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Peak to Peak Wood



Colorado sort yards designed to create new markets for wood

A collaborative-effort in Colorado has helped to establish a number of unique sort yards throughout the state's Front Range region. Made possible by the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado State Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and five counties, a project known as "Peak to Peak Wood" is helping to supply biomass and small-diameter markets in the region. This directly supports efforts in the area to thin over crowded forests susceptible to catastrophic wildfire, insect and disease outbreaks and the overall decline in forest health. In 2008, the project operated three yards in the Front Range region; in 2009 they plan to add two more.

The yards take in material from those willing to donate from a region made up of five Colorado counties: Larimer, Jefferson, Clear Creek, Boulder, and Gilpin. The group then sorts it so that it might attract interest from those operating wood-based industries.

The project was made possible, in part, by a \$100,000 grant the group obtained through the US Forest Service Forest Products Lab. The Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation was the recipient of the grant, while the Colorado State Forest Service, a branch of Colorado State University, has managed it and taken on all of the administrative expense. County dollars have been added to help staff the sort yards.

So far, said Joe Duda, Forest Management Division Supervisor for the State Forest Service, the partnership has been a success. "The counties are very enthu-

siastic about the project. In one case," said Duda, "Boulder County was willing to send some equipment into Larimer County to assist in a project that Larimer County was hosting on private lands." Another sort yard, in Gilpin County, is located near an existing wood boiler system, making it a welcome addition for that area.

Landowners are not compensated for the material they bring in to safely dispose of, but should the "Peak to Peak Wood" project create enough markets for the material sorted along the Front Range, Duda believes such an option could be explored in the future.

According to Duda, more than a dozen businesses have already shown interest in purchasing products from the yards. "They're interested in everything from the low-value material to the high-end ... from landscaping material to posts and poles."

The "Peak to Peak Wood" project has also reached out to area Tree Farmers in an attempt to help build the program.

Duda said that the group would like to invest a por-

See 'Sort Yards' on Page 4



Next Month

A look at the
NACD 2009 national
convention in New Orleans





Report details southern wildfire concerns

In December, the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment (SWRA) project released its "Fire in the South 2" report. The SWRA provides fire professionals and other stakeholders with a dynamic set of tools for evaluating wildfire risk in a consistent manner across the region. "Fire in the South 2" details the results and findings of the SWRA project, providing a quantitative analysis of wildfire risk in the South.

The Southern Group of State Foresters has embarked on the development of two publications that describe the fire situation in the South. "Fire in the South 1," completed prior to conducting the SWRA in April 2005, describes the historical use of fire in the South, including a review of characteristics of the fire problem, associated impacts on the forestry economy, and potential

solutions and recommendations. This report provided the baseline for the SWRA project.

As evidenced by "Fire in the South 2," the results and findings of the SWRA project provide a quantitative analysis of wildfire risk in the South.

Some of these findings include:

- Wildfire risk is widespread across the South with more than five million acres at high risk of wildfire, based on the likelihood of each acre burning
- There are 118,083 communities at risk of wildfire damage in the South and of those, 43 percent, or more than 50,000 communities, are at high to very high risk
- Wildfire occurrence across the South is high; there is an average of 68,000 wildfires that burn a total of approximately 938,000 acres per year

• The wildfire risk assessment classifies more than 100 million acres in the South as having moderate to extreme fire occurrence per year based on historical wildfire ignition data

- In the South, more than 88 million acres are classified as wildland-urban interface (WUI) -- areas where communities and homes are next to or within fire-prone natural areas
- The wildfire risk assessment mapped fuels consistently in each southern state for the first time, which enhances wildfire management and protection planning

For more information on the Southern Wildfire Risk Assessment project or the "Fire in the South 2" report, visit <http://www.southernwildfirerisk.com>.

Funding paves way for next generation of biofuels

The USDA Department of Rural Development has approved the first ever loan guarantee to a commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol plant. The \$80 million loan to Range Fuels Inc., Soperton, Ga., comes from the Section 9003 Biorefinery Assistance Program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill.

"The investment in this facility - which will make cellulosic ethanol from wood chips - has the potential to significantly advance the timetable for second generation ethanol production in this country,"

Schafer said. "USDA is proud to work with the private sector to lead this important breakthrough in renewable energy production."

The Biorefinery Assistance Program promotes the development of new and emerging technologies for the production of advanced biofuels. The program provides loan guarantees to develop, construct and retrofit viable commercial-scale biorefineries producing advanced biofuels. The maximum loan guarantee is \$250 million per project.

The program is designed to create energy-related jobs and economic development in rural America.

The project is expected to produce an estimated 63 jobs. When fully operational in 2010, the plant is expected to produce approximately 20 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol per year.

Further information is available at USDA Rural Development's Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.



Sustainable Forests Roundtable workshops set, call for comments

The draft National Report on Sustainable Forests – 2010 has been released for comments.

While the report presents data primarily at a national or regional scale, it also provides a valuable context for related efforts. The indicators used reflect the environmental, social, and economic concerns of the American public regarding forests. Comments will be accepted through April 10, 2009 at <http://www.fs.fed.us/research/sustain>.

The Roundtable on Sustainable Forests has also announced a series of three National Review Workshops in February and March for public input on the Draft National Report on Sustainable Forests: 2010. The dates and locations for the Review Workshops are:

- February 4 and 5 in Denver, Colo.
- February 24 and 25 in Athens, Ga.
- March 23 in Washington, DC.

Visit <http://www.sustainableforests.net/whatsnew.php> for more details.



FPS releases woody biomass publication

Woody biomass is a broad, generic category that encompasses all woody materials from forest, agricultural, and urban environments that accumulate to problematic levels. It remains a major challenge to expand the sustainable and profitable use of woody biomass as a raw material for value-added products.

Three Forest Products Society Technical Interest Groups (TIG) -- the Energy and Environmental Issues TIG, the Economics and Financial Management TIG, and the Timber Production and Harvesting TIG -- co-hosted a technical session and forum at the FPS 60th International Convention in Newport Beach, Calif. This information has been captured in "Woody Biomass Utilization: Challenges and Opportunities." This 104-page peer-reviewed publication addresses a range of woody biomass topics encompassing harvesting and manufacturing, innovative solutions, and energy pro-

duction and energy life cycle issues.

The book is \$25 for FPS members (\$45 for non-members) plus shipping and handling costs.

To order, visit <http://www.forestprod.org/mycart>, or call 608/231-1361, ext. 202.



SFI launches new blog

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) recently launched a new blog titled "Good for Forests" at <http://www.goodforforests.com>. The blog provides a forum and invites comments on trends, hot button issues, developments related to the SFI program, the health of our forests and forest certification. The blog will also allow its audience to spread the word on important developments or respond to items about our forests. The new site also has a RSS feed function which will alert its readers to new postings.

Forestry Briefs



Endowment selects several Forest Investment Zones

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment) has selected three areas as Forest Investment Zones under a multi-million dollar initiative designed to advance healthy working forests and vibrant forest-reliant communities across America. These zones could allow conservation districts to find new opportunities for partnerships.

The organizations and areas identified as Forest Investment Zones are: the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development in Berea, Kent, which will focus on Appalachian communities and forests in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio; the Northern Forest Center in Concord, N.H., which represents a 30-million acre swath of forests and communities across northern New York, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine; and Sustainable Northwest of Portland, Ore., which will work on “dry-side primarily publicly-owned forests” stretching from northeastern Oregon to northern California.

The Endowment’s mission is to work collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation’s working forests and forest-reliant communities.

“As a new entrant in the sustainable forestry arena we’ve solicited expert input and given a great deal of thought about how we can best achieve our vision of seeing that America’s forests are sustainably managed to meet broad societal objectives...while ensuring healthy and vibrant forest reliant communities,” said the Endowment’s Board Chairman, Dick Molpus. “We landed on the concept of “forest investment zones” – real places where we can work together with local and regional organizations as well as citizens in innovating and learning that could serve as living laboratories to benefit

all forest types and communities across the nation.”

Under the Endowment’s Forest Investment Zone initiative, each partner will be granted up to \$2 million over five years. The grant money will be leveraged with other funds to test and implement strategies that yield healthier working forests, as well as local wealth creation and economic opportunity while assisting rural communities in charting paths to a more productive future.

The Endowment announced that its signature programmatic initiative to implement the organization’s mission will be through Forest Investment Zones.

More about the three Forest Investment Zone partners:

The Northern Forest Center’s proposed zone is located in the northern regions of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York where they are partnering with Coastal Enterprises, Inc., Biomass Energy Resource Center, Community Forest Collaborative, and Sustainable Forest Futures. According to the Northern Forest Center’s President, Robert Riley, “Our proposal responds directly to our concern about changes in forest ownership, increased overseas competition and the impacts of climate change and the end of cheap energy. We are excited to have the opportunity to further our learning and share it among our peers both inside and outside the boundaries of our zone.”

This Sustainable Northwest zone includes portions of 13 counties in Eastern Oregon and two in Northern California in partnership with Wallowa Resources in Wallowa County, Oregon, and the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, Calif. The bulk of the forests in the zone are publicly owned. Sustainable Northwest’s President, Martin Goebel, said, “This is a great opportunity to demonstrate how an integrated

and holistic approach to forest management can create jobs, strengthen communities and improve forest health.”

Mountain Association for Community Economic Development is working in partnership with Appalachian Sustainable Development and Rural Action, all members of the Central Appalachia Network in their zone. “We’ve been working for 32 years to create economic opportunity, strengthen democracy and support the sustainable use of natural resources. Our partnership with the Endowment allows us to expedite our demonstration of the strength of market-driven approaches to sustainable forestry,” stated the organization’s President, Justin Maxon.

Some outcomes from the proposed partnerships include:

- expanding community forest ownership
- enhancing market connections for ecological services
- creating models that use woody biomass energy production at appropriate scales
- promoting technology that will advance forest health
- creating new market distribution channels for green products
- applying forest and forest product certification systems

For more information about the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, visit <http://www.usendowment.org>. To learn more about the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED), visit <http://www.maced.org>. For information about the Northern Forest Center, visit <http://www.northernforest.org>. Or, to learn about Sustainable Northwest, visit its site at <http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org>.

Kashdan replaces Collins as USFS Associate Chief



Secretary establishes Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets

U.S. Forest Service Associate Chief Sally Collins was recently named the Director of the Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets (OESM); Hank Kashdan will replace Collins as Associate Chief.

USDA has established a new Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets and a federal government-wide Conservation and Land Management Environmental Services Board to assist in the development of new

technical guidelines and science-based methods to assess environmental service benefits which will in turn promote markets for ecosystem services including carbon trading to mitigate climate change. Organizationally, OESM will be located within the Office of the Secretary providing direct access to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Collins has served as USFS Associate Chief for the past eight years, where she pioneered concepts for ecosystem services and markets as part of that agency’s sustainable land management mission. Kashdan became the new Associate Chief on January 12. His prior position within the Forest Service was as the Deputy Chief for Business Operations.

Share Your Success Stories

Districts are addressing communities’ natural resource challenges and opportunities across the country and we want to hear about it! Your successes can be shared with other districts through NACD’s communication tools. Tell us about your district’s work by sending your story to forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org today!



SFI workshops seek feedback

Fred Deneke represented NACD on the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) External Review Panel which met January 7 in Atlanta, Ga. The purpose of the meeting was to review the first round of suggested changes to the existing SFI sustainable forestry certification standards. As part of the standard development process, a series of workshops have been scheduled from February through April, 2009.

The 2010-2014 SFI Standard Development workshops are open to all interested stakeholders. The purpose of the workshops is to provide the SFI Resources Committee feedback on the first draft of the 2010-2014 SFI Standard, which was made available for review at the end of January. This Standard was based on the comments received during the 60-day open public comment period during the summer of 2008. The Resources Committee will consider all feedback from the workshops and incorporate it into the final draft of the 2010-2014 SFI Standard.

Similar to the three-chamber board of directors, which is solely responsible for the SFI program and the standard development process, the SFI Resources Committee has balanced representation from environmental, economic, and social sectors.

Here is a list of the SFI Standard Development workshops:

- February 18 – Sacramento, California
- February 19 – Vancouver, British Columbia
- March 3 – Minneapolis, Minnesota
- March 26 – Charleston, South Carolina
- April 2 – Little Rock, Arkansas
- April 7 – Portland, Maine
- April 16 – Montreal, Quebec

All workshops are scheduled for 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. local time.

To learn more about the program, or to register for a workshop, visit <http://www.sfiprogram.org>.

Sort yards ... cont. from front page

tion of the remaining grant funds in transportation to assist in bringing more material to the yards. Said Duda, "For much of the Front Range, a conventional log truck is too big."

Another obstacle the group has had to deal with is the mountain pine beetle.

"It needs to be a winter and spring operation," said Duda, "because by the time you get into the period the beetles are flying you must make sure the yards are cleared out so that you are not moving material around and transporting insects."

Another wise decision, he said, has been

to work closely with local media to help promote the locations and the operational hours of the yards. Said Duda, "At first, you think everybody is going to know, but you soon realize how critical the communication component is."

The "Peak to Peak Wood" project continues to search for grant opportunities to extend the program beyond the current grant expiration date in September. "Our ultimate goal," said Duda, "is to have them exist as self-supporting entities."

For more information on this project, visit <http://www.peaktopeakwood.org>.

Conservation Calendar

- **March 10** – Forest-based Bioenergy for Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Marquette, Mich. Visit www.forest.mtu.edu/bioenergyworkshop.pdf
- **March 12-13** - Ecosystem Services: Marketing Environmental Services, Charlottesville, Va. Visit www.cpe.vt.edu/esmes/index.html
- **March 17-20** – BIO: Mass, Fuels, Products, Diversity. Portland, Maine. Visit www.nesaf.org
- **March 25-27** - Small Log Conference 2009, "Living Locally, Surviving Globally," Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Visit www.timberbuysell.com/slc
- **March 30-April 1** - International Wood Composites Symposium & Technical Workshop, Seattle, Wa. Visit www.woodsymposium.wsu.edu
- **August 4-5** - The International Conference on Woody Biomass Utilization at the Bost Conference Center, Mississippi State University. Visit www.forestprod.org/confbiomass09.html

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