Communities and Forests

— The newsletter of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress —

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Small trees, big ideas: Lessons in adding value

by Maia Enzer and Ryan Temple

Drivers traveling west into Hayfork, California, are greeted by swaths cut into the forest on both sides of the road. To the north lies an area recently cleared by Sierra Pacific timber company; to the south is a similar scar, the result of catastrophic fire. The tiny town of Hayfork sits in the middle, literally and figuratively trapped between the platforms of national interest groups.

Many environmentalists oppose commercial management on public lands, while many in big timber industry would like to see a return to the large timber sales that once fed their mills. Caught in the middle, the residents of Hayfork are trying to piece together a future for their community by utilizing the forest's resources without depleting them.

In the past, higher rates of timber harvest meant more jobs for Hayfork. Today, the absence of industry in the region is testament to the long-term results of high-volume harvesting. Hayfork's residents are realizing that creating a sustainable economy while sustaining the forest means using each tree to the maximum extent possible. This means producing not just lumber, but also furniture, floors, or other "value-added" products from that lumber.

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EarthCorps crew leader Jun Manabao (left) of the Philippines hauling ivy with Seattle middle school students on Earth day 2001.

Photo courtesy of EarthCorps

Setting the stage for a regional land ethic

by Ian Leahy

As we walk the trail to Earth Corps' campsite within the mountainous cathedrals of the Mount Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest east of Seattle, the young and confident crew leaders, boots caked in mud and with sweaty bandanas, casually tell us how they dealt with their bear encounter the night before. The youngest of the crew, a homeless 14-year-old girl from Seattle, is still shaken by the experience. But the others are bursting with stories that will soon enough be legends. Their tents are stacked one nearly on top of another after a night huddled together for protection. As we march to their trail maintenance worksite with timbers on shoulders, hard hats on heads, and tools in hand, there is camaraderie and confidence between the homeless teenagers and their young adult leaders that did not exist two days before.

This experience exemplifies the spirit of the urban-rural linkages program, a national initiative founded by the Communities Committee to demonstrate the ecological, economic, and social relationships between urban and rural communities. When this program first started gelling a couple years ago, it was apparent that most development theory and practice had focused on either urban or rural issues, with little consideration of their interrelations. But as issues such as urban sprawl and the loss or fragmentation of farms and forests have emerged, they have spurred more widespread consideration of these linkages. Still, the concept of urban-rural linkages is often blurred because of complex dimensions such as local political boundaries, cultural differences, and spatial divides that must be integrated with large scale ecological conditions.

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Comments, subscription requests, and submissions may be sent to:
Ann Moote, Editor
Communities and Forests
c/o Ecological Restoration Institute
Northern Arizona University
P.O. Box 15018
Flagstaff AZ 86011-5018
phone: 928-523-7254, fax: 928-523-0296
ann.moote@nau.edu
www.communitiescommittee.org

Editorial Board:
Christina Cromley, *American Forests*
Genevieve Cross
Maia Enzer, *Sustainable Northwest*
Ian Leahy, *American Forests*
Ann Moote, *Ecological Restoration Institute*
Wendy Sanders, *Great Lakes Forest Alliance*
Bryant Smith, *Urban Arts Institute*
Eleanor Torres, *Integrated Infrastructures*

Contributors:
Greg Aplet, Christina Cromley, Maia Enzer, Ian Leahy, Ann Moote, Ryan Temple, Rock Termini

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The Inside Scoop

Farm bill & stewardship contracting news

by Christina Cromley

The Communities Committee's policy task group and many community forestry practitioners have been paying close attention to two efforts underway in Washington, D.C.: the 2002 farm bill and the monitoring and evaluation of the USDA Forest Service stewardship contracting pilots.

Input to the 2002 farm bill

"Farm bill" is the generic name for a federal law passed every five years or so that authorizes several food and agricultural programs, including forestry and conservation programs. The most recent farm bill, the *Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996* (P.L. 104-127), contains provisions that will expire in 2002, making reauthorization of the farm bill a top priority for the 107th Congress. Because Congress must reauthorize programs in the farm bill and because of the many different programs included under this bill, it has become a key legislative vehicle for interest groups, including community forestry proponents.

In the House

The House Agriculture Committee has completed and passed its version of the next farm bill, *The Farm Security Act of 2001* (H.R. 2646). Forestry provisions in that version of the bill include:

- outreach and cost-share incentives for nonindustrial private forest lands;
- a wildfire community assistance program; and
- a provision allowing the Forest Service to use stewardship contracting authorities on hazardous forest fuels reduction projects.

These forestry provisions resulted largely from suggestions made collectively by a number of forestry groups, all members of the National Council on Private Forests. If passed, they have the potential to help our nation's 9.9 million nonindustrial private forest landowners.

But H.R. 2646 is not likely to pass the full House without a struggle. A group of conservation and environmental organizations are promoting a different bill that would place greater emphasis on conservation programs. Representatives Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Ron Kind (D-WI) and Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD) are expected to introduce an amendment based on the *Working Lands Stewardship Act* (H.R. 2375) that, if passed, would authorize $2 billion more per year for conservation programs than H.R. 2646. The amendment would authorize programs to improve water quality, protect food and drinking water supplies, restore wildlife habitat, combat sprawl, restore and maintain forests, and provide assistance to agricultural communities. It also contains provisions to engage non-governmental groups in technical assistance activities and to target socially disadvantaged groups. The amendment would provide $100 million annually in mandatory funding for urban and community forestry and authorize $270 million annually for technical assistance and cost-share incentives in an expanded forest stewardship program.

In the Senate

Staffers with the Senate Committee on Agriculture are in the process of developing forestry provisions for their version of the farm bill. American Forests presented recommendations to that committee, based on input from the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress, the National Network of Forest Practitioners, the national Alliance for Community Trees, Sustainable Northwest, and the Lead Partnership Group. The recommendations call for authorities and incentives to:

- promote collaborative, public-private planning and projects at watershed scales;
- increase technical and financial assistance to communities;
- build communities' capacity to play an integral role in wildfire management;
- provide mechanisms and funding for monitoring and collaborative learning; and
- strengthen outreach to underserved and minority communities.

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Small trees, continued from page 1

Rebuilding Hayfork

Jim and Lynn Jungwirth are leading the effort to rebuild their community and economy. It is a never-ending story of persistence, ingenuity, and knack for defying the odds.

Caught in the middle, the residents of Hayfork are trying to piece together a future for their community that utilizes the forest's resources without depleting them.

In 1996, despite a market expert's opinion that it couldn't be done, Jim Jungwirth and Greg Wilson combined $26,000 of shop equipment and put eight people to work full time at their new company, Jefferson State Forest Products (JSFP). JSFP has now been making furniture and case goods for six years and is the second largest non-governmental employer in Hayfork.

Lynn Jungwirth, director of the Watershed Research and Training Center, has been working for over four years to build a business incubator to help create other value-added businesses in Hayfork. "I want to make it possible for every piece of fiber that is recovered from a restoration or fuels reduction project—regardless of traditional commercial value—to be made into some kind of product before it leaves my town," she says.

What's all this about adding value?

Traditional forest harvesting involves cutting trees and sending the logs to a mill, or primary processing facility, where the logs are sorted by size and species and then milled into rough-cut boards.

When a woodworker dries the boards and makes wood flooring, paneling, or molding out of it, it is considered secondary manufacturing. When the boards are made into furniture or other finished products, it is called tertiary manufacturing.

Studies show that typical primary mills employ about three to five persons annually per million board feet (MMBF) of lumber produced. Secondary manufacturers making millwork products and other components employ approximately 12 to 18 persons annually per MMBF. Furniture manufacturers employ 60 to 80 persons annually per MMBF of wood processed. As reflected in the number of jobs created, greater increases in value are realized towards the end of the chain. Each step in making a product adds value.

Paying a living wage

There's another side to the job creation story, however: As you move from primary processing to tertiary, wages decrease. Nationally, workers in a primary processing facility earn an average of $11 per hour, while those working in tertiary manufacturing earn about seven dollars per hour. Jefferson State Forest Products is managing to pay a minimum of $8.50/hr, not an insignificant wage in a town like Hayfork, which lost its last mill in 1996 and has seen a steady rise in poverty over the last decade. JSFP is able to do this because they invest in their employees by training them on multiple pieces of equipment and teaching them how to make a variety of products. This raises skill levels and allows the company to serve a diversity of urban retailers and wholesalers.

Securing raw materials

The secret to success is more complicated than simply increasing local value-added manufacturing capacity, however. Businesses must secure a supply of raw material. Small diameter trees, whose removal is currently being emphasized, have not attracted significant interest from large industry. The current abundance of small-diameter wood represents both a challenge and an opportunity for rural businesses.

Putting these low-value trees to an economically viable use supports stewardship and ecological goals, but it also requires creativity and flexibility. Finding new products or techniques that add value to these logs will help rural manufacturers to succeed. However, they still have to overcome the traditional challenges rural businesses face, such as limited access to markets and capital.

Targeting the green marketplace

One way that rural businesses can develop a niche within urban markets is to tune into the emerging green marketplace. For example, JSFP has made a commitment to being an environmentally and socially responsible small business. When Jungwirth decided to start the company he had a vision of creating jobs that depended on the care of the land. Jim's shop is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council and he is a founding business member of the Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership, a regional network of small and micro-businesses committed to sustainability.

Jim believes we have to work to raise people's awareness of the environmental and social aspects of forest management, and that the first step comes in asking simple questions: "Everyone should ask where their wood comes from. Where does your desk come from? Who made it?"

Defying a market expert who said their venture would fail, Jim Jungwirth and Greg Wilson combined $26,000 of shop equipment and put eight people to work full time building furniture. Six years later, their shop is the second largest non-governmental employer in Hayfork.

Only time will tell if products made in an environmentally and socially responsible way can capture markets or receive a premium in the mainstream markets. For many community forestry groups, green markets are a part of the value-added picture.

In Hayfork, the Watershed Research and Training Center is now breaking ground on its value-added forest products business incubator, after raising close to $800,000 over four years from private philanthropic, state, and federal funding sources. This incubator will hopefully be the catalyst that allows others to replicate the value-added model that JSFP has put forth.

Maia Enzer is director and Ryan Temple is marketing manager for the Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership based at Sustainable Northwest in Portland, Oregon.

Member Profile

Rock Termini

I'm an environmental chemist, and my research and consulting addresses various environmental waste problems. Buffalo, New York, where I live, is the place where America woke up to hazardous waste seeping into their basements and playgrounds, and a certain innocence about technology was lost forever. I found I was fixing mistakes for a lot of heavy chemical clients, and it got to a point where I felt I'd become a crutch for polluting industries.

I decided I needed to balance my consulting work with proactive effort to create answers that prevent problems from occurring. So in the 1980s I started working with the National Audubon Society. Initially, I was trying to educate the local chapter on the science of some of the issues they faced. Today, I serve as secretary of the State Audubon Council Board of Directors and as a liaison between the local chapter and government agencies or other NGOs. I also serve on the State Open Space Committee.

Need to address complexity

The Audubon Society, and big national environmental groups in general, haven't matured in style much since the 1960s. They tend to have a top-down management style and focus on a national agenda. This worked fine when the issues were 'big picture' things like getting the Clean Air Act or the Clean Water Act passed, but don't always make sense today. Current environmental issues are much more complicated and need to be addressed at the local or regional level.

I once shocked an audience at the State Forest Products Association annual meeting when I said I view sustainability as a three-legged stool, with economics as one leg. If the economic leg is short, I told them, the stool will fall over. They couldn't believe an environmental group representative was advocating for sustainable economies. But we can't afford to be narrow-minded or unilateral in our environmental attitudes and polices. One problem we face is that many environmental groups don't understand economics.

Education: Connecting people to nature

The Audubon Society now has a "2020 Plan" that will turn its orientation from ninety percent national-level policy lobbying to ninety percent education. We see our challenge as providing the conservation outreach in this country that will enable all people to be the advocates for environmental change. A grassroots groundswell will get to the politicians much more effectively than current lobbying efforts do—and it will also help develop real government leadership, which is lacking in Washington, D.C. today.

One part of that 2020 plan is to locate a nature center within twenty minutes of every large municipal center in the United States. Some of these we will own but many will be "centers without walls" created through alliances with other groups. Our audiences need to be more than just schools and libraries—we need to include non-traditional venues like art centers and community recreation areas. In New York we are completing an agreement with the State Parks agency to provide nature education at several of their sites.

I focus my work on education, especially youth education, because I think the way toward positive environmental change is through establishing relationships between people and nature. We need to develop a culture of conservation based on an understanding of our own role in nature and why it's important. That relationship with nature should be a family value, a social value. People need to have good information so that they can critically assess environmental issues and make good decisions that aren't just based on knee-jerk rhetoric.

Rock Termini chairs the nominations task group of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress.

Listening to each other

My goal is to form alliances and get as many different perspectives as possible working together on a problem. Our environmental problems aren't really technical—they're always social. To solve environmental problems and conflicts, we need to start listening to each other and working together. We need to recognize that our decisions are going to have an impact on others, and that very often those impacts will be negative. Most urban environmentalists in the East are staunchly opposed to fuels reduction in national forests, without understanding that a let-burn fire policy or a no-new-roads policy may devastate families and communities in the rural West. Similarly, a no-cut forest policy in the United States may lead to terrible environmental destruction in other forested parts of the world. We need to understand and acknowledge the impacts of our decisions.

That's why the Communities Committee's Congressional field tours are so important. They teach people first-hand about the complexity of environmental issues today and about the ramifications of national policy at the local level. The Communities Committee plays a unique communication role between the grassroots and national policy levels. Its role is to establish through dialogue what grassroots groups need and get that information to them, and to hear what the grassroots is saying and get that information back to Washington, D.C.

Viewpoint

In October 2000, Congress appropriated over $2 billion for fire abatement and fire fighting for 2001 and directed the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to work with the Western Governors' Association (WGA) on fire planning. Soon after, the WGA set up a core team of stakeholders to draft a comprehensive fire management plan. Two members of the Communities Committee's steering committee, Lynn Jungwirth and Greg Aplet, served on the core team.

On August 13, 2001, the WGA released "A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: A 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy."

The comprehensive strategy should not be confused with the national fire plan, a September 2000 report to the White House written by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture in response to catastrophic wildfires in summer 2000. That report, "Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment," called for more federal resources for fire fighting, reducing hazardous fuels accumulations in the nation's forests, and improving local community coordination and outreach.

Greg Aplet, forest ecologist and Director of The Wilderness Society's Center for Landscape Analysis, made the following comments to the Western Governors' Association on the day that the WGA comprehensive strategy was released. His comments directly address the strategy and allude to some of the provisions of the national fire plan.

Fire planning and funding needs are local, not federal

by Greg Aplet

This comprehensive strategy is significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it focuses the fire issue on the two places where solutions are needed most: the wildland-urban interface, where lives and homes are at risk, and on fire-dependent ecosystems whose health has been degraded by management. The strategy appropriately relies on community-based fire management planning to address hazards and risks before fires start.

Encourage local fire prevention planning, educate homeowners

Among the important principles espoused in the strategy is the need for fire prevention planning at the community level. We need to greatly expand fire prevention education through educational outreach to homeowners and communities. We also need incentives for local governments to engage in land-use planning and other initiatives aimed at minimizing the proliferation of the interface. Current and future development must be planned to minimize the exposure of firefighters to dangerous conditions when homes are threatened.

We also need the means to accomplish hazardous fuels reduction in the interface. This represents a massive undertaking, involving thousands upon thousands of private landowners, myriad state, county, and municipal lands, and even some federal land. A lot of thought needs to go into how to accomplish this.

Finally, the strategy recognizes the need to restore ecosystem health and minimize the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire. The strategy focuses not on all fire-dependent forests, but only on those forests that now face the threat of unnaturally severe fires. In the West, this is largely limited to ponderosa pine forests. As we work to restore health to these forests, we need to prevent the spread of exotic species, encourage the use of native seed, and protect the habitat of sensitive species. The strategy also wisely promotes the application of minimum-impact suppression techniques when suppression is necessary.

The principles of the ten-year comprehensive strategy help set the course to greatly improved fire management policies at the national level.

Get federal money down to the community level

At this point, I'd like to leave the strategy behind and talk about implementation. I believe that the most important thing that must come out of the implementation plan is a streamlined process for getting federal money down to the local level where it is needed to implement the strategy. It is now quite clear that the problem we face in the West is not the suppression or prevention of fire. Rather, it is the reintroduction of fire back into the ecosystems of which it is a necessary part. The problem is how to do that in a way that does not lead to catastrophic loss of life, property, and community. I believe that this requires an ordered, four-step process.

First, we must protect communities. We must create community defense zones—planned, multi-owner areas within and immediately around communities that are zoned and managed to minimize fire hazard and risk.

Second, we need to determine where the places are where we can still allow fire to play its natural role, and we must not shy away from our commitment.

Third, we must restore fire through prescribed burning in those forests whose structure will allow the safe reintroduction of fire.

Finally, on those parts of the landscape that will not burn safely, we must begin the process of mechanically treating fuels to create a structure that eventually will accept characteristic fire.

As I review these steps, it occurs to me that only one of them, the management of those places where we will allow fire to burn, is primarily a federal responsibility. The other three will require unprecedented cooperation of multiple stakeholders and levels of government to achieve.

As long as federal fire prevention funding remains in the hands of the federal government, it will continue to be spent on federal land and on federal infrastructure, when the real needs—for community protection, for prescribed burning, for hazardous fuel reduction—are at the community level on largely non-federal lands. As the Secretaries work with the states to craft the implementation plan, I urge that they make it a high priority to find new, direct, and accountable ways to get federal money to the community level where it can be applied to achieve the goals of this strategy.

Stage, continued from page 1

After numerous scoping sessions, the Communities Committee gave the reins to American Forests to move beyond theoretical papers and discussions and create living examples of urban and rural communities building economic, ecological, and social sustainability. Two cities with very different problems showed the greatest potential for urban foundations from which to build innovative projects. Baltimore, with its poverty and vacant land, was one. Seattle, with growth pressures and land use challenges from the recent addition of Chinook salmon to the Endangered Species List, was the other.

Instilling a land ethic in disadvantaged youths

The Seattle program, named the Greenway Connection, seeks to build a regional ethic for the land by creating on-the-ground environmental education programs that reach urban, suburban, and rural youths from elementary school through to career apprenticeships.

Whether young adult apprentices are constructing a schoolyard wetland in the city, volunteer children are planting trees in the suburbs, or a work crew comprised of homeless teens is obliterating a national forest logging road, each project uses a cascading leadership model by which older youths lead younger ones.

What makes this vision both unique and feasible is its government, nonprofit, and community involvement. A Seattle-based conservation corps, EarthCorps, is this initiative's leading player as it drives restoration project implementation. Pieter Bohen, the wizard behind the EarthCorps curtain, is so passionate for his work that he kneels in meetings to fight the urge to jump from his seat.

Having already built a corps whose crews include members from around the world, Bohen saw an opportunity to reach local underserved youths and minorities that he otherwise could not. As a result, two major Earth Corps programs are now developing. The first is the Greenway Crew, which gives underserved urban and rural youths the opportunity to work on forest restoration and maintenance projects from Seattle to the Cascade Mountains. The other is an apprenticeship program with Washington State University through which older crewmembers will work toward a state-recognized certification to begin living-wage urban restoration careers.

EarthCorps crew leader Angela Omolo of Kenya works with corpsmember Edmer Orbista of the Philippines and a Consejo Summer Youth Brigade volunteer. *EarthCorps photo*

Broad cast of characters

Supporting EarthCorps is an eclectic team of policy, technical, land management, and educational organizations.

The Mount Baker/Snoqualmie National Forest has provided EarthCorps a stage on which to perform. This urban national forest has become a recreational playground for the metropolitan region and a laboratory from which the Forest Service wants to learn how to better reach underserved and minority populations. The partners are therefore creating a civic-science monitoring program to measure whether this initiative's educational programs effectively reach diverse cultures and change participants' relationships to forests for the better.

If the national forest is the stage and EarthCorps the players, the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust (MTSGT), led by Doug Shindler, is the stage director. MTSGT is the visionary local political and technical force that has spent the past decade protecting land for economically sustainable conservation uses along the I-90 corridor. Now that it has successfully created most of this greenway, MTSGT is using this initiative to create stewardship opportunities for diverse volunteers to maintain trails, decommission logging roads, and plant trees on Forest Service land and other lands within the greenway.

Rounding out this partnership is American Forests, which originally came to these organizations with the urban-rural linkage concept. From its unique position as the national partner, American Forests is raising financial support for these local partners, creating jobs for apprentices by working with state agencies and businesses to establish a formal certification for urban restoration workers, and helping develop and fund the monitoring program.

As this program develops, American Forests will disseminate the partners' stories and lessons-learned through its national networks and the media so that other cities can use American Forests' resources or work on their own to change the way they deal with development, community health, and forests.

A model of sustainability

National notoriety is exactly what the Greenway Connection partners hope to create. When asked what they envision the finished product of this program to look like, all parties agree that the program will be finished when Seattle is a global model of land stewardship.

Just as people reference Curitiba, Brazil, when they look for models of a city that fought automobile growth with a well-planned transit system, partners envision Seattle as the city that finds a way to empower underserved sectors of society to keep its booming economy from destroying the reason many people move there. In short, there is a lot of work to do.

Ian Leahy is the urban-rural program manager at American Forests and a member of the Communities Committee's urban-rural linkages task group.

Resources

Publications and Web sites

Quick Guide: Wildfire Management and Forest County Payments. American Forests and the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress recently released the fifth in their quick guide series for community forestry activists. This one reviews federal legislation passed in 2000 that supports community forestry efforts and shows community foresters how to best use the new laws. Previously published quick guides cover the federal appropriations process, media strategies, the federal budget process, and organizing Congressional field tours. All are available free of charge from the Forest Policy Center at American Forests, PO Box 2000, Washington, DC 20013, 202-955-4500 ext. 237. The quick guides will soon be available on the Web as well, at http://www.communitiescommittee.org and at http://www.americanforests.org.

Community Forestry Publications. The National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region, has several new community forestry publications, including: *What is Community Forestry and Why Does It Matter?*, *Who's Planning for Forests?*, *Community Forestry Made Real: Case Studies in Landowner Cooperation*, and *What is Participatory Research and Why Does It Matter?*. All are available free of charge from the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region, c/o Yellow Wood Associates, 95 S. Main St., Ste. 2, St. Albans, VT 05478. They can be ordered by phone at 802-524-6141 or off the Web at http://ncfcnfr.net/pubs.html.

Exploring the Uses for Small-Diameter Trees. By Susan LeVan-Green and Jean Livingston. This article in the September 2001 issue of Forest Products Journal discusses multiple uses of forest restoration products and summarizes recent research on the quality and economic value of several products, including dimensional and nondimensional softwood lumber, engineered wood products, glued-laminated timber, structural roundwood, wood and woodfiber/plastic composites, woodfiber products, pulp chips, compost, mulch, and energy. Contact the Forest Products Society at 608-231-1361 or at info@forestprod.org for copies of this article, or visit their Web site at http://www.forestprod.org/.

Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership. The Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities Partnership is a collaborative business network of wood-product manufacturers, forest managers community organizations, and commercial outlets in the Pacific Northwest committed to restoring forest ecosystems and spawning rural economic vitality. For more information, visit http://www.hfhcp.org.

Fire Policy Web sites. The following three sites provide extensive information on the national fire plan and wildfire policy in the United States.

The U.S. Forest Service National Fire Plan Implementation site includes federal documents and agency policy related to the national fire plan. http://www.na.fs.fed.us/nfp.

The Society of American Foresters site includes several reports, Congressional testimony, current federal law, and policy analyses related to national wildfire policy. http://www.safnet.org/policy/forestfires7501.htm.

Visit the Western Governor's Association site for the final version of *A Collaborative Ten-Year Strategy for Restoring Health to Fire-Adapted Ecosystems* and other WGA fire policy reports. http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/fire/default.htm.

Internet Business Classes from Woodnet Development Council. "Business Planning for Natural Resource Enterprises," an eight-week course, and "Taking Your Product to Market," a five-week course, will both begin in October, 2001. For more information visit Woodnet's Web site at http://www.woodnet.org/planning_course.htm or contact Malcolm L. Dell at 208-476-4263 or at woodnet@woodnet.org.

Events

The Wildland-Urban Interface: Sustaining Forests in a Changing Landscape. November 5-8, 2001, Gainesville, Florida. The purpose of this conference is to provide current information and tools to enhance natural resource management, planning, and policy-making at the wildland-urban interface. Presentations will focus on four main areas: planning and managing growth, human dimensions, conserving and managing forests for ecological services and benefits, and conserving and managing forests under different ownerships. Results of an ongoing U.S. Forest Service study, *Human Influences on Forest Ecosystems: Assessing the Southern Wildland Urban Interface*, will be presented. For more information, visit the conference web site at http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/urban or contact Dianne Powers at 352-392-5930 or at dwpowers@mail.ifas.ufl.edu.

Working Landscapes in the Midwest: Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry, and Communities. November 8-10, 2001, Develan, Wisconsin. For more information, contact Marin Byrne at 612-870-3436.

Small Diameter Timber: Resource Management, Manufacturing, and Markets. February 25-27, 2002, Spokane, Washington. The objective of this symposium is to draw attention to the national significance of the small-diameter timber resource by presenting new developments in management, harvesting systems, manufacturing products, and market issues. For more information contact Richard Folk at rfolk@uidaho.edu or at 208-885-5850, or visit the symposium Web site at http://ext.nrs.wsu.edu/small-diameter.

Smallwood 2002: Community and Economic Development Opportunities in Small Tree Utilization. April 11-13, 2002, Albuquerque, New Mexico. This conference on small-tree utilization will feature technical and poster presentations, discussions, tabletop exhibits, and working equipment demonstrations on harvesting systems, processing, markets, and supply and availability of smallwood material. The conference will also include tours to local processors (including millwork, roundwood, preservation treatment, post and pole, small woodworking, and pellet plants) in the Albuquerque area and live demonstrations of harvesting and processing equipment for small trees. For more information, contact the Forest Products Society at 608-231-1361 or at info@forprod.org, or visit their Web site at http://www.forprod.org.

National policy update, *continued from page 2*

The farm bill has been moving on a fast track in recent months. The coalition that helped develop the Boehlert-Kind-Gilchrest amendment in the House is working to get similar legislation introduced in the Senate. In addition, the Administration appears to be ready to engage in the farm bill debate.

Still time to provide input to the farm bill

Priorities in Congress have changed since the tragic terrorist activity on September 11, 2001, however, and budgetary issues are uncertain. Some Congressional and Administration leaders now believe the farm bill may not pass until next year. This likely delay has widened the window of opportunity for community forestry practitioners to propose new or revise existing forestry and conservation programs. Practitioners should share their ideas with their delegation, staff from the Senate Agriculture Committee, and other forestry and conservation groups.

Evaluating stewardship contracting

The USDA Forest Service stewardship contracting pilot projects are beginning to yield lessons. Congress authorized stewardship contracting pilot projects in 1999 to allow the Forest Service to test new approaches to land management and new ways of working with communities. Fifty-six stewardship contracting pilot projects are currently underway, and an additional 28 pilot projects are expected to be authorized in the upcoming appropriations for 2002.

To ensure that learning occurs from these pilots, Congress directed the Forest Service to establish a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process to assess them. The Forest Service awarded a contract to the Pinchot Institute for Conservation to plan and implement a multiparty monitoring process with regional and national partners. American Forests subcontracted with the Pinchot Institute to conduct outreach sessions designed to ensure that national-level stakeholders are engaged in the multiparty monitoring process.

Three outreach sessions were held on July 16-17, 2001. They were attended by House and Senate staff and representatives from national interest groups as well as project participants. Many of those at the outreach sessions remarked that much learning and progress is apparent in these projects. Project participants also said they need longer-term contracts to allow learning to occur and investment of time and resources to pay off. Some also spoke of a need for authority and funding for multiparty monitoring.

Attendees also raised a number of concerns in the three briefing sessions. For example, some environmentalists and congressional staffers wonder whether the goods-for-services authority, which allows goods off Forest Service land to be "traded" to fund stewardship work, provides a perverse incentive to Forest Service employees and contractors to remove more timber from the land than is necessary to achieve desired end results. Some attendees expressed concern over National Forest Management Act exemptions in the authorizing legislation, including a waiver of the requirement that Forest Service employees must mark any tree taken from Forest Service land. Other people questioned whether annual appropriations or commercial sale of products from the land should pay for restoration work.

More information on the farm bill and a full report of the stewardship contracting outreach sessions is available from American Forests.

Christina Cromley is director of forest policy at American Forests and co-chairs the Communities Committee's policy task group.

Mission Statement: The purpose of the Communities Committee is to focus attention on the interdependence between America's forests and the vitality of rural and urban communities, and to promote:

- improvements in political and economic structures to ensure local community well-being and the long-term sustainability of forested ecosystems;
- an increasing stewardship role of local communities in the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity;
- participation by ethnically and socially diverse members of urban and rural communities in decision-making and sharing benefits of forests;
- the innovation and use of collaborative processes, tools, and technologies; and
- recognition of the rights and responsibilities of diverse forest landowners.

Communities and Forests
Communities Committee of the
Seventh American Forest Congress
c/o Ecological Restoration Institute
P.O. Box 15018, Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5018