

FOREST COMMUNITY NEWS: THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

No. 13

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FROM THE EDITORS

Extra! Extra! Get it while its hot!

Hot is right! The heat wave that affected people all over the nation did not skimp on Washington, DC. As the weather has made us sweat, so too have all the goings-on around town. July is a busy month as Congress gears up to go on their month long August recess.

And while we know most of you are likely busy taking advantage of the warm summer months to get work done outside, we hope you have time to take a few minutes with this latest FCN. Stay cool...

FROM CAPITOL HILL

FARM BILL

On July 24, the Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations were suspended after a stalemate was reached, citing farm trade issues as the most controversial problem.

Arguments ensued over the U.S.'s refusal to reduce its domestic farms subsidies. WTO director general Pascal Lamy declared a "suspension" in the Doha round Monday, and negotiators have set no timetable for future talks. These actions have caused many to regard Monday's collapse as perpetually closing the door on the Doha negotiations. For more information, please visit <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/24/AR2006072400277.html?nav=emailpage>

Sign up for American Forests' Farm Bill Updates Listserve by emailing Laura Schweitzer at LSchweitzer@amfor.org

Upcoming Farm Bill Hearings

On August 11, 2006, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization will visit Moscow, ID to hold a field hearing on the next Farm Bill. For more information, please visit

<http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2042>.

On August 15, 2006, the Senate Committee on Agriculture will visit Redmond, OR to hold a field hearing on the next Farm Bill. For more information, please visit

<http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2043>.

On August 16, 2006, the Senate Committee on Agriculture will visit Grand Island, NE to hold a field hearing on the next Farm Bill. For more information, please visit

<http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2044>.

On August 17, 2006, the Senate Committee on Agriculture will visit Great Falls, MT to hold a field hearing on the next Farm Bill. For more information, please visit <http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2045>.

On August 28, 2006, the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture will visit Springfield, MO to hold a public field hearing to review federal farm policy. For more information, please visit <http://agriculture.house.gov/hearings/schedule.html>.

July Farm Bill Hearings Overview

On July 17, the House Agriculture Committee held a field hearing reviewing the federal farm policy in Chairman Bob Goodlatte's district in Staunton, Virginia. In his opening statement, Chairman Goodlatte remarked how "From corn and grains to vineyards and orchards to livestock and specialty crops to forestry products, the Sixth district has a diverse and dynamic agricultural portfolio." One of the ten witnesses included Mr. Tom Sheets, a hardwood lumber producer from Fishersville, VA.

Senate field hearings on federal farm policy were also held July 17th in Cape Girardeau, MO, July 21 in Harrisburg, PA, and July 24th in Ankeny, IA by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Another field hearing was held by the House Agriculture Committee on July 22 in Marshall, Minnesota. There was an emphasis on renewable energy and the role Minnesota producers play in alternative energy production.

The House Agriculture Committee headed to Scottsburg, Indiana for a field hearing on July 25. Witnesses represented farm, food, and forestry producers from Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan. One such witness was Mr. Randy Koetter, a forest owner and hardwood lumber producer from Starlight, IN.

On July 27 in Washington, D.C., Chairman Frank Lucas of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation, Credit and Rural Development held a hearing to review conservation programs. Subcommittee Ranking Minority Member Tim Holden stated "The current farm bill was the largest investment in conservation in the history of recent farm bills." Witnesses included, but were not limited to, the Honorable Mark E. Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA and Mr. Bill Wilson, President of the National Association of Conservation Districts. Chairman Lucas expressed the need to review current conservation programs before developing new ones for the upcoming Farm Bill.

The House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management held a field hearing on July 31 in Wall, South Dakota to review risk management and commodity programs in regards to the Farm Bill reauthorization. Hearing discussions covered issues such as payment limitations and conservation programs.

Also on July 31, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Livestock and Horticulture convened in Sioux Center, Iowa for a field hearing to hear input on future farm policy. Iowa is a leader in conservation programs, including landscape buffers to reduce soil erosion and protect water quality.

HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests held an oversight hearing on July 19 regarding the implementation of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). Witnesses included the Honorable Nina Rose Hatfield, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior; U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth; Mr. Rick DeIaco, Director of Forestry, Village of Ruidoso; Mr. Matthew Koehler, Executive Director, WildWest Institute; the Honorable Colleen Macleod, Commissioner, Union County, Oregon; and Mr. Jay Jensen, Executive Director, Council of Western State Foresters. There was concern expressed by some senators that the agencies were not utilizing the provisions under HFRA to the best of their abilities, and questions of accountability arose. For more information on the hearing, visit the subcommittee's website at http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1574

MOUNT HOOD STEWARDSHIP LEGACY ACT

On July 24, the House passed HR 5025, the Mount Hood Stewardship Legacy Act, which would designate 77,000 acres of federal land around Mount Hood, OR as wilderness area. The bill would also protect 23 miles of river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, while also instating a new plan for the management of Mount Hood's natural resources. The next move will be on the Senate side, where senators are creating their own wilderness bill. But with the August recess, it is very possible this bill will die at the end of the year. For more information on this bill, please visit http://www.sandypost.com/news/story.php?story_id=115387830578725400 or to view the bill, please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

NORTHWEST FOREST PLAN

The USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have resumed their efforts to replace the Northwest Forest Plan's survey-and-manage provision, which requires that the federal agencies closely monitor non-endangered and threatened species in old-growth forests. In an effort to replace the provision, the Forest Service and BLM have released a new draft environmental impact statement that is meant to address the concerns of a federal judge who blocked the agencies' similar efforts last year. A 90-day public comment period on the document began July 7th and will run through October 5th. To view the survey-and-manage documents, visit www.reo.gov/s-m2006/index.htm.

EMS and NEPA

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has developed a guide to assist federal agencies in aligning their Environmental Management Systems (EMS) with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). CEQ is inviting comments on the guide. Comments should be submitted **on or before September 1st**. To get more information or to read a draft version of the guide, visit www.nepa.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm. To read the notice in the Federal Register, visit <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/06-6251.pdf>.

ROADS

The USDA Forest Service is launching a “Backcountry Recreation Roads Pilot Program” aimed at encouraging the public to take “pleasure drives” along scenic national forest roads. Nationwide, there are about 25,000 miles of unpaved but passable Forest Service roads that lead to a variety of natural amenities – like waterfalls, wilderness trailheads and lakes -- and the Forest Service wants to encourage the public to explore them. To support this program, the agency is hoping to tap into federal highway funding; currently, that money can only be used for public roads outside of federal lands. According to the Forest Service, one of the most popular forms of recreation on the national forest is driving for pleasure through these areas, and the demand for back-roads driving opportunities is on the rise. The pilot program is still in the early stages and no national forest routes have been designated yet; however, a number of national forests in Northern California will be involved, including the Shasta-Trinity and the Modoc. For more information, see *Land Letter* (7/27/06, subscription required) at www.landletter.com.

FARM AND RANCH LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

On July 28th, Agriculture Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey announced the release of an amended interim final rule for the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) with a request for public comment. Public comments on the rule will be accepted for 60 days from the date the rule appears in the Federal Register. The FRPP helps landowners protect their land by providing matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranch land in agricultural uses. For fiscal year 2006, nearly \$70 million in FRPP funding is available. For more information on the FRPP and other conservation programs, contact your local NRCS office, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov. The amended FRPP interim final rule can be viewed at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp.

POST-HURRICANE FORESTRY COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE

Sign-up for the \$504.1 million Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program (EFCRP) officially started on July 17th. This program is aimed at helping landowners and operators restore and enhance forestland damaged by the hurricanes that occurred in 2005. To be eligible for the EFCRP, in general, a producer must have experienced at least a 35% loss to merchantable timber on private non-industrial forestland. The loss must relate directly to one of the calendar year 2005 hurricanes, and must have occurred in one of 261 counties

receiving presidential or secretarial primary disaster designations caused by 2005 hurricanes Dennis, Katrina, Ophelia, Rita or Wilma. A complete list of eligible counties in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas is available online at: www.fsa.usda.gov. Local Farm Service Agency offices will accept land enrollment offers from producers from July 17th through October 20th. EFCRP participants will receive 50 percent cost-share assistance.

USDA has also made available \$250 million for crop disaster, livestock, tree and aquaculture assistance. These funds are being distributed through five new programs: the Tree Indemnity Program (TIP), the Hurricane Indemnity Program (HIP), the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Feed Indemnity Program (FIP); and an Aquaculture Block Grant program. More information on the EFCRP is available at local FSA offices and online at: www.fsa.usda.gov.

Additional information on USDA hurricane assistance is available at: www.usda.gov/HurricaneInfo.xml.

RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

On July 13th, Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner announced the availability of more than \$6.2 million in grant funds through the Rural Community Development Initiative Program (RCDI). This program supports the efforts of qualified intermediary organizations to develop their capacity to undertake housing, community facilities, and community and economic development projects in rural areas. Qualified organizations can be public or private (including tribal) organizations that have been legally organized for at least three years and have experience working with eligible recipients. Applications must be received by Rural Development within 90 days of the Federal Register publication date.

Complete information about the program is available in the July 12th, 2006 edition of the Federal Register or by going to www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/rcdi/. Information is also available from any USDA Rural Development state office.

ROADLESS RULE

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger petitioned the federal government on July 12 to prohibit roads on 4.4 million acres of national forestland in California. The only exception would be roads to aid in the thinning and removal of trees to prevent future fires. California is one of five states to petition the government to preserve their roadless areas. Other states include Virginia, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina. For more information, please visit <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/13831310/> or <http://www.protectingourevironment.com/>

OTHER NEWS

COLLABORATION

Representatives from the USDA Forest Service and partner organizations joined together for a week of training, collaboration and networking at the 3rd Annual Forest Service National Partnership Meeting, June 5th – 9th. Associate Chief Sally Collins addressed the group as well as a panel of leaders in the partnership arena. Partnership networking

and collaboration/partnership training were at the heart of the event. Panels at the session included presenters from both the Forest Service and partner organizations who shared their expertise and gave voice to the need for greater collaboration in public land management. For more information, visit the Partnership Resource Center website at: www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/. *Excerpted from the USDA Forest Service Southwestern Regional Collaboration Newsletter (July 2006).*

GREEN BUILDING & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In July 2006, ground was broken on a demonstration home in Aitkin County, MN as part of Dovetail Partners' eco-affordable housing initiative. The house features in-floor radiant heating, local FSC-certified wood, locally manufactured prefabricated panels, and various other green building practices, while remaining affordable for someone in the local community to purchase.

This creation was born out of the idea that while green building is rapidly gaining momentum in urban centers, rural communities often get left behind. By connecting local wood products companies with the green building movement through this project, both rural economic development and environmental sustainability were addressed.

There will be two open house events at the house in September. Other upcoming projects are being planned for Greenbush, MN and Warren, MN.

For more information, contact Dovetail Partners at 651-762-4007, info@dovetailinc.org, or www.dovetailinc.org/AitkinPR0706.html.

FAMILY FOREST CERTIFICATION

In order to learn more about the diverse and sizable group of family forest landowners and whether or not they might adopt forest management certification on their lands, researchers with University of Tennessee Extension sent a survey to 1,050 landowners in three counties in western Tennessee. Landowners with 40 or more acres of forestland were targeted for the study, and the response rate was 51%.

Survey results revealed the following about the average family forest landowner: he/she is 61 years old; he/she has owned the land for 21 years; and he/she owns 217 acres of forestland. Regarding occupations, 42% are retired, 23% are professional, and 20% own their own business. The top three reasons for owning forestland (chosen from a list 14 options and then ranked) were: (1) to pass on to children or other heirs; (2) to enjoy scenery; and (3) to supply food and habitat for wildlife.

One-half of the landowners indicated that they had received forestry advice or information in the past, but only 3% have familiarity with forest certification. Even so, when given a definition of forest certification, 81% said they would consider it.

For more information, visit www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/spfiles/SP673.pdf.

OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for Funding Opportunities? The Partnership Resource Center website has listings for potential funding sources. Partnerships provide expanded opportunities for obtaining grants: funders often require or prefer projects involving partnerships, and funding is easier to leverage with more partners involved. Funding databases, National Forest Foundation grants, the grant calendar and resources for improving your grant writing skills are available at: www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/funding/.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, & OTHER EVENTS

Who Will Own the Forest? 3, September 11-13, 2006, Portland, OR. Forestry companies are selling their timberland throughout the United States and the world in response to increasing pressure for shareholder return, competition in the global market place and consolidation in the industry. Such changes have huge ramifications for the forest products industry, forest-dependent communities, and the forests themselves. Exploring these issues has become a regular event at the World Forestry Center in Portland, Oregon, where the “Who Will Own the Forest?” Summit series runs every other year. Forest industry analysts, timber investment organizations, forestry leaders, land management communities and conservation groups are invited to attend. To get more information or to register online, visit <http://wfi.worldforestry.org/wwotf3/>.

Advancing Renewable Energy: An American Rural Renaissance, October 10-12, 2006, St. Louis, Missouri. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will co-host this national renewable energy conference at the America’s Center. This event will specifically focus on biomass, wind and solar research and commercialization. Attendance is open to the public. Anyone involved with, or interested in, renewable energy is encouraged to attend, including transportation, large- and small-scale farming, finance and investment officials, as well as academia, and federal, state, government and elected officials. All attendees must register for the conference, including press, who may attend without charge. For more information and to register for the conference, visit: www.AdvancingRenewableEnergy.com.

Fall Sustainable Forestry Collaborative, December 1-2, 2006, Ashland, WI. This event is a chance for woodland owners, members and leaders of woodland owner organizations, and others interested to share information, resources, and experiences. Topics to be discussed include: reports from forestry cooperatives and associations on activities, successes, and challenges; income generating opportunities for both woodland owner organizations and woodland owners; invasive species; land trusts; chain of custody certification; insurance and safety issues; and more. To find out more about this event or to receive registration information as it become available, contact EG Nadeau at egnadeau@inxpress.net.

Forest Stand Dynamics, October 8-13, 2006, New Haven, CT and February 4-9, 2007, Eatonville, WA. Weeklong, intensive course for forestry professionals, taught by Chad Oliver, Ph.D. and Bruce Larson, Ph.D. An in-depth examination of how forest stands grow, from individual tree architecture and growth, to how stands respond to disturbances and

silvicultural manipulations. Presented by the Yale Global Institute of Sustainable Forestry. SAF continuing forestry credit. For more information, contact Barbara Ruth at (203) 432-5117 or barbara.ruth@yale.edu or visit www.yale.edu/gisf

RESOURCES

The following is a list of items—Web sites, books, reports, etc.—that have come across our desks over the past month and that we thought you might find useful or interesting. Have a look!

REPORTS

A study published in the journal *Scienceexpress* documents recent changes in forest fire activity in the western United States. The study, titled **“Warming and Earlier Spring Increases Western U.S. Forest Wildfire Activity,”** analyzes the possibility that new climate patterns may be driving regional changes in wildfire. To read the study visit, www.forestrycenter.org/library.cfm?refID=88462.

A study recently published in the journal *Policy Sciences* study compares the working conditions of Hispanic and white contract forest workers using three measures of job quality: health insurance, job duration, and opportunity for workers to work close to home. The study, titled **“Ethnic Differences in Job Quality among Contract Forest Workers on Six National Forests,”** found that, overall, Hispanic workers do more difficult jobs and receive fewer health benefits than non-Hispanic white workers. To download a copy of the study, visit www.forestrycenter.org/library.cfm?refid=88516.

The Intertribal Timber Council and Resource Innovations at the University of Oregon announce the release of the Tribal Wildfire Resource Guide; an important resource for tribes and agencies engaged in wildfire planning and management across the United States. The Tribal Wildfire Resource Guide provides tribes with a wealth of information on community fire planning, fire, forest, and natural resource policy, opportunities for economic development through fire management, and extensive grant information related to wildfire and forest management, business development, capacity building, and environmental and natural resource management. The Guide also provides information to help public forestry and land management agencies better understand the role of consultation with tribes and the opportunities for cross-jurisdictional planning, as well as gain a greater understanding of tribal affairs, culture, and traditions. Case studies are also highlighted throughout the Guide to serve as current examples of wildfire-related activities in Indian country. The Guide was officially released at the June 2006 ITC Symposium in Fairbanks, Alaska and is available on an interactive CD or in hard-copy form. To view a copy of the guide online, please visit <http://ri.uoregon.edu/programs/CCE/tribalwildfireguide.html> or <http://www.itcnet.org> . To request a CD or a hard copy, email kathy@uoregon.edu or call 541-346-0687.

WEB RESOURCES

The USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station has created a series of web pages that contain information on **financial incentive programs for non-industrial private forest**

owners. Visitors to the site can search for programs by state, or view listings of federal, state or private programs nationwide. Timber tax fact sheets are also provided for each state. Visit the Web site at www.srs.fs.usda.gov/econ/data/forestincentives/.

USDA Forest Service botanists and other specialists around the country have contributed to the editing, content, construction, and maintenance of this website titled **Celebrating Wildflowers**. The site is dedicated to the enjoyment of the thousands of wildflowers growing on our national forests and grasslands, and to educating the public about the many values of native plants. Visit the Web site at www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/.

The National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region, offers numerous community forestry-related documents available for free downloading. Check it out at www.ncfcnfr.net

NEWSLETTERS/UPDATES

Family Woodlands Bulletin. The Family Woodlands Bulletin is a communications link being coordinated through the support of Cooperative Development Services and Rapid Improvement Associates. This project has participants from across the country working in a variety of disciplines all centered on advancing sustainable forestry practices among private woodland owners. For more information on the project visit: www.rapid-improvement.com/wingspread. To subscribe to future bulletins, email familywoodlands@cdsus.coop.

To sign up for American Forests' '**Policy News and Updates**' or '**Farm Bill Listserve**', please e-mail Laura Schweitzer at lschweitzer@amfor.org.

To sign up for The Pinchot Institute's quarterly publication, ***The Pinchot Letter***, send an email request to subscribe@pinchot.org. The document is available both electronically and in hard-copy format.

BOOKS

Foundations of Restoration Ecology. This book aims to advance the science behind the practice of restoring ecosystems while exploring ways in which restoration ecology can inform basic ecological questions. It provides the first comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations of restoration ecology, and is a must-have volume for anyone involved in restoration research, teaching, or practice. Visit www.islandpress.org/books/detail.html/SKU/1-59726-017-7.

CONTACT INFORMATION

To subscribe (or unsubscribe) to *Forest Community News: The National Perspective*, please email **Laura Schweitzer** at **American Forests** (lschweitzer@amfor.org).

Questions and suggestions should be emailed to Laura Schweitzer and/or Naureen Rana at the Pinchot Institute (nrana@pinchot.org).

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