

FORESTRY NOTES



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National Association of
Conservation Districts

Wyoming district and partners work to reduce fuel loads

Campbell County Conservation District (CD) is partnering with the Wyoming State Forestry Division and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to address two key issues: thinning forests to make stands more resilient to insects and diseases, such as the mountain pine beetle, and reducing fuel loads to restrict wildfire damage and improve wildlife habitat.

"When we collaborate, we're able to manage these larger landscapes so when a fire comes through - when it gets to the area with less ladder fuel - it will lay down and will be closer to the ground," Campbell County Conservation District Manager Jennifer Hinkhouse said.

In 2015, the conservation district began talking with Wyoming State Forestry Division, Wyoming Game and Fish and the BLM about projects the district was working on to explore partnership opportunities. Campbell County CD received funding through a state appropriation administered by the State Forestry Division to conduct management in beetle infested areas or in areas that had a high potential for infestation.

"Most people forget about the forests in Campbell County since they are about an hour drive from town," Hinkhouse said.



"Many of the forests have not received any thinning or harvest in the past 30 years and were in need of management. With the help of state funding and assistance of partners, we were able to put forest conservation on the ground."

Those funds led to forest stand improvement projects on private land in northern Campbell County. The conservation district worked with a private landowner, the state and BLM to coordinate efforts. The conservation district worked with BLM on areas to receive thinning where BLM had or was going to implement vegetative treatments on their adjacent property. They also coordinated with the state on performing vegetative treatments adjacent to timber sales and thinning projects on adjacent state lands. Once thinning was completed on these projects, the Campbell County CD conducted various slash treatments, which included lop and scatter, chipping and piling. For areas that had been piled, BLM worked with landowners to assist



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— Jennifer Hinkhouse
Campbell County Conservation
District Manager

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New England Leadership Meeting focuses on forestry

The New England Leadership Meeting (NELM) met Mar. 25-26 at Wentworth by the Sea in Portsmouth, N.H., bringing together conservation leaders from the six New England states. NELM has been meeting annually since the 1960s and is a special occasion for conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to discuss current resource concerns, projects and issues which may be better addressed by working together and learning from each

other. This year's theme was forestry and climate change.

Dr. Lindsey Rusted discussed climate change and its impact on northern forests. Rusted is a research ecologist for the U.S. Forest Service Center for Research on Ecosystem Change in Durham, N.H., and also serves as co-director of the USDA Northeastern Climate Hub and team leader for the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest. Her presentation, "Changing Climate, Changing Forests," traced the rise in greenhouse gases and associated changes in climate at global and local scales, and summarized the past, present and potential future impacts of these changes on northeastern forests.

"We highlight what we know, don't know and need to know in order to be proactive instead of reactive in the face of change," Dr. Rustad said. She also discussed adaptation and mitigation strategies to conserve forest resources.

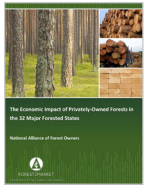
John Magee, a fish habitat biologist with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, explained how the importance of wood in streams for fish habitat was not very well understood nor communicated.

University of Connecticut professor Thomas Worthley presented "Stormwise and Catastrophic Storm Events." Stormwise is a forest vegetation management program with the goal of reducing the risk of tree-related storm damage to power lines.

More than 50 resource professionals attended this year's New England Leadership Meeting, including NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr.

ON THE WEB

Report: The Economic Impact of Privately-Owned Forests in the 32 Major Forested States



An analysis released by the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) shows that private working forests support a staggering 2.5 million jobs, \$109 billion in payroll, and account for \$288 billion dollars in sales and manufacturing.

The new report by Forest2Market analyzes Forest & Inventory Analysis (FIA) data from the Forest Service and North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes from the Department of Labor to calculate the economic impact of privately-owned working forests across the United States.

"This report verifies what we already know – that working forests are the unique place where environmental stewardship and economic prosperity align," said Dave Tenny, founding President and CEO of NAFO.

Visit the NAFO website to view the full report: <https://nafoalliance.org/>



FORESTRY BRIEFS

Pennsylvania district organizes volunteer tree planting

About 30 volunteers, including West Perry students, residents and representatives of conservation groups, began planting roughly 200 trees at the site of the future Lynn Sheaffer Dum Memorial Park in Ellittsburg in late April. The variety of native trees will grow into a 100-foot riparian buffer. In time, the trees will stabilize the ground, improve the park's aesthetics, and improve water quality of a stream that's been designated as impaired.

"This will be a forest 10 years from now," Perry County Conservation District Water Specialist Kristie Smith told the Perry County Times. "These trees will be over our head, and it'll be awesome."

Workshop explores ways to enhance songbird habitat

The Waldo County Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Audubon and the Maine

Forest Service organized Forestry for Maine Birds, a free outdoor workshop at the Head of Tide Preserve in Belfast. The workshop teaches participants to assess forest habitat and consider management options that benefit forest songbirds in a variety of forest types. This workshop is for foresters, woodland owners, and members of the public who are interested in forest stewardship or are bird enthusiasts.

District helps fund forest field day for area third-graders

Third-graders in raincoats and ponchos rotated through four stations in Beazell Memorial Forest for an annual field day that's sponsored in part by Benton Soil and Water Conservation District.

At a wildlife tracks and signs station, students were able to get a glimpse of forest ecology while they hiked the loop trail, looking at the different animals that live there. At the bird station, students learned about their habitat and got to use binoculars to see what they could find.

"What's really been great is the last couple of years, we have been getting grant money from Oregon State Extension and the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District," third-grade teacher Molly Bell told the Philomath Express. "We haven't had to pay anything for the field trip the past two years and that's been awesome."

Forestry Notes Q&A

Congressman Bruce Westerman



Congressman Bruce Westerman is serving his third term as representative from the fourth district of Arkansas. He serves on the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, where he is Ranking Member of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. Westerman graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelor of Science degree in biological and agricultural engineering; he received a Master of Forestry degree from Yale University in 2001.

Congressman Westerman visited with NACD earlier this spring...

This is something that is in your blood. Tell me a little bit about that, growing up, what forestry and the forest industry meant to you.

I grew up in the woods, you might say, in a heavily forested area outside of Hot Springs, Ark., where I saw the impact of forest management. Our recreation was hunting and fishing and whatever activities we could do at the local schools. So I've been hunting in the forests of Arkansas for basically as long as I can remember, and I can vividly remember the dramatic increase in deer and turkey and quail when the forestry companies came in and started managing the timber. This was timber that had been cut over probably 60 or 70 years before and had grown back naturally and had no management really done on it. When the timber companies started managing it, there was an exponential increase in wildlife, and it was because of the habitat. So, without understanding the science behind forestry, I witnessed firsthand the impacts of sound management.

It was a big part of the economy where I grew up. You had mills and timberland, and there was industrial private timberland, nonindustrial private timberland, there were public lands, but it was just natural to manage the timber and knowing it was going into mills, and a lot of people worked in those mills and made many of the products that got used in homes, paper and packaging and all those various areas.

You've argued for the need to expedite NEPA as a way to get some management on our public forests so we can start to make an impact.

NEPA with good intentions has often been misused by people who don't want to see any kind of management on the forest. I could make a case that if you're using scientific management practices on a forest, you're exceeding all of the goals that NEPA is trying to achieve in the first place, because when you're using the science of forestry management you're concerned about water, you're concerned about soils, you're concerned about endangered species and other wildlife. The key to that is having a healthy, thriving forest. With all the good intentions of NEPA, it often gets weaponized and used in ways it shouldn't be used. I would like to see us be able to streamline that process and still be able to check all the boxes off, but not have it as a tool to hold stuff up in court. But I think the proof is in the pudding. You can look at forests that are managed with no NEPA regulations whatsoever, and they are healthier than the federal lands that fall under all these NEPA regulations. I think people who want to use NEPA as a tool to stop management on the national forests should have to explain how NEPA is really helping these federal lands.

So much money is spent on the wildland urban interface (WUI) based on cost of homes and the investment needed to fight in those areas. I think most people understand the wildfire funding fix is not the end-all-be-all to our wildfire problem. Is that what you feel the next phase is, to focus on the WUI?

It's kind of the crux of the whole problem. We've all heard 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' Look at how much emergency funding is having to go to these areas that get ravaged by wildfire when we could spend a small fraction of that doing work in the wildland urban interface. The programs are out there. You've got the Firewise program, the Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs where you can do Forest Stewardship, where you can get the expertise



Bruce Westerman

out in these wildland urban interfaces to make them much more fire resilient.

We had a bill that passed out of the House this Congress for disaster relief. And I worked with Jimmy Panetta, a democrat from California, and we got an amendment in the bill to put additional funding into the State and Private Forestry program focused specifically on the WUI, and it was well received from both sides of the aisle. We've got tremendous opportunity to make smart investments in the wildland urban interface.

What do you believe will be the strongest single selling point to policymakers for the value of conserving America's forest lands in the coming years?

The number one selling point is all the positive implications of stewardship and conservation. These benefits include cleaner air, cleaner water, better wildlife habitat, better outdoor recreation opportunities and strengthening rural economies.



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in burning in order to reduce fuel loads on the nearly 200 acres.

"We removed some smaller trees, reduced ladder fuels, and not only increased the overall health of that forest stand, but also decreased our potential for catastrophic fire," Hinkhouse said.

The following year, another project began on private property near state land and adjacent to BLM property. Campbell County CD worked with the landowner to thin out their trees for improved forest health. With the assistance of BLM on final slash treatment, the landowner was able to treat about 122 acres.

"We have fires every year, but we never know where they're going to hit," Hinkhouse said. "Many are started by lightning. With the remoteness of some of these areas, it

is extremely important we address our fuel loads and forest health. There's a desire by both the landowners and the agencies to make sure these areas are defensible when future wildfires strike."

Campbell County CD hopes to wrap up a third project this spring, with 16 acres remaining from a 220-acre project site. When completed, the collaborative effort will have treated nearly 550 acres.

The result is better forest stands for all.

"When you thin out a stand, it's easier for wildlife to move through, there's more forage available, there's all kinds of benefits, and I think that's why the collaboration works so well," Hinkhouse said. "They all see it from their own perspective, but in the end we all have a united goal."

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CALENDAR

**June 17-21 – NACD Forestry
RPG summer meeting,
San Juan, Puerto Rico.**

*Contact Mike Beacom at
mike-beacom@nacdn.net*

**June 22-25 – Association of
Consulting Foresters Annual
Conference, French Lick, Ind.**

Visit <https://www.acf-foresters.org>

**July 8-10 – Small-Scale Forestry
Conference, Duluth, Minn.**

Visit <http://iufrossf.umn.edu>

**August 2-6 – NACD Summer
Conservation Forum and Tour,
Santa Fe, N.M.**

*Visit [http://www.nacdnet.org/
news-and-events/summer-meeting](http://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/summer-meeting)*

**September 23-26 – NASF Annual
Meeting, Asheville, N.C.**

Visit <https://www.stateforesters.org/>

**October 30-November 3 – SAF
National Convention, Louisville, Ky.**

*Visit [https://www.eforester.org/
safconvention](https://www.eforester.org/safconvention)*

**November 20-21 – Partners in
Community Forestry Conference,
Cleveland, Ohio.**

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