recent discoveries in stride. The California Forest Products Commission said it believes the impact can be kept to a minimum as long as "rational and reasonable measures are put in place."

== WHAT'S HAPPENING =====

*Drought Shrivels Virginia Apple Crop

According to the November 3 Washington Post, this year's apple harvest was disappointing to most farmers on the East Coast. On the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Front Royal, Virginia, Bill Van Deusen's commercial apple orchard and his regular workforce of migrant pickers have been replaced by a pervasive silence.

Wooden crates meant to haul apples to a local cannery are neatly stacked, and the inspection machines sit idle in a dark room.

Van Deusen, whose grandfather first planted trees in 1922, did not produce nearly enough apples this year to warrant the energy or the capital to brig his 250-acre orchard into full operation. This is a theme among apple growers in Virginia as this year's mild winter, frosty spring and--despite recent, welcome rain--persistent drought yielded Virginia's worst fall apple harvest in 20 years.

"In normal years, this place would be rocking and rolling. But this is depressing," said Van Deusen, 51, in the article. His Harmony Hollow orchard produced 20,000 bushels this year--down from 75,000 1st year. "It's at least a double whammy, and for some orchards, it's a killer shot. It could be death. I'm at a point right now if somebody makes me an offer to sell out, I'm likely to listen right now."

The apple trees growing in the limestone-rich Shenandoah Valley of Virginia are known for their quality and quantity, but this year, farmers harvested 7 million bushels compared to the usual 10 million bushels of recent years.

Last year's warm winter also played a part in the low apple count. In order to mature fully, Apple trees depend on cool temperatures that keep apple buds from sprouting too early. The cocoon-like cases keep the blossoms at bay and need 2,000 "chilling hours" at 30 degrees or lower.

Apple growers on the East Coast, like Bill Van Deusen, are holding out high hope for a very cold, wet winter to bring next year's apple harvest up to par. Only time will tell.

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- A free Big Trees calendar
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* "Voters Approve Environmental, Animal Protections"
<http://ens-news.com/ens/nov2002/2002-11-06-07.asp>

* "Scientists warn of environmental danger of wildfires"
http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/11/11072002/reu_48895.asp

* "Bio-prospectors seek treasure in Australia forests"
http://www.enn.com/news/wire-stories/2002/11/11082002/reu_48903.asp

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