

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

**No. 9**

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### **FROM THE EDITORS**

February in Washington, D.C. – the Administration releases their budget proposal for Congressional and public review. This budget took a minimum of two years to put together and its release signals the annual frenzied process of budget and appropriations negotiations. Add to that a slew of other issues ranging from how to manage biomass to what post-disturbance restoration should look like and, as you might imagine, Washington, D.C. is a hoppin' place. Read on to learn all about what's been going on.

### **FROM CAPITOL HILL**

#### **BIOMASS**

The House Resources Committee, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee and the Energy and Minerals Subcommittee held a joint hearing on February 8<sup>th</sup> on the effects of high energy costs on jobs and the potential for expanded use of biomass for energy. The Committees are interested in continuing to look at incentives to encourage the development of biomass projects. Rob Davis of Forest Energy Corp. in Show Low, AZ and a key CBF partner testified before the Subcommittees. For more information, visit: <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/schedule/040105.htm>

#### **BUDGET**

##### **Budget Reconciliation**

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the House approved the budget reconciliation conference report (S 1932), by a vote of 216-214, sending the measure to the President's desk for his signature. The Senate rejected certain provisions of the conference report in late 2005, making it necessary for the House to approve the changes. The bill includes \$39.7 billion in spending cuts to various mandatory programs over a five-year period, including \$934 million in spending cuts to the Farm Bill conservation programs, specifically the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Conservation Security Program, and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Passage of these spending cuts will enable both houses to move on tax cut legislation that could include up to \$70 billion in cuts. Reforestation and other forestry tax incentives could be included in this package. For more information, visit: [www.house.gov/budget/](http://www.house.gov/budget/) and <http://budget.senate.gov/>

##### **Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act**

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Senate amended and passed HR 4297, the Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act of 2005, by a vote of 66 to 31. The Senate version of HR 4297 includes \$70 billion in tax cuts, as allowed for under the FY 2006 budget resolution. The House

passed its version of the bill in December with \$56.1 billion in tax cuts. The Senate package includes incentives to encourage landowner donations of conservation easements to land trusts and would allow expensing of reforestation costs up to \$20,000 for family forest landowners owning less than 500 acres who were hit by the hurricanes this year. The House Budget Reconciliation package does not include such measures, but another bill (HR 4440) passed by the House last year includes the same reforestation expensing provisions as the Senate budget bill. Neither measure that has been passed by the House includes the conservation easement incentives. House and Senate conferees are expected to work out the differences in the two bills before enactment of a FY 2007 budget resolution. For more information, visit: <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/legislation.htm>.

#### Forest Service 2007 Budget

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Domenici, R-NM) held a hearing on February 28<sup>th</sup> on the Administration's proposed \$4.096 billion FY 2007 Forest Service budget. The hearing also addressed a proposal by the administration to sell \$800 million worth of federal lands to cover the cost of reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. Senate Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee Chairman Larry Craig (R-ID) said the lawmakers would not touch firefighting, recreation and other crucial agency funds to pay for the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Fund. Witnesses included Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey and Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth. To view testimony, visit:

[http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1531](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1531)

For more information on the proposed budget, visit: [www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/](http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/)

#### US Department of Interior 2007 Budget

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Chairman Domenici, R-NM) held a hearing on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the Department of the Interior's proposed FY 2007 budget. The proposed budget includes a decrease of around \$9 million for the Bureau of Land Management's hazardous fuels while increasing funds for managing Oregon and California lands. Most other forestry programs remain nearly the same as FY 2006 enacted levels. The US Fish and Wildlife Service budget includes slight increases for its Private Stewardship Grants and Landowner Incentives Grants, both of which are focused on addressing wildlife issues on private lands. For testimony, visit:

[http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1532](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1532).

For more information on the proposed budget for DOI, visit:

[www.doi.gov/news/06\\_News\\_Releases/060206.htm](http://www.doi.gov/news/06_News_Releases/060206.htm)

#### FY 2007 Budget Resolution

The Senate Budget Committee approved a FY 2007 budget resolution on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, setting spending levels for appropriators including those on the Agriculture and Interior Appropriations Subcommittees. As part of the resolution, the Committee included a placeholder for reauthorization for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, provided offsets can be found. The House Budget Committee is not

expected to mark up its budget resolution until after the weeklong St. Patrick's Day recess. For more information, visit: <http://budget.senate.gov/>  
For more information on the Secure Rural Schools proposal, visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/](http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/)

## **FARM BILL**

House Committee on Agriculture Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) convened the first of several hearings on February 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> in Fayetteville, NC and Auburn, AL to review the 2002 Farm Bill. Witnesses included Dr. Robert Cooper, a tree farmer, and Bill Thomas, a forestland owner. On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rep. Goodlatte and others from the Committee traveled to Stockton, CA for a third hearing. These hearings are part of a series the Agriculture Committee is hosting to hear from farmers, forest landowners, etc. in anticipation of reauthorization of the Farm Bill. To view witness statements, visit:  
<http://agriculture.house.gov/press/index.html>

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the House Appropriations Committee held a hearing on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. The hearing involved discussion of farm spending for FY 2007. Farm bill conservation programs, under the President's budget, would see an increase in funding over FY 2006 enacted levels, although the amount is still 18% lower than the authorized levels. For more information, visit:  
<http://appropriations.house.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Detail&HearingId=686&Month=2&Year=2006>

## **FOREST WORKERS**

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee held a hearing on March 1<sup>st</sup> to review the role of the USDA Forest Service and other Federal agencies in protecting the health and welfare of foreign guest workers carrying out tree planting and other service contracts on National Forest System lands, and to consider related Forest Service guidance and contract modifications issued in recent weeks. Lynn Jungwirth of the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, CA and Cassandra Moseley of the Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon, both testified. Both Lynn and Cassandra are long-time CBF partners. For more information, visit:  
[http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=1528](http://energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=1528)

## **POST-DISTURBANCE RESTORATION**

The House Resources Committee, Forests and Forest Health Subcommittee (Chairman Walden, R-OR) held a field hearing on February 24<sup>th</sup> to review research related to recovering forests after catastrophic events. A recent study published in *Science* by researchers at Oregon State University was included in the discussion. Witnesses included Stephen Hobbs, chairman, Oregon Board of Forestry, executive associate dean, College of Forestry, Oregon State University; Thomas Atzet, Atzet Ecological Consulting; Daniel Donato, graduate student, Oregon State University; Peter Kolb, Montana State University Extension forestry specialist; Hal Salwasser, Dean, College of Forestry of Oregon State University; Jerry

Franklin, professor, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington; Dave Perry, professor emeritus, Oregon State University; and Ted Lorenson, assistant state forester, Oregon Department of Forestry. For more information, visit:

<http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/archives/109/ffh/022406.htm>

## **ROADLESS LEGISLATION**

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced S 2365 intended on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to provide long-term protection for inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System. To read the legislation, visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

For more information, also visit <http://cantwell.senate.gov/news/record.cfm?id=252112>

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIRES ACT**

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, Representatives Mark Udall (D-CO) and Salazar (D-CO) introduced HR 4875, the Rocky Mountain Forest Insects Response Enhancement and Support Act. The Act would amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to help reduce the increased risk of severe wildfires to communities in forested areas affected by infestations of bark beetles and other insects, and for other purposes. For more information, visit:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c109:./temp/~c109WNSuPR>

## **FROM THE ADMINISTRATION**

### **BUDGET**

The White House has released its proposed budget for FY 2007. The proposal, which would give \$4.096 billion in funding to the USDA Forest Service and \$1.76 billion to the Bureau of Land Management, includes a controversial proposal to sell approximately \$800 million in National Forest System lands to offset the cost of reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. 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.

In late February, the Forest Service announced the start of a public comment period on the list of forestlands that have been proposed for sale. The list, which has been published in the Federal Register, comprises 304,370 acres of land in 34 states. Comments on the proposed list must be received by **March 30** and may be sent by email to [SRS\\_Land\\_Sales@fs.fed.us](mailto:SRS_Land_Sales@fs.fed.us). Send faxed comments to (202) 205-1604. Written comments may be mailed to this address:

USDA Forest Service  
SRS Comments Lands 4S  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Mailstop 1124  
Washington, DC 20250-0003

For more information on the proposed budget for the Forest Service, visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/](http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/)

To view the land sale proposal, visit: [www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/rural\\_schools.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/rural_schools.shtml).

To view the list of lands that have been proposed for sale, visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/spd.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/spd.html)

## **CONSERVATION RESERVE**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the Farm Services Agency (FSA) will begin notifying certain agricultural producers with Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts that they may extend their contracts or re-enroll their lands. CRP is a voluntary program that helps farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land. FSA county offices will begin notifying certain CRP participants whose contracts are set to expire in 2007 that they are eligible for re-enrollments or two- to five-year extensions. Participants eligible for re-enrollment will be offered 10- or 15-year contracts provided there are restored wetlands on the original land enrolled in the program.

To read USDA's news release, visit: [www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome).

For more information on the Conservation Reserve Program, visit the FSA Web site at:  
[www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm).

## **AGENCY LEADERSHIP**

The USDA Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth announced that Dr. Bov Eav is to serve as the new director of the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon. At the national headquarters, Dr. Jim Reaves will be the new Associate Deputy Chief of Research and Development. For more information, visit: [www.fs.fed.us/research/](http://www.fs.fed.us/research/)

Late Friday afternoon (March 10), Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced her resignation, effective at the end of the month. Her role as Secretary of the Interior gave Norton oversight authority over national parks, federal lands, and the Indian Tribes. Often compared to former Secretary of Interior James Watt of the Reagan Administration, Norton drew constant fire from the conservation community during her tenure for her department's anti-environmental policies. Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett will be assuming Norton's responsibilities pending her replacement, and is herself the speculative successor.

## **FS FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT**

The USDA Forest Service has announced that it plans to allow competitive bidding for some private firefighting equipment and services. The Forest Service will use "best value" criteria to select certain equipment contractors in at least three of its western regions this year. The new contracts will weigh the price offered by contractors, the condition of

equipment, and the past performance of both equipment and contract firefighters. Under the current system, equipment only has to meet minimum standards and costs the same regardless of age or condition. In an emergency, however, the agency will still be able to "go and negotiate on the spot, without going through a competitive process." (AP)

## **ROADLESS RULE**

The attorneys general of Montana and Maine have announced their support of a lawsuit filed by the attorneys general of California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington that challenges the Bush administration's repeal of the roadless rule in national forests. The lawsuit calls for a return to the previous rule that put 58.5 million acres of national forest off-limits to roadbuilding, logging, and other development.

To read the brief, visit: <http://doj.state.mt.us/news/releases2006/02242006brief.pdf>

## **FOREST SERVICE JOBS**

The USDA Forest Service is considering launching 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 to decide whether to put those positions up for competitive bidding with the private sector.

For more information on the proposal, visit:  
[www.peer.org/docs/fs/06\\_27\\_2\\_outsourcing\\_plan.pdf](http://www.peer.org/docs/fs/06_27_2_outsourcing_plan.pdf)

## **FOREST SERVICE FEES**

The USDA Forest Service has announced a new rule governing fees for special use permits on national forests and grasslands. Under the new rule, the Forest Service will collect fees from some permit applicants to recover the costs of processing and administering special use authorizations. Applications for routine recreation uses requiring 50 hours or less to process will not be charged a processing fee. More complex applications will be assessed a fee based on the estimated number of hours that agency personnel typically spend in processing the application and monitoring compliance with the permit. The new rule also calls for the agency to process all routine applications (50 hours or less to complete and monitor) within 60 days.

To read the Forest Service press release on the new rule, visit:  
[www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/02/special-use.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/02/special-use.shtml)

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **U.N. FORUM ON FORESTS**

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) recently held a two-week session at the United Nations headquarters in New York City to discuss the future of international forest policy. The member states that participated in the discussions agreed on several global objectives, including curbing deforestation, promoting sustainable forest management, and improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.

To read a UNFF press release on the results of the session, visit:

[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).

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

**Making Biomass Work: How to Meet Community, Economic, and Ecological Needs, Klamath Falls, Oregon, April 6-7, 2006.** 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. The conference will focus on both the technical and economic feasibility of biomass utilization enterprises and the potential ecological benefits of biomass utilization. Attendees will include forest practitioners, biomass developers, conservationists, representatives of federal, state and local government agencies, business and philanthropic leaders, and community development professionals. For more information, contact John Harrington at [john@sustainablenorthwest.org](mailto:john@sustainablenorthwest.org) or visit [www.sustainablenorthwest.org/biomass/biomassindex.php](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/biomass/biomassindex.php).

**Helping the Wood Products Industry Profit from the Next 10 Years, April 11-12, 2006, Princeton, WV.** The domestic wood products industry currently faces significant challenges, which have been magnified by rising foreign competition and related economic impacts on the primary and secondary sectors of the hardwood industry in the Eastern United States. The USDA Forest Service, Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) and Dovetail Partners are offering a workshop to help the industry constructively respond to these challenges. The workshop will include presentations from innovators in the industry with examples of implementation of strategic thinking and repositioning, new leadership models, mass customization, LEAN manufacturing, and other approaches. For more information, contact Dovetail Partners at (651) 762-4007 or [info@dovetailinc.org](mailto:info@dovetailinc.org) or see [www.dovetailinc.org/wercworkshop.html](http://www.dovetailinc.org/wercworkshop.html)

**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).

**Collaborative Forest Management: A Training Workshop for Forestry Practitioners, May 18-19, Phoenix, AZ.** This workshop will explore mandates, opportunities, and tools for collaboration in both project design and landscape-level planning. The workshop is intended primarily for forestry practitioners in the Southwest. Registration is free, but space is limited to 50 participants. To obtain a registration form, contact Karen Gilbreath at the Ecological Restoration Institute at (928) 523-7925.

## 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!

### WEB SITE

The National Learning Center for Private Forest and Range Landowners has launched a Web site to help private forest and range landowners better understand and manage their natural resources. The site, which is called **“You and Your Forest: A Guide to Understanding and Managing Your Forest Resources,”** is designed to raise awareness and knowledge of forest ecosystems and management so that landowners will be better prepared to work with a natural resource professional in developing a forest stewardship plan. The Web site is located at [www.forestandrange.org/modules/planning/index.htm](http://www.forestandrange.org/modules/planning/index.htm).

### REPORT

A final report has been published following a conference on **“The Future of Family-Owned Woodlands in the United States,”** which was held at the Wingspread Center in Wisconsin in November 2005. The report identifies policies and practices to increase the number of acres of family-owned woodlands under active, sustainable management. To download the report, visit [www.forestrycenter.org/library.cfm?refid=78439](http://www.forestrycenter.org/library.cfm?refid=78439).

### GUIDE

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation recently released a **“Quick Guide on Collaboration and NEPA,”** a manual that explores how the public can actively participate in the environmental review process. To download a copy of the guide, visit [www.pinchot.org/community/NEPA\\_Collaboration\\_Quick\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.pinchot.org/community/NEPA_Collaboration_Quick_Guide.pdf) or email Paige McClanahan at [pmcclanahan@pinchot.org](mailto:pmcclanahan@pinchot.org).

### PAPER

The Center for International Forestry Research has published a paper titled, **“Payments for Environmental Services: Some Nuts and Bolts.”** Payments for environmental services (PES) are an emerging economics-based methodology of conservation management. This paper, which is based on primary and secondary data from Latin America and Asia, aims to



demystify PES for non-economists. Download the report at:  
[www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf\\_files/OccPapers/OP-42.pdf](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/pdf_files/OccPapers/OP-42.pdf).

## **BOOK**

Island Press has published a book titled, **“Positive Impact Forestry: A Sustainable Approach to Managing Woodlands.”** The book is meant to serve as a primer on managing land and forests to protect both ecological and economic vitality. Moving beyond the concept of "low impact forestry," the author describes an approach to managing forests that meets the needs of landowners while maintaining the integrity of forest ecosystems. The book can be purchased online at [www.islandpress.org/books/detail.html?&SKU=1-55963-789-7&cart=%5Bcart%5D](http://www.islandpress.org/books/detail.html?&SKU=1-55963-789-7&cart=%5Bcart%5D).

## **NEWSLETTERS/UPDATES**

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

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

## **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)).

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

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