
Communities and Forests

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

Volume 3, Number 2

Summer 1999

Commune gets chance at sustainable forestry

A commune nestled into the foothills of western Washington has been given a unique opportunity to manage a corporate-owned tract of forest land that abuts the commune. The agreement between Crown Pacific, a Pacific Northwest forest-products company, and River Farm, a commune established in the early 1970s, was announced April 21st, 1999.

Under the terms of the agreement, River Farm's operating entity, Evergreen Ecoforestry, will manage a 160-acre tract of Crown Pacific's forest lands using alternative forest practices. In return, the commune will share its ecoforestry practices and a percentage of its profits with Crown Pacific.

"As far as we know, this is a unique experiment," said Crown Pacific's assistant land and timber manager, Steve Martensen. "Typically people within the environmental community and the forest industry rarely agree with each other. This is a cooperative effort aimed specifically at helping us communicate better and learn from each other."

continued on page 8



District Ranger Martha Twarkins and local community members work on Finger Lakes National Forest forest plan revisions. Article on page 3.

Photo by Larry Fisher.

The Forest Bank: logging for mussels

It might seem odd for a major environmental organization to go into the logging business to save endangered shellfish, but The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is doing just that. Southwestem Virginia is a biodiversity hot spot, and the waters of the Clinch and Powell Rivers—the least disturbed headwaters of the Tennessee River system—are home to a variety of rare fish and a unique assemblage of freshwater mussels. The number of mussel species is dwindling, and TNC has been active in trying to protect those that remain.

Despite its biological wealth, the area is plagued by chronic unemployment and high poverty rates. Coal mining and agriculture were once the mainstays of the local economy, but since 1980, a third of the region's miners have lost their jobs and the small farms are struggling. Rich hardwood forests cover the hills, and many now count on them as a source of income. Much of the Clinch-Powell watershed is made up of small private woodlots. Ideally, these would be managed to ensure the long-term productivity of the forest. In reality, when and how timber is harvested is often decided by the landowner's immediate need for cash. This has led to an increasing number of clearcuts, poorly constructed logging roads, and high-graded forests.

The Conservancy worries that the increased sediment washing into area streams threatens the already-sensitive mussel populations. Knowing that land acquisition on a scale sufficient to protect the watershed was neither economically or politically feasible, TNC made Clinch Valley a pilot area for its new Center for Compatible Economic Development in 1995 (see related article, page 6) and launched a number of voluntary programs for local landowners. The most innovative of these is The Forest Bank.

continued on page 3

Feature: Commune gets chance at sustainable forestry	1
Feature: The Forest Bank	1
Letter from the vice chair	2
Feature: U.S. Forest Service reaches out to communities in the Northwest	3
Member profile	4
News & views	5
Resources	7

Communities and Forests is published by the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy for the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress.

Comments, subscription requests, and submissions may be sent to:

Communities and Forests
Communities Committee of the
Seventh American Forest Congress
Box 356, Hayfork, CA 96041
916-628-4206 (phone)
916-628-5100 (fax)
wsc@tcoe.trinity.k12.ca.us

Editorial board:

Maia Enzer, American Forests
Wendy Hinrichs Sanders, Great Lakes
Forest Alliance
Jerilyn Levi, USDA Forest Service
Bryant Smith, Parks & People Foundation
Kevin Smith, Governor's Office of Oregon

Ann Moote, Editor
Kathleen Veslany, Copy editor

Contributors:

Alex Conley, Carol Daly, Larry Fisher, Jane Braxton Little, Tahnee Robertson, Tonia Torrence, Martha Twarkins

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.

Letter from the Vice Chair

Busy bees planning for the future

Since the Seventh American Forest Congress in 1996, the Communities Committee has been busier than the proverbial bee. This spring, however, the steering committee took a short breather during its combination semi-annual and northeast regional meeting in Cazenovia, NY, to review where we've been and where we're going. From that exploration came a strategic plan of action for 1999-2004.

Our main challenge is to stay focused, to use our limited resources wisely, and to not gallop off in all directions at once. This is tough, because there are so many worthy projects, but too little time and money for this nearly all-volunteer organization to take them all on. Our primary action vehicles are the Committee's task groups

The Communications Task Group

plans to continue such essential projects as publishing this newsletter, maintaining our listserv, and trying to place articles and op-ed pieces on community forestry in newspapers and magazines. New activities will include developing a community forestry information center, producing brochures about the Committee and its work, and broadening the scope of semi-annual meetings to include special sessions and activities for members in the regions where the meetings are held.

The **Indicators and Monitoring Task Group** will: (1) identify groups who have or are developing social/community indicators of sustainability, (2) similarly identify institutions and agencies measuring the relevance and reliability of indicators at different scales (local, regional, national, global), and (3) draw together these innovators and investigators of indicators with the folks who can use their findings (government officials, social activist organizations, forest resource groups, etc.) in a mutual learning experience.

We need your help—which task group interests you? To volunteer for one or to get more information, just give me a call.

The **Policy Task Group's** goal is to build capacity among community forestry groups to affect change through the democratic system. To that end, it is developing a leadership network to improve the ability of community forestry advocates and practitioners to make their voices heard, and has effectively brought sometimes under-represented interests such as forest workers and harvesters into the policy conversation. It will organize field trips for Congressional staff to explore stewardship issues on the ground in local communities. It will extend its policy monitoring and tracking activities to include small-diameter timber-utilization initiatives, workforce issues, and stewardship programs. Working with its institutional partners, this group will offer relevant training, peer-to-peer learning, or direct technical assistance in the policy arena, and will develop "Quick Guides" (such as the one you recently received on the appropriation process) on items requiring in-depth exploration.



Photo by Jane Braxton Little

Carol Daly is Vice Chair of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress.

continued on page 8

Forest Service reaches out to communities in the Northwest

In May, the Communities Committee steering committee meeting toured the Finger Lakes National Forest and learned of new efforts by the U.S. Forest Service to involve local communities in Forest Plan Revisions throughout the Northeast. The following article is excerpted from a longer piece to be published by American Forests in the forthcoming book, "Understanding Community Based Ecosystem Management in the United States."

A different approach

In 1997, the U.S. Forest Service initiated public involvement processes for their forest plan revisions in three national forests in the northeastern United States—the Finger Lakes National Forest in central New York, the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont, and the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and Maine.

In contrast to the process used in previous rounds of forest planning, this planning process pivoted on two primary tenets: partnerships and ecosystem management. The public would be involved from the very beginning, all information would be widely shared, dialogue and learning would be essential, and joint problem-solving would be emphasized.

During this plan revision, the agency strove to engage members of the public as partners in management. It created a variety of participation formats, including one-on-one interactions with interested people and local governments, public meetings to work on issue development, working groups to answer technical and/or management questions, and contracts for surveys and interviews to ascertain public perceptions and desires.

Public outreach and planning at Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) is the only national forest in the state of New York. At 16,000 acres, it is also the smallest forest in the national forest system. Despite its limited size, there are more than two-million people living within a 100-mile radius of the forest. Its primary use is for recreation: principally hiking, camping, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, pleasure driving, fishing, and birding. The North Country Trail, a national scenic trail, traverses the Forest as does a portion of the Finger Lakes trail system. The FLNF is also a working forest managed for wildlife habitat, cattle grazing, wood products, and water supply.

The Finger Lakes National Forest held two public outreach sessions, which generated more than 600 comments. The public planning group, created after these outreach sessions, worked to sort and further define these issues in a series of meetings. A field-study tour was also held on the Finger Lakes National Forest, which helped clarify specific issues.

Key issues surrounding management planning include concerns over the proper mix of uses for the trail system, the management of old-growth areas, and the desirability of further land acquisition. Some individuals and local governments have expressed concern over the loss of tax revenues to local communities while others would like to see the forest acquire substantially more land. Timber harvesting did not prompt much

discussion on the Finger Lakes National Forest, although it remains a volatile issue on the Green and White Mountain National Forests.

A more engaged and aware public

Active participation by stakeholders—local and state government and a variety of concerned organizations, agencies, and individuals—has helped clarify the range of forest management issues and identify key questions for further analysis. Facilitation by a neutral third party, the Cornell Program on Environment and Community, encouraged participants to view the meetings as balanced and open with no predetermined results. External facilitation also allowed Forest Service staff to interact informally with the participants, allowing better communication and exchange among all parties. The participants were able to see Forest Service employees more as people than as bureaucrats or experts, so communication was increasingly open and honest.

The outreach sessions, public planning group meetings, and other public forums have led to a more engaged and aware public, increased volunteer support, and a better understanding of issues on all sides. For example, more people have signed up to volunteer for trail maintenance, bird surveys, and other forest activities on the national forest, several as a direct result of the public planning group meetings. Citizens are also becoming more involved in environmental issues pertaining to both the national forest and the community. Local government is becoming more engaged in efforts FLNF staff members have undertaken outside the planning process, such as using the national forest as an anchor to expand ecotourism in the area.

Agency benefits

The agency also has benefitted from hearing the reasons behind citizen concerns rather than just demands and complaints. Community participants have continued to meet with the Forest Service to help plan better trails and wildlife areas and to assist with historic preservation. Community groups are helping explore future management options for potential old-growth forests and the best use of recently acquired lands. A collaborative research effort funded by the Community Forestry Research Program helped clarify the range and intensity of views on land acquisitions and further engaged the Forest Service and local communities in constructive dialogue over a potentially controversial issue.

Problem solving

Different user groups have also gained an understanding of each other's views on forest management options, leading to greater cooperation and joint problem solving among participating groups. Through the collaborative planning effort, these groups have begun to work together closely on a trails development and maintenance plan, and hope to institutionalize this forum as a trails association. The success and sense of ownership generated in the trails committee has spilled over into other aspects of forest management and has inspired a new sense of partnership and community involvement in planning the future of the national forest.

Martha Twarkins, Larry Fisher, and Tahnee Robertson

Member Profile

Greg Aplet

I am a forest ecologist and Director of the Center for Landscape Analysis at the Wilderness Society. As a member of the Communities Committee of the Seventh American Forest Congress' steering committee, I try to bring some assurance that national environmental groups like The Wilderness Society have some of the same interests and motivations as those held by community-based conservation groups and proponents of community forestry.

When I first started working at The Wilderness Society, I was wrestling with the initial conceptions of ecosystem management. It became clear to me that while national policy decisions matter in wildland management, local decisions are equally important, and therefore the role of locals is critical to land management. I came to understand the legitimacy and importance of the local role in ecosystem management and was convinced that The Wilderness Society ought to be involved in the emerging debate over local involvement in wildland management. Ever since then, I've been an internal advocate for the consideration of community forestry in our work.

Providing information to local communities

The Wilderness Society's work in land management planning has traditionally involved influencing agency management plans, and our work with local communities focused mainly on alleviating local resistance to conservation initiatives. For instance, we helped initiate the Northwest Forest Plan process by providing an inventory of old growth in the Pacific Northwest—information that the agency didn't have. Then we got involved with communities in that region, helping them see alternative futures they might pursue in the absence of a steady timber flow. We've played similar roles in other areas, supplying information to inform the planning process.

Now, we recognize that information can be as important to setting an appropriate path for community development as for land management planning. I've recently been involved in planning for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. We view that landscape as one whose future is as much in the hands of the people who live adjacent to it as it is in the hands of the agencies who manage it, so it is as equally important for us to provide information to local communities as it is to provide information to the agencies. We are now working to cultivate an understanding of the interconnections among biophysical and socioeconomic systems that will inform local decisions that sustain the wild character of the ecosystem.

Extending the community to include the land

Aldo Leopold talked about the land ethic as an extension of the community to include the land, and this concept is fundamental to The Wilderness Society's philosophy. I think this movement at the intersection of natural resources and community revitalization is the active expression of Leopold's notion.

I'm still wrestling with the term "community forestry." I wonder whether it's ultimately inclusive or exclusive. Should we be looking beyond forests and forestry? Forestry is the only one of the natural resource professions that defines itself by the height of the dominant vegetation, and I wonder whether we have evolved beyond that. I for one prefer to talk about community-based ecosystem management rather than community forestry.

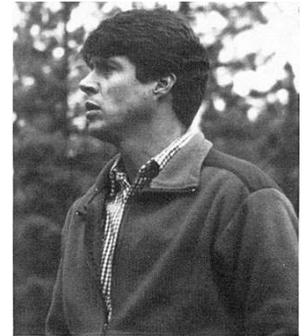


Photo by Jane Braxton Little

“The Communities Committee is the focal point where this concept of community-based ecosystem management resides. It is the expression of the community-based ecosystem management movement.”

Communities Committee

I was the only representative of a national environmental organization on the Board of Directors of the Seventh American Forest Congress. The organizers of the Congress struggled mightily to leave their agendas at the door and work on creating a truly good process. I think the Communities Committee has adhered to and improved on that process.

The fact that the Communities Committee is the most active of the six committees of the Seventh American Forest Congress is very telling. The Communities Committee is the one that best captured the spirit of the Congress, and it is a very relevant, vigorous committee.

I think the most important function of the Communities Committee is its mere existence, and its most important goal for the future should be its continuance. The Communities Committee is the focal point where this concept of community-based ecosystem management resides. It is the tangible expression of the community-based ecosystem management movement.

The Communities Committee provides a way to get people on the same page without conflict—and that's what I always liked about community forestry.

News & Views

Appropriations update

On April 14th, representatives of American Forests, the Society of American Foresters, the National Network of Forest Practitioners, and the Watershed Research and Training Center went to Capitol Hill to urge Congress to continue funding critical U.S. Forest Service and BLM programs. All members of the Communities Committee, they worked together to coordinate their testimony to the Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee. Excerpts of that testimony follow.

Don't overlook the RCA

The Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance (RCA) effort has been easy to overlook because it represents such a small percentage of the Forest Service's budget—about half of one percent. Yet RCA's usefulness and effectiveness have built a growing constituency of past and present beneficiaries who want to see the effort flourish. A closer examination of similar RCA projects around the country reveals that as projects mature beyond implementation, the leveraged dollars often increase dramatically, and social, emotional, economic, and environmental benefits to the communities multiply.

We are not talking about handouts here, government grant dollars thrown into the wind, but rather investments that pay off in big dividends to communities. Arguably, the biggest dividends from this community pastor's and county commissioner's perspective are that self-confidence and self-reliance are renewed and hopelessness is replaced with vision and that old-fashioned "can do" attitude that pulled rural communities out of the great Depression some 60 years ago. With a little thoughtful assistance, we can do the rest.

Dan'l Markham, Executive Director National Network of Forest Practitioners

Support urban forestry

Urban forests represent a valuable resource that is poorly understood and poorly managed—a missed opportunity to

improve the environment and quality of life for our country's predominantly urban population.

In 1997, we estimated the value of existing urban forests in the United States to be about \$400 billion per year (i.e., the value of ecological services related to stormwater management, air and water quality, and energy conservation)....

The lost value of the ecological services associated with...tree-cover loss is very high—in the billions of dollars each year. Through concerted efforts, these trends can be slowed and reversed. That is why we are very pleased to see the Administration's proposals to help communities address the ecological impacts of sprawl.

By investing in initiatives to build the capacity of urban areas to plan and implement actions to conserve and restore forest cover, the federal government can help avoid the extremely expensive alternatives of regulation and enforcement that will result from current and future crises related to clean water, clean air, and species loss....

We strongly support the Administration's request for \$40 million for [the Urban and Community Forestry Program] and also urge the Subcommittee's support for related urban forestry research in the agency's Research program.

Deborah Gangloff, Executive Director American Forests

Partner with non-federal forests

It is important that the Forest Service and the federal government not waiver on their commitment to state and local forestry agencies and the 10 million private nonindustrial forestland owners of this nation. The Forest Service has a unique partnership with the state forestry organizations, a partnership that has the opportunity to improve the health of our nation's forests through technical assistance, inventory and monitoring, and protection from fires, insects, and disease on the 490-million acres of nonfederal forests. Due to limited funding, the State and Private Forestry Programs have yet to fully meet their potential....

The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1987 and the 1990 Farm Bill Forestry Title...recognize the need for state, federal, and local cooperation to achieve resource benefits across the

landscape, and they use a nonregulatory, incentive-based approach to achieve them. This cooperative approach is vital on issues that cross ownership boundaries, such as watersheds, forest insects and disease, and particularly wildfires.

Michael Goergen, Jr., Director of Forest Policy, Society of American Foresters.

Economic Action fills gaps

The success of the Economic Action Program (EAP) has been startling and instructive. It was uncommonly effective in the literally hundreds of forest communities that started the [Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative] process with little or no "soft infrastructure" for economic development.... Most communities had no local economic development group, they had not undergone a planning process for a strategic economic development plan, and they had not developed either the citizen expertise in economic development or the institutional capacity to access and coordinate [other governmental programs].

The Forest Service EAP was able instantly, because of its ground-force-based delivery system and the flexibility of its program, to begin to fill these gaps. No other program...had the ability or the authority to even attempt this.

Today, after five years' experience in the Pacific Northwest, the administration is suggesting reductions in [the EAP]—in spite of the general acceptance that rural development is a very long haul sort of task, in spite of the realization that many more of the nation's forest communities are being economically devastated through this rapid change to ecosystem management, in spite of the awareness that the need can only be expected to grow....

The EAP is the only program out there that can start the basic building blocks of reconstruction. It needs to be encouraged and enlarged.

Lynn Jungwirth, Executive Director Watershed Research and Training Center

For more information

For full copies of the testimonies and/or the Communities Committee's Quick Guide to the Appropriation Process, contact Maia Enzer at 202-955-4500.

Forest Bank, continued from page 1

The Forest Bank is a for-profit corporation owned by TNC that hopes to generate cash for landowners while ensuring that logging is done in an environmentally sensitive manner. According to the Bank's director, Kent Gilges, "The idea of The Forest Bank is to provide landowners with liquidity for what is generally a non-liquid asset."

Landowners who want to participate "deposit" their timber rights and a conservation easement into the Bank. In return, they receive an annual payment of four to four-and-a-half percent of the value of the timber they've deposited, plus a share of any additional profits made by the Bank. At the time of the deposit, the Bank consults with the landowner and develops a forest management plan for the property. The Bank then manages and harvests the timber according to the plan and reinvests the proceeds.

Why would a landowner join The Forest Bank? In addition to the annual "interest" payment, they have the option of withdrawing the cash equivalent of the value of the timber they've deposited if a dire need arises; otherwise, they are assured that they will continue to benefit as their forests increase in value.

While the Bank probably won't appeal to landowners who work their woods themselves, it offers interested landowners assurance that their forests will be managed by capable stewards with a long-term perspective. The Bank also plans to seek Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification—something that would be a challenge for most small landowners to do on their own.

Landowners who want to participate "deposit" their timber rights and a conservation easement into the Bank. In return, they receive an annual payment of four to four-and-a-half percent of the value of the timber they've deposited, plus a share of any additional profits made by the Bank.

How does TNC benefit? It gets an assurance that all forestry operations will be conducted according to criteria set by the Bank and designed to protect specific resources. In the Clinch Valley, TNC is interested in minimizing the amount of sediment that enters the area's rivers. To this end, the criteria will require proper road construction and buffer zones around waterways as well as other erosion-reduction techniques, and will encourage low-impact logging techniques like cable yarding.

The Forest Bank also offers a way for TNC to work with landowners it might not otherwise reach. As Gilges stated, "If we think of landowners as a pie, donating conservation easements may appeal to two to three percent—if we can appeal to 25% with The Forest Bank, we've greatly expanded our conservation effectiveness."

A feasibility study and interviews with a cross section of landowners showed that the idea has broad appeal in the region, and that the Bank should eventually be able to pay its own way. Right now TNC is negotiating with several landowners who want to participate, but the first deposit won't take place until the Bank clears legal and tax hurdles this summer.

While the immediate focus is on getting the Clinch Valley Forest Bank up and running, TNC is already doing feasibility studies in Indiana, Missouri, Wisconsin, and New York, and talking about setting up similar forest banks in other parts of the country. The specific approach would vary from place to place—for example, if the goal were to preserve nesting habitat for songbirds, the criteria might emphasize maximizing canopy cover—but the basic idea remains the same.

Alex Conley

The Nature Conservancy's Center for Compatible Economic Development

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is well-known for its work to protect biodiversity. Recently it found that to succeed in its mission, it also needs to promote economic development, in 1995 INC founded the Center for Compatible Economic Development (CCED) to assist communities in building strong rural economies that are both sustainable and environmentally friendly. It works in three program areas: strategic planning, business development and support, and locally-led land preservation.

The "Pathways" planning process helps groups of citizens envision vibrant, environmentally sustainable futures for their communities. Today, communities from the coast of Georgia to the mountains of Colorado are using the "Pathways" process to identify promising economic development opportunities.

Russell County, Virginia, was one of the first communities to work the CCED to develop a strategic plan. While the resulting plan looks broadly at opportunities in ecotourism, health care, sustainable agriculture, and microenterprise development, a number of forestry-related projects grew out of the planning process. Local groups are now setting up a solar dry kiln to increase the possibilities for value-added wood processing, promoting horse logging as an ecologically sensitive form of forestry, and working with the CCED to establish The Forest Bank (see accompanying article). The CCED offers a manual, training, and consulting assistance to guide community groups through plan development and implementation.

Through its business development and support program, the CCED starts and assists ecologically compatible businesses like The Forest Bank, it also helps green businesses market everything from nature-tourism packages to beef grown using environmentally-sensitive practices.

The CCED also provides support and financial assistance to local land trusts' efforts to protect open space and ecologically sensitive grazing areas.

While the CCED typically works through local INC offices, its manuals and consulting services are available to any community. To learn more, contact the Center for Compatible Economic Development at 7 East Market Street, Suite 210, Leesburg, Virginia 20176, (703) 779-1728, fax (703) 779-1746, <ecodev@cced.org>.

AC

Resources

World Wide Web sites

Social Sciences in Forestry Bibliography. This database indexes forestry-related legislation, policy, planning, management, and economic development. It is a product of the Forestry Library at the University of Minnesota and can be accessed from <www.lib.umn.edu/for/bib>.

The International Network of Forests and Communities

grew out of last fall's International Workshop on Ecosystem Based Community Forestry. To learn more about the network, check their Web page at <www.forestsandcommunities.org>. You can also contact Leslie Gilbert, Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy, P0 Box 2400, Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 3H7, 250-472-4487, <network@forestsandcommunities.org>.

Building Healthy Communities: Resources for Compatible Development. This book provides a wealth of information and resources for all interested in environmentally compatible economic development. Topics include creating effective development organizations, value-added processing and marketing, microenterprise, practicing responsible land use, growth management strategies, and land management education and training programs. Online at <http://www.cfed.org/BuiId_Healthy_Coms.htm>.

Publications

Two new publications describe one community forest effort: its history, successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

The Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership: Community Stewardship in Southwestern Colorado. By Mike Preson and Carla Garrison. This booklet presents the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership (PPFP) and profiles some of the key players in the partnership. It follows the growth of the partnership through the successive stages of a "collaborative learning circle," looks at some of its successes, and discusses the challenges that lie ahead for both the PPFP and similar collaborative restoration-based forestry efforts. Available free of charge from the Montezuma County Federal Lands Program, 109 West Main Street, Room 302, Cortez, CO 81321, 970-565-6061.

The Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership: Forging New Relations to Restore a Forest. By Tim Richard and Sam Bums. This 40-page case study provides a more detailed history and assessment of the PPFP, looking into the role played by science, discursive community dialogue, and economics. It also takes a look at how participants—including the U.S. Forest Service—have changed as a result of this experiment. Available free from Community Public Lands Partnership, Fort Lewis College, 1000 Rim Drive, Durango, CO 81301, 970-274-7032.

Upcoming conferences and workshops

International Ecosystem Health Congress. August 15-20, 1999, Sacramento, California. This conference aims to encourage integrative thinking on the subject of managing for ecosystem health and will culminate in the development of a set of recommendations. Check the Web site to learn more: <www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/centers/iseh/ecosystemhealth.html>. You can also contact the conference organizers at 530-7548507, ehc@ucdavis.edu, or at International Congress on Ecosystem Health and University of California, Davis, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616.

Four Corners Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Roundtable. August 25-27, 1999, Taos, New Mexico. The objective of the roundtable is to develop a widely collaborative strategy to accelerate the restoration of forests and watersheds, decrease likelihood of catastrophic wildfire, and improve the economic viability of rural, forest-based communities in the Four Corners region. Contact Judy Kowalski at 505-827-7474 for more information.

Building Cities of Green: 1999 National Urban Forest

Conference. August 31 - September 3, 1999, Seattle, Washington. Are you interested in urban sprawl, its effects on natural resources, and how it relates to urban forestry? Then this is the conference for you. Topics include planning and design, public policy, technology tools, urban forest management, citizen action, and urban and rural connections that can help improve our environment. For more information, visit <www.amfor.org> or call American Forests at 202-9554500, ext. 202.

1999 Convention of the Society of American Foresters,

September 11-15, 1999, Portland, Oregon. This conference will include a number of technical sessions of interest to community foresters, including global implications of local urban forestry practices, using communication to solve "wicked" resource management problems, and management and marketing of non-timber forest products—lessons learned from overseas. To learn more, visit the Web site <www.safnet.org/calendar/natcon.htm> or contact Stephanie Dolan, Convention Coordinator, Society of American Foresters, 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301-897-8720 ext.109, <meetings@safnet.org>.

First International Conference on Non-Timber Forest Products in Cold Temperate and Boreal Forests.

October 14, 1999, Kenora, Ontario. This conference will explore the growing trade in non-timber forest products in northern forests. Topics include the inventory, management, and harvesting of non-timber forest products; the role of indigenous knowledge; and non-timber economic development opportunities. For more information, visit <<http://web.uvic.ca/ntfp/conferences.html>> or contact Darcy Mitchell, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, Box 1700, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y2, 250-721-6444, <ntfp@uvic.ca>.

Commune forestry, continued from page 1

From Crown Pacific's point of view, the ideal outcome would be that this project would produce results of interest to the investment community. An important stipulation of the agreement is that River Farm must demonstrate a thorough understanding of current forest product markets and economics.

River Farm was given the opportunity to enter the agreement after Crown Pacific purchased the timber land from another forest company that had already secured harvest permits and was preparing to move forward with those plans.

Seeing as these lands are adjacent to River Farm, the commune was upset that lands would be logged. "We understood River Farm's concerns and after finding them reasonable to work with, we decided to see if we could structure an approach that would work well for us as well as them," said Martensen.

Holly O'Neil, a spokesperson for River Farm, said the community will conduct its harvest activities in accord with Smart Wood Certification requirements, which certifies wood as having come from forests managed to sustain the ecosystem.

River Farm's plan will include eight clearings averaging six acres separated by eight thinning areas averaging seven-and-a-half acres. Crown Pacific is interested to see if this reduced productivity on the land will be at least compensated by an increase in the value placed on the timber coming from a certified forest.

Environmental News Network staff

*Reprinted with permission of Environmental News Network
Copyright 1999. All Rights Reserved*

Letter, continued from page 2

The **Research Task Group** will soon be issuing the results of its two-year study of 15 community forestry projects. It is also exploring options for a conference to draw together researchers, urban and rural practitioners, agencies, and funders concerned with community-based forestry to better link and integrate the work of practitioners and researchers.

Meanwhile, the **Urban/Rural Linkages Task Group** will be building awareness of environmental, social, and economic linkages between urban and rural communities, and promoting collaborative action to meet shared ecological objectives. It plans to establish sister communities projects in the Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, and California Bay/Delta regions, linking urban downstream neighborhoods and rural upstream communities to share information and perspectives and build common understanding of evolving urban and rural contexts. There will be a special emphasis on youth and intergenerational learning, and in time, pilot projects will be mounted to enable urban and rural community groups to work together (with federal, state, and local agencies) to demonstrate innovative approaches to ecosystem restoration and maintenance.

As you can see, there is far more work to be done than can be accomplished by the Communities Committee's 25-member steering committee alone. We need your help as well as that of our many partner organizations. Which task group interests you? To volunteer for one or to get more information, just give me a call at 406-756-8548.

Carol Daly

Communities and Forests

Communities Committee of the
Seventh American Forest Congress
PO Box 356
Hayfork, CA 96041