

## **FOREST COMMUNITY NEWS: THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

**No. 16**

**2006 Year in Review**

### **FROM THE EDITORS**

A new year has begun. We thought that in honor of bringing on the new, we would bring you our very first "FCN, Year in Review." The following edition provides an overview of the major Capital Hill and Agency news from 2006 affecting community-based forestry. Starting in February, we'll get back to our monthly format, but in the meantime, we hope you find this edition useful and informative.

### **FROM CAPITAL HILL**

#### **APPROPRIATIONS**

September 29, 2006 – December 8, 2006: The 109<sup>th</sup> Congress passed only two of the eleven appropriations bills for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 (Defense and Homeland Security). The fiscal year runs October 1 thru September 30 each year, so when appropriations bills are not completed by that September 30 date, alternative means of funding the government must be decided upon. In this case, funding for the nine uncompleted appropriations bills for FY 2007 has been provided by three continuing resolutions (PL 109-289, PL 109-369, PL 109-383). The Continuing Resolutions provide funding that is determined by using the lowest of three figures - the House-passed FY 2007 level, the Senate-passed FY 2007, or the FY 2006 levels. The final Continuing Resolution is set to expire on February 15, 2007, at which time the Congress must have passed appropriations bills for FY 2007, passed an additional Continuing Resolution, or allow the government to shut down.

On December 11, 2006, the incoming Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rep. David Obey (D-WI) announced that they planned to adopt a continuing resolution for the remainder of (FY) 2007 to address the 9 (of 11 total) unfinished FY 2007 appropriations bills once the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes in January. The Congressmen did not specify what adjustments they plan to make to the funding formula that has governed the three continuing resolutions already enacted by the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. For more information, please visit [http://www.house.gov/appropriations\\_democrats/](http://www.house.gov/appropriations_democrats/) and <http://www.thomas.gov/home/approp/app07.html>.

#### **BUDGET**

##### **2006 Budget**

The House and Senate adopted significantly different budget resolutions for FY 2007 and did not try to reconcile the two measures. Instead, each chamber separately set a limit of \$872.8 billion on non-emergency FY 2007 discretionary spending, which allowed the

House and Senate to proceed with the appropriations process. This was the fourth time since 1974 and the third time in five years that the two chambers of Congress did not reach an agreement on the budget.

The annual budget resolution, required under the 1974 Budget Act (PL 93-344), is an internal document meant to provide Congress with a framework for the year's actions on taxes and spending. One of the main purposes of a budget resolution is to set a binding limit on discretionary spending for the year. Without a new discretionary spending limit, Congress would have been required to operate under the previous year's budget resolution, which had a tighter cap than either chamber sought.

March 16, 2006: The Senate approved a FY 2007 budget resolution (S Con Res 83). For more information, please visit <http://budget.senate.gov/>

May 18, 2006: The House approved a FY 2007 Budget Resolution (H Con Res 376, H Rept 109-402). For more information, please visit <http://budget.house.gov/>

## **2007 Budget**

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing on February 15, 2007 to review the Administration's FY 2007 Budget request and discuss its FY 2007 budget report to the Senate Budget Committee. For more information, please visit [http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1523](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1523)

## **FARM BILL**

Every 5 years or so Congress takes a comprehensive look at agriculture policy in the U.S. The process results in an omnibus piece of legislation, known as the Farm Bill, consisting of a collection of laws that set the overall direction of U.S. agriculture policy for various periods of time. Its purpose is to provide a plentiful, safe and affordable supply of food and fiber. Each farm bill is composed of titles that address a specific area of agriculture. In the 2002 Farm Bill there were ten titles dealing with such topics as Trade, Conservation, Commodity Programs, Rural Development, Forestry, and Energy among others. It is expected that the next Farm Bill will be completed in 2007.

## **Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act**

Representative Kind (D-WI) introduced the Healthy Farms, Foods, and Fuels Act on September 13, 2006. The bill has 43 cosponsors (28 Democrats, 15 Republicans). The bill would reauthorize certain Farm Bill conservation and energy programs and modify the operation and administration of these programs. The bill contains several Forestry related provisions, proposing the creation of the Suburban and Community Forestry and Open Space Program, changes to the Healthy Forests Reserve Program, and additional funding for the Promotion of Forest Stewardship Practices under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. It was referred to the House Agriculture Committee and the

House Education and the Workforce Committee. For the text of the legislation, please visit <http://www.govtrack.us/data/us/bills.text/109/h/h6064.pdf>.

### **Rural Energy for America Act**

Senator Harkin, a Democrat from Iowa, introduced the Rural Energy for America Act (S 3890) on September 12, 2006. The bill has 4 cosponsors (2 Democrats, 2 Republicans). The bill would reauthorize and amend the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program authorized through the Energy Title of the 2002 Farm Bill to provide production incentives, feasibility studies and a rebate program for renewable energy production. It was referred to the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee. For the text of the legislation, please visit <http://www.govtrack.us/data/us/bills.text/109/s/s3890.pdf>.

### **FIRE**

February 24, 2006: The House Resources Committee, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee held a field hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006 to review research related to recovering forests after catastrophic events. The research at the center of debate came out in a report published in *Science* by researchers at Oregon State University. The research indicated that allowing trees to naturally regenerate works about as well or better than logging and replanting, and that undisturbed areas may be at lower fire risk in the future. For more information, please visit

<http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/ffh/022406.htm> and <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ncs/newsarch/2006/Jan06/regeneration.htm>

To view the study, please visit: <http://www.sciencemag.org> (fee/subscription required)

May 17, 2006: The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (HR 4200) was passed in the house by a vote of 243 – 182. This legislation is intended to accelerate salvage logging and cleanup of federal lands affected by wildfires, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. A complementary bill, called the Forests for Future Generations Act (S 2079) was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Smith (R-OR) in December of 2005, however the legislation did not get passed committee. To view either bill, please visit <http://www.thomas.gov/>. For more information about legislation related to post-fire recovery, please visit <http://www.safnet.org>.

June 21, 2006: The Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests, held a hearing to review the Government Accountability Office report entitled “Wildland Fire Suppression – Lack of Clear Guidance Raises Concerns about Cost Sharing between Federal and Nonfederal Entities” For more information, please visit

[http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1567](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1567)

To read the report, please visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06896t.pdf>

August 2, 2006: The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Subcommittee on Forestry, Conservation and Rural Revitalization held hearings on the

Forests Emergency Recovery and Research Act (HR 4200). For more information, please visit <http://agriculture.senate.gov/Hearings/hearings.cfm?hearingId=2037>

December 8, 2006: The final session of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress ended without passage of the Forest Emergency Research and Recovery Act (HR 4200). Supporters of the legislation stated that they planned to reintroduce the legislation in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. For more information, visit: [http://www.examiner.com/a-438467~Salvage\\_logging\\_bill\\_dead\\_for\\_year.html](http://www.examiner.com/a-438467~Salvage_logging_bill_dead_for_year.html)

## **HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT**

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee held an oversight hearing on July 19, 2006 regarding the implementation of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. This hearing followed a hearing held June 29 by the House Resources Committee, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee, also on the implementation of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (PL 108-148) as well as more broadly on the Healthy Forests Initiative within the Department of Agriculture. For more information, please visit

<http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/ffh/062906.htm> and [http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1574](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1574)

## **LAND CONSERVATION**

August 17, 2006: Congress included language in the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PL 109-280) that raises the tax deduction landowners can take from donating conservation easements from 30% to 50% of their annual income, with a provision for a 100% deduction for farmers and ranchers who make more than half their annual income from agriculture. Additionally, the length of time a taxpayer can claim these deductions has been extended from 6 to 16 years. These changes are in effect through December 31, 2007. These increased deductions have vastly increased the benefits to landowners of donating conservation easements, and conservation groups and land trusts are predicting a significant increase in donated easements.

For more in-depth analysis of the legislation, please visit

<http://www.cclt.org/downloads/Commentary%20on%20Pension%20Protection%20Act%20-%20August%2017%202006.pdf>

To view the legislation, please visit [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ280.109.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ280.109.pdf)

September 26, 2006: The House passed the Open Space and Farm Land Conservation Act (HR 5313). The Bill would reserve a small percentage of the amounts made available to the Secretary of Agriculture for the farmland protection program to fund challenge grants to encourage the purchase of conservation easements and other interests in land to be held by a State agency, county, or other eligible entity. However, the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress ended without passage of a corresponding bill in the Senate. To view the legislation, please visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

July 31, 2006: A House Resources Committee task force is urging Congress to pass legislation that would limit the time needed to complete environmental studies and curbing litigation in projects covered by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The task force's report, finalized in August, contains 20 recommendations for Congress to consider as a basis for revising the 36-year old statute. Among other things, the report recommends establishing an 18-month mandatory timeline for an environmental impact statement and nine months for an environmental assessment. Many Western Republicans and industry representatives complain the studies take too long, leaving stakeholders in limbo for years as federal agencies attempt to make their projects "bulletproof" from litigation. To address the litigation issue head-on, the report recommends adding a "policy position" to Title I of NEPA "recognizing the role of litigation as an enforcement tool, but pointing out that it should only be used in limited cases." Litigants would also have to demonstrate an agency made a final decision without using best available information an science, parties must have been "involved throughout the process" to have legal standing to sue, and all challenges must be filed within 180 days. (Excerpted from Greenwire)

## **WOODY BIOMASS UTILIZATION**

February 8, 2006: The House Resources Committee Subcommittees on Forests and Forest Health and Energy and Mineral Resources held a joint oversight hearing on the effects of high energy costs on jobs and the potential for expanded use of biomass for energy. Rob Davis of the Forest Energy Corporation in Show Low, AZ testified about his experience with issues related to the utilization of forest biomass for energy production. For opening statements and witness testimonies, please visit <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/ffh/020806.htm>

April 27, 2006: The House Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health held a hearing on a report entitled "Woody Biomass Users' Experience Provide Insights for Ongoing Government Efforts to promote its Use," which was released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) the same day. Community-based forestry partners including Wade Mosby of the Collins Company and Ryan Temple of Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership testified about their experiences with woody biomass utilization. For opening statements and witness testimonies, please visit <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/ffh/042706.htm>  
To view the GAO report, please visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06694t.pdf>

June 29, 2006: The House Agriculture Committee held a full committee meeting to discuss agriculture and its role in the renewable fuels market, specifically how agricultural commodities can contribute to the nation's energy supply. Witnesses included Mr. John Burke, III, president of the Virginia Forestry Association, who testified on the role of forest resources as renewable fuels. For more information, please visit <http://agriculture.house.gov/hearings/109/10934.pdf>

September 21, 2006: The House Agriculture Committee held a hearing in which the Committee formally endorsed an initiative called 25x'25. The 25x'25 initiative is pushing for twenty-five percent of energy in the United States to come from renewable sources by the year 2025. For more information, please visit <http://www.25x25.org>.

September 29, 2006: The House approved the Alternative Energy Research and Development Act (HR 6203). In addition to authorizing new research into biofuels, hybrid-vehicle technology, solar energy and wind power, the bill would direct the Department of Energy to continue alternative-energy projects authorized by last year's Energy Policy Act (HR 6 — PL 109-58) The bill also directs the National Academy of Sciences to further study and refine its recommendation to create an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy, or ARPA-E. For more information, please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

### **SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY-SELF DETERMINATION ACT**

December 8, 2006: The final session of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress ended without reauthorization or funding for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act (PL 106-393). Several proposals were floated through the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, including a tax-cut package and several public land sales, however none of them made it through Congress. For more information, please visit <http://www.statesmanjournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061208/STATE/612080329/1042>

### **WATERSHED RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENT ACT**

December 7, 2006: The Senate passed The Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Agreement Act (S 2003). The legislation, also known as the 'Wyden Amendment,' would make permanent a law that allows the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to enter into cooperative agreements with states, tribes, local governments and private and nonprofit groups for watershed protection, restoration and enhancement projects. The bill was not addressed in the House however, so will have to be reintroduced in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress in order to eventually become law. To view the legislation, please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

## **FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

### **AGENCY LEADERSHIP**

#### **Department of Interior**

On March 10, 2006, Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced her resignation, effective at the end of March. Her role as Secretary of the Interior gave Norton oversight authority over national parks, federal lands, and the Indian Tribes. Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett

served as Acting Interior Secretary from March 31, 2006 – May 26, 2006. On May 26, 2006, Dirk Kempthorne was confirmed as the 49th Secretary of the Interior in a voice vote by the Senate, and subsequently took the oath of office. Prior to his confirmation as Secretary, Kempthorne served nearly two terms as Governor of Idaho, elected first in 1998 and reelected in 2002. For more information, please visit <http://www.doi.gov/news.html>

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

On August 23rd, Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced that Arlen Lancaster, a former Republican Hill staffer, will take over the management of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which oversees most of the Farm Bill conservation programs. For more information, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2006/08/0313.xml>

### **BUDGET**

February 6, 2006: The administration submitted its FY 2007 budget request to Congress. The administration proposed \$4.096 billion in funding to the USDA Forest Service and \$1.76 billion to the Bureau of Land Management. The proposed Forest Service budget also includes increases in funding for wildfire suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, and implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan. Among the programs marked for decreases in funding are Forest Inventory and Analysis, Forest Health Management, State Fire Assistance, Forest Stewardship, and Urban and Community Forestry. To view the administrations budget request, please visit <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/>

### **FARM BILL**

March 29, 2006: The USDA released its Farm Bill Forum comment summaries. These summaries reflect the comments gathered through the 52 Farm Bill Forums held by the USDA across the country in 2005 to gather public opinion on the 2007 Farm Bill. For more information, please visit [http://www.usda.gov/documents/Farm\\_Bill\\_Comments\\_Summary.htm](http://www.usda.gov/documents/Farm_Bill_Comments_Summary.htm)

May 8, 2006 – September 13, 2006: The USDA released 5 theme papers providing information on and analysis of Farm Bill issues. The theme papers topics are Risk Management, Conservation and Environment, Rural Development, Energy and Agriculture, and Strengthening the Foundation for Future Growth in US Agriculture. For more information please visit <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/ s.7 0 A/7 0 1UH?navid=FARM BILL ANALYSIS>

## **FIRE**

November 29, 2006: The USDA Inspector General released an audit stating that the Forest Service should allow more wildfires to burn and demand that state and local governments pay a larger share of firefighting costs to offset the costs associated with fighting fires near development in the Wildland-urban interface. For more information, please visit <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2006/11/29/national/a181238S51.DTL>

To view the audit, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/08601-44-SF.pdf>

## **FOREST SERVICE**

The Forest service is in the midst of consolidating its human resources, financial management and information technology function in Albuquerque, NM in an effort that began in FY 2005 and will be completed by September 2007. The forest service has already eliminated nearly 1,000 positions and estimates that another 200-250 will be eliminated by September 2007. It is estimated that the consolidation will result in cost-savings of \$100 million a year. For more information, please visit <http://federaltimes.com/index.php?S=2329561>

The USDA Forest Service is conducting competitive sourcing studies for two-thirds of its workforce, including fire, aviation, law enforcement, and research positions, according to a draft agency memo. Under the draft proposal, the agency would conduct feasibility studies on 21,350 full-time positions during FY's 2005-2009 to decide whether to put those positions up for competitive bidding with the private sector. For more information on the proposal, please visit [http://www.peer.org/docs/fs/06\\_27\\_2\\_outsourcing\\_plan.pdf](http://www.peer.org/docs/fs/06_27_2_outsourcing_plan.pdf)

September 22, 2006: The USDA Forest Service announced the creation of the Northern Research Station in Newtown Square, PA, combining the Northeastern and North Central Research Stations. Michael Rains, previously director of the Northeastern and acting director of the North Central Stations, will serve as the new station's director. For more information, visit [www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/09/northern-research.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/09/northern-research.shtml)

## **HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE**

September 2006: The USDA Office of Inspector General released a report containing results from an audit of the implementation of the Healthy Forests Initiative. According to the report, the Forest Service lacks analytical tools to assess risk to communities and the cost benefit of conducting hazardous fuels projects and lacks national guidance to prioritize fuels treatments. The report also offers several recommendations for addressing these issues. To read the report, please visit <http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/08601-6-AT.pdf>

## **NATIVE AMERICAN LANDS**

An agreement has been reached between the federal government and representatives of four American Indian tribes concerning access and use of Forest Service land in the Huron-Manistee and Hiawatha National Forests. The agreement deals with activities such as logging, cutting firewood, taking plants for medicinal or ceremonial uses, and collecting maple sap, ginseng and conifer boughs. The agreement recognizes the tribes' authority to regulate activities by their members but promises their rules will closely resemble those of the Forest Service. For more information, please visit <http://www.wlns.com/global/story.asp?s=5610334&ClientType=Printable>.

## **NATIONAL URBAN and COMMUNITY FORESTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL (NUCFAC)**

July 5, 2006: The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the selection of six members to USDA's National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC). There are four new members, and two are reappointed. The four new members are Carl Nordstrom, executive director, New Jersey Nursery & Landscape Association, Lawrenceville, NJ; Dan Lambe, vice president, programs, National Arbor Day Foundation, Lincoln, NE; Stephen Shurtz, landscape and forestry manager, Baton Rouge, LA; and James Kielbaso, professor emeritus, urban forestry, Okemos, MI. Two members have been reappointed to serve a second term: Brenda M. Allen, associate professor and extension specialist, Auburn University, Tuskegee, AL; and Joseph Wilson, executive director, Greening Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI. Mr. Wilson was re-appointed the Chair of NUCFAC. More information on NUCFAC is available at <http://www.treelink.org/nucfac/> and <http://www.fs.fed.us/ucf/>.

## **WOODY BIOMASS UTILIZATION**

August 7, 2006: The Department of Energy (DOE) announced the availability of \$2 billion in loan guarantees for energy projects aimed at reducing or avoiding air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The loan guarantees are a product of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The first round of loans that will be offered represents a "learning opportunity" to build expertise while DOE develops permanent regulations to govern the program. A DOE spokesman told reporters the loans are meant to bring "novel concepts, novel technologies to market." For instance, he said DOE would seek to fund "cellulosic" ethanol projects, as opposed to traditional corn-based ethanol projects. For more information, please visit [http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news\\_detail.cfm/news\\_id=10183](http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news_detail.cfm/news_id=10183).

On August 9, 2006: Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and Department of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman announced the appointment of twelve members to serve on the Biomass Research and Development Technical Advisory Committee for a term of three years to assist the Departments of Energy and Agriculture in meeting national goals of a healthier rural economy and improved national energy security. For

more information, please visit

[http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news\\_detail.cfm/news\\_id=10190](http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news_detail.cfm/news_id=10190).

October 11, 2006: Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns and Energy Secretary Samuel announced \$17.5 million in funding from the USDA and DOE to fund a series of biomass research, development and demonstration projects. The following day, an additional \$4 million in grants from the USDA and DOE for biomass genomics research, focusing on lignocellulosic materials, was announced. For the transcript of Secretary Johanns remarks, please visit

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1RD?printable=true&contentidonly=true&contentid=2006/10/0410.xml>

For information on the \$17.5 Million Grant Announcement, please visit

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB/cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/.c/6.2.1UH/ce/7.2.5JM/p/5.2.4TQ/d/0/th/J.2.9D/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?PC.7.2.5JM\\_contentid=2006%2F10%2F0405.xml#7.2.5JM](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB/cmd/ad/.ar/sa.retrievecontent/.c/6.2.1UH/ce/7.2.5JM/p/5.2.4TQ/d/0/th/J.2.9D/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?PC.7.2.5JM_contentid=2006%2F10%2F0405.xml#7.2.5JM)

For information on the \$4 Million Grant Announcement, please visit

<http://www.energy.gov/news/4355.htm>

For more information on biomass energy, please visit

<http://www.energy.gov/energysources/bioenergy.htm> and

[http://www1.eere.energy.gov/biomass/electrical\\_power.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/biomass/electrical_power.html)

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

January 2006: 3.75 million acres of forestland belonging to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and 4.80 million acres of forestland belonging to the Minnesota department of natural resources received Forest Stewardship Council certification in January. The addition of these lands increased the total area of forestland under FSC certification in the United States to 22 million acres.

For more information, please visit <http://www.fscus.org/news/index.php?article=432>

### **LAND CONSERVATION**

March 28-29 2006: On March 28<sup>th</sup>, International Paper, The Nature Conservancy, and The Conservation Fund reached an agreement to protect 218,000 acres of forestlands across 10 states in the single largest private land conservation sale in the history of the South. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, International Paper reached an agreement with the Nature Conservancy for the sale of 69,000 acres of Wisconsin forestland. For more information, please visit <http://investor.internationalpaper.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=73062&p=irol-news>

### **ROADLESS AREAS**

September 20, 2006: US District Court Judge Elizabeth Laporte ruled that the Bush Administration failed to consider environmental and species impacts when it issued its May 2005 Roadless Area policy. The ruling reinstated Roadless Area protections

implemented under the Clinton Administration on 49.2 million acres (of the original 58.5 million acres protected under the original 2001 Roadless rule) of Forest Service land. The September 20<sup>th</sup> ruling did not reinstate protection of land exempted under the Tongass Exemption of 2003. For more information, please visit

<http://www.earthjustice.org/news/press/006/court-reinstates-roadless-rule.html>

To view the court ruling, please visit

[http://www.ourforests.org/documents/roadless\\_rule\\_decision.pdf](http://www.ourforests.org/documents/roadless_rule_decision.pdf)

October 18, 2006: USDA Undersecretary Mark Rey spoke at a meeting of the Roadless Area Conservation National Advisory Committee, stating that "We'll be telling the courts, whichever courts that we're appearing before, that we think the 2005 rules are a better approach and we need to either defend it or remedy the flaws that (U.S. District Court Magistrate) Judge (Elizabeth) Laporte found in it," and that the group should continue its work advising the department on state petitions for Roadless areas. For more information, please visit

<http://www.casperstartribune.net/articles/2006/10/21/news/wyoming/de6d72359bc7d6478725720b008170b5.txt>

November 29, 2006: Judge Elizabeth Laporte, in connection with her September ruling, issued an injunction dealing with a variety of Roadless Rule issues. The injunction prevented the development of oil and gas leases issued since 2001 that would violate the Roadless Rule. For more information, please visit

[http://www.earthjustice.org/library/background/timeline\\_of\\_the\\_roadless\\_rule.html](http://www.earthjustice.org/library/background/timeline_of_the_roadless_rule.html)

To view the court ruling, please visit

[http://www.ourforests.org/documents/Laporte\\_injunction\\_final\\_ruling.pdf](http://www.ourforests.org/documents/Laporte_injunction_final_ruling.pdf)

## **SOFTWOOD LUMBER AGREEMENT**

July 1, 2006: U.S. and Canadian trade representatives announced that the U.S. and Canada have agreed to the text of a softwood lumber agreement. The agreement ends all standing litigation over softwood lumber, establishes terms for export charges and volume limits, and returns \$4 billion in collected duties to Canada, with \$1 billion remaining in the United States to be distributed to a newly created U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Habit for Humanity, and the American Forest Foundation.

For more information, please visit

[http://canada.usembassy.gov/content/textonly.asp?section=can\\_usa&subsection1=trade&document=trade\\_softwoodlumber\\_070106](http://canada.usembassy.gov/content/textonly.asp?section=can_usa&subsection1=trade&document=trade_softwoodlumber_070106)

## **UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS**

February 24, 2006: The sixth session of the United Nations forum on forests drew to a close after two weeks of negotiations. The member states agreed on several global objectives for the future of international forest policy, and renewed the forum's mandate until 2015. For more information on the UNFF, please visit

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

To read a UNFF press release on the results of the session, please visit [http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session\\_documents/unff6/newsrelease-endofsession.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/pdf/session_documents/unff6/newsrelease-endofsession.pdf)

## **WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION NEGOTIATIONS**

Background Information: The Doha Development Agenda, A World Trade Organization (WTO) mandate agreed upon in 2001, provides the mandate for international trade negotiations among WTO member nations for a wide range of subjects, including agriculture. These negotiations deal extensively with agriculture subsidy payments, and could have significant impact on the 2007 Farm Bill, with the potential to extensively influence funding for conservation programs.

July 24, 2006: The Doha talks collapsed over international disagreements on trade issues including agricultural subsidies, tariffs on agricultural products, and barriers to manufactured goods. For more information, please visit [http://www.forbes.com/business/2006/07/24/doha-wto-talks-collapse-cx\\_jh\\_0724doha.html](http://www.forbes.com/business/2006/07/24/doha-wto-talks-collapse-cx_jh_0724doha.html)

November 2006: Six US congressmen met with WTO director Pascal Lamy, Secretary Johanns traveled to India and trade officials spoke of busy behind the scenes diplomatic work, all indicating a potential rejuvenation of the stalled Doha trade negotiations. For more information, please visit [http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/11/29/business/EU\\_FIN\\_ECO\\_WTO\\_US\\_Congress.php](http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/11/29/business/EU_FIN_ECO_WTO_US_Congress.php) and <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr111806b.html>

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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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