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Promoting Sustainable Forestry New Center to Combine American Indian and Forest Service Forest-Management Traditions, Values and Expertise

By George Couch, Public Affairs Specialist

Recognizing that they share a mutual interest in long-term health and productivity of forestlands, five units of the USDA Forest Service have joined with College of Menominee Nation and its Sustainable Development Institute in Keshena, Wisconsin, to establish a research and education center to promote sustainable forest-management techniques.

The center, called the Center for First Americans Forestlands, seeks to promote sustainable forestry by combining American Indian expertise, tradition, and values with values, expertise, and technology from the Forest Service.

Nationwide, some 60 Native American tribes own forestlands; 44 tribes actively manage 19 million acres of forest to produce income. Among the latter is the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin, with forestlands bordering the Nicolet National Forest.

The five participating Forest Service units are Region 9, North Central Research Station, Northeastern Research Station, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry, and the Forest Products Laboratory. (The Forest Service announced in August that the

two research stations will be combined into a new Northern Research Station covering a 20-state region of the North Central and Northeastern United States.)

In April, Mike Dockry—himself an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation—arrived in Keshena to assume duties as the Forest Service liaison to College of Menominee Nation and the Center for First American Forestlands. For Dockry, it might have seemed a homecoming: Keshena is about 40 miles northwest of Green Bay, Wisconsin, where Dockry was born and raised, and not far from the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, where he had worked as an environmental planning intern. His road from Green Bay to Keshena seems well-suited for the task of making the center a reality. With a B.S. in forestry and a Certificate in Environmental Studies from the University of Wisconsin—Madison and an M.S. in forest ecology from The Pennsylvania State University, Dockry traveled to Bolivia as a Peace Corps volunteer. He spent two years in a small Andean community working on soil conservation, reforestation, and environmental education. He spent a third year working

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New Center *(continued from page 1)*

at community development and natural resource planning in a Bolivian National Park in the Amazonian tropics. Once back in the States, he joined the Forest Service as assistant forest planner for the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests, where much of his energy went to facilitating dialogue among the public, scientists, and forest managers to aid in creating integrated and sustainable forest plans.

The objective of the Center for First Americans Forestlands is straightforward: promote sustainable forest management techniques and practices. “Sustainable forestry management is management that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” Dockry explains.

The Center will promote sustainable management practices through education, technical assistance, policy analysis, and eventually research.

“Two things make this project exciting for me,” Dockry says. “First, we’re starting something from the ground floor. Second, we’re able to

look at all aspects of sustainability, from basic ecology, land-management, and planning, to timber harvesting, processing, and marketing.”

“We’ll also look at the social and economic implications, particularly from the tribal perspective. For example, we might need to educate the general tribal membership—not just the forest managers—about why certain trees need to be harvested in a particular way.”

The center will also blend western science with traditional knowledge and bring them together for mutual benefit.

“There’s an underlying demand for incorporating tribal vision and tribal philosophy into the management of tribal forestlands. The Menominee have done a good job of that; that’s why they took the lead on this,” Dockry says.

It’s important for the people managing tribal forests to have good communication with the Forest Service—and vice versa, Dockry explains. In areas where tribal forests adjoin National Forests, such as in Wisconsin where Menominee

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land borders the southern edge of the Nicolet National Forest, management activities can be more effective when the Forest Service and tribes work together. For example, tribes sometimes are able to do a better job of cleaning or thinning than the Forest Service, which can be

and to acquaint those people with the fact that the center exists.

To get information out, the center will use multiple venues such as publications and the website as well as conferences, workshops, and seminars directed to tribal people interested in forestry. For example, one event, set for mid-November, was a workshop on invasive species, especially the emerald ash borer, responsible for extensive damage to hardwood forests in Michigan and elsewhere.

“We’ll also help develop forest-management curriculum for tribal colleges integrating western science and traditional values and knowledge,” Dockry said. “Already, a tribal college in Alaska has asked us to help them set up a forestry curriculum.

“We want to acquaint tribal peoples with the Forest Service programs that might be of interest or relevant to the tribal manager’s situation. Few tribal people, for example, are familiar with the resources of the Forest Products Laboratory,” Dockry said.

Just as important, perhaps, Dockry believes that the Forest Service—and the forestland it manages—would benefit by learning to look at issues related to sustainability through a Native American lens.

For additional information or to be placed on the center’s mailing list, contact Mike Dockry at mdockry@fs.fed.us or (715) 799-5600, ext. 3222.



hampered by limited resources or competing priorities. As a result, the National Forest land can endanger adjacent tribal lands. This creates areas of mutual interest and concern between the American Indian forest managers and the Forest Service. The Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-278) tries to address this issue by enabling the Forest Service to work with tribes to manage national forestland that threatens tribal land.

Mike Dockry, Forest Service liaison to the Center for First Americans Forestlands, stands by the logo for the Institute for Sustainable Development at College of Menominee Nation and the Forest Service shield.

Dockry’s initial challenge has been to identify people nationwide who might benefit from the center’s programs or who might be in a position to contribute information and know-how



Ask FPL

We get thousands of questions each year about wood and paper products. In each issue of NewsLine we print what we feel are some of the best. Here are two we recently received.

How is lumber graded, and what characteristics determine the assigned grade?

In general, the grade of a piece of lumber is based on the number, character, and location of any features that may lower the strength, durability, or utility value of the lumber. The two common methods used to examine these features are visual grading and mechanical grading.

Visual grading is the oldest stress-grading method. Growth characteristics that affect lumber properties and that can be seen and judged by eye are used to sort the lumber into stress grades. Typical visual sorting criteria include density, decay, heartwood and sapwood, slope of grain, knots, shake, checks and splits, wane, and pitch pockets.

Machine-graded lumber is evaluated by a machine using a nondestructive test followed by visual grading to evaluate certain characteristics that the machine cannot or may not properly evaluate. Machine-stress-rated (MSR), machine-evaluated (MEL), and E-rated lumber are three types of machine-graded lumber.


Machine-graded lumber allows for better sorting of material for specific applications in engineered structures.

Can trees killed by a wildfire on my property be used as building material?

Timber from trees killed by insects, wind, or fire may be as good for any structural purpose as that from live trees. In fact, 80% of logs used in log home manufacture in Montana are cut from standing dead trees, most killed by insects and wildfires.

Interestingly, in a living tree, the heartwood is entirely dead, and only the comparatively few sapwood cells are alive. Therefore, most wood is dead when cut, regardless of whether the tree itself is living.

It is important, however, to make sure that further damage has not occurred. If a tree stands on the stump too long after its death, the sapwood is likely to decay or be attacked by insects and eventually the heartwood will be similarly affected.

For more information, see the Wood Handbook on our website at www.fpl.fs.fed.us 

Questions?

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Conference to Look at China's Impact on Forest-Based Industries

Scores of policy-makers, researchers and economic-development specialists are expected to join manufacturers, consultants, and investors in an upcoming three-day conference in an effort to understand the potential impact that China's rising investment in forestry and forest products is likely to have on global markets and on North American forest-based industries. Among the scheduled speakers are Mme. Jiang Zehui, president of the Chinese Academy of Forestry; James Shepherd, president and CEO of Canfor Corporation; and former Canadian Ambassador to China Howard Balloch. The conference, titled "China's Boom: Implications for Investment and Trade in Forest

Products and Forestry" and scheduled for January 18–20, 2006, in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, is sponsored by the Forest Products Society, the University of Washington's Center for International Trade in Forest Products, CIBC World Markets, Inc., Forintek Canada Corp., RISI/Paperloop, and the USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory. Complete program and registration information is available from the Forest Products Society (608-231-1361 or conference@forestprod.org). 

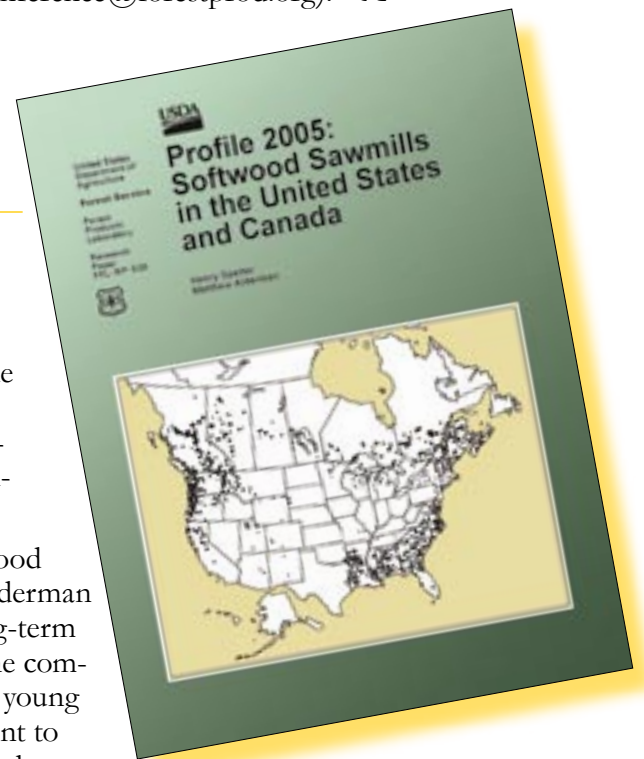
Softwood Sawmills in North America: An Economic Update


The North American softwood sawmill industry as a whole has grown about 2.4 percent per year since 1995. The U.S. half of the industry has grown nearly as fast and has recovered ground lost in the early 1990s, according to FPL economists Henry Spelter and Matthew Alderman.

In a recently issued publication titled "Profile 2005: Softwood Sawmills in the United States and Canada," Spelter and Alderman also report that conditions are favorable for continued long-term activity in housing and demand for softwood products. The combination of low interest rates, demographic growth among young adults, and a strong underlying demand for housing all point to continued demand for softwood lumber and other mill products.

In the near-term, interest rates pose a cyclical risk to housing demand. Possibly an even greater threat to the industry could be oversupply, resulting from large volumes of available timber and increased capacity, productivity and efficiency.

Capacity increased the most in British Columbia, where large numbers of beetle-killed lodgepole pine became available during the past two years. Thanks to second-growth timber on private lands, Western U.S. sawmill capacity also grew strongly in the past three years, recovering from losses in the early 1990s, when reduced government timber sales caused many mills to close.



"Profile 2005: Softwood Sawmills in the United States and Canada" is available free of charge on FPL's website (www.fpl.fs.fed.us/documents/fplrp/fpl_rp630.pdf). The publication, which updates a report published in 2003, is scheduled to be printed in October. 



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Chris Risbrudt
Director

SmallWood 2006 is being held in conjunction with the Virginia Forest Products Association Equipment EXPO, the largest forest products equipment show on the East Coast, with over 12 acres of outdoor exhibit space and over 350 booths of manufacturing and logging equipment.

The EXPO is trying to expand their biomass energy equipment vendors.

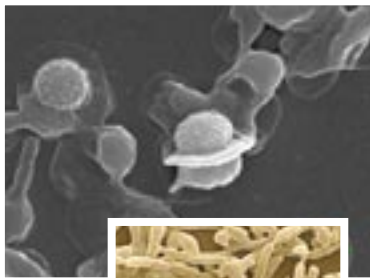


May 16 - 18, 2006
Sheraton Richmond West
Richmond, Virginia

What with Katrina, Rita and Wilma, there is considerable interest in the South about biomass removals. So if you are or know a biomass equipment vendor, this may be the show for you!

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Julie Lang at conferences@forestprod.org*

*For information about EXPO contact
Mike Washko at yfpa.mike@att.net*



Modified
pichia
stipitis
yeast

shows improved fermentation.



Making Ethanol from Biomass

An ethanol producer, Xethanol Corporation, with facilities in Iowa, has announced its acquisition of licensing rights to a patented process developed at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) and the University of Wisconsin.

The process, invented by FPL Research Biochemist Dr. Tom Jeffries, is to aid in the conversion of xylose to ethanol and xylitol. Xylose is a sugar found in waste biomass and corn fiber; ethanol is a fuel used to supplement or even replace gasoline; and xylitol is a sweetener used in food processing.

The conversion is through a fermentation process in which specialized yeast strains break down the xylose. The Jeffries process reduces the amount of time and labor involved in the critical task of isolating and screening yeast strains that produce ethanol faster and with higher yields than other strains.