

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

**No. 7**

**January 6, 2006**

### **FROM THE EDITORS**

Happy New Year! Despite business being somewhat slower here in DC, as many fled the city for vacations and family visits far and wide, lawmakers and agency officials remained busy in the final days before the holidays. Read on for a look at December's happenings in DC...

### **FROM CAPITOL HILL**

#### **2006 BUDGET RECONCILIATION**

In a vote of 51-50, with Vice President Cheney casting the tie-breaking vote, the Senate passed budget reconciliation legislation before recessing for the holidays. However, because Senate Democrats removed three provisions from the conference report, the bill must return to the House for another vote at the start of the second session before heading to the President's desk for his signature. While \$2.7 billion of the \$39.7 billion proposed spending cuts target agriculture and conservation spending, several controversial provisions including drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and allowing mining companies to purchase public lands were removed from the conference report because of strong bipartisan opposition.

#### **ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT**

On December 15, Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) and Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) introduced S. 2110, the Collaboration for the Recovery of the Endangered Species Act (CRESA). The proposed bill focuses on additional participation by landowners and states to recover species. The bill would allow states to enter into cooperative agreements with the Departments of Interior and Commerce to develop state-operated programs to conserve endangered and threatened species. It would also allow the federal government to prioritize its resources in hopes of getting funding to the species most in need, while incorporating local input on recovery plans and species recovery teams. The bill focuses on promoting additional participation by landowners and state officials in species recovery. It also introduces incentives such as tax breaks and conservation banking provisions.

#### **FARM BILL**

Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), Chairman of the Agriculture Committee's Forestry, Conservation, and Rural Revitalization Subcommittee has announced a series of listening sessions around Idaho to discuss the 2007 Farm Bill reauthorization. Crapo will attend most of the sessions, cosponsored by the Idaho Farm Bureau. The Farm Bill typically includes

provisions for private lands conservation, including family forestland. The meetings, all of which will take place in Idaho, are scheduled as follows:

January 3, 2006	8:00 a.m. Sandpoint, Sandpoint Ranger Station, 1500 U.S. Highway 2 11:00 a.m., Post Falls, U of I Research Park, 721 Lochsa Street 8:00 p.m., Caldwell, Canyon County Courthouse, 1115 Albany Street
January 4, 2006	12:00 p.m. Gooding, Toponis Restaurant, 413 Main Street
January 13, 2006	7:00 p.m. Burley, City Council Chambers, 1401 Overland Road
January 14, 2006	11:00 a.m. Blackfoot, Potato Expo, 130 N.W. Main Street 3:00 p.m. Rexburg, City Hall, 12 N. Center Street

Crapo's State Director for Agriculture, Don Dixon, will also moderate meetings planned for Plummer, Potlatch, Genesee, Lewiston, Lapwai, Craigmont, Weiser, Duck Valley, Arco, Hailey, Twin Falls, American Falls, Fort Hall, Pocatello, Malad, and Soda Springs. Dates and locations for these meetings are still being finalized and will be announced soon.

For more information, visit:

[www.crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release\\_full.cfm?id=249979&&](http://www.crapo.senate.gov/media/newsreleases/release_full.cfm?id=249979&&)

## **NEPA**

On December 21st, the House Resources Committee's NEPA Task Force culminated months of hearings and deliberations with the release of 22 potential alterations to the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA, enacted in 1970, requires the federal government to consider alternatives to actions on public lands and provides for public participation in the decision-making process. Among the proposed changes by the Task Force are restricting the parties who have standing to file lawsuits under the Act, instituting deadlines for environmental studies, and limiting the alternatives that agencies must consider. The Task Force Chairperson, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris (R-WA), has announced that the task force will not propose legislation before receiving comments from both the public and members of Congress. Written comments on the NEPA report will be accepted by the House Resources Committee until February 3, 2006. For more information on how to submit comments and to read the report, visit

[http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/nepataskforce/report/nepareport\\_finaldraft.pdf](http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/nepataskforce/report/nepareport_finaldraft.pdf)

## **FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

### **OIL AND GAS PROJECTS**

The Forest Service has announced a proposal that would streamline environmental studies of certain small oil and gas drilling projects in national forests and grasslands. The plan calls for the agency to issue categorical exclusions from National Environmental Policy Act for

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projects that involve construction of less than a mile of road, three miles of pipeline, and no more than four drill sites at an individual location. The new plan will not apply in places that are home to threatened or endangered species, nor will it apply in designated critical habitats, wilderness areas, inventoried roadless areas, wetlands, or historic sites. Public comments on the proposal are being accepted until February 13, 2006. For more information, visit [www.fs.fed.us/news/2005/releases/12/oil-gas-proposal.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2005/releases/12/oil-gas-proposal.shtml)

## **FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS AND ROADS**

Agriculture Department Secretary Mike Johanns announced on December 21<sup>st</sup> that more than \$380 million will be distributed to 41 states and Puerto Rico for improvements to public schools and roads in communities that surround national forest lands. The funds will be provided through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (2000). Counties may use the funds for specific purposes, such as search, rescue, and emergency services on federal lands; community service work camps; conservation and recreation easements; forestry related after-school activities; and fire prevention and planning. For more information and to see a listing of payments, visit [www.usda.gov/wps/portal/lut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1RD?printable=true&contentidonly=true&contentid=2005/12/0561.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/lut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1RD?printable=true&contentidonly=true&contentid=2005/12/0561.xml).

## **STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING**

The Forest Service has announced an amendment to the Renewable Resources Handbook. The amendment provides direction for implementing stewardship contracting that was previously contained in interim directive (ID) 2409.12-2005-1. The guidance and procedures in this direction include appropriate use of the stewardship contracting authority, as well as information regarding project development, implementation, and monitoring the use of stewardship contracting. For more information, visit [www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/projects/stewardship/direction/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/projects/stewardship/direction/index.shtml)

## **CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS & OTHER EVENTS**

**Managing Forestlands Sustainably: Workshops in Ecological Forestry, February 13-16, 2006, Newton, GA.** This three-day course is designed for public, for-profit, and non-profit organizations interested in managing southeastern fire-maintained pine/grassland woodlands for multiple objectives including timber, wildlife and sustaining or restoring native diversity. For more information, contact Kevin McIntyre at (229) 734-4706 or [Kevin.McIntyre@jonesctr.org](mailto:Kevin.McIntyre@jonesctr.org) or see [www.osiny.org/conservationforestry/ga\\_forestry.htm](http://www.osiny.org/conservationforestry/ga_forestry.htm).

**2006 Forest Leadership Conference: The Sustainability Challenge, March 1-2, 2006, Toronto, Ontario.** This conference will provide opportunities for participants to learn about and discuss current and upcoming sustainability challenges in the forest and paper sector. The meeting will emphasize sustainability, competitiveness, and corporate social responsibility. The conference is geared toward a diverse audience of decision makers in the forest sector: corporate executives, sustainable forestry experts, mill managers, procurement specialists, corporate social responsibility officers, market analysts, government officials,

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researchers, First Nations, as well as conservation and other organizations. For more information, contact the conference coordinator at (514) 274-4344 or [conference@forestleadership.com](mailto:conference@forestleadership.com) or see [www.forestleadership.com](http://www.forestleadership.com).

**Making Biomass Work, April 6-7, 2006, Klamath Falls, OR.** This two-day conference will address the most current issues and knowledge regarding sustainable biomass utilization in the Northwest, and explore the interdependence between forest restoration, biomass utilization, and rural economic revitalization. For more information, contact Sustainable Northwest at (503) 221-6911 or [info@sustainablenorthwest.org](mailto:info@sustainablenorthwest.org) or see [www.sustainablenorthwest.org/](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/).

**Forest Leadership Forum 2006: Moving from Dialogue to Action, May 3-6, 2006, Portland, OR.** This forum, which will be hosted by Metafore, aims to provide common ground for business and environmental leaders to meet. A broad spectrum of participants will create ways to encourage responsible business practices. The forum will feature speakers, workshops, exhibits, training exercises and networking opportunities. For more information, contact Jen Rains at (503) 224-2205 or [jrains@metafore.com](mailto:jrains@metafore.com) or see [www.metafore.org/index.php?p=About&s=127](http://www.metafore.org/index.php?p=About&s=127).

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group has issued a call for applications for 2007 Community Assistance and Wildland Urban Interface Projects. In a shift from previous years, assistance for fiscal year 2007 will be granted only to projects that treat hazardous fuels or that provide opportunities for marketing and utilization of wood products. Hazardous fuels treatments projects must be outlined in a completed Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). All applications must be submitted online and are due by **5:00 pm on February 13, 2006**. Additional information about the grants program and how to apply can be found at [www.nwfireplan.gov](http://www.nwfireplan.gov).

## **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!

## **REPORT**

Forestlands of the Southern U.S. have been undergoing dramatic changes in ownership and markets for forest products. To understand these changes, a team of scientists and researchers joined forces to write a report, titled **“The U.S. South’s Timber Sector in 2005: A prospective analysis of recent change, Strategic Factors Driving Timberland Ownership Changes in the U.S. South.”** The research was supported by the Southern Group of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. A preliminary report is now available at [www.srs.fs.usda.gov/econ/pubs/southernmarkets/](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/econ/pubs/southernmarkets/). A full report will be published at a later date.

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## WEB SITE

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service maintains a **PLANTS Database** that provides standardized information about the vascular plants, mosses, liverworts, hornworts, and lichens of the U.S. and its territories. The database includes names, plant symbols, checklists, distributional data, species abstracts, characteristics, images, plant links, references, crop information, and automated tools. The database is available at <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>.

## PUBLICATION

The Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station has published a study titled **“Nontimber forest products management on national forests in the United States.”** The study provides an overview of nontimber forest products (NTFP) programs on national forests in the United States and identifies key barriers to adequate incorporation of NTFPs in Forest Service planning, inventory, and monitoring. The study was conducted by researchers at the Institute for Culture and Ecology in Portland, OR and was partially funded by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry. To download a copy of the study, visit [www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw\\_gtr655.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/pnw_gtr655.pdf).

## NEWSLETTERS/UPDATES

To sign up for American Forests’ ‘Policy News and Updates’ or ‘Farm Bill Listserve’, please e-mail Laura Schweitzer at [lschweitzer@amfor.org](mailto:lschweitzer@amfor.org).

## GENERAL RESOURCES

**American Forests.** Visit their website at [www.americanforests.org](http://www.americanforests.org)

**Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress.** Visit their website at [www.communitiescommittee.org](http://www.communitiescommittee.org)

**National Network of Forest Practitioners.** Visit their website at [www.nnfp.org](http://www.nnfp.org)

**Pinchot Institute for Conservation.** Visit their website at [www.pinchot.org](http://www.pinchot.org)

**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](http://www.ncfcnfr.net)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

To subscribe (or unsubscribe) to *Forest Community News: The National Perspective*, please email Paige McClanahan ([pmcclanahan@pinchot.org](mailto:pmcclanahan@pinchot.org)).

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Questions and suggestions should be emailed to Paige McClanahan and/or Laura Schweitzer at American Forests ([lschweitzer@amfor.org](mailto:lschweitzer@amfor.org)).

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

*Forest Community News: The National Perspective* is supported by the Ford Foundation and published on behalf of American Forests, the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, the National Network of Forest Practitioners, and the Pinchot Institute for Conservation.