



Roundtable discusses forest impact on people

In early September, the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wis. hosted another in a series of roundtable discussions on sustaining the nation's forests. The three-day meeting brought in close to 100 people from all over the country and speakers from New Zealand and Canada.

The discussions focused on developing methods for collecting data on two important issues: the importance of forests to people and resilience of forest-dependent communities. Teams led by University participants Michigan State University and Portland State University conducted the workshops to discuss what these concepts meant and how they could be measured.

Holly YoungBear-Tibbetts represented the College of the Menominee Nation in Keshena, Wis.

"There are important implications in these roundtable discussions for all of the timber-holding tribes," she said. "It's very much a changing industry." Because of meetings



Roundtable meeting participants David Gerhardt, Region Director for MeadWestvaco Corporation (left) talks with McKinley-Ben Miller, Arizona State Forester for the Bureau of Land Management.

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NACD press release helps RC&D to educate landowners on Firewise

The Green Hills RC&D in Chillicothe, Mo. is spreading the word about Firewise to local residents. As a tool, the RC&D used a NACD press release outlining the benefits of Firewise in a local newspaper.

Said Ray Goodwin, Green Hills RC&D coordinator, "I found the Firewise press release to be well written and informative. I published it in the Chillicothe Tribune, using the Green Hills RC&D Project office as the contact point, to inform the public what Firewise opportunities are available."

Goodwin, whose district has made it a two-year goal to certify two Firewise com-

munities in its nine-county region, was happy with the response from the release.

"The Timber Villas Estates community contacted our office by phone requesting additional information," said Goodwin.

The community houses elderly living independently in a series of four-plex units. The area is encompassed by forest land, making it a good candidate for Firewise.

In October, the community will welcome a retired Missouri Department of Conservation specialist with more than 35 years worth of wildfire suppression experience for a 30-minute presentation.

"Following that, Timber Villas management and residents can decide if they'd like further assistance or to sign a commitment to become a certified Firewise community."

The press release Goodwin used was one of three inserted with the July mailing of Forestry Notes. The press releases are available to be downloaded off the NACD Web site at http://nacdnet.org/resources/sample_releases.

"I found the Firewise press release to be well written and informative."

Ray Goodwin

Smokey's 2008 Forest Fire Prevention and Conservation Project Catalog and the National Association of State Foresters' Tree Poster order forms are enclosed for your use. Leonard Killian, NASF Education and Conservation Project Coordinator said they would be glad to serve conservation districts interested in purchasing this fire prevention and conservation education material.

INSERT



Appalachia studies energy from woody biomass

'Woody Biomass to Ethanol' was the theme of a recent conference hosted by West Virginia University. The conference brought together experts on processing woody biomass to energy, the sustainability of forest resources, the development of new markets for forest products and provided a platform for forest industry and local economic development boards to look at the potential of woody biomass utilization in the Appalachian region.

West Virginia is the third most heavily forested state—behind only Maine and New Hampshire. It is trying to get ahead of the new wood to energy emerging technologies that are maturing into new industries. West Virginia State Forester Randy Dye outlined the amount of growth occurring in the state that is not being utilized that could support new markets. Seventy-nine percent of the forests in the state are family owned.

It became readily apparent during the conference that a lot of the opportunities for woody biomass utilization will be determined locally. As Phil Badger of the Southern States Energy Board described, there could be as many as 2,000 biofuel plants scattered across the country by 2030 to reach the cellulosic ethanol goals now being described. He also pointed out there were many variables to consider – each technology is advancing at its own pace; each feedstock has its own unique properties and processing requirements; feedstocks are not uniformly available across the country; and if using living organisms such as yeast, fungi or bacteria for fermentation, they each require their own specific environments. These, along with market variables, will result in many different types of plants across the country.

Although the conference was titled 'Woody Biomass to Ethanol', it also

became apparent that ethanol should not and will not be the single focus or source of energy from woody biomass. Woody biomass can be transformed into many forms of energy and the market will have to work out the new technologies to address the nation's needs.

Representatives from the forestry industry also presented many avenues they are studying for utilizing woody biomass for energy and chemicals. Steve Burton, a research scientist from the MeadWestvaco Corporation, outlined many products that can be derived from woody biomass and cautioned against just focusing on ethanol. Other forms may supply better conversion rates and greater returns. Industry is exploring many alternatives and watching closely to see which routes might first become profitable.

In the heart of West Virginia's coal country, the Mingo County Redevelopment Authority has just completed a study demonstrating the feasibility of mixing the resources they have—woody biomass and coal—to enhance energy production. The proposal includes utilizing the Fisher-Tropsch system, generating syngas and liquids, and produce sources of energy at lower levels of emissions than coal or wood by themselves.

Conservation districts need to be involved in these local efforts exploring the utilization of woody biomass. This is especially true in states with heavy forested acreage. The next few years could drastically improve private landowners' ability to practice silviculture and address the backlog of overstocked and unhealthy forests by having new markets for woody material. Woody biomass will not alone solve the nation's needs for energy nor provide energy security, but it will contribute its part and we can help.

CWPP help: new Web site offers wildfire planning assistance

The U.S. Forest Service Southern Research Station, in cooperation with Louisiana State University, recently developed a new information section in the National Database of State and Local Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs Website. The section assists community leaders and fire officials in developing community wildfire protection plans and provides a central location to review key features of existing CWPPs, such as a searchable format that allows stakeholders to review existing plans.

The 2003 Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) promotes development of CWPPs by offering communities that meet HFRA criteria priority consideration for projects and treatment areas identified in CWPPs, as well as a voice in the federal government's process for selecting wildfire mitigation projects on adjacent public lands.

For more information, visit <http://www.wildfireprograms.usda.gov>.

Wisconsin technical college trains loggers

Northcentral Technical College (NTC) in Wausau, Wis. will allow students to chop away at a certificate program to enter the logging industry. The timber harvest operator certificate aims to make students more marketable in the industry and marks the college's first initiative to train future loggers.

NTC plans to offer a summer logging camp after it hires a coordinator, said Scott Mickelsen, dean of agriculture and community services. In the future, NTC would also like to offer the three-credit course as an outdoor lab during the fall semester.

"We want to teach these courses in the woods. We want the students to be out there and live the life of a logger and experience what they experience out there," he said.

The courses will consist of operating highly technical machinery, using hydraulics and identifying types of trees and how to make the best cut.

"The logging industry is hurting a little bit right now," Mickelsen said. "It is our intention to train and certify students. We hope this training will give them a competitive edge to become marketable in that industry."

Matt Jensen, a Wisconsin certified master logger, said contractors can spend about \$50,000 training someone how to use the technical equipment.

"It's extremely costly to train people on the job. Any course that teaches you hydraulics and forest management would be a plus. It's very hard to find qualified, trained people," he said.

Jensen, who is based in Crandon and a representative for the American Loggers Council, said he hopes an apprenticeship program will develop. "Because it's such an independent business, there's no job retention. That's really a tough thing," he said. "There's a definite need. It's one of our largest industries. We've been the largest paper-producing state for over 50 years."

The certificate program has been made possible through a \$200,000 grant and partnership with Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton.

Earlier offerings of the course did not meet registration requirements but Mickelsen is determined to make it work. "Even though we've failed a few times we're still interested in trying to make this program successful," he said.

For more information about the course offerings, call 715/675-3331 ext. 4373.

Thier brings 'real world' experience to NACD policymaking team

September brought new expertise to NACD as Ralph Thier joined the team as the Western Issues Specialist.

Thier, a forest entomologist, spent the last 30 years working for the USDA -



Ralph Thier
NACD Western
Issues Specialist

Forest Service. "People asked if I was retiring," Thier said. "I don't use the 'R' word. I enjoy working. I won't retire until people stand around my grave 6-feet deep."

This dedication to hard work has proved well in Thier's previous career. He moved around the country working mostly in the West for Forest Health Protection in various capacities; often representing a multitude of agencies and partners. At one point, he worked for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, completing several details in

China.

Thier transferred to Washington, D.C., in 2004 to take on forest health policy and budget issues. His unique experiences working in the field bring a new perspective to policy making.

Thier calls Idaho home. He still maintains property there and likes splitting his life between there and Washington. "I enjoy going back and forth," Thier said. "It keeps me grounded. I go home and see how the world works, and come back to D.C. to see how policy affects those forests."

He brings a wealth of knowledge and life experiences to NACD. Thier, who grew up in northeastern Ohio, got his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Kent State University. He then went on to spend four years in the military. He joined the Forest Service at Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1977. From there, he moved to Boise, Idaho in 1979 working as a technical consultant to all forest land managers within Idaho

in the area south of the Salmon River. In 2002, he was stationed in Ogden, Utah where he was the forest health monitoring coordinator for Montana, Idaho, Utah and Nevada.

"We are delighted to have someone with Ralph's extensive knowledge and experience join our team," says NACD CEO Krysta Harden. "His career has allowed him to work across the West, but he also has an understanding of how things work in D.C."

Thier credits his wife, Pam, for supporting his career and the move to D.C. in 2004. "I was only supposed to be here on detail for two months," he said. "We had a great time exploring D.C. during my detail, and agreed to move here."

The couple has three children who live in Vermont, Idaho and Oregon, as well as two grandchildren in Idaho and Oregon.

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like this one, the tribes are exploring carbon sequestration, silviculture and biomass. Said YoungBear-Tibbetts, "Looking at forest waste as an economic supplement to timber harvesting is an important step for the tribe."

The goal of these discussions, according to



Rich Guldin, Director, Policy and Quantitative Studies, Research and Development, USDA Forest Service. Dr. Guldin spoke to the group about the progress on preparation for the 2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests.

Graham Cox, the co-chair of the Sustainable Forest partnership communication and outreach committee, is to enhance the 2010 report due on the sustainability of America's forests, and make it more valuable and more accessible to a broader audience than the initial report released in 2003. "Sustainable forests fit into the picture of watersheds, climate control, biofuel production and a lot of other issues," he said. "This is extremely valuable info on a national level."

David Morman is the director of the forest resources planning program for the Oregon Department of Forestry. He is most interested to see how other states and countries are accomplishing sustainable forest management.

"The state of Oregon has been an early adopter of the framework for sustainable forestry criteria. We're interested in what's happening at a national and international scale," said Morman. "Then we'll bring that (information) back to policymakers and Oregonians so that they can decide if we are managing our forest lands sustainably."

"The emphasis of this meeting was heavy on the social indicators, which perhaps we're weakest at. That's good. We're looking to learn," he said.

This series of discussions has made great strides at bringing new ideas to the forefront, said Jim Hubbard, deputy chief of State and Private Forestry in the US Forest Service.

"The roundtable's mission is to make sure we're fulfilling our domestic responsibilities as part of international discussions on forest sustainability," said Hubbard. "From its start to now, the progress has been considerable,

and the participation has broadened."

Eric Norland, who co-chairs the communication and outreach workgroup with Cox, said conservation districts have a big role in sustainable forest discussions.

"Sustainable forest management is about what happens on the ground," said Norland. "NACD is an important partner because districts are well-positioned to work with landowners on the ground. We need NACD to participate in Roundtable discussions and projects."

The Roundtable on Sustainable Forests was chartered in 1999 as a forum for forest stakeholders with diverse interests to better understand approaches to sustainable forest management, including assessment and reporting. Key to this approach is the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations.

The framework for the roundtable discussions and projects is the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators. "This is an international, non-binding protocol that utilizes seven criteria and 67 indicators as measures of sustainable forests," said Norland. "By using measurable indicators to assess sustainability, the discussion moves away from abstract concepts to truly measurable economic, biological, and social attributes," he added.

For more information on this meeting, or to find out about future roundtable meetings, visit www.sustainableforests.net or contact Eric Norland, national program leader for forest resource management, USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service at 202/401-5971, or enorland@csrees.usda.gov.

Survey: green home buyers satisfied

Reporting the results of a survey last year of new home buyers, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) notes that 85 percent of the homeowners said they are more satisfied with their new green homes than with their previous, more traditional homes.

The survey, the first of its kind to separate out owners of green homes from an undifferentiated list of homeowners, also found that the expectation of lower operating and maintenance costs was the key motivation

behind buying a green home. Also, some 40 percent of those surveyed who had recently completed home remodeling or renovation work claimed to have used green products or materials. The survey was conducted by McGraw-Hill Construction, who plan to publish complete survey results at a later date.

Source: June 2007 Forest Products Journal, George Couch, editor; george@forestprod.org.

DOE announces funding for biorefineries

In a move to support the development of small-scale cellulosic biorefineries in the United States, the Department of Energy (DOE) is providing up to \$200 million over five years. The funds will assist in the design, construction and operation of integrated biorefinery demonstration facilities employing lignocellulosic feedstocks to produce some combination of liquid transportation fuels, biobased chemicals and

substitutes for petroleum-based feedstocks and products. The small-scale projects are expected to use novel approaches and a variety of cellulosic feedstocks to test new refining processes. DOE requires applicants to provide a minimum of 50 percent cost-share for the projects.

Information is available at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Conservation Calendar

- **Oct. 11 – 14** – National Tree Farmer Convention, Madison, WI. Contact: Amy Yambor, 202/463-5172 or ayambor@treefarmssystem.org
- **Oct. 16 – 18** – “Making Wood Work: Local Energy Solutions” National Workshop, Missoula, MT. Contact: Julie Anderson, 406/542-4280 or visit the conference website at http://fuelsforschools.org/biomass_boiler_workshop.html
- **Nov 14-16** – Partners in Community Forestry National Conference, Baltimore, MD. Visit the conference website at <http://www.arborday.org/shopping/conferences/brochures/pcf/2007/index.cfm>
- **Jan. 28-31, 2008** – “Fire in the Southwest: Integrating Fire into Management of Changing Ecosystems,” Tucson, Arizona. Contact: Erik Berg, Wildland Fire Science Lead, 703/648-4243, or eberg@usgs.gov

Share Your Success Stories

Districts are addressing communities' natural resource challenges and opportunities across the country and we want to hear about it! Have you implemented a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, successfully implemented fuel-load reduction practices or utilized woody biomass in a new way? 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!



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