Forest Matters

The stewardship newsletter

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Issue Contents:

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Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Web site and *Forest Matters* online:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/stewardship

Where It's Known, It's Shown

by R. "Fitz" Fitzhenry, U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area

In the last issue of Forest Matters, we talked about estate and succession planning methods for keeping family lands in family hands. We focused on the "I" options for solving the forest-loss problem, so now, let's take some time to talk about the "we" options.

Family forests benefit the public.

Family forests benefit the public—where that's understood, it's also understood that stemming forest loss involves both individual and public action. Here's a short list of some best practices that States, counties, and towns have taken to support working family lands across America:

- **Right to practice forestry**—All States have some form of Right to Farm laws that protect farming rights. Some counties and towns strengthen these laws for local needs. The laws protect farmers from lawsuits by neighbors with nuisance complaints and from anti-nuisance ordinances and other controls that would harm farming. Forestry operations are akin to farming and many governments have enacted Right to Practice Forestry laws as well. Sometimes, these laws include the requirement that current or new landowners be notified that a managed forest is adjacent to their property. The notification is signed with the deed papers at closing.

- **Forests: crop or not?—**In many States, forest income is taxed at the same rate as more profitable endeavors, like coal, oil, or natural gas extraction. Farm income is not taxed at these high rates. Where forest income tax structures mirror or combine with farm income laws, forest owners have fewer finanicial obstacles to managing and keeping their land. Timber Severence Taxes increase the cost of ownership and make it harder for forest owners to effectively manage their forests.

- **Beyond current use and other tax abatements—**In most States, landowners receive a reduced property tax rate for keeping their forest as open space. At least one State took that a step further. Under its laws, forest owners who are managing their land as working forests, with a stewardship plan in place, receive additional property tax reductions beyond the simple, unmanaged current use reduction. This reduces landowner burden and increases stewardship, and increases the likelihood that forests will be maintained as open space.

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Where It's Known, It's Shown *(continued from page 1)*

- **Cost of community services—**Local governments who figure out the cost of their community services for different land uses tend to support forest ownership in their planning and zoning. The cost of community services typically hovers around a 3 to 1 ratio when comparing service costs for residential lots to costs for open forest acreage. As an example, for every dollar West Greenwich, RI, received in property tax revenue (1995), the town spent:
  - ►$1.46 in town services per residential acre
  - ►$0.46 in town services per acre of open space
- **Planning and zoning**—Master plans and zoning can help towns balance growth and conservation goals. They can redistribute the pattern of development, or specify such things as conservation or cluster development. Transportation, schools, and other considerations may factor in, or compete with, family forest conservation. It's important to understand that each decision has the potential to put development pressure on a forest, or conversely, devalue a landowner's property.
- **Local forestry regulation**—This last one isn't a best practice at all, it's the opposite. Increasingly, community ordinances regulating forestry operations are appearing. With Federal and State regulations and enforcement structures already in place to ensure good forestry practices, additional community regulations can cause two problems. First, the community needs someone to enforce forestry ordinances. If they don't contract or hire that expertise, the job usually falls to the code enforcement officer, whose knowledge is in building construction, not ecology or forestry. Second, profit margins for landowners are small, yet working forests are often profitable enough to pay the taxes and allow the owners to keep the land after retirement. When local ordinances cut into that profitability, the land loses value as a working forest and it's more likely to be subdivided and developed.

Forest Matters: the stewardship newsletter is published semiannually by the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Program. Its goal is to bring the stewardship message to natural resource professionals, consultant foresters, and private forest landowners in the Northeast and Midwest. If you have any questions, or would like to be added to the hard copy or electronic mailing list, please contact Patty Dougherty USDA Forest Service, 11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200, Newtown Square, PA 19073, phone: 610-557-4225, fax: 610-557-4136, e-mail: pdougherty@fs.fed.us.

Stewardship News

2008 Farm Bill—Federal Assistance Programs for Landowners

by Devin Wanner, U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides many support programs that family and individual landowners can use to conserve their working land. The programs provide expert technical advice and often include financial assistance for landowners who use specific management practices. Some programs also offer rental payments to offset income losses due to changes in land use.

These are voluntary programs—property owners choose the program that most closely matches their management goals, such as improving wildlife habitat or restoring a wetland. The Natural Resources Conservation Service administers many of the programs, and the U.S. Forest Service and Farm Service Agency manage other programs.

Crop, livestock, and forestry programs are included in the summary that follows, since many properties have mixed uses.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

Administered by: U.S. Forest Service
Goal: Encourage protection of working private forests

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) provides a way to ensure that traditional land uses continue into the future. The program supports a State's effort to maintain options for forest resource management in the future.

FLP is a highly competitive program, with each State allowed only three projects per year to be recommended for support.

The Forest Legacy Program functions by acquiring conservation easements from landowners—legal agreements that transfer certain property rights from one party to another. Typically, these easements restrict development and require the landowner to maintain sustainable forestry practices.

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and individual States. A contact list of Forest Service and State Forest Legacy Program coordinators is available at http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/library/flp_all_contacts.pdf .

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Administered by: Farm Service Agency
Goal: Protect topsoil from erosion

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides assistance to landowners with cropland. The program strives to improve the water quality of pond, lake, stream, and river watersheds by reducing water runoff and sedimentation.

Landowners can receive additional assistance to replant their acreage in approved cover. The cover planting option makes the program a major contributor in increasing wildlife habitat in many parts of the country. Conservation Reserve Program contracts last for 10 or 15 years.

Through the CRP, landowners receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance for enrolling eligible land. The program makes yearly rental payments to landowners in exchange for converting erosion-prone land from annual crops, such as corn, to grass or tree cover for long-term resource protection.

The Farm Service Agency administers the CRP in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cooperative State Research and Education Service, State foresters, and local soil and water conservation districts. Visit http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa to locate a Farm Service Agency office or go to http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp for more information.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Administered by: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Goal: Protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is similar to the CRP. CREP has many of the same enrollment requirements, but also a few differences. Landowners can enroll in CREP at any time instead of during specific signup periods. However, CREP is not available in all areas. States limit enrollment to specific geographic areas and practices, so landowners need to contact their local

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Farm Service Agency office to see if they are located in a CREP program area.

CREP also includes a land enhancement portion; in addition to paying the annual rental rate, the program pays up to 50 percent of the cost of installing enhancement projects. The program also offers a signup incentive for installing specific practices.

More information is available on the Web at: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=cep .

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Administered by: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Goal: Promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides assistance to individuals involved in forest management or agricultural production who have soil, water, air, or related natural resource concerns about their land.

The program is used to promote multiple priorities, including reducing nonpoint source pollution, reducing groundwater contamination, conserving ground and surface water, reducing emissions of particulate matter and nitrogen oxides (NOx), reducing soil erosion and sedimentation, and promoting habitat conservation for at-risk species. As a result, EQIP can differ among States and even among counties.

Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, private forest land, and other farm or ranch lands.

NRCS has responsibility for establishing program policies, procedures, and priorities, including the cost-share and incentive payment limits and the eligibility of specific practices. The FSA has responsibility for the administrative processes and procedures for applications, contracting, and financial matters, including program allocation and accounting.

Visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/ to learn more about EQIP.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Administered by: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Goal: Develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic wildlife habitat areas

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) encourages the creation of quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of national, State, Tribal, and local significance.

Under the program, NRCS works with a landowner to create a wildlife habitat development plan. NRCS provides cost-share payments to landowners through agreements that usually last for 5 to 10 years, depending upon the practices to be installed. NRCS offers short-term agreements to install practices that address wildlife emergencies. Short-term agreements require the approval of the NRCS State Conservationist.

NRCS also provides greater cost-share assistance to landowners who enter into agreements of 15 years or more for practices that create essential plant and animal habitat. Landowners can enroll land in the program as long as they own or have control of the land for the duration of the agreement period. Landowners can submit enrollment applications at any time during the year.

NRCS administers the program by working with a variety of partners, including the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Forest Service; Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; State foresters; and State fish and wildlife agencies.

Visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/ for more information.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Administered by: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Goal: Restore, enhance, and protect wetlands

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) encourages landowners to retire marginal land from agricultural production through financial incentives. The program offers three enrollment options: permanent easement, 30-year easement, and restoration cost-share agreement.

Under the permanent easement option, NRCS pays the lowest of three amounts: the agricultural value of the land, an established payment cap, or an amount offered by the owner. In addition, the USDA pays 100 percent of the cost to restore the wetland. The 30-year easement pays 75 percent of the permanent easement value and 75 percent of restoration costs.

NRCS considers three factors when determining WRP allocations: ecological considerations regarding the number of wetlands lost in a State and whether the State impacts migratory birds, landowner interest in the program as reflected by the level of unfunded applications, and State performance related to prior-year WRP activity.

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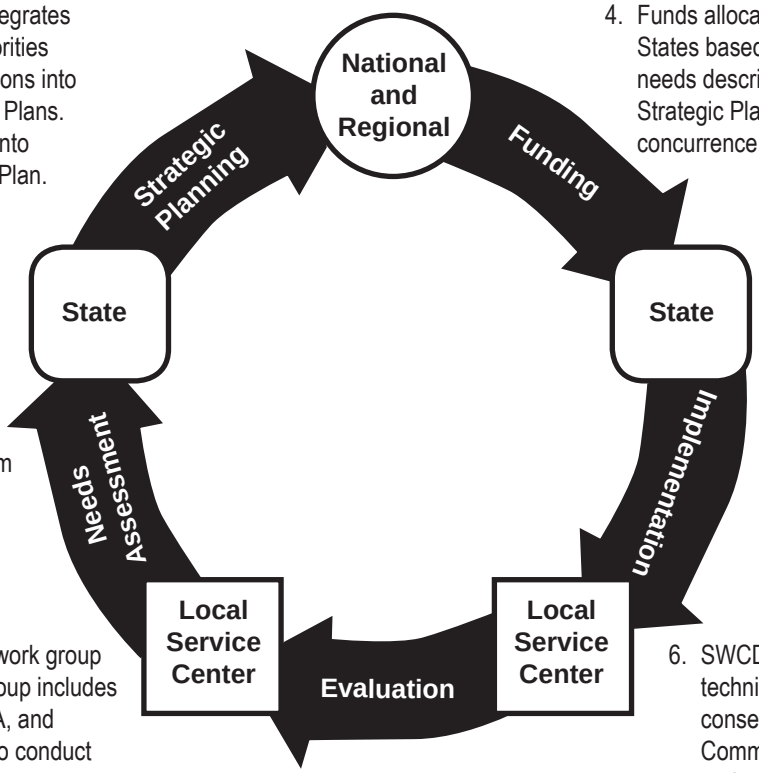
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) *(continued from page 4)*

Eligible land for enrollment in the WRP includes wetlands cleared or drained for farming, pasture, or timber production; lands adjacent to restorable wetlands that contribute to wetland functions and values; restored wetlands that need long-term protection; drained wooded wetlands where hydrology will be restored; existing or restorable riparian habitat corridors that connect protected wetlands; and lands substantially altered by flooding where wetland restoration at a reasonable cost is likely.

Landowners can submit enrollment applications at any time during the year through NRCS. Visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/ for more information. *(continued on page 10)*

Conservation Program Delivery - How Farm Bill Programs Reach Landowners*



3. Regional Office integrates local and state priorities and recommendations into Regional Strategic Plans. Information feeds into National Strategic Plan.

4. Funds allocated to Regions/ States based on resource needs described in National Strategic Plan, with FSA concurrence.

2. State Conservationist, with the advice of State Technical Committee, completes Conservation Needs Assessment, sets state priorities, and makes program policy recommendations.

5. NRCS determines allocations with State Technical Committee advice. RSA State Committee concurs with the determination and issues allocations.

1. SWCD convenes local work group which NRCS chairs. Group includes County Committee, FSA, and other partners. Task is to conduct Conservation Needs Assessment, establish local priorities, and make program policy recommendations based on resource information.

6. SWCD and NRCS deliver technical assistance and approve conservation plans. FSA County Committee approves contracts and makes payments to participants based on needs and priorities identified by local work group.

7. Continuous needs assessment and program improvements based on evaluation of achievements.

The implementation of USDA programs is influenced by State Technical Committees, chartered bodies representing both agricultural and forestry interests. The recommendations of the Technical Committees help each NRCS State Conservationist determine local policy and priorities. For more information go to http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/StateTech/.

NRCS - Natural Resources Conervation Service
SWCD - Soil and Water Conservation District
RSA - Revised Statute Annotated
FSA - Farm Service Agency

*Except Forest Legacy, which is determined by State Stewardship Committees.

Landowner Spotlight

Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation (BCMSR)

by Karen Sykes, U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area

The Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation (BCMSR) is a 1,964-acre tract located in Harford County, Maryland. It is the largest nonindustrial private forest tract between Baltimore and Philadelphia, and contains about 1,800 acres of contiguous forest land, which are surrounded by development. This tract includes portions of a 60-acre old-growth Eastern hemlock forest, the largest hemlock community in Maryland. More than 25,000 campers from Baltimore City and the surrounding metropolitan area use the BCMSR each year.

This stand was harvested because of a white pine bark beetle infestation. Tree tubes now protect newly planted red, black, and chestnut oak trees.

Prior to 1994, the BCMSR had very little management. Hunting was not allowed, and the governing Camp Conservation Committee (CCC) preferred preservation over conservation. Over time, however, the CCC realized the value of managing the forests and was encouraged by the results.

The first Stewardship plan for the property was written in 1994. Its objectives were to provide recreational opportunities for the scouts and other campers, and preserve areas that were ecologically unique, such as the hemlock area. By 2003, the BCMSR management staff was following recommendations in its Stewardship plan, and periodic harvests were conducted to reduce the number of hazard trees and provide income.

White pine bark beetles infested a white pine stand on the property around 2004, and many of the trees began to die. The Stewardship plan was revised to accommodate this change, and the stand was harvested to salvage trees and prevent the beetle from spreading. Funds from the State's Forest Conservation Act and the sale itself were used to purchase seedlings. The stand was replanted with black, chestnut, and red oaks on the poorer sites, and bottomland hardwoods on the wetter sites.

Because of its dedication to forest management, the BCMSR was named Maryland Tree Farmer of the Year in the organization category.

Reed Blom, Director of the BCMSR Support Service, said, "Nothing would have progressed without the Maryland Forest Service."

Research

Releasing Black Birch Crop Trees in Southern New England

Black birch (*Betula lenta* L.) has become an increasingly prevalent component of northeastern forests in recent decades, according to Jeff Ward of The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Ward recently published an article that discusses possible causes of increasing black birch densities and the impact of release of black birch crop trees.[1] Ward concluded that if crop tree management was started in young stands of black birch poles where the average diameter of trees in the upper canopy was 4.5 inches, the time required to grow those trees to a diameter of 13.5 inches could be reduced by nearly 50 percent.

Several factors drive the increase of black birch in northeastern forests. The mortality of tree species other than black birch after infestations by invasive insects and diseases has indirectly resulted in higher birch densities. Black birch numbers have also increased after partial cutting that created a patchwork of small- and medium-sized gaps. In areas where deer over-abundance impacts forest regeneration, young black birch are apparently a less preferred food, letting them survive while other young trees are weakened or killed through browsing.

Ward discusses releasing black birch crop trees in southern New England. From 1996 to 1997, researchers set up sampling plots to measure the diameter and volume growth changes of black birch crop trees after their release. The stands were 20 to 99 years old, and the average crop tree diameter ranged from about 5 to 14 inches. Researchers followed the growth of the crop trees for 8 years.

Over this 8-year period, pole-sized black birches (4.6 to 10.5 inches in diameter) that were completely released grew twice as much in diameter and volume than unreleased poles. The growth rate of pole-sized black birches increased the first year after release and showed no indication of decreasing after 8 years.

Black birches that were classified as small sawtimber crop trees (10.6 to 13.5 inches in diameter) did not have increased diameter growth until the third year after release. However, after 8 years, their diameter and volume growth was nearly 40 percent greater than unreleased trees of the same size. Releasing medium sawtimber black birch crop trees (greater than 13.5 inches in diameter) had a negligible effect on their diameter and volume growth.

[1]Ward, J.S. 2007. Crop-tree release increases growth of black birch in southern New England. Northern Journal of Applied Forestry. 24(2): 117–122.

Site Factors That Affect Black Ash Ring Growth in Northern Minnesota

Black ash (*Fraxinus nigra* Marsh) grows in wet or moderately moist sites and is commonly used for furniture, veneer, pulpwood, and nontimber forest products. Several Native American tribes in Eastern North America use black ash to make baskets. A number of tribes, including the Mohawk, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Ojibwe, are concerned about declines in locally available black ash trees for basket making.

A study[1] was set up on the Chippewa National Forest in northern Minnesota to identify sites that would grow the highest percentage of black ash trees that have the growth ring characteristics needed for basket making. The researchers relied in part on the traditional ecological knowledge of Native American basket makers to guide this project. Basket makers have learned from experience that relatively few black ash trees (approximately 5–20 percent) have the 2–3 mm thick growth rings they need to create the wood strips that are woven into baskets.

Their guidelines for selecting a “basket tree” include a minimum d.b.h. of 12.5 cm, a minimum butt log length of 2 m relatively free from surface defects, and approximately 20 years of ring growth with a minimum ring width of approximately 2 mm. To find such trees, basket makers look for trees with good crown form and few obvious defects that are growing on slightly higher microsites within swamps or in stands that do not have permanent standing water (Richard David, personal comm., 1999).

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Site Factors That Affect Black Ash Ring Growth in Northern Minnesota

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There were two objectives for this study—determine what site factors affect ring width of black ash, and determine what site factors affect the growth of black ash basket trees in lowland forest, upland forest, and vernal woodland pond sites.

Ring Width

On lowland forest sites, 5-year ring growth declined as the percent cover of herbaceous vegetation increased. This result was not seen in the upland forest or woodland ponds sites. The authors concluded that these herbs, mostly sedges, limit tree growth on lowland sites, where total soil volume available for roots is extremely limited by high water tables. More moderately moist sites such as the upland forest and woodland ponds produced a higher percentage of basket trees based on the quality of ring width. The woodland pond ecosystem also clearly had wider rings than either the lowland or upland ecosystems, even at equivalent tree sizes.

Site Characteristics and Potential to Produce Black Ash Basket Trees

Since black ash is typically associated with growing on extremely wet sites, it is assumed that this is the ideal habitat; however, these sites may not provide the best growing conditions to produce quality basket or lumber trees. Other studies have suggested that not all wetland trees are highly productive in typical wetland sites and that some, such as black ash in this study, would grow much better on slightly drier sites.[2] Black ash is probably growing on wetland sites because it is among the few trees that can grow successfully there. If it can become established, it will grow much better on a drier site. Black ashes do not become easily established on many upland sites because they can't compete with other tree species and forest vegetation.

Vernal woodland ponds seem to be the best compromise for black ash because they supply enough water while remaining dry enough and limit competition from forest vegetation. The woodland ponds are especially productive with respect to ring growth because of the seasonal conditions that keep competing vegetation to a minimum. However, woodland ponds are still not good sites because they are not very productive. Based on stem analyses of a subset of the black ash trees studied,[3] it appears that all of the woodland pond sites may be far from being the most productive sites for black ash when compared to a published site index table for black ash.[4]

[1]Benedict, M.A.; Frelich, L.E. 2008. Forest Ecology and Management. 255 (Issues 8-9): 3489–3493.

[2]Keeland, B.D.; Conner, W.H.; Sharitz, R.R. 1987. A comparison of wetland tree growth response to hydrologic regime in Louisiana and South Carolina. Forest Ecology and Management. 90: 237–250.

[3]Benedict, M.A. 2001. Black ash: its use by Native Americans, site factors affecting seedling abundance, and ring growth in northern Minnesota. M.A. Thesis, University of Minnesota.

[4]Carmean, W.H. 1978. Site index curves for northern hardwoods in northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Res. Pap. NC–160. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station.

State Roundup

~~~The **Maine** Division of the New England Society of American Foresters (NESAF) will host the 2009 NESAF Annual Winter Meeting from March 18 to 20 at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, ME. The theme of this meeting is "Bio: Mass, Fuel, Products, Diversity: Resource Management in a Changing World." Please contact one of the following chairpersons if you can help: Ken Laustsen, General Chair (ken.laustsen@maine.gov), Jake Metzler, Program Chair (jake@fsmaine.org), Spencer Meyer, Program Chair (spencer_meyer@umenfa.maine.edu), and Ron Lemin, Arrangements Chair (ronald.lemin@uap.com).

~~~America's second largest infestation of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) was discovered in Worcester, **Massachusetts**. The danger with this infestation is it marks the closest yet this invasive pest has landed to a rural forest.

The USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the finding in early August after an alert citizen from the Greendale section of Worcester reported finding an unusual beetle in a maple tree. This is the first detection of this invasive pest in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Agricultural Resources, and the city of Worcester are working with the U.S. Forest Service and APHIS to coordinate a management plan to eradicate ALB the Worcester and surrounding towns. APHIS and State officials immediately quarantined the infested area to stop the beetle's spread. Inspection crews will survey northern Worcester and the neighboring towns of Boylston, West Boylston, Holden, and Shrewsbury. Crews will inspect ALB host tree species for signs of the beetle using ground crews, specially trained tree climbers, and bucket trucks. Infested trees will be destroyed. Susceptible host trees may need treatment to prevent further infestations.

To report signs or symptoms of ALB, call the Massachusetts ALB program at (508) 799-8330. For more information about ALB, visit www.aphis.usda.gov.

~~~Forester Dennis McDougall is now serving as the Stewardship Coordinator for the States served by the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry St. Paul, **Minnesota**, Field Office. Dennis takes over for Mike Majeski, who retired in January 2007. He earned a B.S. degree in forest resources and an M.S. degree in plant pathology from the University of Minnesota. Dennis has worked for the Northeastern Area since 2001 in forest health, and has primarily been involved with aerial and ground-based pest detection, monitoring, and treatment. He has also served as the Field Office invasive plant contact and specialist. Dennis in interested in using technology to solve forest resource problems and exploring how GIS technology can be used to help advance the Forest Stewardship Program. He's also interested in the connection between forest health and stewardship because good stewardship seems increasingly dependent on forest health issues. He hopes to use his forest health background to bridge the gap between forest health issues and on-the-ground private forest management through the Stewardship Program. Dennis was born and raised in Wisconsin and enjoys fishing, playing with his three kids, and playing electric bass. Dennis can be reached at (651) 649-5182 or dmcdougall@fs.fed.us.

~~~Michael Huneke became the new stewardship program coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area in December 2008. He replaces Mark Buccowich, who remains with the Area in a special projects role.

Mike graduated from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in 1992 with a dual B.S. degree in Resources Management and Environmental Forest Biology. In 1993, Mike began working as a watershed forester for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service in Harford and Cecil Counties, Maryland. As a watershed forester, Mike established some of the first landscape-level riparian restoration projects in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

In 2002 Mike became the Project Manager for the Harford Cecil Project with the Maryland DNR Forest Service and worked to oversee the delivery of all Maryland Forest Service programs in the

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State Roundup *(continued from page 9)*

two-county area, including stewardship, fire, urban forestry, information and education, and State forest management. Mike has a strong background in project management, forest stewardship, and fire, and is currently qualified as a Division Supervisor.

In July 2008, Mike left the Maryland DNR Forest Service after 15 years of service to take a position as the U.S. Forest Service Military Conservation Projects Coordinator stationed at the Army Environmental Command at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

Following termination of the Interagency Agreement between the U.S. Forest Service and the Army, Mike was reassigned to his new role.

Mike has served as the Chair of the Maryland-Delaware Division of the Society of American Foresters and is a member of the Harford County Forest Conservancy District Board. Mike has been recognized as the Maryland DNR Forester of the Year, Maryland-Delaware SAF Forester of the Year, and Allegheny SAF Forester of the Year. Mike is an Eagle Scout and a recipient of the Baltimore Area Council of the Boy Scouts' Silver Beaver Award.

Mike is active in his church and community at home in Whiteford, MD, and serves as a firefighter and EMT with the Whiteford Volunteer Fire Department. Mike also enjoys spending time with his wife Su Ann and four children Carmen, Jacob, Abbey, and Tyler. Mike can be reached at (610) 557-4110 or mhuneke@fs.fed.us .

~~~Counties considered at high risk from the emerald ash borer that threatens **Pennsylvania's** ash trees were part of a systematic monitoring program during 2008. Pennsylvania's 300 million ash trees could be wiped out in little more than a decade if this borer becomes established. During summer 2008, approximately 13,000 traps were set up in 35 counties to determine how far this invasive insect has spread since its discovery the previous summer in Butler County, north of Pittsburgh. Most of the traps were set up in western Pennsylvania, but others were deployed in a grid across a smattering of counties in eastern Pennsylvania, including Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Monroe. The surveillance program will be supplemented with a separate monitoring effort for the rest of Pennsylvania that will focus mostly on high-risk public lands such as State parks and forest, said Donald Eggen, Chief of Forest Pest Management for the State. The three-sided panel traps are a bright purple color and baited with manuka oil.

~~~The **West Virginia** University Division of Forestry and Natural Resources has partnered with the U.S. Forest Service's Wood Education and Resource Center to update and expand the "Managing Your Woodlot" Web site. This Web site, which was developed to educate private forest landowners, includes a "stumpage/log value" calculator that provides a glimpse at the variability in value among hardwood species. The Web address is http://ahc.caf.wvu.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=12&Itemid=91.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) *(continued from page 4)*

Administered by: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency
Goal: Restore and protect grasslands

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) supports working grazing operations; enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion to crop production, urban development, and other activities that threaten grassland resources.

GRP allows landowners to continue grazing practices. The program also allows haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production with certain restrictions during nesting season. Landowners can conduct appropriate fire rehabilitation and construct firebreaks and fences.

The program has three enrollment options: permanent easement, 30-year easement, and rental agreement. Landowners can also choose a rental agreement as an alternative to an easement. NRCS offers 10-, 15-, 20-, and 30-year rental agreements. Eligible land includes privately owned and Tribal lands that contain forbs or shrubs, or land located in areas historically dominated by grassland, forbs, or shrubs that has the potential to serve as wildlife habitat.

Visit http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=grp for more information.

Naturalist's Corner

Restoring Disturbed Wet Areas

by Roger Monthey, U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area

Care must be taken when conducting forest management activities in and around wetlands. Exposed mineral soil can result in increased erosion and sedimentation and should be stabilized as soon as possible. Exposed soil can be stabilized by planting seeds of wetland plants to reduce soil erosion and help hasten reestablishment of plant communities.

Seeds will generate best on bare soil, and may be applied by hydroseeding, using a mechanical spreader, or by hand. When seeding on bare soil, it is important to rake the soil to create grooves, apply seed, and then lightly rake (New England Wetland Plants, Inc., http://www.newp.com/seed%20mixes.htm).

Seeding is best conducted in spring, but seeding in summer can be successful if a light mulching of weed-free straw is applied after seeding, to conserve moisture.

Some plant species that can be seeded in disturbed wet areas include switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), Virginia wild rye (*Elymus virginicus*), creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), fox sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*), creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), soft rush (*Juncus effuses*), New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*), grass-leaved goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*), green bullrush (*Scirpus atrovirens*), boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), upland bentgrass (*Agrostis perennans*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), and woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*). A few of these species are described on this page and on the back cover.

All photos by Roger Monthey

Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*) – This native fern grows in wet meadows and woods, swamps, and on streambanks, and is usually found in slightly acidic soil. It grows to 18–24 inches in height. The spores are located on separate fertile fronds within bead-like modified leaflets. The stalk is yellow or pale tan, and is dark brown at the base with a few scales. Its name is derived from the fact that the frond tends to wither at the first slight frost.

Woolgrass (*Scirpus cyperinus*) – This native perennial plant consists of a clump of low vegetative shoots, from which arises one or more flowering stalks about 3–5 feet tall. Its habitat includes marshes, swamps, sloughs (seasonal streams), sedge meadows, gravelly seeps, and borders of ponds. This plant prefers full or partial sun, wet to moist conditions, and soil that is muddy, sandy, or gravelly. Shallow water is tolerated. This plant can be planted by seed or by division of the vegetative shoots.

Fox Sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*) – The native fox sedge grows well in damp to very wet soils in full sun to partial shade. Seeds should be planted in the fall or stratified with moisture and planted in the spring. This sedge grows on moist, open ground in wet sites such as swamps, wet meadows, or near water. The narrow, grass-like leaf blades grow up to 3 feet in height. The seed heads resemble a fox's tail and are short lived.

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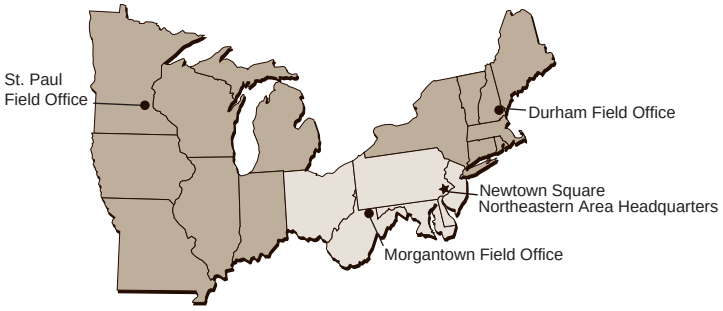

Grass-leaved Goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*) – This perennial plant, also called lance-leaf goldenrod, grows in low, wet places, and prefers open, sunny places. This goldenrod has leaves about ¼-inch wide, with three or five veins running down the leaf. It might be confused with slender goldenrod (*Euthamia tenuifolia*), which has narrower leaves about ⅛-inch wide that have a single vein running down the leaf.