

# FORESTRY

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<http://nacdnet.org/news/publications/forestrynotes>

## The perfect partnership

### NWTF recognizes RCD in California with its national partner of the year award



Success is all about relationships and timing.

A few years ago, Coarsegold Resource Conservation District (CRCD) President Tom Wheeler was at a meeting where he struck up a conversation with Keith Swope, the president of California's High Sierra Yelpers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). Not long after, Swope was asked to attend a CRCD meeting.

Since then, the relationship between the district and the NWTF chapter has produced several noteworthy projects. This month, CRCD was recognized by the

*"Personally, I think every NWTF chapter should develop a relationship like this one with their local district. They're good people to work with."*

**Keith Swope**  
*President of California's High Sierra Yelpers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation*

NWTF as its National Conservation District Partner of the Year.

"We couldn't believe it," said Wheeler, "It was an honor for the entire group."

The two organizations have worked closely together to improve a region called the Kinsman Flat Wildlife Area. According to Wheeler, the California Department of Fish & Game had acquired the 400-acre property from a

local rancher roughly a decade ago but had done very little with it. CRCD stepped forward and offered to help manage the wildlife-rich area. To date, thanks to the help from NWTF and other agencies, CRCD has secured close to \$3 million for vegetative management practices that will directly impact wildlife habitat.

Using two \$10,000 grants from the California Deer Association, CRCD first brushed the area. The brush

plies from the clean-up efforts only enhanced the wildlife habitat, said Wheeler.

To provide water for wildlife, Wheeler turned to Swope for help in funding a watering system. Swope's office initially provided a \$2,500 NWTF grant to help pay for the necessary plumbing and solar pumping system to service a stock pond on the land. Those funds also helped pay for a windmill. The RCD coordinated the project while Fish & Game did the work on the ground.

The partnership's most recent project was designed to provide a mile-long handicap-equipped path throughout Kinsman Flat Wildlife Area. Seeking NWTF's assistance, Wheeler worked with the Eastern Madera Fire Safe Council and the Department of Fish & Game to fill out the necessary paperwork for the NWTF grant. This year \$8,000 of NWTF funds will be used for the path's construction.

"There are eagles and mice and everything in between," said Wheeler. "Handicapped people usually don't get to see wildlife like this."

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**A gate for the handicap-accessible trail was recently built. The trail will be finished later this year.**

**Next  
 Month**

**NACD leaders talk  
 forestry at the national  
 convention in Reno**





## RC&D aims to create wood-energy markets

The Southern Alleghenies Resource Conservation & Development Council has begun to explore how it might use forested acreage on abandoned mine land as a source for renewable energy projects.

A local assessment, commissioned by the southern Pennsylvania RC&D, indicated a strong potential for wood-based fuel projects in the region. Roughly a half-million tons of residual wood is available for utilization throughout the RC&D's six-county area.

Southern Alleghenies RC&D coordinator David Steele helped organize an advisory committee to look into possibilities, then connected with a consultant group to conduct the study. Building the right combination for the advisory committee was a key to getting off on the right foot, said Steele.

"We tried to get a broad cross-section of representation from individuals in the region who have interests in local economics, agriculture and industry," said Steele. "We wanted an advisory committee that could provide them with guidance and contacts."

That advisory committee included representatives from the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission and the Altoona-Blair Economic Development Corporation, the Bedford County Commissioner, the Cambria County Conservation District manager, and several elected officials.

At the same time, through the help of a \$100,000 USDA Rural Development grant,

the group asked Vermont-based Research Systems Group (RSG) to conduct an assessment of the region. The main focus of the report was to assess biomass energy production in the Southern Alleghenies Region.

"There is a significant amount of fuel available," said Steele. "The purpose of this was to take a broad look at what is available and then to focus on a few key areas."

Steele admits, however, that before any work can be done on the ground his group must first create a market for biofuel in the area. The hope, he said, is that wood fuel will be viewed as a complement and not a competitor of other industry in the area.

"We made it a point to not harm one industry in the area so as to create another," said Steel. "Our consultants were sensitive to that when doing their report."

Instead, Steele is convinced now that the potential new business created by wood fuel could augment, or support local industry, perhaps leading to the sharing of facilities and equipment.

The group has spoken extensively with local energy producers about using chips for co-combustion with coal, and Steele said it has also considered whether a wood pellet plant would be a good fit for the area.

Another possible fit is the Fuels for Schools Program. The program, which has been widely successful in Montana and in the New England region, encourages schools to

convert to wood-based fuel systems. Steele said that RSG has met with local school officials and has arranged conference calls for them with administrators in Vermont schools where the program has worked. Said Steele, "There are a lot of school districts excited about the potential savings involved with switching to wood fuel."

One common obstacle in the utilization of wood fuel is transportation; chipping and hauling costs often negate potential profits. Steele believes it is not as great of a concern for his area.

Said Steele, "We have a good infrastructure here. Due to the abandoned mines, most of the forest land is accessible by roads."

One long-term goal of the study is to create a market for a cellulosic ethanol plant in the region. According to Steele, numbers from the study suggest there is enough available wood in the area to produce as many as 60 million barrels of cellulosic ethanol each year.

To help boost wood production, the study also suggested the possible utilization of a poplar tree operation on 20,000 acres of abandoned mine land. According to Steele, more than one million trees could be harvested off that land over the next 10 years.

For more information about the projects being explored by the Southern Alleghenies RC&D, contact coordinator David Steele at (814) 623-7900 ext. 119, or email him at david.steele@pa.usda.gov.

## Partnership researches development of hardwood

A collaborative effort in Indiana is exploring new ways to improve the management and sustainability of hardwood trees in the Central Hardwood Region. Purdue University's Hardwood Tree Improvement



**Lenny Farlee**  
HTIRC  
Extension Forester

and Regeneration Center (HTIRC) in the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources has spearheaded research.

"This all really started in the late 1990s," said Lenny Farlee, the Center's extension forester. "There was recognition that in Indiana and the Midwest we had a fantastic hardwood timber resource, but there had not been much improvement or genetic work on that resource, similar to what had been with agricultural crops and even pine and spruce and other species important for construction."

That realization, said Farlee, led to the partnership, which includes the U.S. Forest Service, Purdue University, Indiana's

Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry, the American Chestnut Foundation and a number of other private and public organizations.

"The group's diversity provides us some great feedback for where to take research and what folks are looking for," said Farlee. "That's the power behind the whole effort."

The group represents the interests of the Central Hardwood Region, which, according to Farlee, includes the Midwestern states, Kansas, Arkansas and "pretty much anywhere hardwood trees are an important part of the environment and the local economy."

The goal is to put some of these resources to work to help with research and also practical applications for regeneration and management of high-quality hardwood trees in the region.

The group's research is exploring methods of traditional tree breeding to extract certain desirable qualities of hardwood; developing herbicide and disease resistant trees through genetic procedures; and various nursery practices and planting procedures.

Said Farlee, "An example of something we're working on is the selection of disease-

resistant butternut varieties from natural populations. We've got plantations in place, but the testing and selection process will be 10 or 15 years of work to see what a product is going to look like.

"In areas like black walnut and red and white oak we've already had research efforts going on, both from within the Center and work that was done previously in Indiana for 20 or 30 years," said Farlee. "We're starting to develop seed orchards for production of selected varieties. Those are things that will be available to the general public in the next two or three years."

To promote its findings, the Center is publishing a semi-annual email newsletter for forest and hardwood tree plantation owners and managers in the region. The newsletter includes articles on a variety of topics designed to help readers effectively manage their forests and tree plantings in a sustainable manner, point out new opportunities and highlight research and resources that can provide answers to management questions.

*See 'Research' on Page 4*



## Minnesota District explores biofuel options

Last year, thinning efforts managed by Minnesota's Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District left behind roughly 140 piles of residue. Logging companies were hauling the timber away, but the massive piles burned at the site.

Observing one such burning gave district officials an idea.

"We recognized how many homes that one bonfire could heat and thought there had to be a better way to utilize the resource than putting it into the air," said District Manager Christopher Parthun.

Soon Beltrami SWCD began to explore its options.

"In Minnesota we have quite an initiative to utilize renewable resources," said Jerry Stensing, the District's stewardship forester.

Beltrami SWCD now ships the material to Minnesota Power in Grand Rapids, where it is used as a biofuel source to make electricity.

The material is a combination of several products to come from the chipping process. "We utilize all of the tops and limbs—non-merchantable materials—as well as the shrub layer," said Stensing. "It all goes through the grinder looking like a mess and coming out."

The District formed relationships with contractors and began to ship the wood fuel source after the chipping process was complete. Due to the high costs of transportation, the District said it feels lucky to break even at this point.

"The devil's in the details," said Stensing, "but if you do it right you can tread water and break even."

Eventually, Stensing believes, ingenuity will reduce costs and make the process a profitable one for the District.

Beltrami SWCD has worked a Firewise area consisting of 10,000-plus acres. A survey identified 1,800 high-risk homes, a third

of which Beltrami SWCD assisted. Over the past five years the District has secured nearly \$300,000 in Firewise grants to complete the thinning efforts.

According to Parthun, the biofuel project was the result of the district's willingness to explore new avenues and opportunities from existing projects.

"We started out responding to the needs of the landowners," said Parthun. "As their needs have changed, and circumstances have changed in our environment, and we have adapted with them.

"I always encourage other districts is to look to other opportunities within the district, because they're there."

For more information, contact Jerry Stensing, stewardship forester for the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District, at (218) 755-4339, or email him at [Jerry.Stensing@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:Jerry.Stensing@mn.nacdnet.net).

### WACD + WS SAF = MOU

John Larson, the executive director of the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) and Doug Rushton, the chair of Washington State Society of American Foresters (SAF) and supervisor on the Thurston Conservation District, recently announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). According to Rushton,

## Forestry Briefs

it is the first MOU of its kind between conservation districts and the SAF. "The purpose of this MOU is to foster cooperation, communication, and coordination between state and local units of both organizations," said Rushton. "I think this is a big deal because it puts us on the threshold of what can be a new era of tremendous cooperation. Both WACD (and NACD) and the Society of American Foresters have so much in common and this document is intended to leverage our existing infrastructures, knowledge base, and anything else we can think of. When providing the best, science based, technical assistance available on working forest lands - what would be a more natural partnership? Both the conservation district and SAF communities have a vested interest in the preservation of working lands and each organization - either at local, state, regional or national levels - can help the other." The MOU is posted on the Washington State SAF Web site in the 'Executive Committee Archives' section at <http://www.forestry.org/wa/archives.php>.

### EQIP summary available for study

"Environmental Quality Incentive Program - A Western Summary" provides a quantitative and qualitative synopsis on the funds used from EQIP for forestry practices from 2002-2006. From survey questions sent to 17 western states and six Pacific Island Territories the report captures the methods used to access EQIP funds for forestry-related activities, as well as to identify and share related successes. This summary can be used to inform program managers and decision makers as to how EQIP is operating in the west. This summary highlights the current uses and potential for forestry practices within the conservation programs of the Farm Bill and will be a tool to discuss the Farm Bill with western congressional delegates and their staff. The details and state summaries will provide the stimuli for new ideas and opportunities to increase application of EQIP program funds for forestry-related activities. The report was prepared by and is available through the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition at: <http://www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/reports.php>.

### WFLC provides updates on forestry legislation

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) has prepared and posted two items of interest on recent legislation: FY08 Appropriations highlights and analysis of the various S&PF and Wildland Fire Management programs followed by a spreadsheet detailing the funding levels for

the USDA Forest Service.

Farm Bill - Congressional staff is currently working out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill. WFLC has prepared a short document summarizing the difference in the forestry provisions between the two versions. You can view these updates at [www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/issue\\_briefs.php](http://www.wflcweb.org/infomaterials/issue_briefs.php)

### AF&PA publishes report on collaborative efforts

"Factors that Influence Successful Collaborations between the Forest Products Industry and Environmental Organizations" has been published by The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA). The report highlights 12 collaboration projects across the United States and Canada where industry has engaged with the conservation community in efforts to produce outcomes that sustain profitable forest management operations while also addressing conservation priorities, such as enhancing wildlife habitat. The report identifies factors that have led to successful collaborations and presents recommendations for future collaborative efforts. The report is available electronically on AF&PA's Web site at [http://www.afandpa.org/content/NavigationMenu/News\\_Room/Whitepapers/CollaborationStudy\\_Final.pdf](http://www.afandpa.org/content/NavigationMenu/News_Room/Whitepapers/CollaborationStudy_Final.pdf). The report is based on a study commissioned by the AF&PA and the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, and was conducted by the Ecosystem Management Research Institute.



## NWTF Partner ... cont. from page 1

CRCD also sought out NWTF's help when it was exploring how fuel breaks might benefit wildlife in the region. NWTF biologist Ryan Mathis was asked to conduct a field study, which later resulted in 20 miles of fuel break around the neighboring Ahwahnee Oakhurst Basin.

This is the first year that the NWTF has handed out the award. Said Lynn Lewis-Weis of the NWTF national office in South Carolina, "Coarsegold RCD has long been a supporter of wild turkeys in California." Lewis-Weis pointed out that the district has included the NWTF in their monthly meetings, has made wild turkey management a part of their planning, and frequently requests the NWTF to review and make comments on project proposals that impact wildlife. "This collaboration helps make a large scale impact that promotes both organizations' conservation objectives. The

strong relationship between Coarsegold and our High Sierra Yelpers Chapter is precisely why we have developed this annual award," she said.

Swope agreed. "(CRCD) believes solely in conservation and in embracing wildlife habitat. It's a great relationship for us to have. Personally, I think every NWTF chapter should develop a relationship like this one with their local district. They're good people to work with."

For more information on these projects, or on Coarsegold RCD, contact President Tom Wheeler at (559) 877-2422, or email him at [wthomaswheeler@yahoo.com](mailto:wthomaswheeler@yahoo.com).

Other districts interested in contacting NWTF about possible projects are encouraged to visit <http://www.nwtf.org>. Under 'local information' on the home page click on your state, then click 'NWTF Field Staff' and go to the 'Regional Wildlife Biologist.'

## Research ... cont. from page 2

The first issue was distributed in August. According to Farlee, another issue is planned for early 2008.

"We've got some good research results and resources available," said Farlee, "but we haven't had a strong public presence yet, in terms of landowners or organizations like conservation districts that have access to landowners."

Before joining the Center, Farlee was a private lands forester in Indiana with the Division of Forestry and regularly worked with the state's soil and water conservation districts. "Since joining the HTIRC I've been working hard to try to connect with different organizations and let them know what

we have available or to answer questions," he said.

To view the current issue of the Center's email newsletter, visit <http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/fnr/HTIRC/newsletter/email/indexemail.htm>, or to subscribe to the newsletter go to <https://lists.purdue.edu/mailman/listinfo/htirc>.

For more information on the partnership or to obtain other publications on the planting and caring of hardwood trees, contact Lenny Farlee, extension forester for the Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center, at (765) 494-2153, or email him at [lfarlee@purdue.edu](mailto:lfarlee@purdue.edu).

## Conservation Calendar

- **Feb. 20-24** – National Wild Turkey Federation Convention, Atlanta, Ga. Visit <http://www.nwtf.org>
- **March 4-6** – Wildland Urban Interface Conference, Reno, NV. Note CWPP pre-conference workshop March 3, and Western Perspectives on CWPP on March 6. Visit <http://www.iafc.org/associations/4685/files/conferences/WUI/WUI08/REG/index.cfm?page=101>
- **March 11-13** – 4th National 25x25 Summit, Omaha, Neb. Actions state alliances to further develop renewable energy industries, special forestry task group. Visit <http://www.25x25.org>
- **March 17-18** – North Arkansas Forest Landowners Training Conference, Batesville, Arkansas. Visit <http://www.ozarkforestry.org>
- **April 8-11** – National Landowners Association Conference – The Value of New Markets, Chicago, Ill. Visit <http://www.forestlandowners.com>
- **April 30 - May 2** – 13th Annual "Forestry on the Grow" Conference & Expo, Wagoner, OK. Exploring Opportunities & New Technologies for Natural Resources Management & the Wood Products Industry. Visit <http://www.forestryonthegrow.com>

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