

Forest Forum

Washington County Small
Woodlands Association

February, 2010

USDA Programs – Meeting Topic

Dean Moberg, District Conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Gail Stinnett, Executive Director of Farm Services Agency (FSA) – two USDA agencies in Hillsboro, presented an array of USDA programs available to forestland owners at the WCSWA meeting on January 26th. The programs offer opportunities for project related grants, ranging from more traditional programs for watershed protection, wildlife habitat improvement and wetland restoration to new programs for conservation stewardship and biomass production and marketing.

Washington County forestland owners have often used USDA programs in the past to accomplish needed reforestation and stand improvement projects on a cost-share basis. Some past programs such as the Forestry Incentive Program are no longer available but there are still opportunities to accomplish forestry projects with programs such as EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program), WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program), CREP Conservation *Continued on page 8*

Retain – Sustain - Gain: Pacific Forest Trust Goals

Paula Swedeen, Program Director for Ecosystem Services for the Pacific Forest Trust, will be the speaker for the *February 23rd WCSWA meeting, 7:00 p.m. at the OSU Extension office (Capital Center, 185th and Walker Road)*. She will present the Trust's program on the topic of conversion of plantation forests to more diverse forest models, and provide insights into financial mechanisms for accomplishing such conversions.

Swedeen has 20 years of forest conservation and management experience as a wildlife biologist, policy analyst, and ecological economist, and has applied her expertise to a wide array of issues, including endangered species conservation, forest carbon protocol development and valuation of ecosystem services. She joins Pacific Forest Trust after working for the Washington Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Wildlife, and as a private consultant. She holds a Ph.D. in Ecological Economics from The Union Institute, a master's degree in Political Science and Environmental Studies from Western Washington University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Indiana University.

The Pacific Forest Trust is dedicated to conserving America's working forests for all their public benefits – wood, water, wildlife and a well-balanced climate. In order to accomplish this mission, they pursue a comprehensive strategy to *Retain, Sustain and Gain*.

The Trust aims to *Retain* forest infrastructure by raising awareness of the threats to America's private working forests and by directly [conserving critical forestlands](#) in partnership with

See "Trust" on page 7

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Notes from the (New) President

by Jim Brown

I am writing this piece on a rainy January 24th. Yesterday was sunny, and I spent it working in my forest, doing some mechanical repairs, removing limbs hanging low over the driveway and the county road, and chipping the resulting debris. It is always a pleasure for this city-dweller to work where the air is clean and there are just the sounds of birds, animals, and the wind through the trees – except when I am running machinery. Such work and surroundings make it easy to forget about other goings-on which can affect our tree-farming enterprises. For example:

Timberland was front-page news in *The Oregonian* on December 27th. Seems all of the large timber companies have separated their real estate holdings from the rest of their corporate operations over the last twenty years or so. Now most industrial timberland is owned by Real Estate Investment Trusts, REITs. Their operations are subject to little or no corporate taxes. The REITs can sell parcels of land and/or logs and pay taxes at the current low capital-gains tax rates, resulting in hefty profits. REITs can then pass on the profits to their investors in the form of dividends, which are also taxed at that same low rate - currently. Reductions in capital gains tax rates in the last decade have fueled REIT growth. Share prices of REITs rise as land “values” rise. Together, these phenomena have resulted in rapid turnover of timberland, and sales of some parcels for “higher-value” land uses. Since REITs make their profits from sales of capital assets, the chain connecting land, logs, and finished forest products is all but severed. When timberland is owned by folks who bought it to resell, best practices lose out in favor of minimum practices required to comply with state forestry regulations.

The speculation fueled by REIT transactions has pushed land prices beyond what the business of growing timber can justify. If you have shopped for timberland in the last decade or so, you know prices are so high that the monetary returns from two or three rotations would be required just to reach the point of break-even. Whether all of this affects your own planning is something for you to decide. If these high prices are another “bubble” which eventually pops, REIT investors and forestland speculators will suffer abrupt and substantial losses. Changes in tax policy or just investor perception of a bubble could bring about a rapid decline in prices (or “values”, if you like).

In the meantime (hopefully not forever!), if you want to acquire forestland, it will likely be an expensive proposition. If you already own your forest, be grateful for what you have and take good care of it.

If you would like to read the entire *Oregonian* article, go to oregonlive.com/oregonian/, and type in “REIT”. It is still on the website as of this date.

I’ll try to choose a happier topic next month! Until then, a quote from a fellow on how to plant coast redwood seedlings: “Just plant ‘em and stand back!”

See you on February 23rd.

Jim Brown

WCSWA Leadership

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www.wcswa.org

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Contact Tom Nygren for web postings and information.

Forest Forum Newsletter

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The Tree Farm Tradin' Post

A free service to our members: List tree farm items/land to buy, sell, or trade. Contact Tom Nygren, 503-628-5472. Got a tool or piece of equipment you don't need any more? Or maybe you are looking for tools, equipment, property, or materials? You can place a free advertisement in Forest Forum. Another way for tree farmers to help each other! (3 month limit)

For Sale: Illness forces sale: 40 acre tree farm above Hagg Lake. 30 acres in deferral. Mixed ages and species. Includes home, barn, orchard, pastures, springs and seasonal ponds. Kathy or Steve 503-359-1405

Wanted: Ford F250 Diesel. Early 90's 4x4 preferred. Also need a 12K tiltbed trailer. Call Don at 503-357-2942.

Trade: (none)

Event Calendar

February	23	WCSWA Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m. , OSU Extension office, Capital Center, 185 th and Walker Road, Beaverton. Speaker will be Paula Swedeen, PhD, a private consultant and senior policy analyst with Pacific Forest Trust. She will speak on the topic of conversion of plantation forests to more diverse forest models, and provide insights into financial mechanisms for accomplishing such conversions.
March	13	WCSWA Native Plant Sale , 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Bales Thriftway parking lot, at Farmington and Kinnaman. See WCSWA website, www.wcswa.org for details and order form.
	16	Build Local Alliance Annual Meeting , 4 – 6 p.m., Ecotrust Building, Portland. Further information can be found at www.buildlocalalliance.org
	23	WCSWA Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m. , OSU Extension office, Capital Center, 185 th and Walker Road, Beaverton. Program details will be provided later.
April	27	WCSWA Monthly Meeting, 7:00 p.m. , OSU Extension office, Capital Center, 185 th and Walker Road, Beaverton. Program details will be provided later.

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West Multnomah SWCD Hires Forester

The West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District has announced the hiring of a forester, Michael Ahr, to work on forest resource management and riparian and wildlife habitat restoration. Ahr is a Master of Forestry graduate from Oregon State University, and has worked with Polk County SWCD, Oregon Department of Forestry, and most recently, with the Small Forest Landowner program at the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Michael Ahr begins work with the SWCD in February.

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Research by Cornell University scientists Karl Niklas and Edward Cobb published in the January issue of the *American Journal of Botany*

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***July 31st, 2010 is the date of
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Details To Follow

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Eastern Oregon Biochar Plant Prototype

While politicians and activists debate global warming policies, a Baker County man is doing something to curb greenhouse gases: building a "biochar" processing plant. Eric Twombly plans to build the region's first such plant at the site of the former Ellingson Lumber Co. sawmill near Halfway. The plant will turn biomass -- logging slash and agricultural waste such as grass and wheat stubble -- into a fertilizer that improves the soil and helps it store carbon, Twombly said. The plant also will produce a liquid fuel that can replace stove oil and kerosene. The demonstration plant is a portable version manufactured in Canada.

Bob Parker, Oregon State University Extension Service forestry agent for Baker County, said Twombly's project opens the door to converting biomass into valuable products rather than burning the wastes, which releases carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Twombly said various organizations around the world are working to expand biomass processing into biochar products as part of the global effort to reduce greenhouse gases, produce clean energy and help wean agriculture from petroleum-based fertilizers and other products by amending soils with biochar. "It's an ancient farming method that converts organic wastes into renewable resources and soil amendments that improve crop yields," Twombly said.

See "Biochar", page 8

Trust, continued from page 1

landowners and communities in California, Oregon and Washington. The Trust leads the country in the use of working forest conservation easements that ensure productive forests stay working. They also help protect the integrity of important public forests by conserving neighboring private lands threatened by development. To date, more than 50,000 acres of forestlands have been conserved.

The Trust **Sustains** forests by employing state-of-the-art forest stewardship practices on the thousands of acres we manage in the Pacific West. We also promote exemplary forest management to forest owners, policymakers and the public so people across the U.S. will better understand that forestry is key to ecosystem conservation.

The Trust helps both landowners and the public **Gain** from working forests by developing and promoting new forest eco-services. These forest eco-services serve as the basis for a sustainable business model that yields financial returns from management practices that reduce forest-based carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, enhance watershed quality and protect fish and wildlife habitat.

In this category, the Pacific Forest Trust is especially focused on advancing the climate benefits of forests. By leading regional and national efforts to enact climate change policies that unite conservation and management with market-based incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we are promoting the positive role forests can play to help mitigate global warming. Our leadership in this area has led to the creation of a first-in-the-nation, California-based program that allows forest landowners to register and sell CO₂ emissions reductions generated by conservation and sustainable management.

***"Forests For Oregon"* – Oregon Department of Forestry Magazine**

You may be one of the subscribers to the Oregon Department of Forestry quarterly magazine. With the budget challenges facing the Department, they have now switched to a web-based format. This excellent magazine will now be available only at the ODF website. To go directly to the magazine, <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/PUBS/publications.shtml>



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USDA Programs *continued from page 1*

CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program), and WRP (Wetland Reserve Program). A discussion with Dean or Gail can help you determine if the projects can help you.

There are two new programs, however, which may offer additional opportunities for some woodland owners: **CSP** (Conservation Stewardship Program), and **BCAP** (Biomass Crop Assistance Program).

CSP is a program to reward woodland owners for doing a good job, and to encourage additional good forestry practices. In the past, the program has focused on farmers, but is now available to forestland owners also. There are over 70 conservation practices and enhancements included in the program. An evaluation of a woodland as "well-managed" would qualify for a modest payment per acre from the program, and then additional conservation practices could be elected to increase the payment. The enrollment process is relatively simple, and can be initiated by contacting Dean Moberg at the NRCS office.

BCAP is designed to assist farmers and foresters who are or could produce biomass (waste from wood milling, pre-commercial thinning, etc.) market their biomass to a qualified biomass crop facility (such as an energy generation plant). The program provides matching payments to biomass producers to offset collection, harvest, storage, and transport of material. The payment is limited to a maximum of \$45 per dry ton for a maximum of 2 years. There are several biomass conversion facilities in the vicinity of Washington County, including West Oregon Wood Products in Banks and Columbia City, Stimson Lumber Company in Forest Grove, SP Newsprint Company in Newberg, and Freres Lumber Company in Lyons and Mill City. Further information on the program and enrollment can be obtained from Gail Stinnett of FSA.

Biochar, *continued from page 6*

Parker said revenues from biochar and other products made from forest or agricultural biomass wastes are needed to offset the costs of harvesting the wastes, including thinning overcrowded forests. According to Twombly's Web site -- biocharproducts.com -- his plant will take wood wastes from timber thinning and harvesting, as well as agricultural residues such as corn stalks and wheat stubble, and turns them into biochar products, including a nutrient-rich soil amendment that locks carbon dioxide in the soil when it is applied to crops, pastures or forest lands.

Twombly hopes to move the biochar plant into the forest and operate it close to forest thinning operations so the woody biomass can be processed on site rather than being hauled to town for processing. Twombly said the biochar process is carbon neutral when operated properly. Soils contain 3.3 times more carbon than the atmosphere and 4.5 times more than plants and animals on earth, according to Twombly's Web site. Twombly said the portable plant uses a process called pyrolysis to transform waste residues into biochar or bio-oil, which can be used as a replacement for many petroleum-based products, such as stove oil or kerosene. When biochar is returned to agricultural land it can increase the soil's carbon content permanently, thus establishing a carbon sink to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide. In environments with low carbon sequestration capacity and previously depleted soils, such as the tropics, studies show infertile soils can be transformed with biochar into fertile soils.

TREE TALK

by Bonnie Shumaker

"We're Not Making Hammers Here"

Several years ago, (one of the first years that Bob was in charge of the seedling sale), Lewis River Reforestation Nursery had difficulty getting WCSWA's seedlings lifted from the seed bed on time. The weather was just too wet to get the equipment in the part of the field where our seedlings were growing. Bob was getting pressure from seedling customers and was in turn calling Bob Moore at Lewis River hoping for a good report. Mother Nature wasn't cooperating and during one phone call, Bob Moore said, "There's nothing I can do. We're not making hammers here." Of course he was right. Anyone who farms trees or anything else knows there are circumstances that are simply beyond our control. Bob Moore's statement has since become a family saying for many things that fall into that category of "beyond our control."

This year, the weather cooperated and the seedlings were lifted early. Bob and I plus eight other willing volunteers loaded into five pick-up trucks (three with trailers attached) and headed up to Lewis River on Monday, January 25th. The day before had been extremely wet; however Monday was cloudy but dry. We loaded the seedlings from pallets into our trucks and headed for Wendell Walker's tree farm in North Plains. The seedlings were off-loaded into Wendell's cooler with the same ten volunteers, plus two more. Many thanks to Mel Mortensen, Art Dummer, Mike Jamison, Anne and Richard Hanschu, Scott Hayes, Pam and Peter Hayes and Dick Enger and his neighbor Gary. Bob and I make up the final two volunteers. WCSWA also thanks Wendell and Ian Walker for making their cooler available for storing the seedlings. The pictures show the full cooler. It was good that around 6,000 seedlings were picked up immediately and didn't need to go into the cooler – it was full to capacity.

The other thanksgiving is that we found customers for all the seedlings that were grown on contract. In this year of poor timber prices with many people electing to let their trees grow another year or two, this was not a sure thing. So this year in the world of growing trees, not hammers, things are doing well. I wish you all "Happy Planting!"



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Program Committee Looking For Help

The Program Committee is always interested in hearing member ideas for future monthly meetings or tours. If you have an idea about a program or tour which you think our Association might enjoy, please contact a Program Committee member, Terry Howell, Bill Triest, or Beth Adams.

Beth - 503-628-0722
Bill - 503-646-5220
Terry - 503-357-2882

Seedlings Mitch Taylor at ODF in Forest Grove has some surplus seedlings again this year. He would like to deal in quantities of at least 500, preferably 1000. The trees available are:

- 4,000 high elevation (>1500') Douglas fir P+1's from zone 052, genetically improved seed. Cost is \$350/M
- 6,000 high elevation 512A plug hemlock, coast range seed, at \$350/M.
- May have 3,000 1-1 low elevation Douglas fir from genetically improved 052 seed at \$313/M. Will know soon how many are available
- May have some seed zone 001 P+1 Western red cedar, also, at \$325/M. Will know soon how many are available

Contact Mitch if interested: Mitch Taylor, Reforestation Unit Forester, Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Grove District, 801 Gales Creek Road, Forest Grove, OR 97116, 503-359-7444, mtaylor@odf.state.or.us



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“How Sweet It Is!” – Maple Syrup In Oregon

by Liz Jacobs

Maple sap is flowing! After reading about the possibility of making maple syrup from Bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), my family decided to give it a try. It's a fun family project that can help excite the kids about your woodlands. The syrup tastes great and is a nice golden/dark brown. Many of our friends have said they prefer our maple syrup to the kind from back east as this is milder. This is our second season of making syrup.

Not much equipment is needed. We obtained spiles, (the metal spouts that go into the tree) from a maple equipment supplier. Each spile has a hook attached on which you can hang a collection vessel. Pros often use metal buckets, we use old juice jugs. Your collection vessel needs a cover to keep out rainwater; a little square of foil works fine on a jug. A portable drill or a brace and bit are used to drill the hole. Some people claim a brace and bit produce a better flowing hole.



Flow rates vary from tree to tree and we haven't found any particular pattern. We've tapped maples from 5-22 inch dbh. Last year we tapped 10 trees, this year we plan to ultimately tap 20 (only up to 8 so far). Some sources say that maples in boggy areas have a better flow, however all our trees are on a 15% slope of fairly well drained soil at about 650' elevation. Our best flow in 24 hours from a single tree was about 60 ounces.

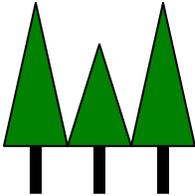
After collecting sap, the next step is to boil off the water. Our ratio of sap to syrup is about 45:1. We usually start the sap cooking on top of the woodstove in the basement, then as it gets closer to syrup we move it to the kitchen stove so we can keep a better eye on it. We can attest to the fact that once the sugar concentration gets high, a syrup batch can easily burn if not closely watched. Even with our lackadaisical pursuit of syrup making we've produced about 36 ounces.

Bigleaf maple syrup production is a growing cottage industry on Vancouver Island, B.C. One of the experts on the subject is woodlot owner Gary Backlund. He has written a book on the subject titled *Bigleaf Sugaring: tapping the western maple*. Maple syrup equipment supply shops can be found with an internet search. I recently used Sugarbush Supply <http://www.sugarbushsupplies.com/>, but there are many. For further reference, the US Forest Service published a research study in 1972 titled *Maple Sirup (sic) Production from Bigleaf Maple*. Another resource can also be found at <http://members.shaw.ca/blmaple/>

Washington County Small Woodlands Association
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Forest Forum



COUNTY CHAPTER OF THE
OREGON SMALL WOODLANDS
ASSOCIATION

Potpourri

Legislative Committee Chair Open

Legislative Committee Chairman Ron Larson has decided to retire from that post after many years of distinguished service. Interested members may contact any Board member or Ron (see page 3 for contact information) to volunteer their services or learn more about the workings of the Committee.

Program Committee Seeks Member

The WCSWA Program Committee, currently comprised of Bill Triest, Terry Howell, and Beth Adams, is looking for an additional member. Perhaps you know of someone, or would like to volunteer yourself. They meet about 4 times a year around everyone's schedules. New or well-seasoned members are welcome. If you have experience with multi-aged timber, all the better. It's a great way to contribute to our mission of arranging informative speakers for the year. Contact Beth Adams (503-628-0722) if you are interested.

Thanks To The Rankins!

As in past years, Laura and Lon Rankin have made a monetary contribution to the Forest Forum. Laura noted on her check, "For your great newsletter". Thanks, Laura, that means a lot to us!

Looking To Mill Your Own Lumber?

Frank Pender of Dallas, well known to many small woodland owners for his innovative approach to timber products and marketing (as well as his "tin hat") is downsizing his operation and is looking to find new homes for his headrig sawmill, Logosol 4 sided planer, and portable hydraulic Mobile Dimension sawmill. Here's a chance to get your own "outfit"! Frank's phone number is 503-623-2015 if you are interested.