Greetings!

Some summer we’ve had this year. Seems like it was a month late getting here and now fall is about a month early arriving – hasn’t been good for my tomato crop, that’s for sure. But the good news – at least in our area – is the fire season wasn’t too bad for a change. I read an interesting article recently, titled “Sun Makes History: First Spotless Month in a Century” which highlights that in August there was zero sun-spot activity. Apparently we are at the beginning of Solar Cycle 24 and the sun has been very quiet the last 8 months, and since sunspot cycles are lengthy affairs, it will likely continue to be quiet for several years. So what, you ask? In the last 1000 years, three previous low-sunspot activity cycles, the Dalton, Maunder, and Spoer Minimums, resulted in periods of rapid global cooling, one of which was called the “mini ice age”. Predicting the weather is a notoriously tricky business, but if there is in fact a strong correlation between sunspots and temperatures – well, you might want to add a new parka to your Christmas wish list. I hear wolf fur is very warm…

All kidding aside, the possible forest management implications of severe, long-term weather changes are receiving much attention of late. At this point, it’s difficult to know exactly what it all means but perhaps the bottom line is that a well-managed forest at its peak of health and vigor will have the resilience to adapt to whatever comes.

Cheers,

Bob Parker, Extension Forestry Agent
OSWA develops “Carbon Aggregator” for family woodland owners.

By Mike Gaudern, Executive Director, Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA).

(The following article discusses an effort here in Oregon to use carbon credits to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide and create a new revenue source for small woodland owners. Mike will be our way later this month to discuss carbon aggregation project in more detail.)

OSWA, the Oregon Small Woodlands Association, dedicates itself to providing education, policy and other resources for small woodland owners. Recently, OSWA has expanded its membership and outreach programs such as the popular Howdy Neighbor! Tours. In addition, OSWA will be working with the American Forest Foundation to develop a “Working Certified Tree Farm Forester” Carbon Aggregation System in Oregon.

The pilot project would potentially run over 3 years and the foundation has suggested they would be willing to invest seed funding, as well as assist in finding sources to match those dollars. The funds would be used to develop an organization that would “pool” the carbon stored in certified “tree Farm” woodlands. These pools would be sold to buyers who want to buy “offsets: to their use of carbon.

This means OSWA and partners could succeed in making a connection between public opinion and their behavior. By having markets pay for an ecosystems service we provide, we will begin a new relationship with the public.

If a landowner chooses to join a pool, their commitment is to be a certified tree farm for 15 years. The reward is that they would receive a check for carbon they store on their parcel.

The OSWA Board of Directors approved a committee to develop a response and feasibility plan. Committee members are Mark Copeland, Ken Faulk, Rich Fletcher, and Mike Gaudern. Roy Beyer and Clint Bentz are representing Oregon Tree Farm System, and Jim Paul, the new chief of the Private Forest Program is representing the Oregon Department of Forestry. This work is supported also by OSWA members and other stakeholder groups.

OSWA was the first forest association in the region to adopt a Working Forests Carbon policy in 2007. It has been at the forefront to developing a Forest offsets opportunity within the Western Climate initiative and has led the charge in developing opportunity for family woodlands.

OSWA has arrived at this crossroads due to careful planning, success and a systematic assessment and decision-making approach. The “Carbon” opportunity is a priority issue for us, but there remain a growing number of other issues that face woodland owners in Oregon.

Support will be vital no matter which direction we take from here. And we’ll be looking to friends to help us shape our common future.

(Note: You can download an mp3 of a show about carbon sequestration from OPB’s web site: http://action.publicbroadcasting.net/opb/posts/list/1382810.page.)

Landowners face hurdles in carbon-credit market.

Mateusz Perkowski, Capital Press.

(And as the saying goes – “there ain’t no such thing as a free lunch”. This article from the Capital Press reveals something of the complexities in the carbon credit markets.)

Carbon-credit trading is on the rise worldwide, but woodland owners will need to over-
come serious obstacles to gain a foothold in the new market, according to several industry experts at the Forests, Carbon and Climate Change Conference in Corvallis, Oregon.

Although the carbon credit cap-and-trade system has grown into an estimated $40 billion global industry since being implemented in 2005, “forest carbon was a trivial part of that,” said Bettina von Hagen, vice president of forestry for the Ecotrust nonprofit group. “It’s not a done deal that we will become part of the mix unless we begin to shape the rules in Oregon” and elsewhere.

Under the cap-and-trade system, developed as part of the Kyoto Protocol plan to reduce global warming, a limit is placed on allowable carbon emissions. When a company falls below that cap, it earns carbon credits that can be sold to firms exceeding the emissions limit.

By creating a demand for carbon credits, the idea is to compel companies to cut their emissions. The system is most prominent in Europe, where the Kyoto Protocol is mandatory, but voluntary markets exist in the U.S. and other countries.

For woodland owners, the system offers and opportunity to derive value from their forests: Growing trees to sequester carbon is another way to create marketable credits.

However, figuring out the actual amount of emissions reduced by planting or preserving trees is tricky. The process is further complicated by the possibility that the carbon offsets will be reversed or severely compromised by fire, disease, wind or another natural calamity.

Woodland owners are put off by the complications of enrolling in forest carbon trading programs, and they’re also wary of agreeing to cease harvesting trees for lengthy periods of time.

Difficulties in measuring offset emissions, managing, risk, navigating complex rules and committing to lengthy contracts all impede the growth of the forest carbon market, said Matt Delaney, a forestry consultant. “It’s a real detriment to landowner participation.”

To study how revenue can be produced with sustainable forest management and conservation, Ecotrust plans to experiment with various emerging market-based methods on timberland properties it owns in Oregon and Washington through its limited-liability company. Economic analysis, however, indicates that efficient carbon sequestration may not correlate with the health of wildlife and forest ecology, said Bruce Lippke, professor at Washington State University’s College of Forest Resources and president of the Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials.

“Conservation-based forest management may be counterproductive: to carbon sequestration, Lippke said, noting that tying up timber in longer rotations can result in a supply shortage. This would either lead to more trees getting cut down elsewhere or an increased use of steel and concrete, which generate emissions to produce.”

“If it’s the long rotation aspect you’re going to need for biodiversity, it’s going to have to pay its own way,” Lippke said. “We have a long way to get the (forest carbon) rules consistent with good science so they’re not counterproductive.”

Carbon protection and fire risk reduction: toward a full
accounting of forest carbon offsets.
Matthew D. Hurteau, George W. Koch, and Bruce A. Hungate. In: The Ecological Society of America.

(And before we leave the subject of carbon sequestration, this recent study demonstrates further justification for reducing fuel loads in our forests.)

Abstract: Management of forests for carbon uptake is an important tool in the effort to slow the increase in atmospheric CO2 and global warming. However, some current policies governing forest carbon credits actually promote avoidable CO2 release and punish actions that would increase long-term carbon storage. In fire-prone forests, management that reduces the risk of catastrophic carbon release resulting from stand-replacing wildfire is considered is to be a CO2 source...even though such management may actually increase long-term carbon storage. Examining four of the largest wildfires in the US in 2002, we found that, for forest land that experienced catastrophic stand-replacing fire, prior thinning would have reduced CO2 release from live tree biomass by as much as 98% (emphasis mine).

Conclusions: ...Forests thinned to approach pre-settlement tree density and stand structure harbor substantially more carbon after wildfire than adjacent dense stands that have not been thinned. Moreover, the biomass removed by thinning is available for wood products or energy generation, the later replacing fossil-fuel emissions. Thinning forests for carbon protection also achieves many of the ecological goals of forest restoration. One of the ancillary benefits of thinning these forests is a reduction in resource competition that increases the growth of the remaining trees. This increase in growth rates could potentially offset part of the predicted decline in the US carbon sink, while concurrently storing carbon in fewer, larger trees per hectare, thereby reducing the risk of loss to catastrophic fire.

(Ok – my final comment on the topic. Carbon credits may offer a viable alternative for woodland owners to realize extra income from their properties. But in all the excitement about this option, let’s not forget that nothing takes care of the environment like good old-fashioned, common sense forestry.)

Safety in the Woods.

(I’ve spent enough time in the woods setting chokers, running a chain saw, or administering logging contracts to have a deep appreciation for the high-risk nature of working in the woods. This article by Ted Hazel is a good reminder of the precautions we should take, whether cutting a load of firewood or logging.)

Like most things in life, working in the woods entails a certain element of risk. However, most people new to woods work do not truly realize the hazards they face. Statistically speaking, a fatal accident is about 13 times more likely to occur to a woods worker than to the average worker. If you pick up a chain saw, this number jumps to about 65 times likelihood of a fatal accident. These sobering numbers from the Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Center should act as a loud-and-clear wake-up call to the importance of safety in our woods-related work activities. Let’s start with personal protective equipment, which could vary depending upon your job description for the day.

* Hardhat. Always wear one when you enter an active harvest zone (or anytime you’re operating a chainsaw yourself). Wear one when you enter a stand of
trees that was thinned within the last few months. People have been fatally injured simply walking through trees that have been recently thinned.

* Hearing protection. I prefer to use noise reduction earmuffs in winter and earplugs in summer. Wear them anytime you are around equipment and chainsaws.

* Eye protection. A wire mesh face shield in winder avoids fogging, while clear UV safety glasses in summer cut glare. Always use when operating a chainsaw. Always wear when operating equipment with a non-enclosed cab.

* Leg protection. Options available are chainsaw chaps, or protective pads in you pants. Wear them EVERY time a chainsaw is used in any way, shape or form. Chainsaw chaps must extend below the knee when the leg is bent.

* Hand Protection. Wear gloves when using your chainsaw for some vibration isolation, protection from cuts and warmth in winter. When working with cable, heavy thick cotton gloves offer protection from frayed areas.

* Foot Protection. Purchase stout boots that offer good ankle support, traction control and are waterproof when needed. For falling timber, cruising or any activity that requires walking on logs and limbs, caulk boots are the footwear of choice for sure footing. If, however, you are on and off equipment, caulk boots can be dangerously unnerving, almost like walking on ice. So for operating equipment, boots with a good traction sole work best.

* First Aid. Carry a personal first aid kit (containing a pressure bandage) that can be easily reached with either hand. Don’t put it in you hard hat, as that can be knocked away during an accident.

* Communications. A loud whistle that’s easily accessible should be carried to summon local assistance. Carry a cellular phone or other type of radio communication system that’s capable of calling out of your location reliably. You should have pre-planned times throughout the day that you will call to check in with someone who could get you assistance. If you are working with a partner (RECOMMENDED!), check on each other periodically.

The key to safety in the woods is knowing your task at hand and THINKING AHEAD. Do I have the appropriate personal protective gear? Do I know the action-reaction points, and can I observe them from a clear, safe position? All situations are different and running on autopilot is how a person with longtime experience can become a statistic as quickly as any beginner.

THINK, THINK, THINK! If you’re too tired or impatient, go home early, or you may go home early…


While supply and demand forces are always equalized with prices, there appear to be a number of new supply shocks emerging that are going to have a huge impact on markets and products going forward. They include the following:

* Mill closures in North America, driven by the slump in housing, which will reduce available capacity during the
The mountain pine beetle in B.C. and other western regions, which will decrease timber harvests by as early as 2010.

The emergence of wood usage for energy as biofuels, which is a reality given US $100+ barrel oil prices.

However, the biggest supply shock – and one that is almost upon us – appears not as well known. The Russian government’s log export tax is currently at 25% and will move to a crippling 80% on January 1, 2009. Russia leads the world in softwood and hardwood log exports with a 40% market share that reached almost 275 billion bf, Scribner scale in 2007. The key customers of Russian log exports – China, Finland and Japan – will be the countries most impacted. However, there will be a new supply realignment of replacement log and wood products to rebalance supply in the countries. Higher prices are expected as early as 4th quarter 2008, and new exporters and product flows will be a given!

The major question on many people’s minds is how large the “ripple effect” will be beyond the main impacted markets of China, Japan and Scandinavia, and – going further than logs – what will be the global price impacts on lumber and plywood, including North America.

It could be bigger than the impacts felt by the withdrawal of U.S. national forest timber as a result of the spotted owl!

Publications of Interest.

Garden Smart Oregon: A guide to Non-invasive Plants is now available. It’s free at some garden centers and OSU Extension offices. Garden Smart Oregon identifies more than 25 invasive plants threatening natural areas across Oregon and recommends non-invasive alternative plants. Invasive plants can take a toll on Oregon’s economy and its environment. Many of the most troublesome plants spread from yards and gardens into our farms and forestland. This book tells how everyone with a garden can make a difference. You can download the booklet online at http://www.opb.org/programs/invasives/ or a mailed copy is available for $3.00 postage and handling at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/.

What’s Damaging western Larch in Oregon. Oregon Department of Forestry, ODF Forest Health Note. This recent publication highlights the major insects and disease that damage western larch trees in Oregon. You can download a copy at http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/PRIVATE FORESTS/docs/fh/larchcasebearer.pdf.

The Teakettle Experiment: Fire and Forest Health. This interactive resource guide available on a DVD discusses an innovative ten-year collaboration of forest managers and scientists who investigated the effects of prescribed fire and forest thinning on restoring forest health. To get a copy, go to: http://teakettle.ucdavis.edu.

The US Forest Service’s three western research stations have officially launched a new online reference site for resource managers and decision makers who need information and tools to address climate change in planning and project implementation in the West. Go to: http://www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/.

Log Market Report.

The prices listed represent the range of prices offered by several mills. Actual prices may vary significantly depending on log species, log quality, purchaser and market fluctuations. All prices are given in MBF (thousand board feet).
Douglas Fir (all sizes) $300 - 305
White Fir (all sizes) $330
Ponderosa pine – by log size (inside bark at small end of log)

6-11 inches 12-17 inches 18-23 inches 24 inches and up
$220 to 330 $340 to 350 $400 to 420 $420 to 450

Chip logs: $42 to 45 per ton

For specific information contact:
Boise Cascade 541-962-2045
Kinzua 541-443-5647
Malheur Lumber 541-575-2921
Prairie Wood Prod. 541-575-2811

**Upcoming Events, Workshops and Classes.**

The Fall 2008 evening Forestry meetings will begin on **September 25th** as the Baker County Private Woodlands Association (BCPWA) welcomes Mike Gaudern, the Executive Director of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association (OSWA), from **7:00 to 9:00 P.M.** at the OSU Extension office, 2610 Grove Street in Baker City.

Mike will discuss Oregon’s effort to create a viable market for Carbon Credits which may provide a new revenue source for small woodland owners in the state. The goal of carbon credits is to provide an incentive for landowners to manage their forests in a way the trees will capture and store carbon for long periods of time, and thus help ameliorate the global warming effects of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Marketing carbon credits is a new, and not well understood, concept and the processes required for individual landowners to participate in the carbon credit market are still being defined. OSWA will have a principle role in establishing these markets and Mike will shed light on how carbon credits work and how we can benefit from them.

Then on **October 23rd**, we will have a discussion of collaborative groups and how this new and innovative mechanism is being used to identify and develop Forest Service projects that local citizen feel are a high priority, such as reducing forest fuels to ameliorate forest fire risks. Members of collaborative groups currently working with the Malheur National Forest representing the Forest Service, forest industry and conservation groups will be on hand to talk about what collaborative groups are, how they work, and the benefits hoped for through using the collaborative processes.
Calendar of Events

**September:**

25 Small Woodlands Meeting, 7-9 pm, Baker County Extension Office  
“Carbon Credit Markets in Oregon”

**October:**

23 Small Woodlands Meeting, 7-9 pm, Baker County Extension Office  
“Collaborative Groups Partner with the Forest Service”