

Communities and Forests

The newsletter of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress

Volume 2, Number 2

Spring 1998

Proposed road moratorium fuels controversy

On January 22, the Forest Service announced it would propose a temporary moratorium on new logging road construction in currently roadless areas of the national forests. Chief Dombeck said he would use this moratorium as a “time out” to assess the current road program and how it might be redesigned to meet changing needs and use patterns.

As proposed, the moratorium would apply to roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres, areas adjacent to roadless areas greater than 1,000 acres, and “special areas” as designated by the regional forester—all in all about 60 million acres, not including the special areas category. This translates to roughly 30 percent of the national forest system.

Forests affected by the President’s Northwest Forest Plan, the Tongass National Forest, and forests with a recently completed forest plan are exempted from the proposal. The Forest Service had planned to build 107 miles of roads in these areas prior to the proposed moratorium.

The Forest Service has been caught in a contentious debate over road building

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Lilly Baker, Maidu Indian basketweaver, gathering willow. Native Americans are important players in the special forest products industry. Photo by Jane Braxton Little.

Special forest products workers teach Congress about their industry

Special forest products (SFPs)—wild mushrooms, floral and Christmas greens, wild berries, medicinal plants, pine cones, and other edible and decorative plants—are playing an increasingly important role in community-based forestry, particularly in rural communities transitioning from timber based economies. Yet our understanding of the roles these plants play in ecosystem structures and functions is limited, as is the economic viability of this emerging industry.

In February, the Senate Subcommittee on Forests and Public Lands Management held an oversight hearing on special forest products, also known as non-timber forest products, with the stated purpose of learning what progress the Forest Service has made developing and implementing new harvesting and monitoring programs designed to ensure the long term future of these products. The subcommittee also wanted to learn how Native Americans and other commercial harvesters will be able to work together and how Forest Service special forest products management is contributing to the goals of the community-based forestry movement.

Special forest products workers themselves are worried about ensuring the sustainable development of this industry. In presentations to the subcommittee,

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Special forest products, continued from page 1.

panelists from the Forest Service, academia, Native American tribes, and community SFP practitioners raised issues of research and monitoring, cultural diversity, reinvestment, and the importance of partnerships.

Several panelists spoke of an increasing need for research and monitoring of the ecological and economic aspects of the special forest products industry. While demand for SFPs and their rate of harvest increases, information on what plants are harvested, where they are found, how they are used, and the ecological roles they play is currently lacking, panelists said. The Forest Service highlighted its need for "targeted research to fill in essential information gaps such as market research, individual species' roles in various ecosystems, socio-economic considerations, community coordination and involvement needs, and resource sustainability."

"Special forest products represent a potential economic opportunity, as timber used to in our region. However, as with all extractive industries, we must be aware of creating a boom-bust cycle that does not take care of the land and the people." - warned Melissa Borsting of the Rogue Institute

Forest certification for sustainable production and harvest was also discussed. Christina Johnson of Trinity Alps Botanicals in northern California said that herbal markets consumers do care whether their products were sustainably produced and harvested and whether harvesters and processors were paid fair wages. Others stressed the importance of developing activities and strategic marketing of SFPs.

Several presenters made estimates about the SFP industry's contribution to the economy. Keith Blatner of Washington State University estimated that in 1989, \$128.5 million was generated by the floral and Christmas green markets in western Oregon, western Washington, and southwestern British Columbia. The wild edible mushroom industry in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho was estimated at \$41.1 million in 1992.

Participants warned Congress against looking to special forest products as a source of large revenues at this time, however, noting income generated by SFP collection is often limited and supplementary. During the question and answer period, many of the community presenters also pointed out the workers were not necessarily benefitting from this seemingly robust industry. They cautioned the government to carefully determine who was making the money in this industry and structure a fee system that would be equitable to harvesters and workers.

Others noted that the industry's rapid growth, if not carefully managed, could result in ecological and economic problems. Melissa Borsting of the Rogue Institute for Economy and Ecology in Oregon stated, "Special forest products our region. However, as with all extractive industries, we must be aware of creating a boom-bust cycle that does not take care of the land and the people."

Victor Benavides of the Alliance of Forest Workers addressed the concerns of forest workers and the importance of recognizing the diversity of the workforce in the Northwest. Today's forest workers and harvesters include Latinos, Southeast Asians, Native Americans, and European Americans, Benavides said. Although diversity among forest workers is not new, Benavides stressed that in the context of today's demands and worker conditions, more innovative ways of facilitating communication between these groups and federal agencies is needed.

Enabling forest workers' participation in policy and management decision-making processes will require communication in multiple languages and techniques for dealing with tensions between different groups working in the woods, Benavides said. The agencies also need to find ways to reduce confusion about laws and regulations. Often laws differ from state to state, making them particularly onerous for migrant workers. Benavides mentioned the communication methods developed by the Jefferson Center in southern Oregon as a model federal agencies could learn from.

The Communities Committee sponsored Victor Benavides' participation at the hearing to help ensure multicultural and community perspectives were adequately represented. In his comments, Benavides represented the Alliance of Forest Workers, not the Communities Committee. American Forests served as local host to Benavides and two other community panelists and helped them prepare their testimony.

Other issues raised at the hearing included increased conflicts between recreational, subsistence, commercial, local, and non-local harvesters. However, many of the presenters said these conflicts could be reduced with increased training, better communication, and clearer regulations.

The Forest Service said it needs "targeted research to fill in essential information gaps such as market research, individual species' roles in various ecosystems, socio-economic considerations, community coordination and involvement needs, and resource sustainability."

In follow-up discussions, subcommittee staff said it is clear Native Americans have a large stake in SFPs and their concerns must be incorporated into any management structure developed around these products. Staff also recognize a need for better law enforcement to protect people working in the woods. They said funding for studies to develop baseline information on forest activities and multiyear planning, accompanied by monitoring and evaluation, are other areas needing Congressional attention.

Maia Enzer

Committee Briefs

Research

This summer, the research task group is revising its collection of community forestry case studies in preparation for fall publication. Looking to the future, the task group is exploring options for a researcher-practitioner conference. The conference would examine the state of community-based research and explore ways to make research more responsive to the needs and concerns of communities.

For more information, contact Jonathan Kusel, 530-284-1022, Kusel@FCResearch.org.

Urban-rural linkages

Connecting urban and rural people is no easy task, but this group is trying. The urban-rural linkages task group is planning a series of scoping sessions around the country to explore rural and urban communities' commonalities. Based on these sessions, the group will review its plans for a sister communities program. They're also looking at issues of environmental justice, particularly the need to involve urban minority groups and migrant forest workers in the national community forestry dialogue.

For more information, contact Gerry Gray at 202-955-4500, ggray@arnfor.org.

National policy

How can YOU influence Congress? It may not be as difficult as you think. The national policy task group is working on ways to give community members the tools they need to access Congress, the White House, and federal agencies. They are organizing to improve information sharing and keep community groups up to date on current Congressional and federal activities, and plan to hold seminars to teach community groups how to play in federal and state legislative arenas.

For more information, contact Mike Goergen at goergenm@safnet.org, 301-897-8720 x116, or Maia Enzer at 202-955-4500, menzer@amfor.org.

Communications

Just who are these community forestry buffs? Right now the Communities Committee's newsletter goes out to about 650 people, and the listserv reaches about 150. Communities Committee members will be able to connect with some of their compatriots when we send out the updated member contact list early this summer.

Mary Tess O'Sullivan has updated the Communities Committee's Web page (<http://www.tcoe.trinity.k12.ca.us/wsc/wafcc.html>). Check it out, and send us your feedback. Jane Braxton Little continues to reach out to the general public with her newsletter and magazine articles on community forestry (*see Resources, page 7*).

To avoid duplicating efforts, this task group has put its white papers on hold and will be tracking American Forests' upcoming workshop on community forestry for useful products. The workshop will produce a series of papers on collaborative process, stewardship, monitoring, reinvestment, policy institutions, global linkages, and other community forestry issues. Papers are due out this fall.

For more information on communications, contact Ann Moote at 520-621-7189, moote@u.arizona.edu.

Fundraising

A fundraiser's work is never done. Led by Committee Chair Lynn Jungwirth, this task group continues to reach out to

foundations, industry, and agencies to support Committee activities.

To help with fundraising efforts, contact Lynn at lynnj@tcoe.trinity.k12.ca.us, 530-628-4206.

Steering committee

The Spring steering committee meeting was held in Chicago, home of the 200,000 acre Chicago Wilderness (*see Chicago, page 6*). The steering committee continued developing work plans and budgets and assigning tasks for the coming year.

Three new members joined the steering committee this Spring. Madeline Williams, based in Denver, is President of the National Association of Black Environmentalists. Marshall Pecore, of Menominee Tribal Enterprises, is from the Menominee Indian Reservation in Wisconsin. Bryant Smith is an urban community forester at Parks & People Foundation in Baltimore (*see Member Profile, page 4*).

Sandra Hill, state forester from Washington, DC, has taken a leave of absence from the steering and executive committees.

Carol Daly is still accepting nominations for steering committee and urban vice-chair positions. Contact her at 406-756-8548, cdaly@netrix.net.

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Member Profile

Bryant Smith

I work in the Community Forestry program at the Parks & People Foundation in Baltimore, Maryland. As a community forestry organizer, I'm out there in the communities working with residents to improve their neighborhoods through street tree plantings and by transforming vacant lots into community parks and gardens. I grew up in East Baltimore, so my work hits very close to home.

I got involved in environmental restoration through work in community development. A number of years ago, I worked at an outreach center called The Door, in East Baltimore. I taught African American Heritage to children aged six to eleven. One day, I was working with a little girl named KK, and she was eating a big bag of candy. She ate the whole bag, then got up and walked outside. When she came back, I asked her where she'd gone. She said, "I threw out my trash." There were trash cans in every corner of the room, so I asked her where she'd gone to throw it. She said, "My mother told me to always throw my trash in the gutter." That mobilized me to start teaching the kids about their environment.

In 1994 the position with Parks & People opened up, and I knew I wanted to continue working on environmental issues, so I applied.

The Community Forestry program at Parks & People has been through a couple of phases. Initially, there was some resistance, because some people don't want street trees. People have a lot of negative perceptions about street trees: they think the roots will break into a water or sewer pipe; they're afraid drug dealers will hide drugs in the pits; they're afraid of rats living in the pits; they think they're messy and don't want to have to clean up the leaves. So early on we did a lot of education, going into neighborhoods and just talking to people, and also making presentations at community meetings. People were very receptive and now folks come to us wanting to do environmental improvement projects. We do a lot of work with the schools, too, bringing kids out of the classroom to work on projects in their environments.

With our street tree and vacant lot projects, we start by talking to people at a community meeting, then organize an event. We'll come out one day and work together with local residents to help them prepare the site, cutting holes for street trees or clearing a lot. Then the day of the planting we do a lot of public education, explaining how to plant and maintain trees, and explaining the benefits they can bring to the neighborhood.

My work goes way beyond tree plantings, though. We often need to address social issues before getting to environmental ones. People aren't interested in talking about planting trees if they can't feed their kids. So in those cases I take off my community forester hat and put on my community developer hat, to help people find other resources the city or private organizations offer. I let people know I'll be there to help; I'll be around. A lot of folks are used to having government people

and NGOs promise things and then never come back. That's one reason the follow-up work is so important.

We always come back in six months and do a follow-up visit, to make sure things are being maintained. We don't have any problem keeping people interested, but we do have a problem with people moving away. In one neighborhood we worked in East Baltimore, two-thirds of the people moved out over a three year period. That's not unusual, and it's why we have so many vacant lots. Baltimore is losing its population to the suburbs.

Sometimes we can link the social and environmental issues. One way we've been doing this is by developing micro enterprises in open spaces, tying together the need for employment with environmental improvements. Some people raise vegetables or flowers for profit. Other benefits are more subtle. Tree plantings can bring divided sectors of a neighborhood together. People who wouldn't speak to each other start working together. There are a lot of spin-off community programs.

Bryant Smith was recently appointed a Communities Committee steering committee member.

Jane Braxton Little photo



I joined the Communities Committee because it provides an opportunity to address urban environmental issues nationwide—to help inner cities on a larger scale—and also to work in partnership with rural areas. We need to bring more resources into urban areas, especially the inner cities. I think there are fewer opportunities in urban areas than in rural ones, and we need more equity in resource allocation.

Urban people also need to recognize the problems that exist in rural communities. There are a lot of misperceptions in the cities, mainly because we lack information about rural and suburban areas. People in urban areas tend to think everything's peachy outside of the city, that people there have no drug or crime or unemployment problems.

It's important to develop an urban-rural link, so we can help each other and work together to address our problems. I'd like to see the Communities Committee's steering committee become more balanced, with as many urban community foresters as rural. The Committee needs to work to change policies to benefit both inner cities and rural areas.

The Committee is going to have its struggles, but I think it's also going to have a very big impact, because it bridges a gap between urban and rural communities and is forming a partnership between them.

Community Conversations

Innovative projects explore community forestry tools

Northwesterners experiment with all-party monitoring

Five community groups in northern California and southern Oregon are testing three different approaches to all-party monitoring. The five members of the Lead Partnership Group, are examining all-party monitoring as a way to assure ecosystem management addresses the concerns and interests of all stakeholders, and management is both ecologically sustainable and socially sound.

The Watershed Research and Training Center will be working with the Forest Service in the Hayfork Adaptive Management Area. The Quincy Library Group and Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Group are identifying key biological indicators and management safeguards for monitoring, and are exploring ways of making monitoring data accessible to both local and distant stakeholders. The Applegate Partnership and the Rogue Institute for Ecology and Economy are creating a team of local and distant stakeholders to select a forestry project and design a monitoring plan for it.

The Lead Partnership Group received funding for the three projects from the SURDNA Foundation. For more information, contact Elisa Adler at 530-284-1022, Kusel@FCResearch.org.

Northern Forest denizens celebrate heritage, collaboration

The Northern Forest Center hosted the first annual Northern Forest Heritage Conference on April 24-25. Over 50 people from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York gathered in Vermont for two days of presentations, workshops, demonstrations, singing, and storytelling to celebrate the culture and heritage of the Northern Forest. Participants report a strong consensus that it is the forest and people's relationships with the forest and with each other that binds the region together and makes it distinct.

The following week, May 1-2, the Northern Forest Sustainable Communities Network held its first gathering. Community leaders from working coastal, farm, and forest communities met in New Hampshire to discuss topics ranging from health care to the arts. There was considerable interest in building ongoing communication and collaboration among the participants. For more information, contact Steve Blackmer, 603-229-0679, sblackmer@northernforest.org.

Forest Service plan sustainable development for NH community

A Forest Service project in North Hampton, New Hampshire is using a citizen-driven process and advanced planning tools to help the community address both increasing urbanization and the need to protect critical ecological, social, and economic values that contribute to the town's quality of life. Public participation will occur throughout the project's duration through meetings and workshops. Satellite imagery, aerial photos, geographic information system technology, and computer modeling will be used to map and analyze resources in the watershed.

The Forest Service expects the project to result in revised zoning and subdivision regulations, an open space master plan, and a comprehensive natural resource management plan for the watershed. It is also intended to serve as a model that may be used to guide future growth in other southern New Hampshire communities. Initial public meetings will be held this August. For more information, contact Bob Neville, 603-868-7688.

Riparian forest buffers reduce nutrients in Chesapeake Bay

On April 20, hundreds of volunteers and public officials helped plant 600 trees along the Anacostia River in Maryland. American Forests organized the tree planting to further its goal of planting forest buffers along 2010 miles of Chesapeake Bay tributaries by the year 2010. The riparian buffers act as filters, helping to keep nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus and other non-point source pollutants from entering the Bay. American Forests is working with local businesses and landowners to help address the nutrient problem in Chesapeake Bay in ways that make sense for local communities. For more information, contact Cheryl Collin at American Forests, 202-955-4500.

Prairie communities fight snow damage with trees

Unusually heavy snowfall in the last few years inflicted exorbitant snow removal costs and extensive flood damage in Midwestern towns. In response, state and local agencies are partnering with private citizens to build living snowfences around towns and along roadways—thousands of miles of them. In Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Transportation are partnering with counties, cities, and local landowners to form local living snowfence working groups. The locals identify the best locations for the snowfences, and the agencies supply the resources. For more information, contact David Johnson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, at 218-847-1596.

For more information on the processing centers or the Collaborative Learning Circle contact Cate Hartzell at the Rogue Institute, 541-482-6031, hart@mind.net.

USFS pilot projects to test new management methods

The Forest Service has earmarked one million dollars for pilot projects testing innovative ways to manage vegetation on the national forests. Intended to demonstrate resource stewardship, the role of ecosystem management and maintenance activities in helping sustain rural communities, and the advantages of collaborative stewardship, the projects will examine a wide variety of management approaches. Tools being tested range from exchange of goods for services to Native American land use practices. Pilots are distributed throughout all Forest Service regions, including some urban interface areas. The majority are in the West; Regions 4, 8, 9, and 10 have one pilot project each.

This Forest Service program grew out of a national scoping session facilitated by the Pinchot Institute for Conservation in October 1996, where participants urged the Forest Service to look at managing vegetation in ways that would meet the goals of ecosystem management.

Scoping session participants discussed the limitations of standard commercial timber sale contracts and service procurement contracts. For example, timber sale contracts were designed to dispose of federal property, and it is difficult to incorporate other resource management objectives into them. Service contracts are generally limited to one year, as all funds needed to complete the project must be committed at the beginning of the contract. Participants strongly emphasized that the agency needs to provide clear guidance to field units and the public on its current legal authorities using service and timber contracts. They also asked the Forest Service to make available the results of its 1992-1994 experiments with land management service contracts.

Participants at the scoping session recommended the Forest Service begin developing a new flexible contracting mechanism for managing vegetation and making other needed improvements. They recommended the Forest Service partner with local communities, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and government when crafting and implementing new mechanisms. There was broad-based support for using pilot projects to test new tools.

Regional Foresters nominated a total of 52 projects in 1997. Nominated projects were evaluated according to their ability to add to existing knowledge, their potential for application in other areas, and the extent of external interest in and support for the project. Projects were also examined for their ability to implement the Chief's resource priorities: improving water quality and/or quantity; riparian restoration; forest and rangeland ecosystem health; promoting responsible recreation use; and promoting partnerships.

The 23 projects recommended for implementation are expected to cost roughly \$7.5 million by the time they are completed. They range from less than one to more than ten years in duration. Collectively, the pilot projects will test a broad array of new administrative and management tools in a variety of geographic and vegetative contexts.

Tools to be tested include: service contracts with salvage rights; contracts involving some exchange of goods for services; designation by description rather than marking; using separate

service contract logging and log scale contracts; selling cut material from log decks and sort yards; conservation credits; collaborative stewardship; modified contract awards; modified bidder qualifications; multi-year funding; giving state foresters an administrative role in national forest management; and working with tribes to examine traditional Native American land use practices.

Although projects are currently scheduled to go forward, a number of these will need legislative authority before they can be implemented. For example, because most ecosystem restoration projects will not pay for themselves, some projects need approval for new funding mechanisms. Others require a modified contract award system whereby contracts do not have to go to the highest bidder. A few may require adjustments to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because they involve a high level of partnership with diverse groups. For more information, contact Cliff Hickman, at the Forest Service, 202-205-1162.

Mary Mitsos

Chicago Wilderness

Sound like an oxymoron? As the Communities Committee's steering committee learned in early May, the area around metropolitan Chicago actually contains globally significant remnant ecological communities. It is also home to an unusual partnership of 54 public and private organizations and thousands of individual citizens who have joined forces to protect, restore, and manage these natural lands.

The Chicago Wilderness is made up of 200,000 acres of protected natural lands, both public and private, in the metropolitan Chicago region. It contains some of the best surviving examples of eastern tallgrass prairie and open oak woodlands, and supports many rare plants and animals, including 181 species listed as endangered or threatened in Illinois.

Since the late 1970s, a network of concerned citizens has played an important role in managing the Chicago Wilderness. In Cook County, the Volunteer Stewardship Network is organized by a full-time Volunteer Coordinator and a full-time Volunteer Supervisor. Each volunteer restoration site has a volunteer Steward. Stewards are experienced volunteers who annually prepare and submit restoration plans to the Cook County Forest Preserve District for revision and approval. Volunteers are trained through a formal apprenticeship program.

Restoration projects have seen some setbacks in recent years. Negative public perception of tree removal and prescribed burns brought a moratorium on restoration work in the County Forest Preserve District. In response, Chicago Wilderness staff have been working on educating people about their activities through outreach and publications. To learn more, visit their Web site: <http://www.chiwild.org/>.

Resources

Funding opportunity

Global ReLeaf ecological restoration grants

American Forests is looking for tree planting projects that include 20 or more acres of damaged forest ecosystems in need of restoration through tree planting. Projects should have clear public benefits (e.g. water quality/quantity benefits to communities served by the watershed) and use new or innovative restoration approaches with potential for application elsewhere. Projects on private land must meet special criteria. Apply now—the deadline is July 1, 1998. For more information, contact Bill Tikala, 202-955-4500 x204, biltik@amfor.org, or check American Forests' Web site, <http://www.amfor.org/releaf/>.

Recent publications

Natural resources Income Opportunities on Private Lands: Conference Proceedings

Proceedings of this conference, held in western Maryland April 5-7, 1998, address recreation and policy trends; legal liability; marketing; evaluating resource potential; insurance needs; estate planning; and taxes. Papers on specific enterprises cover ginseng, maple syrup, custom sawmilling, fee fishing, recreational enterprises, aquaculture, hunting leases, and forest guide services. \$20, or \$17 for four or more, \$15 for eleven or more. Make check payable to the Washington County Extension Advisory Council and send it to: Conference Proceedings, Washington County Cooperative Extension, 1260 Maryland Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740. Or call 391-791-1304.

Draft forest stewardship certification standards for central Appalachia

The Mountain Association for Community Economic Development has released a draft of the Central Appalachia Regional Forest Stewardship Certification standards. They can be reviewed at <http://www.maced.org> or obtained from Michael Jenkins at 606-986-2373. Recommendations must be submitted by July 1, 1998.

CBEP resource book available from EPA

Community-based Environmental Protection: A Resource Book for Protecting Ecosystems and Communities is available from EPA's Office of Sustainable Ecosystems and Communities. This free publication covers different approaches and tools communities can use to address ecological, economic sustainability, and quality of life issues in both urban and rural areas. It includes references to more detailed sources and short case studies. The resource book is available free from EPA at 800-490-9198 and on the World Wide Web at <http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/>.

Members' articles on community forestry

We have several academicians and noted journalists among our ranks, and they've been busy raising awareness about community forestry. Here's a selection of their recent publications.

Changing the Rules. By Gerry Gray and Jonathan Kusel. *American Forests* 103(4):27-31.

Development or Dependency? Sustaining Alabama's Forest Communities. By John C. Bliss, Tamara L. Walkingstick, and Conner Bailey. *Journal of Forestry* 96(3):24-30.

Community Forestry, Defined. By Thomas Brendler and Henry Carey. *Journal of Forestry*, 96(3):21-23.

The Feather River Alliance: Restoring Creeks and Communities in the Sierra Nevada. By Jane Braxton Little. *Chronicle of Community*. Autumn, 1997, pp.5-14.

Hispano Forestry: Land Grants and the U.S. Forest Service in northern New Mexico. By John B. Wright. *Focus*, 2(6): 10-14.

Repairing the System. By Carol Daly with Maya Muir. *American Forests*. 103(4):32-33.

Search for Consensus: A Library Tempest. By Jane Braxton Little. *Inner Voice*, March/April 1998, pp. 22.

Senators Learn Collaboration. By Jane Braxton Little. *Yes! A Journal of Positive Futures*. Fall 1997, p.34.

Spirit of Forest Congress Lives on in Communities. By Jane Braxton Little. *The Forestry Source*, January 1998.

The Woods: Reclaiming the Neighborhood. By Jane Braxton Little. *American Forests*. 103(4): 12-13,39-41.

Upcoming events

Best of the West Summit, September 1998

The best community responses to urban forestry challenges will be featured at this summit, which focuses on urban and community forestry issues in western states. The summit will be held September 16-18, in San Francisco. Contact Martha Ozonoff, Summit Coordinator, 916-752-5897, for more information.

Urban forestry conference: Call for papers

American Forests' Ninth National Urban Forest Program Committee is seeking papers from urban and community foresters and planners for their 1999 conference. The theme is building cities based on intelligent uses of natural landscapes. Abstracts are due August 1, 1998 to: Ninth National Urban Forest Conference, American Forests P.O. Box 2000, Washington DC 20013, by fax: 202/955-4588 or by e-mail: ckollin@amfor.org. The Ninth Annual Urban Forestry Conference will be held in Seattle, Washington August 31-September 3, 1999. For more information, call 202-955-4500 or check the Web at <http://www.amfor.org/>.

Roads moratorium, continued from page 1

on national forests for years, particularly since President Clinton pledged to manage Forest Service roads through "science, not politics" just after he signed last year's appropriation's bill.

Environmentalists often claim the roads, usually built by forest products companies that harvest timber, fragment important wildlife habitat and cause landslides, erosion, and stream damage. The forest products industry counters that road building undergoes thorough environmental review and roads are necessary not only for timber harvesting but also for firefighting and other forest health management efforts, and are used by recreationists. Access is often a concern for communities adjacent to national forests, as well.

While the Forest Service was developing the moratorium proposal, members of the environmental community lobbied for a more stringent policy that banned road construction in roadless areas larger than 1,000 acres. The forest products industry argued the proposal alters forest management plans without a full public review process. Once the proposal was announced, all sides of the issue commented in full vigor.

Daniel Beard of the National Audubon Society lauded the proposal saying, "While additional restrictions are needed for bird and wildlife habitat protection, national forest policy is moving in the right direction."

Society of American Foresters Executive Vice President Bill Banhaf disagreed, saying, "One-size-fits-all solutions to

managing complex and diverse ecosystems are not appropriate. If roadless areas should be set aside, we should determine this on a case-by-case basis with meaningful public input."

Several Western Republicans, including Representative Don Young (Alaska) and Senators Larry Craig (Idaho), Slade Gorton (Washington), Gordon Smith (Oregon), and Frank Murkowski (Alaska) have warned the Clinton administration against a road building moratorium on national forests, saying such a measure would meet with strong resistance in the GOP led Congress.

In a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, the senators said they could agree to requiring environmental impact statements for any new road construction. But they said they would "strongly resist" a flat moratorium on road building, a redefinition of roadless areas, the creation of any new land-use categories, or "any other unilateral administration initiative" that undermines state wilderness laws.

If the moratorium is implemented, the Forest Service plans to convene a panel of scientists and draft new rules on road building. The proposed moratorium period is expected to last 18 months, or until the Forest Service develops a new strategic direction for its roads program. A public comment period on both the proposed moratorium and the Forest Service's road program in general ended March 30. Forest Service officials say they expect a final decision on the proposed moratorium by mid-summer.

Michael Goergen

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Communities Committee is to focus attention on the interdependence between America's forests and the vitality of rural and urban communities and to promote: improvements in political and economic structures to ensure local community well-being and the long-term sustainability of forested ecosystems; an increasing stewardship role of local communities in the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity; participation by ethnically and socially diverse members of urban and rural communities in decision making and sharing benefits of forests; the innovation and use of collaborative processes, tools, and technologies; and recognition of rights and responsibilities of diverse forest landowners.

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