

TEMPLATE ... cont. from page 1

nationally over private forest management practices.”

Says Wight, “It should make it quicker for NRCS field staff to develop a financial assistance contract based on the plan template because the needed information can be found easily.” In time, he adds, the hope is to transfer all plans electronically to make the process even more efficient.

Another side benefit of the year-long effort has been the trickle-down effect it has had

on state-level relationships. State conservationists, state Tree Farm committees, state foresters and others now have another reason to compare notes.

Says Dalla Rosa, “To me, that is the most important outcome of this effort – encouraging and promoting state level coordination.”

For more information on the joint management plan template or the accompanying guides, visit <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/nationalplantemplate>.

CONSERVATION CALENDAR



June 28-July 1 – 4th Annual Ecosystem Markets Conference, sponsored by the World Resources Institute and American Forest Foundation, Madison Concourse Hotel, Madison, Wis. Contact Todd Gartner at Todd.Gartner@wri.org

July 18-19 – NACD Summer Legislative Conference, Washington, D.C. Contact NACD at **202-547-6223** or meetings@nacdnet.org

Aug. 2-4 – NACD Forest RPG Meeting, Grey Towers National Historic Site, Milford, Penn. Contact Yenie Tran at yenie-tran@nacdnet.org

Aug. 9-11 – 2011 National Tree Farmer Convention, Santa Ana Pueblo, N.M. Visit <http://www.treefarmssystem.org>

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

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DEADLINE: 15th day of the preceding month

FORESTRY NOTES

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

One forestry plan for all to use

Leaders from USFS, AFF and NRCS work together to simplify the process for landowners

There are a variety of programs and services available to forest landowners, but up until now most required a separate plan of action – a management plan for NRCS cost-share programs such as EQIP and WHIP, another for the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Stewardship program, and one to receive certification from American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

Too many plans, too much to ask of landowners.

About a year ago, national forestry leaders came together in an attempt to solve what had long been a brain-buster – how to build one plan that satisfies the needs of all. Representatives from the Forest Service, NRCS and American Forest Foundation (which facilitates ATFS) first began to identify the differences.

“Most of the components were in agreement. It was almost more of a language issue,” says Karl Dalla Rosa, Forest Stewardship Program Manager. “For example, NRCS was a lot more explicit about certain requirements with respect to NEPA, since the management plans need to be cost-share ready.”

To begin the process of building a joint national management plan template, the group closely examined state-level plans that had been developed in Mississippi, Missouri, Montana and Oregon. “There was no need to create something totally new,” says Caroline Kuebler, the outreach manager for ATFS.

After several internal reviews, a draft of “Managing Your Woods: A Template for Your Plans for the Future” was circulated to state leaders for a two-month-long commenting period. No red flags were raised, only a few minor points. The National Association of State Foresters also provided input, and has since given the joint management plan template its endorsement.

Leaders also developed a pair of educational guides – one written for forestry specialists, the other for landowners – to complement the template.

From now up to the end of the fiscal year, the joint manage-



Foresters can now use one forest management plan to help landowners take advantage of the Forest Stewardship program, American Forest Foundation/American Tree Farm System, and NRCS cost-share opportunities.

ment plan template and the guides will slowly find their way into the hands of state and local conservation leaders, who will be able to spread the word to landowners. This provides conservation districts with an opportunity to play an important role in helping to shape the working document. “Certainly we want the districts to provide feedback,” says NRCS National Forester Bruce Wight, “... We hope districts can get the word out and encourage landowners to review the template and the guide that goes with it.”

At present, Arkansas and West Virginia are adapting the template for state-level use. By summer 2012, national leaders hope to have comments from forestry officials and technical service providers from around the country on areas of the template that may still need to be addressed. Says Wight, NRCS staff will continue to receive training this summer, and in June a special training session has been planned for the Association of Consulting Foresters.

The national template should also speed up the process. “With these agreements, the American Tree Farm System, the Forest Service, and NRCS have made it easier for family forest owners to streamline their on-the-ground conservation efforts,” said AFF Senior Vice President Bob Simpson in a press release. “These three entities have the most influence

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Extension is a valuable partner in agroforestry efforts 

WE NEED YOUR HELP

At the end of 2010, NACD entered into a working relationship with the U.S. Forest Service's Rangelands office. As part of this partnership, the two organizations have developed a survey to gauge the rangeland and pastureland work being done by conservation districts around the country.

During the months of May and June, districts will receive a link to an electronic survey. All districts are asked to complete this survey, whether they are actively involved in rangeland or pastureland work or not. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. The deadline is June 30.

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FORESTRY NOTES

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The link between beetles and wildfire

In May, leaders from across the country gathered in Helena, Mont. for a seminar exploring the relationship between the growing pine-beetle epidemic and wildfire.

"Mountain Pine Beetle and Fire: The Science Behind the Risks" featured presenters from the U.S. Forest Service, the Missoula Fire Lab, the British Columbia Forest Service's Wildfire Management Branch, and the University of Idaho. Montana State Forester Bob Harrington opened the meeting.

A diverse group of nearly 200 participants took part in the forum (also available as a webinar), including conservation district staff, academics and researchers, scientists, public lands managers, wildland firefighters and landowners.

"It was a really nice mix of folks, all with a slightly different interest in the information that was shared," says Paula Short, an information officer with the Montana Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division, which has coordinated a series of meetings to address mountain pine beetle issues.

Researchers from the Missoula Fire Lab briefed attendees on the three phases of

mountain pine beetle-infected wood, each with a different level of needle moisture content and flammability risk: the red needle phase (a dead tree in the first few months after contact), the gray needle phase (a dead tree still standing whose needles have fallen), and the dead-and-down phase.

Says Short, "Each one of these phases brings a different level of concern for wildfires."

British Columbia fire-management specialist Dana Hicks, who has seen the issue first-hand in Western Canada, summed up the dangers of diseased trees this way: "Think of these stands as 75-foot tall cured grass."

This was the third meeting hosted by the

interagency Mountain Pine Beetle Forum. Earlier meetings included discussion on how mountain pine beetles affect recreation and tourism, and how they impact the timber industry. Short says the next meeting could tackle how mountain pine beetles affect infrastructure, specifically trails, roads and power lines. "I think that could be the next great challenge we'll face," she says.

For more information on the interagency Mountain Pine Beetle Forum, or upcoming meetings and webinars, email Paula Short at paulashort@mt.gov, or visit <http://www.beetles.mt.gov>.

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORIES

Have you implemented 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.



FORESTRY BRIEFS

NAFO site provides biomass resources

The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) has launched a website dedicated to offering information on renewable biomass energy from wood. The site offers dozens of links to additional biomass resource material, and features a "frequently asked questions" module highlighting biomass sustainability and the role of forest biomass in national energy policy. To learn more, visit <http://www.renewablebiomass.org>.

NAFO's mission is to protect and enhance the economic and environmental values of privately-owned forests through targeted policy advocacy at the national level. To learn more, visit <http://nafoalliance.org>.

Ohio leads Tree City USA communities

For three decades Ohio has remained the leader in Tree City USA communities. This year, the state was recognized for having 244 participating cities, villages and townships, all of which invested more than \$36 million towards the planting and maintenance of their public rights-of-way and parks.

"Half of Ohioans live and work in a Tree City USA, and they are enjoying a variety of

benefits that come with having more trees, such as cleaner air and water, reduced stormwater runoff, and increased property values," said Bob Boyles, state forester and chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry.

Since 1979, the ODNR Division of Forestry has assisted communities in enhancing the quality of life through comprehensive tree planting and care programs.

To qualify, participating communities must establish a tree board or department to carry out a tree care program; enact a community tree ordinance to provide direction; fund the community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita; and celebrate Arbor Day with a community ceremony and mayoral proclamation.

For more information on the Tree City USA program, visit <http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA>.

New trade group tackles pellet issues

Earlier this year, the U.S. Industrial Pellet Association was formed to address industry issues faced by U.S. manufacturers of industrial grade wood pellets that are being exported to Europe.

Several companies came together to form the group, including Enviva Biomass, Fram Renewable Fuels, Green Circle Bio Energy Inc. and the Westervelt Company. "We're looking for other producers to become members, or anybody who is involved in the value chain or supply chain of industrial wood grade pellets," says Executive Director Seth Ginther. "That includes landowners, transporters, equipment manufacturers, ports, European utilities and trading groups."

The group has identified three main issues: certification standards for industrial wood pellets, sustainability and uniformity of contracts.

According to Ginther, demand overseas "will continue to rise dramatically," an encouraging sign for U.S. producers. The group also has plans to work with Canada on policy issues, as Canada currently exports the vast majority of wood pellets imported to Europe.

For more information about the U.S. Industrial Pellet Association, contact Executive Director Seth Ginther at (804) 771-9540 or via email at sginther@hf-law.com.



IDAHO: A DAY OF FUN AND FORESTRY KNOWLEDGE

For nearly three decades, northern Idaho's Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District has helped to coordinate a contest that quizzes junior high and high school students on a variety of forest-related topics. This year's event, held in mid-May, welcomed more than 400 students from schools around the state.

Idaho State Senator Shawn Keough served as the 2011 honorary chairperson, and NRCS State Conservationist Jeff Burwell attended. Burwell was impressed by the number of students who get exposed to the state's forestry natural resources.

The day-long contest is sponsored annually by the Idaho Department of Lands, Bonner SWCD, and the U.S. Forest Service. The organizations support the time their personnel spend in planning, setting up, and putting on this event. Linda O'Hare, the district administrator for Bonner SWCD, says the contest introduces students to some basic skills used in the forestry profession and promotes knowledge and understanding of our forests. "It gives them a chance to interact with professional foresters and conservationists to explore career opportunities in the field of forestry and natural resources," says O'Hare.

Months before the spring event, students and coaches are asked to download a 10-chapter manual from either the Bonner SWCD or Idaho Department of Lands websites. Each chapter covers a variety of forest-related issues. Topics include:

- Log scaling
- Timber cruising
- Tree and plant identification
- Map reading
- Compass reading and pacing
- Tool identification
- Soils and water quality
- Tree health
- Silviculture
- Noxious weeds

After arriving at the contest, students walk one mile through the forest to a meadow, where they are tested at several stations. Students are divided into teams of four, and are given 20 minutes to complete each station, which quizzes them on a chapter from the manual. When the students finish, they walk back through the forest where volunteers have prepared a hardy barbecue. Prizes are awarded to the top-scoring teams and individuals.

The forest competition is available free to all students thanks to donations made by numerous local and forestry-related organiza-



(Above) Students competing in the 29th Idaho State Forestry Contest are given instructions at one of the stations. (Right) More than 150 volunteers helped to prepare meals for the students and coaches who participated in the day-long event.



tions. O'Hare says the event raised just more than \$8,000 for 2011.

What has become such a huge event, requiring the help of more than 150 volunteers, began with only a few teams.

In the early 1980s, the FFA Chapter at nearby Sandpoint High School approached the district conservationist to see if he would help train the group so they could compete in a contest held in Newport, Wash. The conservationist connected the group with Bill Love, a private forest specialist with the Idaho Department of Lands, who, along with Vern Bromgard, traveled with the students to participate for two years.

"As we were driving back that second year it came up in discussion: 'Why drive over to Washington? Why don't we do something like this in Idaho?'" says Love. In 1983, the first Idaho State Forestry Contest was held on a 1,350-acre tree farm owned by former district board member Ray Delay. To boost attendance, Love scheduled the event two weeks before the Washington contest in hopes those students would use the Idaho contest as a primer. It worked, and for the first few years there were more students from Washington than Idaho.

Over time the event has expanded, and now dwarfs its neighboring state's annual contest. "When it started, organizers needed just a couple cans of beans and some burgers," laughs O'Hare. "Now we have four roaster ovens full of beans cooking all day and we barbecue over 800 burgers."

Initially, the Delays agreed to host the contest for one year, but the family enjoyed having the kids visit so much that they've decided to serve as the permanent hosts. Contest organizers purchase a one-day insurance policy each year for the event.

O'Hare is a member of the contest steering committee, which meets January through June. As part of her duties, she helps schools coordinate information to all participants with monthly newsletters, and keeps in contact with donors.

Love says the relationship with Bonner SWCD is a no-brainer. "Our conservation district is heavily forested, and the supervisors within the district, many of whom own forestland themselves, have always placed a high priority on forest-related projects," he says. "It's just a natural fit."

Says O'Hare, "One of the things our district focuses on is outreach and education. This is such a great venue to reach so many students with forestry education, and it puts them in contact with professional foresters."

Most of the district's five-person board attends every year, she says. They all realize it's a special event; it's also very rewarding, says O'Hare. "At my first contest, I turned to my board chairman and said 'I cannot believe I get paid for this.'"

To learn more about the Idaho State Forestry Contest, contact Linda O'Hare, district administrator for the Bonner Soil & Water Conservation District, at 208-263-5310 ext. 100, or via email at Linda.Ohare@id.nacdnet.net. To view the contest manual, visit http://www.northidahoswcds.org/bonner/forestry_contest.htm.