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Hazardous Fuels Reduction Versus the 400-Pound Gorilla

BY DOUG CRANDALL

As I was preparing to write this article, I received an email stating that the National Interagency Fire Center upgraded the National Preparedness Level for wildland fire risk to Level 5, the highest level—the point at which the potential exists to exhaust all firefighting resources nationally because of the exceedingly large number and severity of wildfire incidents. Total wildland acres burned through August 1 was two million acres above the 10-year average (see www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/nfn.html). Is this year's explosive fire season a "perfect storm," the surprising result of an unusual series of circumstances, or is it a predictable probability based on an overwhelming accumulation of evidence? If you have even a rudimentary knowledge of forestry, have paid attention to historical wildfire trends or have spent any time on and around our federal lands, the answer to this question is obviously and painfully the latter. I say "painfully" because the awareness of an unnatural over-accumulation of fuels has been widely reported and discussed within the forest community for literally decades, yet the management response has been slow to develop and inadequately implemented.

I don't state this to place blame. In fact, to be fair, the current adminis-



tration has quadrupled the number of acres treated and the amount of money spent on hazardous fuels reduction, a huge increase over any previous administration. From 2000 to 2007, the USDA Forest Service and Department of the Interior will have treated nearly 20 million acres. Since 2003, the first year of the administration's Healthy Forests Initiative, about 7.8 million acres have been treated in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), representing almost 60 percent of all treatments during that time frame.

While these accomplishments are important and appreciated, when put into context of the enormity of the problem, it becomes clear that we have only scratched the surface and, in fact, are actually falling behind. Considering that current government estimates show that approximately 190 million acres of federal land are at an uncharacteristically high risk of catastrophic wildfire, treating four to five million acres a year just doesn't cut it (so to speak). If forests somehow maintained themselves in basically static and unvarying conditions, these treatment levels might be sufficient, but we now know that these systems are dynamic and constantly changing. As much as the analogy of the 400-pound gorilla in the room has become an abused cliché, I can't think of a better way of describing the completely dominant, but often overlooked role of forest growth and mortality.

Two years ago Congress asked the Forest Service for a summary of net annual growth, mortality and harvest



Is this 400-pound gorilla on a diet?

levels (in board feet) on national forestlands. The response was remarkable: net annual growth was approximately 20 billion board feet (BBF); net annual mortality was almost 10 BBF; and net annual harvest was about 2 BBF. In other words, the timber sale program was only about one-tenth of the net growth and one-fifth of the mortality on these lands.

While the timber sale program is only one tool among many for manipulating vegetation, it is still, by far, the most used and important, even though harvest levels have fallen off by about 80 percent due to controversy and litigation. Few timber sales today on federal lands are designed for the primary purpose of harvesting trees for economic purposes; in fact, most are intended to achieve other objectives such as thinning for fuels reduction or wildlife habitat enhancement, or to create conditions more resistant to disease or insect epidemics.

One of the most unfortunate consequences of the collapse of the federal timber sale program has been the resulting loss of hundreds of manufacturing facilities and logging companies—the very infrastructure need-

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Hazardous Fuels Reduction

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ed to cost effectively treat dense and dying forests. Some regions no longer have a viable forest products industry and must pay outright to have forests thinned and dead trees removed, with no offsetting income from the value of the removed wood or biomass. States like Colorado and Arizona that lack this infrastructure are scrambling to find ways of enticing investment in new milling and biomass enterprises, whereas other states like Montana and Oregon are struggling to keep the few remaining facilities they still have.

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the lack of a predictable supply of raw material is still the primary impediment to the maintenance of existing infrastructure and the largest obstacle for enticing investment in new equipment and enterprises. Until we address the issue of a predictable supply, we will simply not be able to

achieve even modest hazardous fuels objectives. But I believe we have started to turn the corner.

Though the availability of information and science concerning wildfire and fuels has been accumulating for decades, a good place to begin a review of significant events or initiatives is in 1995 with the release of the first national wildland fire document.

• **December 1995—Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and Program Review.** Key elements include: reaffirming the protection of life as the first priority; recognizing wildland fire as an important natural process; requiring the development of wildfire management plans; requiring decisions to be consistent with land and resource management plans; and clarifying responsibilities within the wildland-urban interface.

• **September 2000—The National Fire Plan. Report to the President: Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment.** Key recommendations include: provide additional firefighting resources;

restore fire-damaged landscapes; emphasize and expand efforts for reducing hazardous fuels; and increase education efforts and coordination within the WUI.

• **October 2000—Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000.** In response to the collapse of the federal timber sale program and the resulting loss of funds to forest counties and schools from federal revenue sharing programs, a safety-net was established, at historic averages, through 2007. In addition, the creation of local Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) was authorized, including a substantial funding source allowing them to perform collaborative projects on neighboring federal lands, many of which address hazardous fuels reduction. This was the first major law creating local collaborative structures and providing them funds for forest health activities on federal lands.

• **August 2001—10-year Comprehensive Strategy.** Produced in conjunction with governors, tribes, private landowners and a variety of other stakeholders to help develop a long-term strategy for better coordinating and managing wildfire, hazardous fuels and ecosystem restoration, with emphases on priority setting, collaboration and accountability.

• **May 2002—Implementation Plan, 10-year Comprehensive Strategy.** Identifies 22 specific tasks for achieving the four goals of improving wildfire prevention and suppression, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire adapted ecosystems and promoting community assistance.

• **August 2002—Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI).** A presidential initiative including a number of administrative actions: the creation of a categorical exclusion under NEPA for some federal fuels reduction projects; streamlining the appeals process within existing authorities; streamlining Environmental Analysis documentation; and improving the consultation process under the Endangered Species Act.

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Next Issue: Biomass

Appropriations Resolution. Omnibus appropriations bill; includes a provision granting broad stewardship contracting authority for 10 years.

• **December 2003—Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA).** Law providing the Forest Service and BLM with legislative tools for expediting hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal lands, limited to a total of 20 million acres, with a primary focus on the WUI. Some of the key provisions include: a streamlined Environmental Analysis (EA) process; incentives for local involvement through the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs); and expedited administrative and judicial review procedures. In addition, other titles in the bill have provisions concerning woody biomass development, assistance to states and tribes on watershed forest management, improved information gathering and dissemination on forest insects and diseases, the creation of a Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP), and the creation of an early warning system for preventing and controlling invasive species.

• **August 2005—Energy Policy Act.** Comprehensive law with numerous provisions for promoting the use of renewable energy and alternative fuels, including woody biomass. Three key biomass provisions include: extension and expansion of production tax credits; authorization for transportation grants up to \$20 per ton of biomass; and authorization for R&D grants up to \$500,000.

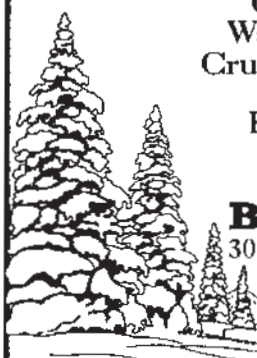
• **May 2006—Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (FERRA).** The U.S. House of Representatives passed HR 4200 (FERRA), which includes provisions for expediting forest recovery following major catastrophic events. Many of these events create significant fuels problems. FERRA also authorizes federal funding and assistance to state and private entities for forest recovery and provides dedicated funds for related research. The Senate has yet to pass companion legislation.

This is only a partial list, but gives a good idea of how much positive activity has occurred in recent history and why I think the momentum has shifted from conflict and neglect to a

realization that there's actually a gorilla in the room. This realization, now, needs to lead to management actions proportionate to the severity of the problem. New tools, management techniques and authorities—such as stewardship contracting, HFRA procedures and categorical exclusions—

in combination with the more traditional tools of prescribed fire, timber sale contracts and wildland fire use must be applied at an exponential rate. It will also be important for the agencies to better identify and prioritize at-risk acres, as recommended by the GAO in a recent report. In that

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analysis, the GAO expressed concerns that the acres being treated are often the easiest and cheapest, and not necessarily the most important.

Even with a much more aggressive level of treatments—because of the huge magnitude of the problem—we will continue to experience many fire seasons in future years, if not decades, that will reach a National Preparedness Level of 5, but we also know that the sooner we begin to treat these forests, the more land and communities we will protect in the long run.

This effort will require support and action from a broad set of interests, groups and constituents:

- Agencies will need to better educate and communicate the magnitude of the problem, create better internal and external accountability structures concerning hazardous fuels targets and accomplishments, coordinate better with other groups, and place more emphasis, personnel and funding on fewer key priorities.

- Congress and state governments will need to continue to provide increased authorities and funding,

and provide focused oversight.

- Forest products companies and industry organizations will need to continue to engage in the issues through collaborative efforts and ensure proper application of best management practices, as well as continue to modernize facilities and invest in new infrastructure for small-diameter material and biomass (to the extent possible and appropriate considering the difficulty in obtaining new funding when raw material supply is tenuous).

- Environmental groups, and their members and beneficiaries, will need to engage more in collaborative problem solving rather than in the strategy of vilify and litigate, which is no longer an appropriate response to current structures and realities, and in the long-run is likely to backfire and affect their credibility and long-term success.

- Professional organizations such as SAF will need to continue to provide information, coordination and guidance. I need to mention that SAF leadership at the national level and in some states has put the Society in a

stronger position of positive influence than I have ever experienced previously. All I can say is thanks.

These and other groups will need to engage, because no matter what values they prize most from federal lands—whether recreation, wildlife, esthetics, economic activity or any other—the risk to them is greater due to the increase of hazardous fuels than from any other threat.

Wildfires need fuel, heat and oxygen to exist. Of the three, we only have the ability to influence fuel. And, there are only two ways to reduce forest fuels: intentionally or unintentionally. The decisions are ours to make, and we are responsible to local communities and future generations for the consequences of these decisions or lack thereof. At our current pace, future foresters and land managers will look back at our legacy as an embarrassment at best, but more likely as a tragedy, considering that the problems and solutions were well understood, but the will lacking. This is a distinct possibility, but considering the progress made so far and momentum that's been generated, maybe now's the time to put our gorilla on a diet. ♦

For the last three years, Doug Crandall has been the Staff Director for the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health in Washington, D.C. For two years previous to that appointment he was vice-president for the National Forest Foundation, a private nonprofit conservation organization that works in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. For four years before that, Doug was again Staff Director for the House Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health. Before working for Congress, Doug worked on national forest issues for the American Forest and Paper Association; managed a lumber company in Montana; and was a forester, float-plane pilot and plywood mill manager in the Brazilian Amazon. He is an Oregon State University forestry grad and an SAF member. A member of numerous forestry, industry and community organizations, he can be reached via email at doug.crandall@mail.house.gov.



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Some Results of Wildfire Mitigation Planning

BY WILLIAM E. SCHLOSSER

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) was considered the biggest change in the management of our nation's forests in 100 years. HFRA made it possible to conduct forest management activities needed to protect communities and our nation's national forests from over crowding and heavy fuel loads that contribute to the intense fires that have occurred in the last two decades. The National Fire Plan (NFP) provided resources and money for states, counties and communities to complete the process of planning, which leads to the reduction of lives lost, homes destroyed, communities shattered and rural economies devastated as a result of catastrophic wildfires.

With all of the attention given to the NFP and the resulting county-level wildfire protection plans, the question remains, "What has been the impact?" During 2005, approximately \$3.3 million were spent in Idaho alone to plan and administer hazardous fuels treatments on non-federal lands. Since 2001, over 10,000 acres of hazardous fuels have been treated on private lands through grants administered by the Idaho Department of Lands. This article takes a closer look at a few examples of how wildfire mitigation planning has led to the implementation of projects that have made an impact on the lives of people in rural communities.

Shoshone County, Idaho

In 2001, Shoshone County, Idaho, received a planning grant through the Idaho Department of Lands to complete a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The plan was completed in 2002 (updated in 2006) and included a number of recommendations targeting: 1) safety and policy; 2) factors of home ignitability; 3) infrastructure hardening; 4) firefighting resources and capability enhancements; and 5) regional land management recommendations. Shoshone County carries a long history of dealing with wildfires. In the Great 1910 Fire, the County Seat of Wallace was mostly destroyed, resulting in the loss of life and property



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIAM E. SCHLOSSER

The homes on the South Hill Wallace were situated on steep slopes and under dense canopies of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and grand fir. Ignitable fuels adjacent to homes and poor access contributed to a high potential for casualty loss leading to a recommendation of treatments in the county's CWPP.

as this blaze roared through the region.

The Shoshone County CWPP identified the South Hill of Wallace as an area in desperate need of home defensibility fuels treatments, access improvements and the treatment of structural ignitability. Steep slopes and highly ignitable fuels surrounding homes defined this area. Following the adoption of their plan, the county sought and received funding assistance to implement the plan. The treatments involved local homeowners, adjacent state and federal land, and community members. Over the period of a year the treatments were implemented by thinning out dead and dying trees, and opening up the tree canopy where it overtopped homes and garages. Roads were widened and connected where one-way-in-and-out conditions were present. Follow-up activities have been implemented mainly by the homeowners themselves as trees are pruned, brush is controlled and combustible materials are controlled.

The Shoshone County example provides an excellent case in point of how the NFP is making a difference by reducing the potential for casualty loss.

Boise County, Idaho: Castle Mountain

Boise County, Idaho, completed

their CWPP in 2003 and updated it in 2006. As part of the recommendations identified in the planning process, the community of Castle Mountain was identified as high risk to casualty loss from wildfire. This community, nestled above a natural hot springs area, supports streams, ample tree and brush species, narrow roads and low-hanging power lines. Once a part of industrial forestland holdings, this community has become a full-time home to many and weekend retreat for others.

Castle Mountain supports over 200 homes, all of which are at a very high risk to loss from wildfire entering the community or spreading from a house fire in the community. Working with the West Central Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Association, Inc., Castle Mountain community members hired a consultant to assist with implementing an aggressive fuels treatment program. During 2004 and 2005, homeowners developed fuel treatment programs and implemented them through hired contractors and homeowner efforts. Roads were widened, power lines were re-routed and fire district access was enhanced.

Beyond just the treatment of fuels around homes, use of fire-resistant building materials were addressed

through educational materials and consultations. Many homeowners now enjoy a community defensible against wildfire, while still enjoying the natural beauty of their area.

Pend Oreille County, Washington

Pend Oreille County, Washington, completed their CWPP in December 2005, the first county in Washington state to complete a countywide CWPP. Already in 2006, three more counties adjacent to Pend Oreille County are developing their plans in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Pend Oreille County integrated their CWPP into their FEMA-approved All Hazards Mitigation Plan (AHMP) in order to increase the usefulness of the CWPP and round out the AHMP. Their approach targeted recommendations in the five broad mitigation measures detailed in the Shoshone County summary. Two of their projects were rather unique and point to the benefits of integrated wildfire mitigation planning.

1. Kalispel Tribe of Indians. The Kalispel Indian Reservation is located along the eastern shore of the Pend Oreille River in Pend Oreille County. The reservation is surrounded on three sides by rural fire protection, although it is not formally covered by a rural fire department. Wildfire protection is contracted by the BIA to the USFS with an office in Newport, Wash., located approximately 30 minutes away. Nearly 100 homes and business structures are located on the reservation, but fire protection is limited.

As a recommendation in the county's CWPP, the Kalispel Indian Reservation was identified as needing a dedicated rural fire department capable of structure protection and initial attack for wildfires. The Kalispel Tribe of Indians, using this recommendation, was able to win a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development to build a fire station and purchase fire fighting equipment. As of August 2006, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians is moving into the construction phase of the project and locating a fire chief for this department.

This situation provides an excellent example of how an integrated approach to wildfire protection incorporated not only hazardous fuels reduction, but also resources and capabilities to respond to fires when they threaten homes and businesses.

Parallel to these activities, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians is developing a Fire Management Plan for the reservation that is integrated with their



PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNIS S. THOMAS

Over 200 homes in the Castle Mountain community in Boise County, Idaho, received fuels treatments and access improvements to reduce the potential for casualty loss from wildfires. Many of the homes were perched on top of scenic vistas, such as this one, with a continuous bed of wildfire fuels below the home.

Forest Management Plan.

2. County and City Policy in Pend Oreille County. Another recommendation developed in the Pend Oreille County CWPP was to address county and city building codes. Once the CWPP was completed and adopted, the county received a grant from the USFS to develop targeted recommendations for amending the regulatory environment in Pend Oreille County to reduce the potential for repetitive loss from wildfires.

The county recognized that treatments of existing homes do not change the root of the problem. That problem is the construction of new homes with inadequate access, high-risk building materials (cedar shake

roofing, wooden siding and decorative/combustible vegetation) and no defensible space. Working with a contractor, the county and cities are developing a range of alternatives to discuss during open public meetings leading to the adoption of new codes in each municipality. In this way, the county hopes to educate the owners of new homes (many who are moving into the area from outside "fire country") about the factors of home ignitability while providing for a defensible home site that rural fire protection can reasonably expect to save in the case of a wildfire.

CWPP planning efforts have been

successful because of the concentrated efforts of wildfire and rural fire protection professionals, elected officials from state, county and city government, federal, tribal, state and local agency representatives, Resource Conservation and Development Associations, homeowner associations, professional forestry consultants, individuals and businesses coming together for the purpose of mitigating the potential for casualty loss in the wildland-urban interface. Few federal programs have been met with such enthusiasm and energy as the National Fire Plan and its local implementation. As this program

moves into the latter half of this decade, and into this century, it is incumbent on everyone involved to keep the flame of energy burning to update and implement the plans, so that we do not allow the flame of wildfires to burn our efforts and energies away. ♦

William E. Schlosser is a professional forester and regional planner with Northwest Management, Inc., located in Moscow, Idaho. He has been the project leader on the development of 35 County and Tribal Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Wyoming. He can be reached at schlosser@consulting-foresters.com.

BLM Lakeview District's Gerber Stew Stewardship—A “Stewpot” of Treatments

BY MIKE BECHDOLT

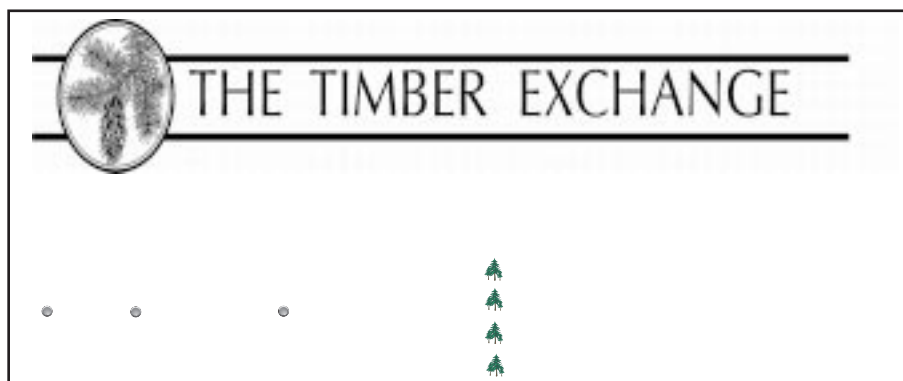
Imagine receiving new legislative authority to design a long-term contract with an objective to implement an array of ecosystem restoration treatments under a single contract. That's exactly what the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) districts have been successfully doing since the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution was signed in February 2003 giving the BLM and USDA Forest Service (USFS) the ability to enter into long-term stewardship contracts. Since receiving the authority, Oregon and Washington BLM has awarded a combined total of 24 stewardship contracting projects involving restoration treatments such as streamside habitat enhancement, fish habitat improvement, biomass utilization for energy production, precommercial thinning, fence construction, wildlife habitat improvement and hazard fuel reduction. One of the many successful BLM

stewardship contracts to date has been Gerber Stew, which was awarded in September of 2004.

The Gerber Stew project is located on the Lakeview District in the Klamath Falls Resource Area in southern Oregon. The vegetation in the resource area ranges from high elevation true fir above 6,000 feet on the westside to juniper/sagebrush high steppe desert on the eastside. The westside of the resource area consists primarily of mixed conifer Oregon/California (O&C) forestlands with primary emphasis on permanent forest production in conformity with the provision of sustained yield. The O&C act also emphasizes protecting watersheds, regulating stream flow, contributing to the economic stability of local communities and industries, and providing recreational facilities. The initial intent of the Gerber Stew contract was to experiment with potential utilization markets for western juniper. For a number of years, the

Lakeview District has been cutting and burning hundreds of acres of western juniper on lands where native understory vegetation is negatively impacted by encroaching western juniper. These efforts were undertaken in response to documented research showing that western juniper has significantly expanded its range in the last 130 years as a result of fire suppression. BLM became interested in utilization because local mills in Klamath Falls and in the surrounding areas were starting to use more western juniper for a variety of products, including mining timber posts, paneling, fencing, absorbent, flooring, hardboard and biomass. With increasing local demand for western juniper, the new authority to enter into stewardship contracts, and interested contractors willing to test an untested market, the Gerber Stew project was spawned.

The initial treatments, called task orders, were designed primarily to deal with the restoration and utilization of western juniper on eastside lands. With the Klamath Falls Resource Area cutting and burning 2,000 to 3,000 acres of juniper per year as part of the National Fire Plan and rangeland restoration work, there appeared to be a readily available supply of potential logs and biomass. The scope of treatments quickly expanded when the Klamath Falls Resource Area received funding to treat westside, small-diameter forested stands for forest health and hazard fuel



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reduction purposes. The contractor reviewed some of the proposed small-diameter thinning treatments and stated he was willing to test the chip markets not only for western juniper, but for small-diameter mixed conifer material (1"-9" DBH) that is typically left in the woods after a precommercial thinning. To date, not only has the contractor been able to find a market for western juniper, but has also successfully found a market for small-diameter material resulting in improved forest health and a reduction of hazardous fuels in some of the resource area's younger mixed conifer stands including young ponderosa pine plantations.

Two unique aspects of the stewardship contracts are that the legislation authorizes: (1) the value of vegetative material to be applied as an offset against the cost of services received; and (2) multi-year contract authority greater than five years, but not to exceed 10 years.

Neither of these authorities is available under standard BLM timber sale or service contracts. Under Gerber Stew, the BLM is using the value of the material (i.e., logs, chips and biomass) to help offset the cost of restoration and service work. Where the value of the material will often not pay for implementing the full array of restoration treatments, the BLM is securing the additional funds to pay for the service work.

Gerber Stew is an IDIQ (Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity) contract, which allows use of task orders to regulate work requested based upon available funding and priority of treatments. Funding for the task orders comes from a variety of sources depending upon the restoration treatment. For example, if fuel reduction is the primary goal, funding may come from National Fire Plan accounts. If spring restoration

work is being done, one-time appropriated dollars may come through water restoration accounts.

The Gerber Stew project is designed to implement a "stewpot" of work. Individual treatments to date have varied from cutting, yarding and removal of the juniper, manual cutting and piling western juniper around sensitive spring sites, road resurfacing, fencing, seeding, removal of residual landing slash for biomass, and slashbusting. Not all the work involves product removal. Table 1 describes the service work that has been tasked out.

In contrast, table 2 shows estimates of products that have been scheduled for removal to date.

(1"-9" DBH) is involved, the product value rarely pays for the cutting, yarding and hauling.

Bidding on these types of contracts is challenging for the contractors. Imagine trying to bid on a 5-10 year contract with multiple bid items on treatments that you have typically not implemented before and speculating on annual cost increases. Imagine trying to develop a market for a product (western juniper) that is rarely marketed, is economically and ecologically difficult to remove, and is historically left alone or cut and burned. Imagine trying to work with the local infrastructure to see if they will expand their product line or develop a market

Table 1. Gerber Stew—Service Work Tasked to Date and Costs.

Treatments Tasked To Date	Units	Cost Range Per Unit
Manual Cut, Pile & Cover (Western Juniper)	346 Acres	\$370-\$680
Mechanical Cut & Pile (Western Juniper)	240 Acres	\$120-\$230
Mechanical Cut (Western Juniper & Mixed Conifer)	1,220 Acres	\$115-\$265
Mechanical Yarding (Western Juniper & Mixed Conifer)	1,220 Acres	\$50-\$134
Seeding	944 Acres	\$15.00
Road Maintenance	960 Stations (1 Station = 100 ft.)	\$8.00
Road Obliteration	75 Stations	\$9.00
Road Blocking	3	\$165.00
Spot Rocking (Includes hauling and processing rock)	356 Stations	\$25-\$40/ton of rock \$40-\$50/station
Fencing	3,500 Feet	\$0.75-0.90
Slashbusting/Mastication	300 Acres	\$200-\$360

Table 2. Gerber Stew—Estimates of Products Scheduled for Removal to Date.

Product Removal	Units	Approximate Value
Western Juniper – Clean Chips For Hardboard Processing	4,962 Tons	\$0.25/ton
Sawlogs	753 MBF	\$15.00-\$50.00/MBF
Biomass for Energy Production	5,240 Tons	\$0.10/ton
Ponderosa Pine – Clean Chips For Hardboard Processing	4,050 Tons	\$0.20/ton

The cost of the service work far exceeds the value of the product removed. To date, approximately \$800,000 of service work has been tasked out with a product return value of about \$16,000 on Gerber Stew. However, this varies by contract, and some stewardship contracts return a much higher product value depending upon the amount of sawlog material sold and how much service work is involved. It is no secret that whenever biomass and small-diameter thinning

and infrastructure locally to utilize material typically ignored (i.e., small trees ranging in size from 1"-9" DBH that contribute to elevated fire risks and fuel loadings). Yet, despite these challenges, and after two years of implementation, the contractor working both externally with private industry and the local BLM office has managed to implement the contract.

In 2005, the stewardship contractor delivered approximately 2,000 tons of juniper chips to the local hardboard



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE BECHDOLT

In 2006, a biomass utilization example involved grinding of residual timber sale landing piles.

plant. In addition, 450 acres of a ponderosa pine plantation was thinned down to 2" DBH. The material is scheduled for chipping and utilization

at the local hardboard plant in 2006 after it dries out. In forested small-diameter stands, where the BLM typically precommercially thinned, trees

that were normally left on site are now being yarded and utilized. The inherent risks associated with stewardship contracts are discussed at the pre-bid meetings prior to issuing a solicitation of a stewardship contract. Contractors ask questions to obtain as much detail as possible. Field tours are given of potential treatment sites. However, because some of these contracts are designed long term (10 years), there are more unseen items in regard to future treatments than seen on the field trips.

Are stewardship contracts working as intended? For the Gerber Stew stewardship contract, the treatments are meeting many of the objectives. For instance, approximately \$100,000 of road resurfacing was completed last fall on a section of road that needed immediate attention. The work was tasked out and completed within a month. A local rock and gravel company was subcontracted to provide and haul the rock. In 2005, two rangeland spring sites that were completely encroached with western juniper were treated by hand (cut and piled) due to their resource sensitivity. This spring, the Klamath Falls Resource Area identified over 150 residual timber sale landings scheduled for burning. In lieu of burning, the resource area tasked out the grinding and removal of the landing slash to the stewardship contractor. The material is being sent to the closest biomass facility in Medford for power generation.

These task orders are accomplishing the very objective of stewardship contracting by providing employment to

BLM's Stewardship Contracting Guidelines

Under Section 323 of Public Law 108.7, February 28, 2003, the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have authority until September 30, 2013, to enter into stewardship projects with private persons or public or private entities, by contract or by agreement, to perform services to achieve land management objectives for the national forests or public lands that meet local and rural community needs.

1. Stewardship Contracting is not a replacement for the established timber sale program. Forest management projects designed primarily to enhance volume are not suitable for stewardship contracting.
2. Stewardship projects shall comply with applicable environmental laws and regulations, including the appropriate level of environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and are consistent with the applicable land use plans.
3. Any vegetative material removal must be a by-product of meeting the stewardship contracting project goals. Removal of these products must be consistent with the objectives developed through the collaborative process and the applicable land use plan objectives.
4. When designing stewardship contracting projects, consider projects involving treatments and techniques available to make forests, woodlands and rangelands more resilient to natural disturbances such as fire, insects, disease, wind and flood.
5. For contacts exceeding five years in duration, field managers should consider such factors as the scope of the project, the type of the material to be treated, the availability of local capacity to process and use the material removed from the land, and the potential development of new markets for small-diameter material, as well as operational factors such as local weather patterns, sensitive wildlife species habitat use cycles and seasonal restrictions for wildfire prevention.

Stewardship restoration treatment objectives include:

- road and trail maintenance or obliteration for improved water quality;
- soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values;
- setting prescribed fires to improve composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat;
- removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards or achieve other land management objectives;
- watershed restoration and maintenance;
- restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish habitat; and
- control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE BECHDOLT

In this 2005 juniper utilization treatment, Norcross Springs Western juniper was cut, yarded, chipped and delivered to a local plant for hardboard processing. The objective was to release the understory vegetation (sage brush, bitter brush and bunch grasses).

rural communities, meeting restoration goals, building utilization markets and reducing wildfire risk. So, yes, the stewardship contract is working as envisioned. The key to successful implementation has been flexibility on the part of both the contractor and the government to meet the overall objectives and to work through the challenges of a new contracting mechanism. Would any of these treatments have happened without having the ability to use stewardship contracts? The answer is yes, but stewardship contracts encourage long-term commitments and stability between the government, the contractors and the community. Contractors and the BLM are learning to adapt as each treatment is implemented and new stewardship contracts are awarded. It is the agency desire that the early "seeds" of stewardship contracting grow into a larger and stable market for utilization of the by-products of ecologically sound land management restoration activities. ♦

Mike Bechdolt is lead forester, Lakeview District, Bureau of Land Management, located in Klamath Falls, Ore. He can be reached at 541-885-4118 or Mike_Bechdolt@blm.gov.



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Reducing Wildfire Risk through Collaboration and Commitment

BY KATHY LYNN

Wildfire risk in Josephine County, Oregon, is extreme. The county also has a long history of adversarial relationships between the government and its citizens. In 2002, the Biscuit Fire burned over 500,000 acres and resulted in suppression and recovery costs that exceeded \$150 million. Most of the acres burned in the fire occurred in Josephine County, which is

located in southwest Oregon on the border with California. During the Biscuit Fire, over 10,000 households were put on evacuation notice. While very few homes and outbuildings were ultimately destroyed and no lives were lost, the potential for catastrophic losses of life and property became very clear. The Biscuit Fire created a window of opportunity—county government, local fire districts, state and federal agencies, and citizens recognized

that the potential consequences from wildfire are much greater than those that occurred during the Biscuit Fire. Most significantly, public and private partners alike realized that unless they could work together and identify common ground, they would not be successful in addressing the critical need to reduce wildfire risk.

In 2003, Josephine County convened local, state and federal partners to begin developing a countywide fire plan—the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan (JCIFP). Josephine County has a population of over 76,000 and has one of the highest poverty rates in the state. The federal government owns 70 percent of land in the county, and over 50 percent of the county's population lives outside of the urban growth boundaries in rural communities, many of which are in areas at high risk to wildfire. The initial objectives of the JCIFP included addressing the lessons learned during the Biscuit Fire and focusing on strategies for risk assessment, fuels reduction, education and outreach, and emergency management. The county also wanted to address planning guidelines and requirements in the National Fire Plan and the Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation program. In December 2003, when the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) was signed, the county also began to address HFRA guidelines for Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

The development of the JCIFP began with a focus on collaboration—core members of the planning team identified stakeholders from fire districts, local, state and federal agencies, community organizations, citizens and social service agencies to participate on planning committees. Initially, one executive committee was formed to guide the planning process; however, partners quickly identified the need for multiple subcommittees to tackle the complex issues related to each facet of the plan.

Implementing the Plan: The 2005 Deer Creek Fire

Nothing tests a plan like a real event. In late August 2005, almost a year after the JCIFP was adopted, the Deer Creek Fire burned over 1,600 acres, destroyed five homes and a number of outbuildings, and threatened over 100 residences. After the fire was contained, JCIFP partners organized two forums to identify lessons learned from the Deer Creek Fire. The first event was a briefing for fire service and county agencies on September 22, 2005.

Josephine County Emergency Management and the Josephine County

Fire Defense Board led an agency debriefing to review operations, response, evacuation and other issues. Participants agreed that interagency communication, strengthened through the fire planning process, resulted in stronger coordination during the Deer Creek Fire than during previous fires, including the 2002 Biscuit Fire. One of the major accomplishments was stronger coordination of the evacuation process. In previous fires, there had been limited coordination between county, state and federal agencies, which resulted in limited communication and challenges in notifying many residents who live in rural, isolated areas. In the Deer Creek fire, agencies worked together to coordinate public notification, reroute traffic and strengthen communication.

JCIFP partners also organized a community meeting in partnership with the Illinois Valley Fire District a month after the fire. Over 80 people attended this meeting, which provided an opportunity to gather information on the experiences of residents directly affected by the fire and to understand their concerns. The information provided by residents affected by the Deer Creek fire is now helping local fire agencies, Josephine County and community organizations identify strategies to improve emergency management and communication, education and outreach, and mitigation actions to reduce wildfire risk. Lessons learned from the Deer Creek fire has resulted in a protocol for future agency and community debriefs that will be implemented by JCIFP partners in the event of a significant fire. Other recommendations for increasing education and awareness, continuing to strengthen evacuation, and coordinating landscape scale fuels treatments have been incorporated into an updated action plan for the JCIFP.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY LYNN

Josephine County residents provide input to JCIFP partners on how the fire plan worked during the 2005 Deer Creek Fire.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, MEDFORD DISTRICT

The JCIFP was in place when the 1,600-acre Deer Creek fire started in August of 2005. The plan enabled agencies to communicate and work together to coordinate and accomplish many tasks, including public notification and rerouting traffic.

The JCIFP was adopted in November 2004 and included specific strategies for implementation. Most of the diverse partners involved with the planning process agreed to continue their participation and take responsibility for implementing elements of the plan.

Agency and Community Collaboration

The development of the JCIFP was an unprecedented collaboration for Josephine County that helped strengthen relationships between all stakeholders. One of the most significant examples of collaboration within the JCIFP was the development and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that focused on implementation of the plan.

The MOU illustrates the roles and responsibilities of the various committees to ensure that the plan is implemented, monitored, maintained and updated. It also outlines the roles and

responsibilities of partners to work collaboratively to implement the JCIFP, maintain coordination of the committees, identify and implement education and outreach strategies, and work together on emergency management issues, including evacuation and response, incident command training and multi-agency coordination. In the MOU, local, state and federal partners identified high risk areas and prioritized fuels reduction projects on public and private land that met objectives for landscape scale treatment. Traditionally, the agencies have sought public input on treatment areas as required through the National Environmental Policy Act and environmental assessments. The JCIFP partnership is resulting in ongoing dialogue about where to treat projects and ensure that public agencies are treating areas adjacent to communities at risk.

On-the-ground accomplishments

Since the adoption of the fire plan in November 2004, JCIFP partners have treated over 1,100 acres of defensible space on private land. These defensible space projects have been coordinated by local fire districts, watershed councils, community development organizations, nonprofit groups and through grants adminis-

Reducing Disaster Risk for the Special Needs Population

Josephine County is home to a large number of people with special needs, including the elderly, physically and mentally disabled, and those with low incomes. Josephine County's Special Needs Committee estimates that 10 percent of the county's population is classified as special needs, the majority of whom are 65 years and older. According to the 2000 Census, over 2,400 families live below the poverty level. The county is also diversifying in terms of its population demographics. Latinos now make up over four percent of Josephine County's population. Those who do not speak English as a primary language, as well as undocumented individuals, also comprise a growing portion of residents.

To better serve the special needs population, the JCIFP includes a special needs assessment, as well as a list of local social service agencies and the populations they serve. The assessment provided a series of recommendations to improve education and outreach, emergency management, and fuels reduction efforts for the special needs population. The assessment also resulted in a grant that is now assisting low income and elderly and disabled citizens reduce hazardous fuels around their homes. Although the grant is still being implemented, 15 households have already had work completed. In a case study conducted to help monitor the lessons learned for the grant, one JCIFP partner commented: *"The [defensible space] work improves the ability for special needs people to make it through wildfire without the catastrophic risk of losing properties or their lives. It was great to look at how social and fuels reduction aspects came together in this unique project."*

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tered by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Most of the funding for the defensible space projects came through the National Fire Plan and Title II funding from the Secure Rural Schools Act. The JCIFP has helped bring in over two million dollars to Josephine County in the past two years alone for defensible space on private land and other JCIFP projects.

In 2005, the Medford BLM and Rogue-River Siskiyou National Forest treated over 6,000 acres in the wildland-urban interface. These efforts, when matched with treatments on private land, are helping Josephine County to work toward long-term, landscape fuels reduction goals.

Getting the public involved!

The plan places significant emphasis on public education and outreach. One of the primary efforts that has resulted from the JCIFP has been an annual woody vegetation disposal day. This event, held first in 2005 and again this past spring, provides an incentive to residents to clean up their yards and bring the debris to a local composting facility for free disposal. While the regular disposal fee is only a few dollars, residents surveyed during the 2006 event indicated that the free disposal motivated them to clean up around their homes sooner than they usually would have. In the two years that the event has taken place, over 300 people have participated and over 600 cubic yards of woody vegetation has been collected. Additionally, volunteers from local fire districts and state and federal forestry agencies have had an opportunity to meet with people attending the event and build relationships between local citizens and the



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHY LYNN

One aspect of the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan is its emphasis on public education and outreach, such as the second annual woody vegetation disposal day, where residents can dump their woody debris for free.

fire community. In 2007, JCIFP partners plan to increase marketing for the event, expand the hours at the collection site and organize a second collection site in the Illinois Valley.

Collaboration and Stewardship Contracting

There is growing recognition of the need to reduce hazardous fuels on a landscape level. Coordination of public and private land treatments, however, is not a simple task. The Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan's risk assessment provides an indication of priorities, including areas to be treated, that are reviewed each year by all partners. However, funding and priorities for private land projects must connect with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management strategic plans for hazardous fuels reduction.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM GONZALES, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, MEDFORD DISTRICT

A fuels reduction sign is used to promote demonstration projects in Josephine County

JCIFP partners recognize that there is not enough funding under the National Fire Plan or other grant sources to treat all of the hazardous fuels adjacent to or within communities at risk in Josephine County. With this in mind, partners have been identifying alternative sources of funding to sustain long-term treatment on public and private land. In the fall of 2005, partners in Josephine County began discussing opportunities related to stewardship contracting. The group sought a tool to implement public and private fuel reduction activities that would help protect communities from wildfire. In addition, the group was

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motivated by a desire to find more collaborative approaches to land management and build off of the strong working relationship they developed while working on the JCIFP. Others were excited to use stewardship contracting to increase local economic development and pursue biomass utilization opportunities. Some wanted to use stewardship as a means to develop examples of sound forest restoration. Finally, some partners wanted to craft a model of integrated stewardship and community wildfire protection planning.

These objectives are all directly related to the goals within the JCIFP, which focus on reducing fire risk through collaboration, public outreach and involvement, and coordinated treatments on public and private land. Stewardship contracting provides a process for collaborating with diverse partners, accomplishing on-the-ground fuels reduction efforts, and potential funding through retained receipts and/or the utilization of biomass from projects. Currently, the col-

laborative stewardship group is partnering with the BLM on two small stewardship contracts to reduce fuels in high priority areas. The collaborative group is helping the agencies identify the suite of activities to include in the contract and to find ways to utilize the biomass. The BLM already has two stewardship projects underway in Josephine County and the collaborative group is tracking the progress and outcomes to better learn how to use the stewardship tools.

The partners are also working with the Forest Service on a project that is still in the planning process. This project will restore late successional forests in the uplands and use the product value to reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface. Although the agencies do not receive additional funding to design stewardship projects, using by-products from restoration and fuels reduction allows them to treat far more acres than by using traditional means. Also, the collaboration will help ensure that the stewardship projects address the areas that are

most important to the community.

While stewardship efforts are still under development, the long-term partnerships formed through the JCIFP are providing an invaluable forum for public and private partners to identify opportunities for hazardous fuels reduction, as well as broader forest restoration efforts. The trust built between organizations that have traditionally been in conflict with each other stems from the identification of common goals and a long-term collaborative process. ♦

Kathy Lynn is associate director of Resource Innovations, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon, in Eugene. She can be reached at 541-346-0687 or kathy@uoregon.edu. A good source of web information on collaboration is The Collaboration Handbook. This resource provides practical advice about convening a collaborative effort and making it work. It can be found at www.redlodgeclearing-house.org/resources/handbook.html.



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HFRA: A New Tool for Achieving Forest and Community Health in Northern California

BY NICK GOULETTE

The people of rural Trinity County, living in the rugged Coast Mountains of northern California, have long been on the front lines of learning to interface with federal land management policies. At times we have paved the way, establishing a Fire Safe Council (FSC) and developing a community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) beginning in 1998 prior to the passage HFRA; other times we have followed, for instance in learning to use expedited environmental reviews allowed by HFRA Title I, which we have yet to try. Regardless, with 75 percent of the county land base being National Forest (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property, federal policies such as the Northwest Forest Plan, National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI), and most recently the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), have shaped the strategies and approaches that residents and land managers pursue to promote healthy forests and safe and healthy communities in Trinity County.

Much of this recent legislation has increased the focus on collaborating with local communities to prioritize and plan forest management on federal lands. Through it all, professional foresters, both federal and private consulting, have taken on a number of critical roles. Whether it be contributing technical services and professional advice to the community wildfire planning process or interpreting new legislation and guiding project design and planning, their knowledge and skills have been invaluable.

Our efforts to develop and imple-



ment a comprehensive fire and fuels management plan began in 1998 with the formation of the Trinity County Fire Safe Council. The intent was to improve cooperation and coordination in all aspects of wildfire management. Members included representatives from local, state and federal land management agencies, non-governmental organizations including the local Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) and citizens. While county- or regional-scale wildfire management planning efforts often fail to involve or



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROGER JAEGLER

Hayfork yarder at work harvesting small-diameter trees.

even acknowledge local residents' knowledge and expertise, the Trinity County community wildfire planning process focused heavily on collaborative planning and integrating local knowledge with advice from local and regional experts in fire, fuels and forest management. The result was a spatial-

ly explicit countywide fire management plan to assist in prioritizing and coordinating, at a landscape level, activities such as pre-fire fuels reduction treatments that improve forest health and provide community wildfire safety. The plan was adopted as a HFRA CWPP in 2005.

Funding support was provided by the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station and the state Department of Water Resources. The process was managed by the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC). Both NGOs employ a number of local resource management professionals and now serve as two of the primary implementers of the CWPP.

The next step was to begin planning. Initial priorities focused on developing shaded fuelbreaks and defensible fuel profile zones along critical roads and ridges to provide safe ingress and egress routes, and to serve as anchor points for fire suppression. The HFI provided an essential tool through the Category 10 Fuels Reduction Categorical Exclusion (Cat 10 CE). The Cat 10 CE has been the primary NEPA analysis used by the local USFS districts to plan CWPP projects. Allowing for 1,000 acres of mechanical fuels treatments and 4,500 acres of prescribed burning, it has been more than adequate for accommodating small-scale WUI treatments.

Funding has been and continues to be a barrier to successful implementation of the CWPP. Monies provided by the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-determination Act have been invaluable. Enacted to offset losses to rural public lands counties from reductions in timber harvest on federal lands, Title II of the act provided for the establishment of Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) to allocate funding for fuels reduction and watershed restoration projects on federal forestlands. Title II funding has been the primary source of both planning and implementation dollars for the Trinity County CWPP.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK GOULETTE

A roadside fuel management zone outside of Hayfork, Calif.

Much of the early fuelbreak work has focused on implementing standard fuels prescriptions linearly across the landscape. With the objectives of reducing crown bulk density and removing ladder fuels and surface fuels, prescriptions have tended toward 25-foot stem spacing, pruning to eight feet, and complete removal of trees and brush less than eight inches DBH (except to meet spacing requirements).

WRTC and RCD have thus tested a number of methods for implementing these projects in an effective and efficient manner. While the cheapest approach would likely be to utilize migrant labor and/or large contractors from California's Central Valley, we have strived to provide opportunities for local employment through both project implementation and wood processing. Some of the methods that we have tested include: 100 percent manual treatment (costly, but not equipment intensive, leaves potentially marketable material and burn piles in the woods); mastication (slope and access limited, can be costly, but leaves no piles); tractor logging (slope and access limited, but allows for removal of commercial and small-diameter wood); whole-tree cable yarding (accesses steep slopes, eliminates need to treat activity fuels in woods, removes commercial and small-diameter wood, but can be

expensive); and a number of combinations of the aforementioned methods.

We've found that one of the primary byproducts of such treatments regardless of method is an abundance of small-diameter trees. WRTC has been working since 1995 to solve this dilemma. We're continuing to explore processing and utilizing this small wood

to improve the economics of community wildfire protection and forest health treatments. With a sort-yard, post and pole peeler, and small-diameter log mill already in place, we are now investigating uses for the lowest value woody biomass such as manufacturing pellets and cogeneration.

Local USFS and BLM districts are now beginning to apply the newest available tools to begin affecting wildfire behavior and effects across the broader landscape. Two stewardship contracts have been planned, both of which are focused on community wildfire protection and will seek to balance costs and commercial values across the landscape to accomplish more acres using less appropriated dollars. The next step will be to utilize HFRA-expedited NEPA review to scale-up from Cat 10 CEs to a larger watershed and landscape approach to federal forestland management and community wildfire protection. ♦

Nick Goulette, an SAF member since 2004, is stewardship coordinator and forester for the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, Calif. He can be reached at 530-628-4206 or nickg@hayfork.net.

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On May 19, the Oregon Society of American Forester's hosted its First Annual Golf Tournament at Trysting Tree Golf Course in Corvallis. Starker Forests, Inc. of Philomath, Ore., was a key supporter of the event and was deemed event co-sponsor. Over 100 professional foresters, forest industry contractors and suppliers played in the event. In addition, over 45 forest industry businesses from around the state made financial contributions to the event.

The event was developed around a three-pronged approach. First, the tournament acted as a fundraising vehicle for the Oregon SAF Foundation fund, which provides scholarship and internship opportunities to forestry students at the OSU College of

Forestry. Second, a number of Oregon State University SAF Student Chapter members were invited to play in the tournament free of charge, thanks to donations from OSAFers to cover their green fees and dinners. The student presence at the event helped bridge the gap between student and professional member relations. Third, members were encouraged to bring non-members to the tournament. Membership information was provided in the hopes of gaining a few new members.

At the June 28th OSAF Foundation Fellows Luncheon, Eric Kranzush (event co-chair) presented a check to Foundation Chair Sue Bowers in the amount of \$11,971.70, earmarked for the Foundation's Forestry Scholarship/

Internship fund. Everyone had a great time at the event. Plans are already in the works for a second Annual OSAF Golf Tournament.

We hope to see you at this event next summer! ♦



TEAM OSU: Ed Jensen (far right), Jack Walstad (with sunglasses) and student SAF members team up at the golf tournament.



Event sponsor and SAF member Barte Starker tracks his ball to the green.



Umpqua Chapter member Jake Gibbs putts for par.



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Calendar of Events

Professional Timber Cruising Seminar, Oct. 11-12, Beaverton, OR. Contact: Atterbury.

Managing for Wildlife Habitat in Westside Production Forests, Oct. 18, Hilton Hotel, Vancouver, WA. Contact: WFCa.

Timber Measurement Society meeting, Oct. 18-19, Medford, OR. Contact: Matt Fonseca at matt.fonseca@plumcreek.com.

GPS for Mobile Professionals, Oct. 25, Beaverton, OR. Contact: Atterbury.

2006 National Convention Our Woods: Wild and Working, Oct. 25-29, Pittsburgh, PA. For more information, visit www.safnet.org.

SuperACE 06 Seminar, Oct. 26, Beaverton, OR. Contact: Atterbury.

3rd International Fire Ecology and Management Congress, Nov. 13-17, San Diego, CA. Contact: Detlef Decker at ddecker@wsu.edu or 509-335-2811.

Sprayer Calibration, Nov. 15, Salem, OR. Contact: CCC.

Label Comprehension, Nov. 18, Salem, OR. Contact: CCC.

Keeping Working Forests: The Role of Forests in Preserving Open Space, Nov. 28-29, Bend, OR. Contact: WFCa.

Forestry Vegetation Management, Nov. 30, Salem, OR. Contact: CCC.

Contact Information

Atterbury: Atterbury Consultants, 3800 SW Cedar Hills Blvd. Suite 145, Beaverton, OR 97005, 503-646-5393; jaschenbach@atterbury.com.

CCC: Chemeketa Community College, 503-399-5139 or 503-589-7946 for registration information.

WFCa: Western Forestry and Conservation Association, 4033 SW Canyon Rd., Portland, OR 97221, 503-226-4562; richard@westernforestry.org; www.westernforestry.org.

Send calendar items to the editor, **Western Forester**, 4033 SW Canyon Rd., Portland, OR 97221; fax 503-226-2515; rasor@safnwo.org. The deadline for the November/December 2006 issue is October 16, 2006.

Understanding the Past...Creating the Future: The Western Forestry Conference, Dec. 6-7, Vancouver, WA. Contact: WFCa.

Weed Identification and Management, Dec. 9, Salem, OR. Contact: CCC.

Forest Road Surfacing: Principles, Designs and Applied Practices, Dec. 11-12, Olympia, WA, and Dec. 14-15, Canyonville, OR. Contact: WFCa.

Ecosystem Services: Market Incentives for Land Stewardship, Jan. 18, 2007, Vancouver Hilton, Vancouver, WA. Sponsored by PNW Research Station and WFCa. Contact: WFCa.

OSAF/WSSAF Leadership Conference, Jan. 19-20, 2007, Hood River Inn, Hood River, OR. Contact: John Prendergast at jprender@charter.net.

2007 Oregon Logging Conference, Feb. 22-27, 2007, Lane Events Center, Eugene, OR. For more information, visit www.oregonloggingconference.com or call 541-686-9191.

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Countdown to Convention '07

National Convention Returns to the Northwest

BY CLARK SEELY AND
LINDA GOODMAN

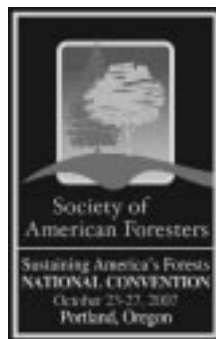
Greetings Northwest SAFers! Excitement is growing as planning gets underway for the 2007 SAF National Convention in Portland, Ore., on October 23-27, 2007, at the Oregon Convention Center. The theme of this 87th national convention is *SAF—Sustaining America's Forests*, and we anticipate, once again, hosting a premier national convention. The most recent conventions in Portland, in 1999 and 1983, set attendance records, and we are planning for the same in 2007! With this message, we begin a series of *Western Forester* articles about the convention and our local plans and efforts.

Jointly hosted by the Washington State and Oregon SAF societies, the national convention objectives as established by the SAF Council focus on professional development, networking, enjoyment and financial success. Guided by these objectives, we are poised to provide a world-class experience for all SAF members, guests and companions. Our local Northwest team is joined by a talented and dedicated SAF national office staff and a management consulting firm to form a national planning and operations effort to meet the convention objectives.

The program development effort is being led by the national program committee chaired by Oregon SAF member Mike Cloughesy and Washington State SAF member Gretchen Nicholas. Within the overall

theme of sustainability, program tracks are being designed to capture the most relevant and timely issues of the day for the profession and SAF members across every discipline. It's a tall order, particularly on a national scale. You can expect dynamic and thought-provoking general sessions, rock-solid concurrent science and technical sessions, and top-notch technical field tours, all within the notion of sustaining America's forests. What better place to learn about and showcase sustainability than right here in the Northwest, home of some of the world's most productive forests, where the concept comes alive on a daily basis! And we'll do all this not only looking at the present and the future, but also learning from our past legacy as we celebrate the milestones of the forestry profession across a number of organizations nationally and in the Northwest.

Engaging student activities will be at the forefront of the convention program, as well as dozens of exhibitors from all facets of natural resource management, a set of great leisure tours, job fair, poster symposium, sponsored technology tracks, and alumni, diversity and leadership events. A wonderful venue and event partnership is being developed with the World Forestry Center which, with its newly renovated Discovery



Museum, will bring special opportunities to convention attendees.

Our local arrangements planning effort is being led by Washington State SAF member Vicki Christiansen and Oregon SAF member Bob Williams. As with past Portland conventions, the basis for success has been the tremendous commitment and effort made by local Washington State and Oregon SAF volunteers, and a significant volunteer effort will be needed for 2007 as well. This is where you come in! Volunteer opportunities are available in a number of areas including student activities, Foresters' Fund, local publicity, communications, marketing, companion rooms, technical field workshops and fundraising. To sign up to help, contact Jana Greer of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources at 360-902-1730 or jana.greer@wadnr.gov and let her know how you can assist.

Sponsorship of convention activities, functions, tours and presentations will again be an important aspect of convention success. Fortunately, with the 2007 convention, dozens of sponsorship opportunities will be available at several different levels of contribution, and engagement of both local and national firms and organizations will be needed. More information about these opportunities will follow in a future *Western Forester* article.

In the meantime, mark your calendars now for October 23-27, 2007, and please contact us if you have any questions or thoughts about the convention efforts, or if you are interested in exhibiting or sponsorship. It's not too early to make your interests known! And thank you for your support, your dedication to the profession and your membership in SAF. We look forward to working with you! ♦

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Clark Seely and Linda Goodman are 2007 SAF National Convention general co-chairs. Clark is the associate state forester for the Oregon Department of Forestry in Salem and can be reached at 503-945-7203 or cseely@odf.state.or.us. Linda is the regional forester for the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region in Portland, and can be reached at 503-808-2200 or ldgoodman@fs.fed.us.

Washington Fire Display Available to SAF Chapters



The Wildfire in Washington display, as shown here with the set-up crew, is available to SAF chapters for fairs, meetings and other events. To schedule the display, contact Dick Hopkins at Green River Community College at 253-833-9111 x4509. Dick and his students provide delivery, set-up and pick-up services, an offer that's hard to refuse. The display was most recently used at the Western Washington Fair in Puyallup. ♦



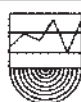
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Policy Scoreboard

Editor's Note: To keep SAF members informed of state society policy activities, Policy Scoreboard is a regular feature in the Western Forester. The intent is to provide a brief explanation of the policy activity—you are encouraged to follow up with the listed contact person for detailed information.

Ecosystem Services and Northwest Forests.

According to presenters at the June 2005 Katoomba Conference in Portland, environmental markets for carbon, watershed and wetlands management, and perhaps biodiversity have development potential in the Pacific Northwest, and will affect forestry directly or indirectly. A summary of the conference *Ecosystem Services and Environmental Market Potentials: Notes from the Katoomba Conference* by your correspondent and John A. Helms, includes a list of additional references and is available online at www.cnrhome.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=92027. Contact: Jay O'Laughlin, IESAF Policy chair, 208-885-5776; jayo@uidaho.edu.

Idaho State Forester Retires.

Winston Wiggins has worked for the Idaho Department of Lands for 37 years, the last five as director and state forester. He announced his retirement in July. At this writing no decision has been announced regarding the appointment of a new state forester. Contact: Jay O'Laughlin, IESAF Policy chair, 208-885-5776; jayo@uidaho.edu.

Idaho and Washington Property Rights Initiatives.

Oregon's Measure 37, approved by voters in 2004, has touched off what one policy think tank calls a "property rights wildfire" to be decided come election day in November in six more western states, including Idaho's Proposition 2 and Washington's Initiative 933. The particulars of each ballot measure are summarized online at www.reason.org/commentaries/gilroy_20060809.shtml.

If approved, Idaho's Proposition 2 would limit eminent domain when used for economic development; redefine land-use terms such as "highest and best use," "fair market value" and "just compensation" and entitle qualifying landowners to receive just compensation for regulatory takings from land-use laws that diminish property values. The bill's text, a *High Country News* article on the property rights movement, and bloggers' arguments for and against Prop 2 are available at <http://blog.sunvalleyonline.com/index.php/nils-ribi/507/>.

A similar blog for Washington's I-933 is available at www.concurringopinions.com/archives/2006/07/property_rights.html.

The Washington State Forest Health Strategy Work Group has developed a strategic plan and is tasked by the legislature to recommend legislation to implement the plan. The plan uses a three-tiered approach for a system of "Forest Health Hazard Warning." Tier one promotes voluntary efforts through education and outreach for all types of forest landowners. Tier two occurs when the commissioner of Public Lands declares an area of "Forest Health Hazard Warning." This would initiate a formal forest health identification process and more highly focused effort on voluntary action by landowners to address the forest health situation. Tier three is the most severe tier and allows the commissioner to declare an "Extreme Forest Health Hazard." In the extreme case, in addition to voluntary efforts, the commissioner could require action be taken to "isolate or reduce the hazard." Peter Heide represents SAF on the Work Group.

In 2004, the legislature passed SSB 6144, which authorized the Work Group. It is expected that the legislature will, after public input, implement the recommendations of the Work Group next session. A series of public meetings were held in August by the Work Group. More information is available at www.dnr.wa.gov/htdocs/rp/forhealth/. Contact: Doug St. John, WSSAF Policy co-



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The Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Forest Resources Institute to improve understanding of forestry and to encourage sound forest management.

chair, dougstjohn@greencrow.com; 425-452-5702.

Board Action. The Washington State Forest Practices Board has been busy; they made the Northern Spotted Owl emergency rules pass on November 9, 2005, permanent. The Department of Natural Resources news release says: "One of the amendments ensures that no spotted owl sites will be decertified until after June 30, 2007." The second amendment discontinues a provision that has allowed landowners to count as habitat land that which was harvested under an adjacent landowners' habitat conservation plan.

In another action, the Board initiated review of proposed rule amendments related to management of riparian zones on perennial non-fish habitat streams for public review. These streams are also known as Type Np/Type 4 waters. The proposed amendment would eliminate the default basin size assessment when a perennial initiation point cannot be identified by non-technical means. The basin sizes were determined to be incorrect based on a controversial adaptive management study. The board also decided to evaluate a preliminary rule proposal based on another adaptive management study that found basal area targets in riparian management zones on fish habitat waters are not being met. Contact: Doug St. John, WSSAF Policy co-chair, dougstjohn@greencrow.com; 425-452-5702.

Roadless Issues Spur Governor's Office. Recent policy revisions for federal roadless areas prompted the governor's office in Oregon to take some diverse actions. In April, the office joined California, Washington and New Mexico in a suit against the federal government to block implementation of the rule changes, based on alleged violations of laws involving public process and administrative pro-

cedures (i.e., NEPA and APA). In August, three public meetings were held to take comments about the two million acres of federal roadless areas in Oregon. This input will be used to help develop a state petition about the desired management direction for these areas, a required step unless a state defers to federal decision makers about how these areas will be managed. Although OSFA has not taken a formal position on roadless areas in the state, it and the national SAF generally support local and site-specific management planning versus blanket policies that significantly restrict management options. Contact: Paul Adams, OSFA Policy chair, 541-737-2946; paul.adams@oregonstate.edu.

Forest Recovery Issue Burns On. In August, *Science* magazine published technical comments on the widely publicized paper "Post-wildfire Logging Hinders

Regeneration and Increases Fire Risk," closing one chapter of a protracted controversy involving OSU and agency scientists, students and administrators, as well as federal and state lawmakers. Issues raised by the OSU study have overlapped discussions both in the region and on Capitol Hill about new legislation to deal with the unique management concerns that follow wildfires and other catastrophic events. Passage of HR 4200 in May was followed by a Senate hearing in August that included SAF testimony. The national SAF office continues to promote key post-catastrophe recovery concepts on Capitol Hill and with the news media. This and other related information from SAF can be found at www.safnet.org/policyandpress/forestrecovery.cfm, and federal legislation can be tracked at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. Contact: Paul Adams, OSFA Policy chair, 541-737-2946; paul.adams@oregonstate.edu. ♦



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