

FOREST COMMUNITY NEWS: THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

No. 19

May 7, 2007

FROM THE EDITORS

Things have been a little busy around here lately and in a crunch, we decided to combine the news from March and April into a single issue.

You may notice that in this month's issue that we changed how we reference web sites, replacing full web addresses with short descriptions containing hyperlinks. If you have any comments or are having any trouble with the changes please drop us a line, contact information is located at the end of the issue.

FROM CAPITAL HILL

FY 2007 EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL

March 23, 2007: The House voted 218-212 in favor of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act, 2007 (HR 1591). The House bill contained:

- \$500 million to repay fire suppression cost overruns - \$400 million for the Forest Service and \$100 million for the Department of Interior (For more information see FIRE SUPPRESSION further along in this FCN).
- \$400 million to fund the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393) for one additional year (In addition to \$100 million currently available from timber receipts).

March 29, 2007: Following passage in the House, the bill was sent to the Senate where several amendments were made. The Senate voted 51-47 in favor of the Emergency Supplemental (also referred to as HR 1591). The Senate bill contained:

- \$500 million to repay fire suppression cost overruns.
- \$1.9 billion to fully fund the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program for 2008 through 2012
- \$2.8 billion to fund the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393) for 5 additional years through 2011 (In addition to \$100 million currently available from timber receipts).

Under the Senate Proposal, funding for County Payments would be reduced from a total of \$525 million in FY 2007 to \$379 million in 2011, the last year of the current funding authorization. However, Senate Finance Committee Chair Max Baucus said that although payments would be gradually phased down to "a very sustainable level" the program would be reauthorized in another five years.

April 24-26, 2007: Following House and Senate passage of the Emergency Supplemental, the two met in conference to work out the differences between their two

bills and create a single piece of legislation (which must then be voted upon by both the House and Senate). The Conferees agreed to legislation and published their conference report on April 24th. The agreed upon language contained:

- \$500 million to repay fire suppression cost overruns. \$400 million for the Forest Service and \$100 million for the Department of Interior.
- \$425 million to fund the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-393) for one additional year (In addition to \$100 million currently available from timber receipts).

The amendments added to the Senate bill extending the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act and increasing funding for Payments in Lieu of Taxes were not included in the final version of the bill agreed to in conference.

The House passed the Emergency Supplemental by a vote of 218-208 on April 25th, with the Senate following on April 26th, passing the bill by a vote of 51-46.

May 1-2, 2007: On May 1st, the President vetoed the Emergency Supplemental in opposition to language contained in the bill setting timetables for troop withdrawal from Iraq. The House failed on May 2nd to override the veto by a vote of 222-203, far short of the two-thirds majority required. The President and Congressional leaders are currently working to develop a compromise bill to provide the emergency appropriations.

Resources:

- Initial [House War Supplemental](#) ([Roll Call](#))
- Initial [Senate War Supplemental](#) ([Roll Call](#))
- Post-Conference [War Supplemental](#) passed by both the House and Senate
 - Pre-Veto: [House Roll Call](#) [Senate Roll Call](#)
 - Post-Veto: [House Roll Call](#)
- [The Washington Post](#), Johnathan Weisman and Shailagh Murray, May 3, 2007

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Budget Tracker
- CQ Green Sheets

BUDGET

March 23, 2007: The Senate passed their FY 2008 budget by a vote of 52-47. Only two Republicans broke ranks in supporting the plan, Maine Republicans Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins.

March 29, 2007: The House passed their FY 2008 by a vote of 216-210. No Republicans voted for the Democratic budget, while 12 Democrats voted against the measure, a combination of conservative Democrats uneasy over language presuming the non-renewal of the Bush tax cuts and anti-war members who opposed the continued war funding assumed by the budget.

With the House and Senate budgets passed, the two sides will conference to work out the differences between the two bills. House budget Chairman John Spratt (D-South Carolina) has said he wants to have a budget conference completed by the beginning of May so appropriators can be given their discretionary allocation and begin moving fiscal 2008 spending bills.

Resources:

- [House Budget](#)
- [Senate Budget](#)
- [The Washington Post](#), Lori Montgomery, March 24, 2007

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Budget Tracker

CLIMATE CHANGE

March 19, 2007: Democrats on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee released their initial findings in their investigation into allegations that the Bush Administration doctored scientific evidence on climate change, reporting that the White House made several hundred changes to play up uncertainty of a human role in global warming or play down evidence of such a role.

Additionally, on March 27th, the Government Accountability Project, a government accountability and whistleblower protection group, released a comprehensive report detailing the findings of a year-long investigation into political interference at federal climate science agencies.

Resources:

- [Government Accountability Project Press Release](#), March 27, 2007
- [The New York Times](#), Andrew C. Revkin and Matthew L. Wald, March 20, 2007

March 20, 2007: Representative Henry Waxman (D-California) introduced the Safe Climate Act (HR 1590) which has 131 cosponsors as of this publication. The bill would impose a cap on carbon dioxide emissions.

Resources:

- [Safe Climate Act](#)

March 21, 2007: Al Gore testified before two Congressional panels on climate change. Gore offered a list of recommendations for addressing climate change, supporting his case for the suggested actions with over 500,000 messages from citizens asking for “real action on climate change,” along with the promise that he’ll “be out there” generating support for lawmakers to “do the right thing.”

Resources:

- [The Washington Post](#), David A. Fahrenthold, March 22, 2007

March 27, 2007: Following a roundtable discussion where European Union officials reported to US Senators on the details of the European Union Emission Trading Scheme, Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-New Mexico), Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, announced that he hopes to introduce legislation soon that would slow the growth of emissions by setting caps on and reducing them.

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Green Sheets

COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

April 25, 2007: The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee has approved and sent to the Senate the Coastal Estuarine Land Protection Act (S 1142). The measure would direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to award grants to states to purchase ecologically sensitive land near coastal areas and estuaries. Supporters say the bill would help restore habitat for sea life, maintain water quality, provide nesting for coastal birds and make it easier to implement flood-control measures.

The bill would authorize \$60 million annually from fiscal 2008-12, and the federal government would be responsible for providing 75 percent of the total cost of each state grant

Resources:

- [Coastal Estuarine Land Protection Act](#) (Search S 1142)

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Today

ENERGY

April 29, 2007: The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is set to mark up an original bill drawing on text from pending legislation including S 987 on biofuels and transportation, S 1115 on energy efficiency, and S 731 and S 962 on Carbon Capture and Storage.

The Measure is expected to be a major part of an energy package expected to go to the Senate floor before Memorial Day.

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Green Sheets

FARM BILL

March 15, 2007: Representative Ron Kind (D-WI) introduced the Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act of 2007 (HR 1551). The bill has 86 cosponsors as of this publication. The

bill is essentially what is known as a marker bill, meaning that it is not really intended to be passed as an independent piece of legislation, but rather that it serves as a means to advance discussion and demonstrate support for legislation, with the eventual goal (in this case) of having the legislation or its concepts incorporated into the Farm Bill.

In addition to providing increased funding for conservation programs and biofuels, Rep. Kind's bill contains several forestry specific proposals, some of the highlights include:

- Establishment of a Community Forests and Open Space Program that would provide \$50 million annually for 2008-2013 to assist local governments and/or nonprofit organizations in acquiring land for conservation purposes.
- Modification of the Healthy Forests Reserve Program to replace the option of "an easement of not more than 99 years" with an option for "a permanent easement." The options for a 10-year cost-share agreement and a 30-year easement would remain unchanged.
- Creation of a provision within the Conservation Reserve Program to allow for contracts for land "devoted to the restoration of rare and declining forest ecosystems,"
- Creation of a provision within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program for the "Promotion of Forest Stewardship Practices" providing cost-share and incentive payments increasing from \$25 million in 2008 to \$100 million in 2013.

Resources:

- [Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act of 2007](#)

FIRE SUPPRESSION

In FY 2006, the Forest Service spent over \$1.5 billion on fire suppression, overspending by \$710 million \$690 million in initial appropriations and \$100 million in supplemental appropriations.

The Administrations FY 2008 budget request details \$200 million in transfers taken in FY 2006 from other Forest Service programs to cover this \$710 million dollar overrun, but does not address the remaining \$510 million budget shortfall, stating that "no additional funds are necessary" (p.499) while providing no details of what additional Forest Service Programs have been or will be affected.

If the \$400 million in supplemental funding provided in the War Supplemental is eventually enacted, there would still remain a \$310 million dollar shortfall in the FY 2006 Forest Service Budget

Resources:

- [FY 2008 Forest Service Budget Justification](#)

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

BIOMASS

March 21, 2007: USDA Secretary Mike Johanns announced \$6.2 million in grants for more than two dozen small businesses and community groups for developing uses for woody biomass.

Resources:

- [USDA Press Release](#)

March 28, 2007: The Department of Energy announced just over \$23 million in federal funding for five projects focused on developing highly efficient fermentative organisms to convert biomass material to ethanol.

Resources:

- [Department of Energy Press Release](#)

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

A leaked draft of proposed changes to DOI regulations along with a memorandum from the Department of Interior (DOI) office of the Solicitor has generated media attention and sharp criticism from a number of environmental groups. The material suggests that the administration is considering significant reinterpretation of the Endangered Species Act that would drastically alter the federal government's responsibilities under the law.

A spokesman for the Interior Department's Fish and Wildlife Service said the leaked proposal is an early draft that will be revised extensively. Experts say the rule would have to be officially proposed within the next six weeks if the administration wants it in place before President Bush leaves office.

Senior Democrats suggested that they may use appropriations legislation to block Bush administration plans to make changes to the Endangered Species Act. Appropriations bills can block a federal regulation by ordering an agency not to spend any money on implementing the rule.

Resources:

- [Department of Interior Memorandum](#)
- [Los Angeles Times](#), Janet Wilson and Julie Cart, March 28, 2007
- [The Seattle Times](#), Warren Cornwall, March 29, 2007
- [DOI draft regulation material from the Center for Biological Diversity](#)

ROADLESS RULE

April 9, 2007: The Bush administration has filed an appeal with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals challenging the court's February 7, 2007 judgment that affirmed the status of legal protections for inventoried roadless areas in national forests. Between September 20, 2006 and February 6, 2007, Judge Elizabeth Laporte issued three rulings reinstating

the roadless rule and its protections nationwide, excluding the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

Resources:

- [Environmental News Service](#), April 9, 2007

OTHER NEWS

CLIMATE CHANGE

March 20, 2007: Declaring it "Climate Crisis Action Day," environmental groups demonstrated in front of the U.S. Capitol, demanding that Congress take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

Resources:

- [Climate Crisis Action Day](#)

April 2, 2007: In its first ruling on climate change and one of the most important environmental decisions in years, the Supreme Court ruled 5 to 4 that the Environmental Protection Agency violated the Clean Air Act by improperly declining to regulate new-vehicle emissions standards to control the pollutants that scientists say contribute to global warming.

Resources:

- [The Washington Post](#), Robert Barnes and Juliet Eilperin, April 3, 2007
- [Supreme Court Ruling](#)

April 6 – April 30, 2007: The Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its second summary report for policymakers as part of its "Climate Change 2007" report. The second summary report is focused on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.

Following the release, six scientists who participated in drafting the report testified on April 17th on their findings before the House Science and Technology Committee.

Beginning April 30th, hundreds of scientists and diplomats began work in Bangkok finalizing the language for the IPCC's third summary for policymakers on mitigating global warming, due to be released May 4th.

Resources:

- [House Science and Technology Committee Hearing](#)
- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)
- [Summary for policymakers of the second IPCC report](#)
- [San Francisco Chronicle](#), Michael Casey, April 30, 2007

April 12, 2007: The National Forest Foundation (NFF) launched the Carbon Capital Fund which will help mitigate global climate change and will fund conservation projects on National Forest System lands. Visitors to the NFF Web site can use a carbon calculator to estimate their carbon footprint, and make a contribution to the Carbon Capital Fund to offset their daily emissions. A stewardship project on the Pike and San Isabel National Forest (CO) will be the first to be implemented through the Carbon Capital Fund. The project will supply woody biomass to a local energy plant, offsetting carbon dioxide emissions by burning wood instead of traditional fuels, like natural gas, coal or oil. The project will help prevent catastrophic fire and improve ecosystem health and resiliency, providing measurable benefits beyond emission reductions.

Resources:

- [Carbon Capitol Fund](#)

April 15, 2007: Calling for Congress to enact legislation that would cut U.S. carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050, more than 1,400 events were held, in each of the 50 states, as part of the National Day of Climate Action. The events were organized by Step It Up 2007.

Resources:

- [Step It Up 2007](#)
- [The Washington Post](#), Darragh Johnson, April 15, 2007

April 16-18, 2007: The connection between global warming and security has been an issue of focus recently both in the US and internationally.

- On April 16th, a report titled “National Security and the Threat of Climate Change” was released by the Center for Naval Analyses, a government-funded research group. The report was written by a group of retired generals and admirals called the Military Advisory Board. This report warns that human-driven warming of the climate poses risks to the national security of the United States.
- On April 17th the U.N. Security Council held its first ever debate on global warming, highlighting the food and water shortages climate change may cause and the security effects.
- On April 18th, the House Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming held its first hearing, examining the national security implications of global warming and energy dependence.

Resources:

- [International Herald Tribune](#), The Associated Press, April 17, 2007
- [The New York Times](#), Andrew C. Revkin and Timothy Williams, April 15, 2007

Information Excerpted From:

- CQ Green Sheets

DEFORESTATION / FOREST PRESERVATION

March 29, 2007: Australian Prime Minister John Howard announced Thursday a global fund to curb deforestation in Southeast Asia. He pledged \$161 million for the effort, to be managed by the World Bank, and said Australia expects to draw “very significant contributions” from the United States, Britain, Japan, New Zealand and Germany.

Resources:

- [Forbes](#), Rod McGuirk, March 29, 2007

April 1, 2007: The Washington Post published a major article detailing how some of the biggest swaths of natural forest left on Earth are being logged at an alarming pace to feed a global wood-processing industry centered in coastal China.

The wares are shipped from China to major retailers including Ikea, Home Depot and Lowe’s. They end up in homes and offices in the United States and Europe, bought by shoppers with little idea of the wood’s origins or the environmental costs of cutting it down.

Resources:

- [The Washington Post](#), Peter S. Goodman and Peter Finn, April 1, 2007

FOREST POLICY

March 31, 2007: A federal district judge ruled that the Bush administration illegally rewrote the rules for managing 192 million acres of federally owned forests and grasslands in 2005 and must consider the environmental impact of its plan before offering another policy blueprint.

Resources:

- [The Washington Post](#), Juliet Eilperin, March 31, 2007

ENERGY

April 12, 2007: Federal Way-based Weyerhaeuser Co. said Thursday that it has signed an agreement with petroleum giant Chevron Corp. to study commercial production of biofuels from cellulose-based sources, including trees and other crops that might be grown on Weyerhaeuser lands.

Resources:

- [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), Bill Virgin, April 13, 2007

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Aguilar, Leslie. Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts... Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World.

Perlin, John. A Forest Journey – The Story of Wood and Civilization. Woodstock, Vermont: The Countryman Press, 1989 & 2005. Dallas, TX: The Walk the Talk Company, 2006.

Pralle, Sarah. Branching Out, Digging In - Environmental Advocacy and Agenda Setting. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006.

Taylor, David. Ginseng, the Divine Root – The Curious History of the Plant that Captivated the World. New York: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005.

CONFERENCES

The **Lomakatsi Restoration Project is holding a 3-day participatory workshop**, including practical applications of traditional ecological knowledge, restoration forestry, ecological woodlot stewardship, permaculture, small diameter utilization and natural building from **Friday, May 4 through Sunday, May 6, 2007** at White Oak Farm in **Williams, Oregon**. To register or for more information contact Jenny at Lomakatsi Restoration Project at 541-488-0208 or jenny@lomakatsi.org

Staying Grounded When on the Spot: A Skill-building Workshop for Facilitators, May 8-9, 2007, Boston, MA. Participants will learn to quickly and effectively handle the inevitable surprises and challenges of facilitation in this two-day workshop with veteran trainers Bob Stains and Maggie Herzig. Through presentations, exercises, case examples, and discussion, participants develop skills in staying focused and staying grounded, even in difficult moments. For more information, please visit http://www.publicconversations.org/pcp/index.asp?page_id=239&catid=51.

Environment and Public Policy Section (EPP) of the Association for Conflict Resolution, June 7-9, 2007 Jupiter, FL. The Environment and Public Policy Section (EPP) of the Association for Conflict Resolution will be meet to better understand the role of neutral and collaborative leaders in creating long-term institutional change, four themes will guide our discussions.

The themes are:

- The role of collaborative leadership in promoting public decision making around issues of importance to communities
- The relationship between our practice as conflict resolvers and efforts to promote deliberative democracy
- Dynamic tensions between our professional norms and practices to resolve particular disputes and the long-term viability and development of collaborative decision making
- Options for advancing the field of public dispute resolution to a skeptical public

For more information about this event please visit:

<http://www.acrnet.org/conferences/index.htm>

The Property and Environment Research Center is now taking applications for a two-week **Enviropreneur Camp** they will be conducting in **Bozeman, Montana**, from **July 11-26, 2007**. This is designed for environmental practitioners who are interested in learning how market approaches can be used to solve environmental problems. Participants will receive a \$3,000 stipend plus room and board for the duration of the program. For more information, please visit www.enviropreneurs.com or contact Carol Ferrie at carol@perc.org or 406.587.9591

EPA 10th Community Involvement Conference & Training, June 19-22, 2007: Jacksonville, FL. EPA's Community Involvement Training Conference (CIC) will be celebrating its tenth year on June 19-22, 2007, in Jacksonville, Florida. The CIC brings together more than 450 people from EPA and its federal, state, tribal, and local partners who plan and implement environmental community involvement, partnership, stewardship, outreach, and education programs. The 2007 conference theme, *Community Involvement: Celebrating the Past, Looking to the Future*, underscores the educational value of highlighting lessons from the successes of the past ten years and also exploring forward-looking, innovative approaches for government to interact with communities to promote the protection and sustainability of our environment. For more information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/ciconference/>.

Community Matters 07' is being held by the Orton Family Foundation, PlaceMatters and partner organizations in **Burlington, Vermont, October 23 through 25, 2007**. This event brings together citizens, elected officials, practitioners, innovators and tool providers to learn, share, and seed innovation in place. Join to engage in discussions about land use planning and community development in small cities and towns. For more information, please visit: www.communitymatters.org

GRANTS

The National Forest Foundation Mid-Capacity Program

The NFF Mid-Capacity Program provides awards for up to two years, with the second year being conditional on the organization demonstrating significant progress towards stated outcomes during year one. Awards will be for \$35,000/year and require an annual match of \$10,000.00. In their efforts to build ecological, social and economic sustainability, Mid-Capacity grantees are expected to continue their on-the-ground conservation work and produce measurable results for their organization, the community, the natural resources, and – as feasible - the local economy. All applicants must have their 501(c)(3) status. In addition to award funds, general technical assistance will be provided throughout the grant period and in year two a small pot of up to \$5,000 will be available for specific technical assistance needs. This will allow organizations to take advantage of or address unforeseen opportunities and/or challenges.

For more information, please contact Mary Mitsos by phone at 406/542-2805 ext. 15 or by email at mmitsos@natlforests.org

REPORTS

Civic Engagement, A Guide for Communities: This guide, published by [Arlington Forum](#), makes the case that civic engagement is a healthy way to solve problems by using the metaphor of civic engagement as a practice that a community does to improve its health. The authors, Palma J. Strand and Melinda D. Patrician, co-founded the Arlington Forum, a local initiative of the Civic Organizing Foundation, in 1999. The three guides can be found at www.policyconsensus.org in the February 2007 Newsletter.

WEBSITES

www.WestCANhelp.org

On March 15, 2007, the Sonoran Institute and the National Forest Foundation announced the unveiling of the Western Collaboration Assistance Network (WestCAN), with an online resource library at www.WestCANhelp.org and personalized assistance through a toll-free information line. Collaboration is increasingly used to find common ground around public lands issues in the West. WestCAN seeks to broaden the community of people working together on complex natural resource issues. WestCAN works to prevent repetition of common mistakes and to coordinate opportunities for people to connect with others who have successfully overcome the many challenges of collaboration. The Web site provides easy access to hundreds of documents that offer tools, guides, research, lessons learned and best practices to help community members and federal agencies involved in collaboration on public lands issues.

www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/training/collaborative-training/

The Forest Service has put together a series of training modules designed to equip Forest Service personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the challenge of being exemplary partners. The suite of training modules has been created to demonstrate the power of working in collaboration and partnership to achieve the agency's mission. More specifically, the purpose of this training is to help overcome hurdles to collaboration and partnership activities and adopt effective strategies to achieve better outcomes for the people they serve and the land they care for. The goal of these modules is to provide employees with the essential tools and precautions needed to achieve vibrant, effective, partnerships supported by sound business practices. With the skills and training acquired through these modules, employees should gain the confidence and competencies necessary to fulfill their responsibilities and the Agency obligations that partners expect and deserve.

NEWSLETTERS/UPDATES

To sign up for American Forests' electronic news services "Policy News and Updates" or "Farm Bill News and Updates," please e-mail Laura Schweitzer at lschweitzer@amfor.org or Gary Gorski at ggorski@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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions, suggestions, and to subscribe (or unsubscribe) to Forest Community News: The National Perspective, please email American Forests' staff of Laura Schweitzer at lschweitzer@amfor.org or Gary Gorski at ggorski@amfor.org

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American Forests: www.americanforests.org

Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress:
www.communitiescommittee.org

National Network of Forest Practitioners: www.nnfp.org

Pinchot Institute for Conservation: www.pinchot.org