

## NWTF Conservation District Partner of the Year Award

### Purpose of Award

To recognize an outstanding Conservation District Partner that has joined with a National Wild Turkey Federation local chapter(s) or staff to raise public awareness of conservation and wildlife management issues, improve wildlife habitat and increase hunting opportunities.

### Selection Process

NWTF staff and partners will provide nominations for consideration. Nominations can be a district under the group category at the state, regional or county level or an individual that represents a district at the state, regional or county level.

### Selection Deadline

October 15, 2011

### Presentation

Award will be presented at the National Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting in February.

### What to include

- Conservation District (name and state)
- Contact Person with the CD (name, address, phone number, email)
- Summary of CD partnership with the NWTF (technical and/or financial support for field days, grants, banquets, coop positions, programs, projects, etc.). Include specifics that highlight impacts on our natural resources and the importance of the partnership. Include photos and any other support material.
- Person nominating the CD (name, phone number, email)

### Return nomination form by October 15, 2011 to:

Donnie Buckland  
P.O. Box 530  
Edgefield, SC 29824  
Phone: (803) 637-3106  
Fax: (803) 637-9180  
dbuckland@nwtf.net



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## CONSERVATION CALENDAR



**Sept. 18-22** – 2011 NASF Annual Meeting, Renaissance Hotel, Baltimore, Md. Visit <http://www.stateforesters.org>

**Oct. 13-16** – Women and their Woods: 2011 Educational Training Retreat, Camp Susque in Trout Run, Pa. Contact Amanda Subjin at [conserve@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:conserve@delawarehighlands.org)

**Oct. 27-29** – Backyards & Beyond Wildland Fire Education Conference, Denver, Colo. Visit <http://www.nfpa.org>

**Nov. 3-5** – Tree Care Industry (TCI) Expo 2011, Hartford, Conn. Visit <http://expo.tcia.org>

**Nov. 14** – Alliance for Community Trees Annual Meeting, Orlando, Fla. Visit <http://actrees.org>

**Nov. 15-17** – 2011 Partners in Community Forestry National Conference, Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Visit <http://www.arborday.org/shopping/conferences/brochures/pcf/2011/call.cfm>

A joint project of NACD, USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters for the purpose of keeping America's conservation districts informed. Our services and programs are provided without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap or religious affiliation. This publication is funded in whole or in part through a grant awarded by the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry.

**SEND NEWS ITEMS TO:** Yenie Tran, Managing Editor  
**EMAIL:** [forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org](mailto:forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org)  
**DEADLINE:** 15th day of the preceding month

# FORESTRY NOTES

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



## New Jersey makes fire a priority

District plays key role in developing state's first Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Given the increase in residential development throughout New Jersey's high-risk wildland urban interface, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service (NJFFS) actively develops measures to prepare and protect local residents. They train volunteer fire companies and have implemented a successful Firewise Communities program to better educate residents of the dangers of wildfire.

To further develop and implement wildfire protection strategies at the township and municipal level, NJFFS began developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). These plans provide an analysis of all wildfire related risks at the municipal level. Each plan provides an outline of available emergency resources and prioritizes a list of hazard mitigation measures that are recommended for the municipality in order to reduce their wildfire risk.

This initiative was made possible through a grant NJFFS received from the U.S. Forest Service. In its search for a local partner to assist in implementation of this project, NJFFS developed a cooperative agreement with the Mercer County Soil Conservation District.

"The CWPPs require local collaboration to be successful, and we needed a partner to increase our ability to work more directly with the communities in need," said NJFFS Firewarden Greg McLaughlin. "The District brings forestry, wildfire and planning expertise to the partnership."

"New Jersey has an extensive pine forest. Over two million acres of unbroken pitch pine, shortleaf pine and Virginia pine regimes – it's very dry, very sandy and flat," says Bill Brash, Director of the Mercer County Soil Conservation District. "People from urban environments, either New York or Pennsylvania, are attracted to the setting. To them, it's just woods." Naturally, as more people find the forest, the threat of catastrophic wildfire becomes an increasing concern.



The Warren Grove Fire of 2007 threatened the safety of residential communities in New Jersey's wildland urban interface.

Brash jumped at the opportunity and quickly received the necessary approval from the District's Board of Directors. Not only did the project connect with him – Brash has been a consulting forester since 1985 and is a former chair of the New Jersey chapter of the Society of American Foresters – but he viewed it as a unique opportunity for his district. Prior to this year, New Jersey didn't have a single CWPP; thanks to its partnership with NJFFS, Mercer County Soil Conservation District would help to create plans for approximately 35 percent of the state's at-risk communities.

Brash says the relationship was designed to mimic New Jersey's successful state community forestry program, in which districts play a key role.

Mercer County Soil Conservation District was given \$150,000 to help implement 25 CWPPs in a two-year period, as well as assist with educational efforts. By the end of July the district had completed five plans, with several more in various stages of development. For each plan, the district connects local leaders – often the fire chief, office of emergency management and in some cases the mayor – with NJFFS staff.

"The Forest Fire Service has a lot of technical information and mapping capabilities that they bring to the table," Brash says. "They've been collecting data for a hundred years. They have these extensive GIS files on fire origins, prescribed burning ... When you overlay all those maps it almost pinpoints where the problem areas are in each community."

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FORESTRY NOTES  
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The NACD Forest RPG visits Grey Towers



## Arizona cattlemen face difficult post-fire decisions

The wildfires that tore through Arizona in June and July impacted an estimated one million acres of U.S. Forest Service land, much of it used for cattle grazing by way of allotments. Now, in the wake of the Coronado and Wallow Fires, landowners are faced with difficult decisions.

Daric Knight, President of the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, is working to help cattlemen and ranchers understand the full scope of the issues they face. In July, Knight met with NACD and Forest Service leaders in Washington D.C., and discussions with local Forest Service leaders are ongoing.

Following a wildfire, the Forest Service must monitor the land and determine when it is safe for livestock to return to it. During this process, the land is no longer available for use. This spells trouble for cattlemen who rely on the allotment for their grazing rotation.

"In order to have an operation large enough to sustain a viable grazing operation, you're going to have state trust land and federal land, whether it's Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management," Knight says. "That's true of almost all ranching operations in Arizona and western New Mexico."

According to Knight, it's been common for the Forest Service to request a two-year layoff from grazing following a fire to allow the land to restore itself. In other instances, however, the layoff period is only a matter of months. Cattlemen have no way of knowing how long the layoff will be until a decision is made.

"If you have cows, you have to feed them every day," says C.B. "Doc" Lane, Executive Vice President of Arizona Cattlemen's Association. "To make a decision on the forest,

it may take two months or two years. In the meantime, people who take care of livestock have a daily problem. We can't wait two years."

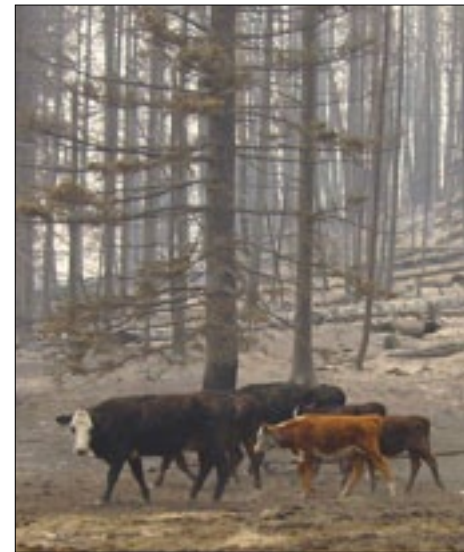
In some cases, only a percentage of an allotment is affected, but that doesn't guarantee that all, or any of the allotment will become available in the near future.

In May, Knight trailed his herd of cattle 40 miles to his 35,000-acre allotment of Forest Service land in the high country, where they typically graze for the summer. On the day they arrived they saw smoke from the Wallow Fire off in the distance. After 30 days in the meadow, all the forage was gone, and the cattle were returned to their winter grazing spot. According to Knight, much of the fencing infrastructure of the Forest Service land was unharmed by the fire. Despite this, he was told he could not return his herd this summer or fall, despite ample rainfall. "We'll be dang lucky if we can graze next year," he says.

This uncertainty has led cattlemen to entertain several options, none of them ideal. "They're forced to find a new home for their cattle, which with today's fuel prices is not economically feasible, or they're forced to supplement with hay, which, in Arizona, is over \$300 a ton right now," Knight says.

The other option is to continue to rotate on private and state trust lands, further depleting the areas where the cattle had already grazed in the winter months in most cases.

Duane Coleman was forced to relocate the portion of his herd that was to graze on his 30,000-acre Forest Service allotment this summer. He believes most of the land experienced a "low- to moderate-intensity fire" but



Arizona cattlemen that rely on U.S. Forest Service allotments for grazing have been forced to make difficult decisions while the Forest Service evaluates the land following a series of fires.

fears he will become a victim of red tape or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which comes into play if it's determined the land's habitat has been changed by the fire.

Dave Stewart, the Director of Rangeland Management for the Forest Service's Region 3 office in Albuquerque, says the Forest Service treats the issue on a "site-specific basis" and has no blanket policy for when livestock can return. "What our people are doing now – our district level range specialists – is starting to evaluate, as best they can, these individual allotment situations, especially those where there is an immediate need," he says.

The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams have done much of their analysis already, and presently there are efforts to reseed or mulch close to 100,000 acres that were affected by the Wallow Fire, much of that work aimed to protect downstream communities.

Stewart says early evidence from the Coronado Fire (a collection of fires in the Coronado National Forest area) suggests some permit holders may be able to return to Forest Service land in that region as early as this winter.

Stewart stresses that the cattlemen will have a role in these discussions. "We view decisions to restock these allotments as collaborations between the Forest Service, the permit holders, and other involved agencies."

Landowners like Coleman plan to bring their own collection of data to the table.

"We haven't had ample precipitation to return to the forest after the fire. It's still fairly black," Coleman says. "We'll monitor on our own and take the results at the end of the growing season."

## WRI BRIEFS EXPLORE SOUTHERN FOREST INCENTIVES



The World Resources Institute (WRI), an international environmental think-tank, has released a series of issue briefs over the past several months that outline economic incentive opportunities relevant to federal, state, and local decision-makers and other stakeholders in the south seeking to encourage conservation and sustainable management of southern U.S. forests. This work is part of a three-year project, begun in 2009, called Southern Forests for the Future, which focuses on researching and pilot testing economic incentive opportunities for private landowners to keep forest as forest. Although focused in the South, these programs have national relevance.

To select the economic incentive programs, WRI enlisted the help of dozens of experts – foresters and land managers, corporate forest landowners, local conservation partners and policy makers – and asked each to highlight the programs that are the most advantageous for landowners. WRI then wrote an issue brief on each of the most promising topics.

In July, WRI released its fifth brief in the series, "Current Use Valuation Programs: Property Tax Incentives for Preserving Local Benefits of Forests."

Here is a description of the five briefs WRI has released so far:

• **Keeping Forest as Forest:** The series' introductory brief provides an overview of incentives, markets, and practices that can promote conservation and sustainable management of southern U.S. forests.

• **Payments for Watershed Services:** This brief provides examples of how downstream water users can pay upstream forest owners to maintain and restore forests and

thereby protect water quality, quantity, and flow as an alternative to building expensive new treatment plants.

• **Conservation Ballot Measures:** Public ballot measures have already unlocked over \$58 billion nationwide for conservation. This issue brief explores the potential of conservation-related ballot measures as a tool to protect forests. It defines conservation-related ballot measures, summarizes their nationwide track record, assesses their application in the Southern United States, and makes recommendations to increase their utilization in the South in the future.

• **Working Forest Acquisitions:** This provides an overview of how public land, including forestland, can be "put to work" to earn revenue from ecosystem service market opportunities. Working forest revenue sources include sustainable timber production, recreation and hunting fees, and – to the extent that management activities enhance environmental quality – payments for carbon sequestration, endangered species habitats, and/or water quality.

• **Current Use Valuation programs:** This brief explores current use valuation programs as one tool for conserving and fostering sustainable management of southern U.S. forests under private ownership. The brief identifies key constraints on existing programs and suggests measures that could be implemented to enhance program effectiveness.

Two additional briefs will highlight opportunities associated with increasing the use of conservation easements in the South, and how sustainable forest certification can be combined with forest carbon offsets to incentivize private forest conservation and sustainable management.

Throughout 2011, WRI is partnering with

local stakeholders, including conservation groups, resources agencies, and landowners to pilot test three of the most promising economic incentives to demonstrate their scalability in the region and beyond.

Forests provide immense economic and environmental benefits to communities and businesses across the country. Conservation districts can help promote these and similar programs by supporting policies that enable these incentive programs to operate effectively—with clear demand, adequate supply, and necessary transactional infrastructure. In a time of strained budgets and recourses, these economic incentives can leverage existing tools and develop new pathways to finance conservation and management of critical ecosystem services, ultimately helping keep forest as forest.

PDFs of the issue briefs and more information about the Southern Forests for the Future project can be found at <http://www.SeeSouthernForests.org>.

To learn more about WRI, visit <http://www.wri.org>.

### SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Has your district helped to build a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, successfully implemented fuel-load reduction practices or assisted with agroforestry practices? Your successes can be shared with other districts through NACD's communication tools. Tell us about your district's work by sending us a note at [forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org](mailto:forestrynotes@email.nacdnet.org).

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No plan is the same. As Brash puts it, "Every community has different needs and capabilities." However, all plans are built from the same template provided by the Forest Fire Service. To gain final approval, each CWPP must meet certain criteria determined by state officials.

After the plan is complete, NJFFS has \$5,000 seed money for each community to implement the highest priority actions. In some cases this is as simple as building new road signs to help responders find the fire. Says Brash, "In a lot of these towns there are dirt roads that community members know by three different names."

The communities also have incentive to continue the planning work after the CWPP is in place; when plans are coordinated with larger county and statewide hazard mitigation plans, communities become eligible for additional mitigation funding from the

Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The first phase is the most important, Brash says – bringing everyone together so the discussion can begin. "I think the key ingredient to building a successful CWPP is ensuring that the local expertise is sitting at the table, and then giving them an understanding of what technical capabilities are available," Brash says. "With both, you can build a plan to anticipate issues and take action, when appropriate."

To learn more about Mercer County Soil Conservation District's efforts, contact Director Bill Brash at 609-586-9603, or via email at [MercerSoil@aol.com](mailto:MercerSoil@aol.com).

For more information on Community Wildfire Protection Plans and how districts can assist in wildfire efforts, view NACD's Community Wildfire Desk Guide and Tool Kit at <http://nacdn.net/resources/guides/wildfire>.

## FORESTRY BRIEFS

### New California bill will assist state's firefighting costs

In early July, California Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill that will require landowners in rural areas to pay a \$150 annual wildfire protection fee to assist in wildfire defense costs. The fee is expected to generate \$200 million annually; California has spent an average of \$177 million a year over the past decade fighting fires. As part of the bill, CalFire will form a working group to explore changes in the state's management of wildland firefighting. Anti-tax advocates are expected to

challenge the legality of how the bill was passed.

### New Firewise video available for free

The Firewise Communities program is offering a free new DVD entitled "Safer from the Start: Developing a Firewise Community." The video focuses on Firewise principles, which developers and planners can adopt when building communities in wildfire-prone areas. To view the video, search the title on YouTube or order a free copy by visiting <http://www.nfpa.org/catalog>.

### State and Private Forestry releases updated handbook

The USDA Forest Service has updated its "Principal Laws Relating to USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Programs" handbook. The handbook covers major laws relating to the Cooperative Forestry Program of the State and Private Forestry area. The document is available online (search the title on the Forest Service's website) and in hardcopy (contact Mary Dempsey at [mkdempsey@fs.fed.us](mailto:mkdempsey@fs.fed.us)).

