



Intermountain SAF



**Intermountain
Society of American
Foresters**

Editors Comments and Disclaimers

This newsletter is sent by e-mail to members with e-mail addresses. Those without e-mail addresses receive by surface mail. This conserves resources and IMSAF operating budgets. Our next Newsletter deadline for submitting articles is ***. I will edit for brevity and clarity and take responsibilities for them. Contact me with your concerns, corrections and (better yet) news you wish us to cover. My contact information is:

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Thank You, Darrel L. Kenops

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2009 IMSAF SECTION MEETING:
Vegetation Management in the Great Basin**

On Friday and Saturday, August 28 and 29, IMSAF members visited several sites on the general topic of vegetation management in the Great Basin.

First stop was Great Basin National Park where Stan Kitchen, USFS Research, presented preliminary findings from his research on the fire history of the Great Basin. Stan gave a powerpoint presentation then we visited some of his research plots in the Park for on-the-ground discussions. Some of his findings include: a reduction in fire frequency since the 1870's; prior to that fires in the forested mountains of the Great Basin tended to be frequent but typically relatively small in size; stand densities and stand composition have changed, as have densities of the adjacent pinyon-juniper stands, causing an increase fuel continuity, ground fuels, and aerial fuels that now put many of the old-growth ponderosa pine and some bristlecone pine stands at-risk from stand replacement fire; years with fires during the "pre-settlement" period can be correlated with wet years prior to the fire year and an unusually dry year during the fire year. Stan's research is adding to our knowledge base for Great Basin ecosystems. Stan's work will be published in the near future.



As a final event while in the Park, the group hiked to view some of the ancient bristlecone pine on the slopes of Mt. Wheeler.

On Saturday morning the second stop was with Cody Coombs, fuels program manager for Ely BLM. The group visited the completed Ward Stewardship project, where BLM thinned pinyon-juniper stands within the wildland-urban interface (WUI) with the objective of reducing the risk of fire to homes in the community of Ely. PJ wood was chipped and sent to Ely Pellet for use in the home heating industry (production of wood stove pellets) or sent to Ely Schools for use in their biomass boiler. Seeding grasses after thinning appeared to result in a more robust understory than thinning alone. BLM's work shows that woodland restoration and community wildfire protection can go hand-in-hand. Treatments of this type are



expensive on a per-acre basis, however, these projects show a favorable benefit-to-cost ratio when compared to a potential wildfire and its associated wildland and urban losses and suppression and rehabilitation costs. Monitoring of completed woodland treatments should go a long way in analyzing effects for additional large-scale treatments. Our compliments go to BLM for proactive management.

The third stop was a visit to Juniper Pellet owned by Jim Hollingsworth. Jim's efforts have demonstrated that woodstove pellets can be successfully made out of juniper. While they have a higher than desired ash content, they also have a very high btu output. So their ash/btu, which is a reasonable metric by which to judge wood pellets, should be below average when compared with pellets made from pine and other western softwood species. The Ely Pellet plant is currently not operating, but not because of product marketability or biomass supply. They have over 3,000 tons of biomass currently stored at the plant and were marketing their product in several western locations. According to the owner, they are currently suffering from cost overruns and a lack of operations capital.

The fourth and final stop was a visit to the Ely School District biomass boiler where Paul Johnson provided a tour and history. The Ely School District's biggest headache, when it comes to their biomass heating system, is biomass supply. He said they wished they would have built a larger biomass storage shed so they could purchase more material at one time. Besides being an efficient way to heat Ely schools, the biomass boiler system is also a great tool for teaching kids and adults about renewable energy and forest management. The Ely school district needs to be commended for taking the progressive step of building the biomass burner. We were surprised at how marginal the payoff was (40 years!) and how little the federal funding took care of. If it wasn't for the grant to rebuild the energy infrastructure, that was needed anyway, they wouldn't have implemented the biomass burner. How can we expect a functioning oil or gas burner to be replaced with a biomass boiler if they have to wait until it's defunct, to be economical?

Rick Tholen, John Roberts, Doug Page

USU STUDENT FORESTERS ATTEND NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Utah State University Student Chapter enjoyed spending five days at the National SAF Convention in Orlando, Florida. With donations from the Intermountain SAF Section and The Wildland Department of The College of Natural Resources, the Forestry Club was able to send seven of its members to the convention. Members that traveled included Seth Ex, Richie Gardner, Rachel Pyles, Crest Simeon, Donovan Birch, Shane Stickney, and Peter Howard. Two of the club members presented posters from undergraduate research projects, while four competed in the Student Quiz Bowl. Members attended several days of sessions that included areas of interest for each student. The Student Chapter would like to thank everyone that donated and made it possible for us to attend the convention and further our education.

USU Forestry Club / Student Chapter of the Society of American Foresters

Donovan Birch: President; Rachel Pyles: Vice-president; John Rentschler: Treasurer; Fred Baker: Faculty Advisor

HEADS UP! MARCH 3 - 4, 2010 CONFERENCE, BOISE, IDAHO CLIMATE CHANGE, BIOENERGY, AND SUSTAINING THE FORESTS OF IDAHO AND MONTANA MARK YOUR CALENDAR! PLAN TO ATTEND!!!

Plan to participate in the second of two linked conferences to address this key theme. This March 2010 conference builds from the September 2009 conference held in Missoula, Montana which explored the theme: "Forests & Energy: The Economic & Ecological Implications of Biomass Utilization from Rocky Mountain Forests."



This March 3 - 4, 2010 conference notice by the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources, the Snake River and Missoula Chapters and Inland Empire Section, Society of American Foresters is being planned with partners and is seeking sponsors at this time.

A conference goal is to bring together the regions natural resource professionals, Federal, State, Tribal and local government representatives, government policy staff and all climate change and bioenergy stakeholders interested in the role our region's forests play in mitigating climate change and contributing to America's renewable energy needs while sustaining our forests and its many values.

One result sought is to "gain a greater common understanding of the interconnected opportunities and challenges climate change and bioenergy bring to the future of sustainable management of Idaho's and Montana's forests."

The meeting will be held at the MK Plaza meeting facilities, near the Boise River, Boise. A meeting announcement is available on our website: <http://www.usu.edu/saf/10-0303.pdf>. The detailed agenda, speakers and registration details **will be available** on line in December, 2009 at <http://www.cnrhome.uidaho.edu>.

There is limited seating so keep a sharp eye out for these details and join us on March 3rd & 4th, 2010 in Boise, Idaho to learn and contribute towards making progress in in this important forest area and arena!

A footnote: This early October, 2009 two of our 2010 Boise, Idaho conference planners attended the Pinchot Institute/Heinz Intermountain gathering on woody biomass and Intermountain forest opportunities and challenges. In late October one of our conference organizers is participating in the Western Governors Woody Biomass/Forests/Energy Working Group of which he is a member.

So from the Missoula, Montana to the Boise, Idaho conferences we will have a wealth of information to sort thru to present, so those working in this key area can move ahead fully in their local efforts more fully informed and networked.

Darrel Kenops, IMSAF Newsletter Editor

IMPORTANT WOODY BIOMASS/ENERGY REPORTS, CRITIQUES & CATCHING UP!

Since our last newsletter several key reports and critiques on woody biomass and how it can be apart of sustainable forest management and importance to State's and our Nation's energy needs and strategies have been released. Congress now believes it is positioned to bring forth to completion Climate Change proposed legislation for Presidential action before the first of the year.

So far legislative proposals for renewable energy for electricity and biofuels are advanced. One final energy standard needing attention is a renewable standard for thermal energy which is not now included but is need to have a consistent energy portfolio as it relates to forest sustainability, woody biomass and climate change.

These report are a cross section of the blizzard of information available and are useful for debates and discussions underway.

1) The College of Forestry, University of Washington's report to the Washington State Legislature titled "Wood To Energy in Washington: Imperatives, Opportunities, and Obstacles" released in June, 2009 is an in depth, strategic quality report filled with important facts and useful observations no matter where you live in the Western U.S. It is Statewide study and proposed action plan.



Recommendations are preceded by a 1925 Henry Ford quote "the fuel of the future is going to come from apples,, weeds and sawdust-almost anything. There is fuel in every bit of vegetable matter that can be fermented".

Key study findings concluded that:

- a) Three fundamental imperatives compel changes in energy policy: Climate Change & Mitigation, Energy Independence and Sustainability.
- b) Where possible, development of renewable in-state sources of transportation fuel should be the State's highest energy priority
- c) Production of renewable biofuels in Washington State will necessarily require wood as a primary feedstock and efforts to reduce State greenhouse gas emissions must fully consider forests and forest resources.
- d) Energy recovery of liquid fuels from wood biomass will require large integrated biorefinery installations that must be able to secure resources for operations and markets for bioenergy outputs.
- e) Sustainable development of renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuels will require careful planning, resource conservation, and committed policy supports.
- f) Washington State must have a cohesive strategy for renewable energy development to meet its renewable energy and green house emission goals.
- g) In absence of integrated planning and enduring commitment to change, opportunities for wood to energy are compromised while combustion of imported fossil fuels and associated green house gas emissions continue to increase.

This report in full can be accessed at <http://www.ruraltech.org>

2) Jesse Caputo' Environmental and Energy Study Institute's Policy Paper titled "Sustainable Forest Biomass: Promoting Renewable Energy and Forest Stewardship released in July, 2009 concludes that:

"Woody biomass from forest management is a renewable, low carbon feedstock that can substitute for fossil fuels in the production of energy and other products---potentially important tool in the national strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and resist global climate change".

His policy recommendations span the horizon from *forest sustainability, *renewable energy incentives, *bioenergy incentives, *feedstock development, *research, development and outreach; to provide an national framework for action.

Type in your search bar--Environmental and Energy Study Institute-- and this should link you into this and other allied reports of importance.

3) The final report, released in April, 2009 by the Wilderness Society, is titled "Wood Products and Carbon Storage: Can Increased Production Help Solve the Climate Crisis?" One conclusion they reach is: "an increase use of wood fuels and lumber will have very little effect on climate change."

A professional, peer review of this report by Dr. Jim Boyer and his colleagues concluded "What is promoted as a scientific evaluation of the carbon storage/wood products issue is deeply flawed." They continued, "Whether intended or not, the net effect is a muddying of the waters on the issue of carbon storage and wood products under the guise of science." You can access this report and the peer review critique at http://evergreenmagazine.com/web/Wilderness_Society_Carbon_Storage_Report.html.



WILDERNESS SOCIETY PROMOTES PRESIDENTIAL ACTION TO ESTABLISH FEDERAL FOREST CARBON RESERVES

Reporter Rocky Barber in the October 13, 2009 Idaho Statesman newspaper, stated "William Meadows, President, Wilderness Society is encouraging President Obama to establish federal forested reserves to store carbon in perpetuity as a National Forest Trust" Meadows was speaking at a Frank Church Institute sponsored Boise, Idaho conference.

He added that other federal lands, including Idaho's 21 million acres of National Forests with big, old trees could be added by a panel of scientists who would determine where preservation is appropriate.

In response Jim Riley, President, Intermountain Forest Association called Meadow's proposal illogical because it would increase intense wildfires that spew carbon into the air. "If the US wants to do something credible about climate leadership the last thing the Obama Administration should do is engage these thinly veiled single-use wilderness agendas."

On another biomass front, the Biomass Power Association announced in August, 2009 the launching of a public awareness campaign to promote the benefits of biomass as a renewable energy source. Bob Cleaves, President and CEO said "We will emphasize that biomass power actually reduces green house gases and presents the greatest opportunity to meet a strong standard for renewable electricity and create thousands of clean energy jobs".

BIOMASS ENERGY CENTER 55 CASE STUDIES AVAILABLE

With assistance from the U.S. Endowment for Forests and Communities and the U.S. Department of Energy, the Biomass Energy Center <http://www.biomasscenter.org> has compiled fifty five "best-in-class" woody biomass applications in the United States, Europe, Canada and Scandinavia.

These case studies illustrate the development and operational experience of various community scale facilities that employ biomass systems.

Facilities included schools, community district energy, campuses, business and industry, community buildings, housing, institutions, governmental facilities and agricultural facilities.

The Biomass Energy Resource Center mission is to achieve a healthier environment, strengthen local communities and increase energy security across the United States through the development of sustainable biomass energy systems at the community level. Their particular focus is on use of woody biomass and other pelletized biomass fuels. ---contributed by Smallwood News----

SAF COUNCIL REPORT BY OUR COUNCILMAN LYNN SPRAGUE ON SAF, ITS OPERATIONS AND CHALLENGES!

An outstanding SAF 2009 National Convention keynote address by Charles Mann, author of "1491-New Revelations of the America's Before Columbus" provided important insights into our business of professional forestry and the responsible management of forested landscapes we've been entrusted with. be they public or private. I highly recommend this book to all foresters.

It was a good convention and while there SAF's National Council met to discuss and act on the following.

*SAF Executive Vice-President Michael T. Goergen Jr. outlined impacts of our current challenging economic situation on SAF finances and operations and the steps he and staff are taking to keep things



moving within our means. Ad revenue's are down, SAF membership continues to decline.

Measures taken are as straight forward as cancelling office cleaning contact to where SAF staff now do the cleaning. To not filling staff vacanices and then reallocating total workloads to reducing postage. On the positie side, SAF investments have made significant improvements since the beginning of the year. Improvements in office technology and the greatly improved service to State societies it is bringing.

We approved two task force charters for; a) "Trends and Impacts of the Use of Forest Biomass for Energy" which helps us and policy makers consider potential impact of energy policy on forests, wood harvesting and timber harvesting industries; b) "Improving the Competitiveness of the U.S. Forest Sector" will provide an evaluation of our global competitiveness to identify; *influencing factors, *specific factors which could be improved, *additional needed analysis work, *identify potential partners, and *recommendations for further action.

House of Society Delegates Chair Vander Wyst provided their recommendations to: * Field Foresters Award process improvements, *dues Loyalty Program modifications. Other HSD discussion topics were, *HSD meeting process, *Certified Forester prep exam, *dues structure, * loss of accreditation at some major Universities, *Leadership Academy, and *"Trees Are The Answer" campaign. E. Lynn Burkett was elected the 2009-2010 HSD Chair-elect.

We accepted committee reports on "communications, * Forest Policy, and Forest Science and technology Board. SAF President Bernie Hubbard outlined his outreach efforts to other organizations and his committee's progress to improve the Fellows nomination process.

I welcome all who wish to visit with me on these and other SAF matters of interest. My next SAF Council meeting is December 5-6, 2009 in Bethesda, MD.

IN PASSING & REMEMBERING

Recently we received information on the passing of Harold "Andy" Andersen in Sandpoint, Idaho. Andy, a long time U.S. Forest Service and Society of American Forester leader was 93 years old. Many of us who worked in Northern Idaho appreciated his encouragement to become actively involved in Society of American Foresters activities at the grassroots as well as National level.

He came from the 'greatest generation" and served in the U.S. Navy where he was a World War II PT Boat Commander. He worked in the forests of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Minnesota. Upon retirement he became a consulting forester and a lecturer at Yale University where he had received a Masters Degree.

He was one of my early SAF mentors. He also at that time mentored Bob "Bos" Bosworth who become President of SAF. He was active in working with State and local forestry interests. And so we say goodbye to "Andy" and send our heartfelt thoughts to his family and friends. ---your editor----



BRISTLECONE PINE INTERPRETIVE TRAIL



Some bristlecone pines are nearly five thousand years old — the oldest living things in the world. They are found on extremely rugged sites in many of the high mountains of the southwest. Here in Great Basin National Park, their grotesque beauty and scientific value are particularly evident.

The great age attained by these trees is due to their unusual ability to adapt to their environment. They often live in isolation, where trees of other species cannot survive.

The growth of most bristlecone pines is uniquely slow. The wood is fine grained and resinous, — highly resistant to decay. Instead of rotting, these trees are eroded and polished by the elements. After death they may remain standing for thousands of years.

