Upcoming Events:

Basic Forestry Shortcourse,

**Location:** Cloverleaf Hall, 600 NW 1st St., Enterprise, OR

**Dates:** February 11, 18 and March 4, 11, 18 and 20th (field tour if weather permits)

**Time:** Evenings, 5:30 PM. to 8:00 PM.

This class is designed to present a comprehensive overview of woodland management principles and concepts, terms and practices. It’s a great way to get some basic startup skills for practicing woodland management. A fee of $20 per person or couple will help pay for handouts and the notebook. The **registration deadline is Tuesday, February 9**. Course Instructor: Paul Oester, Extension Forester and several guest speakers. See page 16 for a more complete class description and registration form.

2010 Summer Agriculture Institute (SAI)

**Location:** Union County

**Dates:** July 11-16.

This is a 3-week long, graduate level course for K-12 educators with little or no agricultural background, offered through Oregon State University. Some of the key topics are land and water usage, Ag education applications, food safely, Ag marketing and economics, Hydroponics food safety and commercial farming. Participants receive three graduate level credits from OSU. For more information on requirements, registration fees and an application go to: [http://www.oregonfb.org/programs/sai.shtml](http://www.oregonfb.org/programs/sai.shtml) or call Jana Lee Dick at 541-562-5129 x 22.

Office Closure Notice

Due to the State budget cuts, the Union County OSU 4-H & Extension Service will be closed for the following mandatory furlough days. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

- Friday, January 22, 2010
- Friday, February 26, 2010
- Friday, March 26, 2010
- Friday, April 23, 2010
- Friday, May 28, 2010
- Friday, June 25, 2010

Best Regards,

Paul Oester, Extension Forester
Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties
Tree School East is coming to Baker City

Location: Baker High School  
Date: April 17, 2010

Tree School East was held at Eastern Oregon University in 2004, 2006 and 2008. This year we've changed the location to the Baker High School. Look forward to 27 classes both indoor and field as in the past. Topics are varied and include chainsaws for gals, fighting invasive weeds, essential oil production, small scale sawmilling, forest insects and disease and much more. There will be new classes and some popular repeat classes. Look for our brochure in a couple of weeks for a full account of the offerings and how to register. The brochure can be downloaded (once we have it) from our website in Union County, http://extension.oregonstate.edu/union/. Everyone who receives this newsletter will receive a brochure.

Forest Health in Oregon: State of the State,  
Location: LaSelles Stewart Center, Oregon State University campus, Corvallis, OR.  
Date: February 24-25, 2010

The College of Forestry and Forestry Extension at Oregon State University invites you to attend this conference which is a continuing education event designed for foresters, forest managers, resource professionals, woodland owners and those interested in the health of Oregon forests. This is the first conference to address the health of Oregon’s Forests. Topics include Climate, Fire, Insects, Diseases, Vertebrates, Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Forest Pests which influence tree mortality, affect growth and cause decline of forests. The conference will provide an overview of the current forest conditions in Oregon, and recent forest research, assessment tools and emerging technology for management. The registration fee is $180. Go on-line to learn more and to register. http://oregonstate.edu/conferences/foresthealth2010/index.html

Union County Community Forestry Tour,  
Date: June 18, 2010 (tentative)

Tour organizers include the USFS, Union County Board of Commissioners, Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Capital Partners, Oregon Women in Timber, John Herbst Forestry and the OSU Extension Service. This year the tour will focus on the full spectrum of forest management actions. Some of the highlights include: 1) computer simulations, and the type of technology available for making forest management decisions; 2) how trees and stands are measured and set-up for management actions; 3) a logging operation; and 4) post-harvest actions such as thinning response and a small mill operation. More details to follow.

Management Planning for NRCS Technical Service Providers

This workshop is intended for professional foresters and forestry contractors who wish to become NRCS Technical Service Providers (TSPs) Landowners who receive cost-share funding from NRCS via Farm Bill programs to implement forestry practices such as management plans, forest health or habitat improvement projects must use the services of a TSP. Contact OSU Extension Service, Union County at 541-963-1010 for further information.

Updating Forestland Classification in Northeast Oregon

Forestland Classification is undergoing changes in northeast Oregon which is part of a statewide trend. Recently, Forestland Classification Committees have been established in Baker, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa Counties. Each county is in a different stage of their efforts. In Union County the committee has met for nearly a year and is finishing their work. The reason for revisiting and updating forestland classification is because the last classification was conducted in the 1960’s. Since then there have been technology improvements, more current aerial photography and land use changes. Updating provides a more fair and equitable classification of forestlands.
with improved accuracy the goal. The Oregon Department of Forestry provides a list of FAQs below regarding forestland classification for fire protection and the process of updating. If you have further questions about your forestland situation contact the Department of Forestry nearest you.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why are we doing this process?** To improve the accuracy and equity of the Fire Patrol Assessment so the appropriate acres are being assessed the appropriate rate.

- **What is Fire Patrol Assessment?** Oregon Department of Forestry provides wildland fire protection on private, county and state owned forest and rangelands within their Fire Protection District Boundaries. This fire protection service is funded by a combination of an assessment on lands within the Fire Protection District and the General Funds for the State of Oregon. The landowner contribution is termed the Fire Patrol Assessment. Currently, the General Fund and the landowner’s assessment each contribute approximately 50% of the funding at the District level. The current landowner rates in the NEO District are $1.29/acre for class 2 timberland and $.44/acre for class 3 grazing land.

- **What is included in a Forestland Classification?** A map that identifies timberlands and grazing lands that meet the definitions set forth in Oregon Revised Statutes and Administrative Rules. Timberland is defined as all forestland primarily suitable for joint use of timber production and the grazing of livestock. Grazing lands are defined as all forestland that is primarily suitable for grazing or other agricultural uses. Grazing lands may contain undeveloped grasslands if such grasslands are in close proximity and intermingled with timberland.

- **Who gave the committee the authority to complete this work?** Oregon Revised Statutes and Administrative Rules.

- **How was the classification committee formed?** According to State Statute, one representative was appointed by the State

Delivered
LOG MARKET REPORT $/ 1,000 board feet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Umatilla/Pendleton</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas-fir/Larch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11” Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$260</td>
<td>$200-$230</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand fir/White fir Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgepole Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engelmann Spruce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp/Chip Logs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La Grande/Elgin/Joseph</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas-fir/Larch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11” Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$295</td>
<td>call</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand fir/White fir Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>26-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgepole Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>26-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engelmann Spruce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>26-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp/Chip Logs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>26-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burns/John Day</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas-fir/Larch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11” Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$360</td>
<td>$400+</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand fir/White fir Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$195</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgepole Pine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$360</td>
<td>$400+</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engelmann Spruce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$360</td>
<td>$400+</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulp/Chip Logs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$360</td>
<td>$400+</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon Log Market Report, Editor John Lindberg, ph 360-693-6766, fax 360-694-8466, logmkt@comcast.net

January 15, 2010
Forester Mitch Williams (La Grande- Assistant Unit Forester), one appointed by Oregon State University Extension Service (Paul Oester) and three members appointed by the County Commissioners (Gene Hardy, Russ Hegedus, Chris Heffernan) Ray Hammann, the Union County Fire Chief and Chief of the LRFD served as an advisory member.

- **Where do I find my current Fire Patrol Assessment?** The Fire Patrol Assessment is located in your property taxes, collected by the County Assessor and passed on to the local ODF District.

- **Will this affect the Fire Patrol Assessment that I currently pay?** For most landowners it will create a change for several reasons. The differences in the accuracy of the mapping technology in the 1960’s and today is enough to create small changes even if the timber and grazing lands are exactly as they were in the 60’s. Other reasons include, land use changes that were not captured and areas that were assigned the wrong classification.

- **What effect will this have on ODF’s budget level if more lands are included?** If more lands are included, this will spread the costs across more acres and slow the rate of increase landowners pay assuming the level of protection stays the same. The level of protection is determined by ODF and the Budget Committee which is composed of landowners throughout Northeast Oregon. Bob Messinger, John Warness, and Chris Heffernan are the three representatives from Union County.

- **What is forestland?** “Forestland” has a very broad definition when used in the fire related statutes. The definition for “Forestland” is any woodland, brush land, timberland, grazing land or clearing that, during any time of the year, contains enough forest growth, slashing or vegetation to constitute, in the judgment of the forester, a fire hazard, regardless of how the land is zoned or taxed.

- **What is a Minimum Assessment?** Each lot of record must pay a minimum assessment of $18.75. This minimum assessment helps defray some of the additional administrative and operational costs of providing wildland protection on small parcels where, figured on an acreage basis, the assessment for forest protection would not reach $18.75.

- **What is Dual Assessment?** An assessment for fire protection from two different entities on the same parcel. An example is an assessment from ODF on the forestlands on a parcel for the purposes of wildland fire protection and an assessment from a Rural Fire Protection District on the value of the structures and up to five acres for purposes of structure protection.

- **How are Agricultural lands defined?** Those lands that do not meet the definition of forestland and that are being actively farmed. These lands were delineated through editing of 2005 color aerial photography. The basic intent was to include all lands that were being actively farmed in the agricultural lands class. Since lands that are actively farmed pose less of a fire threat, these lands would be excluded from the assessment process.

- **How are agricultural lands classified?** Agricultural lands that are actively being farmed are excluded from this process.

- **How are lands under CRP contracts classified?** CRP lands are being classified based on the current vegetation type present in the most recent aerial photography (2005). At the conclusion of the CRP contract if the land is converted back into agricultural lands, they then would be exempted.

- **How can a landowner go about opting out of fire protection?** Opting out for land-
owners with classified lands within the Fire Protection District boundaries is a rigorous process. A landowner must provide a robust fire protection plan that needs to be approved by the Oregon Board of Forestry. The specific requirements for what is needed can be found in Oregon Revised Statue 477.210 (2) and within Oregon Administrative Rule 629-042-0005. At present, no such plans exist in the State of Oregon.

• What is the purpose of the Public Meeting? We are offering public meetings to share the Union County Classification Committee’s findings with landowners in Union County.

• What is the purpose of the Public Hearing? The Public Hearing is a mandatory and formal process that must occur prior to implementation of the findings of the classification effort. This hearing is a time when interested persons can object or offer changes to the proposed classification. Following the hearing the committee may make such changes in the preliminary classification as it finds to be proper, and thereafter shall make its final classification. The final results of the classification effort will be by formal written order which must include a statement of findings of fact on the basis of which the order is made, and must include a map showing the classifications or reclassifications. The original of the order shall be filed with the county clerk of the county, who shall maintain it available for public inspection. A copy of the order certified by the secretary of the committee shall be sent to the State Board of Forestry.

• How can a landowner appeal the findings of the Classification Committee? Any owner of land classified under ORS 526.328 or 526.340 and who is aggrieved by the classification may, within 30 days after the date of the order making the classification, appeal to the circuit court for the county. The appeal shall be taken by serving the notice of appeal on the secretary of the committee and by filing such a notice with the county clerk.

First-Ever Study Quantifies the Economic Impact of Private, Working Forests in the U.S.

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (December 9, 2009) – A new study, commissioned by the National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) and conducted by Forest2Market®, quantifies the economic impact of private, working forests on the U.S. economy. The study found a significant gap between the contributions made by privately-owned forests over other ownership types. On average, they generate $277,000 in state GDP per 1,000 acres, while public forests generate just $41,000.

The study also concludes that every 1,000 acres of private, working forest creates on average 8 jobs, $270,000 in annual payroll, $9,850 in annual state taxes (income and severance taxes only) and $733,000 in annual sales.

The study completes the picture of the contributions that working forests make, says David P. Tenny, President and CEO of NAFO. “We all know that private, working forests provide clean water and air, open space, wildlife habitat, recreation, and other environmental benefits. This study demonstrates the significant economic benefits these forests provide: family waged jobs, a strong tax base, and the economic foundation of the forest products industry. They are fundamental to both the economic and environmental infrastructure of our nation.”

The study, which looks at economic contribution by state and region as well as nationally, is the first of its kind. “To our knowledge, no one else has taken a comprehensive look at the total contribution that forests make to the economy,” says Pete Stewart, CEO and President of Forest2Market®.

“This study demonstrates that private working
forests support local and state economies,” says Stewart. “While the industry is struggling from the depressed housing market and the wider recession, it’s important to know exactly how much working forests contribute in jobs, taxes and GDP. With a clear view of the total contribution, we can better understand the consequences of public policies and market factors that limit how much work these forests can do.”

Results of the study are available using the interactive map on NAFO’s website. The full study is available at http://nafoalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/f2m_economic_impact_study_2009.pdf or http://www.forest2market.com/f2m-impact.

About NAFO
NAFO is an organization of private forest owners promoting federal policies that protect the economic and environmental values of privately-owned forests at the national level. NAFO membership encompasses more than 75 million acres of private forestland in 47 states.

NAFO Contact:
Dan Whiting, Director of Communications
National Alliance of Forest Owners
2025 M Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036

Variable-Density Thinning - What the heck is it, and why should I care?
By: Constance A. Harrington

About 15 years ago, people started talking about variable-density thinning, especially on land managed by public agencies or environmental organizations. This type of thinning deliberately creates non-uniform conditions through a stand. Non-uniform thinning — often called variable-density thinning — has some advantages over uniform thinning in accelerating the development of wildlife habitat and in preserving or developing biodiversity. Let me provide an example and explain how it works.

Results of the Gaps
One type of variable-density thinning called "thinning with skips and gaps" was used in the Olympic Habitat Development Study on the Olympic Peninsula in western Washington. The "skips" are areas skipped over in the thinning (and in this example were also no-equipment entry zones). These areas allowed snags to be retained for wildlife habitat without risking worker safety. They also protected any ground vegetation, large downed logs, and associated animals that might be sensitive to disturbance (for example, most amphibians do better in cooler, moister areas such as would be found in un-thinned patches).

The "gap" part of the thinning creates small openings to encourage development of understory vegetation and also provides areas in the stand that would result in especially good tree growth as the trees around the gaps would gain additional growing space. The largest trees removed in the project were removed from the gaps (as all trees were cut in the gaps other than those of species being favored or those too small to be merchantable); thus, much of the volume in this project came from the gaps. The gaps also provided an opening in which to fall trees from dense areas outside the gaps. The general thinning outside the skips and gaps in this project was a light thinning from below, designed to promote residual tree growth and favor development of understory vegetation.

Why Go to the Trouble?
"Yeah, yeah," I can almost hear some of you say. "Why should I care about this type of thinning? Sounds like more trouble than it’s worth." It’s true that many of the variable-density thinnings that have been accomplished are relatively light, and the volume removed is low. However, there are probably tens of thousands of acres in the Western United States that are fairly uniform now and could be thinned in this manner to achieve wildlife goals as well as provide employment opportunities in the forest products sector. There are many acres that will
only become available for thinning if the early examples go well.

Some people are skeptical that the benefits from any type of thinning outweigh the potential risks, and they need to be convinced by the results of successful projects. For projects that depend on public acceptance to move forward, it’s important there be early successes.

**From the Ground**

So, what does variable-density thinning look like on the ground? It differs, depending on the requirements of the landowner and the landowner’s past experience with the logger. In some cases, the skips are marked on maps and on the ground with tags stapled to trees indicating the boundary of the partial-cut unit. It is possible however, the skips could be “logger’s choice” with the number, size, and general location specified (for example, no more than so many in a certain percentage of the area).

As mentioned above, skips can help preserve snags while protecting logger safety, so locating them in areas of the stand with large or numerous snags can make sense. Gaps can also be marked with paper tags on trees (marking the boundary of the “clearcut”) or delineated with paint. Although all trees to be cut in a gap could be painted, I haven't seen that done as it takes a lot of extra paint and time — even when the gaps are small.

Once again, the actual location of gaps could be pre-determined or “logger’s choice,” depending on the landowner’s specifications and trust in getting the work done right. It is also possible that the locations of skips and gaps could be given to the contractor in a GPS(global positioning system) file. The area between the skips and gaps is usually thinned. Once again, the trees to be cut could be painted or could be specified, as they would be in any other type of thinning. Some prescriptions are very complex (specifying the spacing by species and requiring a level of clumping in residual trees), but others have been pretty straightforward and simple to apply. Not all variable-density thinning includes skips and gaps — some just vary the level of removal (or level retained) in different parts of the stand.

So, in a nutshell, that’s variable-density thinning. It’s a long name, but not really such a hard nut to crack.

Constance A. Harrington is a Research Forester at the Pacific Northwest Research Station’s Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Olympia, Wash. www.fs.fed.us/pnw/Olympia/silv/TW

July/August 2009 — TimberWest www.forestnet.com

**Managing mountain pine beetle to prevent catastrophic losses to our lodgepole and ponderosa pine forests**

By Paul Oester and Dave Shaw

Native forest insects are critical to forest productivity, nutrient cycling and tree health. These insects typically occur at background or endemic populations. When they’re at these levels their mode of operation is to cause minor growth loss or incidental tree mortality across the landscape. However, some native forest insects can cause tree mortality and/or significant growth loss. Certain groups of insects, such as some defoliators and bark beetles, can periodically reach epidemic population levels that result in catastrophic damage and tree death at the landscape level.

One bark beetle in particular causing recent widespread damage in parts of Oregon is the mountain pine beetle (MPB).

Of the approximately 700,000 acres of bark beetle caused mortality in Oregon reported in the 2008 aerial survey, almost 80 percent can be attributed to the MPB. Although lodgepole and ponderosa pine are the species most damaged by this insect, increasing amounts of five-needle pines (sugar, whitebark and western white) are also killed. This aggressive beetle is causing the most damage in lodgepole pine along the east slope of the Cascades from Mount Hood south to California, and in Klamath and Lake counties. While some areas have seen a drop in damage intensity, such as parts of Central and Northeast Oregon, dramatic increases continue to occur in Klamath-Lake area. Currently, some 400,000 acres have been impacted, creating what is known as the
“red zone.” So, if you have some lodgepole or ponderosa pines, what should you do?

Tree size and stand density seem to be the most reliable predictor of lodgepole stand susceptibility to this beetle in Oregon. Stands with an average DBH of more than 8-10 inches are more susceptible than stands with smaller trees. Historically, outbreaks of MPB have not been sustained once the mature lodgepole pine has been exhausted.

Thinning overstocked stands, either older stands or young stands on poor sites is less effective in lodgepole than in other pine species. It seems to be more successful in the northern Rockies. In Oregon, management strategies include:

- Make patch cuts to increase diversity of age classes (tree sizes) across the landscape. This works better in larger ownerships, but owners of smaller tracts could adopt this approach cooperatively, too.

- If the stand includes young and old age classes, and if the younger age class is healthy and has good live-crown ratios (above 30 percent), then remove the older, larger trees in the overstory in a diameter-limit cut.

- In mixed stands, thin to remove most of the susceptible-size lodgepole.

- Thin only young stands on better sites.

Older stands typically have poor live-crown ratios, so leave trees will not respond well to the thinning. Also, lodgepole pine tends to have a shallow root system, making it more susceptible to windthrow on thinned sites.

Ponderosa pine is also at risk, particularly following the heals of an outbreak in lodgepole pine. What typically happens is that large beetle populations that have built up in mature lodgepole forests “spill-over” into adjacent overstocked ponderosa pine stands, attacking normally more resistant mature and small diameter pines. If you have ponderosa pine, consider the following:

- Prioritize stands: thin overstocked, large-diameter, and higher-value stands first.

- Prevent attacks by keeping stand densities below the self-thinning threshold to decrease individual tree stress, reduce attractiveness to mountain pine beetles, and give the stand room to grow.

- If bark beetles are active in the stand, complete salvage and sanitation operations before the peak beetle flight period during mid-summer.

- For patchy stands, local centers of high stand density will be susceptible to beetle attack, thus don’t forget these in your thinnings.

- Use an increment borer to monitor leave-tree diameter growth to determine whether the thinning response meets your goals.

Associated with epidemics of MPB in lodgepole pine is the threat of catastrophic fire. This threat is thought to be a big issue, especially when large kills occur. However, little is really known about the behavior of fuels and potential for fire following this mortality. As a consequence, the U.S. Joint Fire Science program is currently focused on getting answers. The current thinking is that shortly following beetle kill, while needles are still on the trees, there is a high hazard from fire. Once the needles have fallen to the ground, it may be that the threat goes down for several years, and then after a decade or so, as understory vegetation accumulates and the dead beetle killed trees begin to shed branches and fall down, the threat increases again. Therefore, fuels management is about the long-term dynamics of the forest following the short-term “red foliage” stage when fire may be a big threat.

Catastrophic landscape-scale impacts of MPB have been documented in the past, but the current, 10-year-plus epidemic across the Rocky
Mountains, eastern cascades, and particularly in central/southern-east side British Columbia has bug people really scratching their heads. This is a big one—the biggest forest insect kill in recorded history. Much is being written about why this may be, but this native insect epidemic is certain to be caused by a complex interaction of biotic and abiotic factors with a little bad luck.

**Sudden Oak Death in Oregon 2009**  
Dave Shaw and Paul Oester

Sudden oak death (SOD) is an introduced plant disease caused by the water mold, *Phytophthora ramorum*, which currently occurs in-the-wild, in extreme SW Oregon near Brookings, Curry County. The infestation was discovered in 2001 by Ellen Goheen, USFS, and Mike McWilliams, ODF, on an aerial survey after learning about the disease in California. A quarantine zone has been established in this area (FIGURE 1). This organism causes disease in over 100 species of trees, shrubs, herbs, and ferns. Sudden oak death refers to the ability of *P. ramorum* to infect oaks and tanoak directly through the bark, causing an area of dead tissue (a canker) that grows and eventually girdles and kills the tree (FIGURE 2-pg 10). These trees may suddenly become red, but the time it takes to kill a tree is actually much longer. This disease syndrome only affects the red oak group (California black oak, coast live oak), and does not affect the white oak group (Oregon white oak, valley oak in California). Therefore, our common oak in the Willamette Valley is not threatened.

**Phytophthora ramorum** causes leaf blight and twig dieback in most host species, especially rhododendrons, camellias, and huckleberries. The disease is called Ramorum leaf and shoot blight in these hosts. In Oregon, tanoak, California black oak, and coast live oak are threatened with mortality if infected. However, a long list of Oregon plants, as well as nursery, Christmas trees, and floral greens plants are susceptible to Ramorum leaf and shoot blight, including madrone, Oregon myrtle, big leaf maple, rhododendron, evergreen huckleberry, salal. Also infected are the conifers, redwood, Pacific yew, Douglas-fir, and grand fir (Table 1-pg 11).

In California, the disease is widespread in the coastal strip from south of Monterey to Humboldt County, while in Oregon it is limited to the quarantine zone around Brookings (FIGURE 3-pg 12). Sudden oak death has been found in several plant nurseries in Oregon and other states and these nurseries are currently under strict inspection and eradication protocols. Each year new outbreaks are detected, and much effort is spent suppressing the disease. Contact Nancy Osterbauer, Oregon Department of Agriculture with any nursery questions.

In Oregon, there is an internationally recognized group working to eradicate (yes, eradicate, not just manage) the disease. This includes Oregon Department of Agri-
culture, which is responsible for quarantines and regulation, Oregon Department of Forestry, leading the eradication effort, US Forest Service, Forest Health Protection, Bureau of Land Management, as well as Oregon State University, Research and Extension. We called on Rob Flowers’ partner at ODF, Alan Kanaskie, forest pathologist, to get the skinny on the current situation. Alan Kanaskie, with Mike McWilliams at ODF, Ellen Goheen at USFS/BLM FHP, Nancy Osterbauer at ODA and Everett Hansen at OSU has led the detection, eradication, and monitoring program. OSU is a critical piece of the puzzle because confirmation of the pathogen requires molecular DNA analysis, which is done in labs at OSU. ODF has hired Stacy Savona as a forester in Brookings to oversee eradication and monitoring efforts, her contact in Brookings is 541-469-5040.

Just in case you are wondering about the familiar name, *Phytophthora*, it is one of the most important plant pathogen genera in the world. Two common diseases you may know about include Port Orford cedar root disease (*P. lateralis*) and late blight of potato (*P. infestans*).

**What is at risk?**

*Phytophthora ramorum* is an internationally quarantined plant pathogen and there are currently strict restrictions in place to prevent the spread of this destructive pathogen. The disease threatens marketing and movement of products in the timber trade, the floral green industry, Christmas tree plantations, and plant nurseries throughout Oregon. The potential economic impacts of this disease are huge especially because Douglas-fir is on the host list. It also has the potential to increase fuel loads, affect slope stability, affect wild mushroom populations, and alter forage and structural components of wildlife habitat in tanoak forests of SW Oregon. The cost of eradication and compliance to forests and nurseries in Oregon has cost millions of dollars. Quarantines and regulatory compliance will impact economic gains of growing wood and plants in Oregon. We must do all we can to prevent the spread of this disease.

Sudden oak death and the other diseases caused by *P. ramorum* are so new that information is only now accumulating at a rapid rate. Observations from California, where the disease is widespread, suggest that the disease may be limited to warmer, wetter coastal and near coastal environments. In California the behavior of the disease is closely linked to the composition and structure of the forest, spreading on California bay laurel (Oregon myrtlewood) and killing tanoak. In Oregon the primary hosts that we know it can spread on are tanoak and rhododendron. Evergreen huckleberry may also be threatened in the coastal strip. So far Oregon myrtle has not become widely infected, as it has in California.

**How is it spread?**

Localized spread of *P. ramorum* is well documented, but long distance dispersal of the pathogen is less well understood at this time. The populations of *P. ramorum* in the woodlands of California and Oregon belong to a single clone that has reproduced asexually. This occurs via the prolific production of spore packets called sporangia that can easily break off in rain and flowing water. The sporangia release spores that can swim through films of water to infect leaves and bark *Phytophthora ramorum* can also form a resting spore (chlamydospore) that stays in the plant material or soil for prolonged periods, only
germinating under the proper conditions. They may last more than one year. Dispersal seems to occur primarily during the wet windy winter and spring months.

People are the best means for long distance spread of *P. ramorum* when they transport potted plants or infected wood, leaves and stems. *P. ramorum* spores can also survive in soil, on bike tires, and on shoes. If you have been in an infested area in California, remove the soil from these items before you return to Oregon. Do not transport plant material from coastal California to Oregon!

**Where did it come from?**
The origin of *P. ramorum* is unknown. *Phytophthora ramorum* also occurs in Europe in a population that is genetically distinct from the one in North America. It appears that both the European and North American *P. ramorum* were both introduced from an unknown location.

How SOD came to the Brookings area in Oregon is not known. One theory has it that infected Rhododendrons were brought in to a neighborhood on the SE part of town, as first detection of the disease in 2001 was found near this urban-rural interface.

**What is being done about it?**
*Phytophthora ramorum* is being eradicated in Oregon forests through the cooperative efforts of the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Agriculture, USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management, and Oregon State University. Surveys for the disease are done by air, ground and streams throughout the year. When infected plants are discovered, they and neighboring plants are destroyed. Following eradication, sites are monitored for 5 years. Stream monitoring is also done throughout western Oregon to determine if the pathogen is present. In nurseries, inspections for diseased plants are conducted on a routine basis. When infected plants are discovered, they and neighboring plants are destroyed and the nursery is required to do follow up monitoring.

---

**Figure 3:** Distribution of Phytophthora ramorum in the wild on the west coast. Illustration provided from California Oak Mortality Task Force, website: [http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/)
and compliance.

**What you can do!**

Do not transport plant material or firewood from affected areas in California to Oregon.

Before returning to Oregon from coastal California, wash mud and soil off your vehicle and footwear.

Familiarize yourself with host plants and symptoms of the diseases caused by *P. ramorum*. This can be tricky! The host list is long and many other plant pathogens cause diseases with similar symptoms.

Keep on the lookout for infected plants in south Coastal Oregon.

Report to your local county forestry extension agent or state or federal forestry officials if you think you have seen SOD.

Do not move host materials or soil from within the quarantine zone near Brookings, Oregon.

When purchasing host plants from nurseries: inquire with the nursery management what is known about the origin of the plants and whether inspection has occurred.

**More Information.**

For questions regarding regulations, contact Nancy Osterbauer, Oregon Department of Agriculture.


Stop the Spread Brochure available at: (free pdf download) [http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/jspui/bitstream/1957/13516/1/ec1608.pdf](http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/jspui/bitstream/1957/13516/1/ec1608.pdf)

The California Oak Mortality Task Forest web site: [http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/](http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/)


Table 1. Some common plants in Oregon that are listed as hosts for *P. ramorum*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Sudden oak death</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>California black oak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Coast live oak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tanoak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ramorum leaf and shoot blight</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ferns:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidenhair fern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Herbs:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False solomon’s seal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western starflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shrubs:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evergreen huckleberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhododendron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hardwoods:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big leaf maple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon myrtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific madrone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Conifers:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas-fir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand fir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific yew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nursery plants:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camellia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhododendron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viburnum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a complete host list including plant species that will be regulated in a quarantine situation, see The California Oak Mortality Task Forest web site: [http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/html/host_plant_lists.html](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/html/host_plant_lists.html)
Recommendations for Releasing Douglas-fir Regeneration

Habitat type:
Habitat type represents the best site variable for predicting the release of Douglas-fir regeneration. Cool and wet environments associated with grand fir habitat types should result in trees reaching full growth rate within 5 years.

Longer adjustment periods are associated with dry and hot Douglas-fir habitat types and cold and wet subalpine for habitat types.

Pre-release Growth:
Pre-release height growth is the best tree variable for predicting the release of Douglas-fir regeneration. Annual growth increments indicate the degree of suppression and provide a forecast of future growth that should follow once the overstory is removed. Greater growth prior to release will result in greater growth after release.

Overstory trees:
Two-stage overstory removal can be used to gradually release regeneration, especially on harsh sites or where trees are severely suppressed. Retaining some overstory trees will reduce sunscald on released trees while they develop sun needles; however, retaining overstory trees can reduce height growth after trees have adjusted to release. Because pre-release height growth indicates the degree of suppression, there is no need to record pre-release overstory density.

Damage:
Avoid damaging desirable regeneration during logging. Damaged trees are not expected to have growth rates comparable to undamaged trees.

Crown ratio and shape:
Other research shows the importance of adequate crown ratios for released regeneration. Retaining trees having crown ratios of 40 percent and greater, and no lower than 30 percent is preferable. The degree of suppression can be judged by crown shape. Trees having well-defined conical crowns are more likely to have vigorous growth after overstory removal. Conversely, trees having round or umbrella-shaped crowns are severely suppressed, having a higher probability of mortality following release, and will adjust slowly to release.

Needle morphology:
To help mitigate effects of physiological shock, implement the overstory removal during the dormant season so that shade-developed crowns will develop a current year complement of sun-developed needles.

Early indicators of response:
The first indicator of response to release will be sunscald and abscission of newly exposed needles. The second indicator will be height increment the second or subsequent year after release. The second year’s height growth is the earliest indicator on grand fir habitat types, while 3 or 4 years are needed on Douglas-fir and subalpine fir habitat types.

Adjustment period and subsequent stand improvement treatments:
The adjustment period for released Douglas-fir regeneration to reach full growth rate is approximately 5 years for grand fir habitat types, 10 years for Douglas-fir, and 15 years or more for subalpine fir habitat types. Stand improvement treatments should be delayed until the second half of the adjustment period to give released trees an opportunity to adjust to release. If stands need thinning after release, favor trees having greater post-release height increments and remove trees that have sustained logging damage.

Background:
In 1993, Snake River Chinook salmon were listed as “Threatened” under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Snake River steelhead followed with a similar listing in 1998. Geographically for Oregon, this in-
cluded the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, and Imnaha River basins. These listings brought new emphasis to these species and their habitats, along with expectations for species recovery to the point where they would eventually no longer need protection under the ESA. Part of the species recovery process is the development and implementation of recovery plans that provide guidance for recovery and the ultimate de-listing of the species. For salmon and steelhead, recovery plans will include all influences on their life cycles, including habitat, harvest, hatchery management, hydropower dam operations, estuary management, and predation.

Union and Wallowa Counties have a long history of riparian and aquatic conservation. Many improvements in habitat on both private and public lands have occurred since the initial listings under the ESA. Recovery planning is intended to support these local efforts, and gain from their experiences.

**What is a recovery plan?**

Under the ESA, recovery plans specifically require the following:

- **Objective, measurable criteria for de-listing the species**

- **Site specific actions**

- **Estimates of time and cost for implementing the recovery plan**

The ESA requires the development of recovery plans, and envisions them as road maps for species recovery. These are guidance documents, not regulatory instruments. They are intended to be grounded on existing conservation efforts, and utilize local expertise and related planning efforts. Completed recovery plans should be one of the most important tools to support sound, scientific and practical decision making throughout the recovery process. Funding decisions for projects and programs will be heavily influenced by the strategies and priorities within the recovery plans. Local public input, support, and involvement is essential to developing effective recovery plans. Participation by local, state, and federal agencies and Tribes is desired as well.

**What has occurred to date?**

The Interior Columbia Technical Review Team, composed of experts and scientists, has laid the foundation for recovery planning by developing a sound scientific base including why the spring/summer Chinook salmon and steelhead were listed, how populations are characterized and identified, what their current status is, what is the desired status including viability criteria and recovery goals, the gaps between current and desired status, and limiting factors and threats by population.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) initiated a stakeholder involvement process to aid in recovery plan development for the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, and Imnaha river basins in the summer of 2005. At that time, NMFS asked the Board of Directors of the Grande Ronde Model Watershed if they would play a primary role in public review and feedback, especially as policy issues arose. The Board agreed, and expressed their primary interest in being associated with the tributary habitat component of the plans. Other key players in this process have been the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and local, state, and federal agencies and entities affected by the listings. Since 2005, NMFS staff have met periodically in workshop settings with this stakeholder group which evolved into a larger Sounding Board over time. Most of the planning work has included developing the tributary habitat component, with work yet to be completed on other components of the plan, especially those with out-of-basin influences.

**Where are we in the process?**

A draft recovery plan for the Oregon portion of the Snake River is being developed now. Although not complete, significant work has occurred on developing the tributary habitat component of the plan, with further work on
the remaining components now in progress, including the draft hatchery, fishery and hydro portions of the Plan.

**What is next?**
A new updated work plan has been developed and NMFS would like to complete the draft NE Oregon recovery plan by the end of 2010. The work in Northeast Oregon will be merged with similar efforts in the Idaho and Southeast Washington portions of the Snake River, creating an overall approach to recovery for the listed salmon and steelhead in the Snake River basin. This will then be shared with the general public for review and comment prior to final adjustments and publication in the Federal Register, hopefully a year from this coming spring in 2011. Prior to general public review, NMFS anticipates the need for at least two public workshops this spring and early summer to review and discuss the various components of the draft NE Oregon recovery plan. There will also be coordination with the public on the three-state Snake River Plan.

**How can you be involved?**
NMFS is updating its contact list for the NE Oregon Sounding Board and please let Jeff Blackwood know if you have additional names of people we should include. We are seeking to communicate with and involve as diverse and broad a spectrum of the public and interest groups as possible.

**Questions?** Rosemary Furfey of NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) is leading the recovery planning effort for Northeast Oregon. She can be reached at (503) 231-2149, or rosemary.furfey@noaa.gov. Jeff Blackwood is facilitating the public involvement processes, and can be reached at jeff.bwood@gmail.com, or by telephone at (541) 276-4240.

**Reforestation**
Yes, it’s time to begin thinking about tree planting for next spring! Doing some planning now will improve your chances of success!

Some ideas to think about:
- Check out your planting site. Site conditions will have a bearing on what species to plant and the stock type (like 2-0’s or 1-1’s). For example, on drier south and west slopes you may get better survival and growth with 1-1 pine than 2-0’s. Evaluate the existing vegetation. If you’ve got grass or brush some form of vegetation control will be necessary for good survival of planted seedlings.
- Order your seedlings early—NOW is a good time! Seedlings are usually in short supply. Ordering early assures you of not only enough seedlings to get the job done, but seedlings from the right seed zone and elevation.
- Animals like gophers or elk and deer can damage seedlings. If you anticipate animal problems now is a good time to plan for control measures.
- Finally, plan on taking a little time between now and planting season to learn the best ways to store, transport and plant your trees. One way to do that is check out our tree planting video from the Extension Office nearest you and spend one of these cold winter evenings reviewing the basics with whoever is going to help you plant.

**OSU Extension Reforestation Resources.**
EC 1095 Seeding Care and Handling (pdf) $1.00  
EC 1188 Site Preparation: An Introduction for the Woodland Owner (pdf) $2.50  
EC 1196 Selecting and Buying Quality Seedlings (pdf) $2.00  
EC 1201 Understanding and Controlling Deer Damage in Young Plantations (pdf) $2.00  
EC 1388 Introduction to Conifer Release (pdf) $2.00  
EC 1498 Successful Reforestation: An Overview (pdf) $1.50  
EC 1504 The Care and Planting of Tree Seedlings on Your Woodland (pdf) $2.00  
PNW 520 Enhancing Reforestation Success in the Inland Northwest (pdf) $2.00
Basic Forestry Shortcourse Class Schedule in Enterprise

**Thursday, February 11**
**Management Planning:** Discover some advantages of having a management plan and learn about the parts and process of developing a plan. Master Woodland Managers will be on hand to tell their story.

**Basic Tree Biology and Forest Ecology:** Find out about how a tree grows and interacts with its environment. This information can be helpful for anyone planting trees or tending their woodland property.

**Thursday, February 18**
**Measurements and Mapping:** Learn about how to measure trees and the tools used in forestry. Gain skills in reading aerial photos and maps.

**Thursday, March 4**
**Silviculture:** Learn how a stand of trees grows and how cultural techniques such as thinning and pruning can be used to improve stand development to reach your objectives.

**Reforestation:** We'll discuss how to choose the right tree species for a reforestation project, site preparation and the importance of controlling competing vegetation, handling and planting techniques, protecting seedlings and legal requirements under the Forest Practices Act.

**Thursday, March 11**
**Forest Health:** Forest health is more than just maintaining healthy trees. We'll explore the role of pests and other stresses on the forest, ways to sustain a vigorous/healthy forest, and some local examples of insects, diseases and animal damage.

**Fire Ecology and Management:** Learn about the role of fire in our forest environment, fire behavior, beneficial and detrimental consequences of wildfire, management practices that reduce fire risk, considerations for fighting fire, fire laws and liabilities.

**Thursday, March 18**
**Harvesting and Marketing:** This session covers safety, logging practices, how to choose the right harvest system for your needs and what to expect after harvest.

**Woodland Assistance:** This session will focus on different sources of technical, educational and financial assistance available to help you meet your management goals.

----------------------------------------------------------------------

**Registration for Basic Forestry Short Course**
5:30-8:00 p.m. Thursdays
February 11,18 and March 4, 11,18 and 20
Cloverleaf Hall, 600 1st St, Enterprise

Name (s): __________________________________________ Phone: _____________________________

Mailing Address: ____________________________ Zip:_________ Email:_________________________

Class size is limited and a minimum number required, so advance registration is required. Registration fee is $20/family. Please pre-register by **February 9th**, by sending payment to:

OSU Extension Service, Union County , 10507 N. McAlister Rd. Rm.9, La Grande, OR 97850
For more information, call Connie Carter or Sherry Nantz at 541-963-1010
REITS and TIMOs

**What is a real estate investment trust?**
It’s a tax designation for a corporation investing in real estate that reduces or eliminates corporate income taxes.

In return, REITs are required to distribute 90 percent of their income, which may be taxable, into the hands of their investors, who pay capital gains taxes. The REIT structure was designed to provide a similar structure for investment in real estate as mutual funds provide for investment in stocks.

Like other corporations, REITs can be publicly or privately held. But at least 75 percent of total assets must be in real estate and it must have at least 100 shareholders.

**What is a timber investment management organization?**

It’s a management group that aids institutional investors in managing their timberland investments. A TIMO acts as a broker for institutional clients, finding and acquiring investment properties. Once an investment property is chosen, the TIMO is given the responsibility of actively managing the timberland to achieve adequate returns for the investors. They have a wide range of diversity in terms of focus and size.

From: The Sunday Oregonian, December 27, 2009

**Halfway Oregon Man Starting Biomass Plant**

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 burn 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.

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, a former forest service employee who founded Biochar Products, pegged initial employment at the Halfway plant at five, but he said that could double to 10 when the operation is running full bore this spring and summer.

He 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.

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.

Gene Stackle, a business recruitment and retention manager with the Baker City/County economic development team, said a $4.1 million request submitted for federal stimulus funds for development of a biomass industry in Baker County included $2 million sought for Twombly’s biochar project.
“We still have not heard a thing about the stimulus money” for biomass development, Stackle said.

He said Twombly’s application was submitted through the U.S. Forest Service. Even though his project apparently was bypassed for stimulus funding, Stackle said Twombly decided to forge ahead with a privately funded biochar demonstration project at the Halfway site.

According to Twombly’s website: 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.

The demonstration plant is a portable version manufactured in Canada.

Although the project will start in Halfway, Stackle said 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.

“If this is successful, I see it as a cookie-cutter project that could be placed in different locales,” Stackle said.

Ultimately, Twombly said, the potential use of carbon-rich crop and forest residues has the potential to reshape agriculture by reducing the industry’s dependence on petroleum-based fertilizers and other products, and to provide a viable alternative market for wood from forest thinning activities desperately needed to restore forest health and reduce the threat of unnatural stand-replacing fires.

Adapted from an article by Merriman, Baker City Herald

Using Technology to Develop and Enhance Peer-to-Peer Discussion and Learning
Bob Parker, Extension Forester, Baker City

Anyone who has participated in a forestry class or workshop can tell you that some of the best learning happens through the face-to-face, and often informal, on the side discussions with your peers. The problem is it’s pretty tough to get out to classes and workshops very often so those peer-to-peer discussions can be few and far between. There is a solution! A year ago, I became interested in Facebook, an online social networking tool and figured that just because I’m an old fogy, that doesn’t mean I have to be a technology adverse/incompetent Luddite. So I started a Facebook page and found that it is an easy and enjoyable way to stay in touch with a community of friends that I choose to communicate with – it beats emails hands down, no doubt about it.

So here’s the deal. I created a social networking site but instead of Facebook, I used a site called Ning which is becoming popular among individuals, professional groups and organizations, such as the National Network of Forest Practitioners, and is also easy to use. The home page I’ve started is called the Ecology and Management of Eastern Oregon Forests (just like the OSU publication), which you can access at: http://easternoregonforests.ning.com/. Only eastern Oregon woodland owners and other select forestry enthusiasts will be allowed to participate in this community of peers and the site will not tolerate spamming, tirades or other nonsense. Here are just a few of the ways you can use and benefit from this site:
• Stay connected and involved with your *community* of forestry friends.
• Share your experiences! Things big or small, it doesn’t matter. Work, play, successes, failures, hopes, dreams, what worked, what didn’t, what would you do differently. You can tell your story with text, photos and even video! It’s interesting, informative and just plain fun when friends share their interests with friends.
• Ask questions or seek advice from your peers. Your fellow woodland owners possess a tremendous wealth of knowledge and experience and this online network is a great way to tap into that reservoir whenever you want.
• Post meeting, workshop and forestry tour announcements. Share links to sources of information on the web, such as publications, webinars, news stories.

I hope you will go to the website, have a look around and seriously consider using this tool to link up with our community of woodland owners. If you want to join, send me your email address and I’ll send you an invitation.

**Weyerhauser Board OKs Conversion to REIT Status**

Weyerhaeuser Co. said Tuesday its board has approved a conversion of the forest products giant into a real estate investment trust, letting the company take advantage of major tax benefits.

Weyerhaeuser has been under pressure for years to lower its income tax rate -- which currently totals 35 percent -- by becoming a REIT. The investment trusts distribute at least 90 percent of their taxable income to shareholders as dividends each year, and then can deduct those dividends from corporate taxable income. In many cases, REITS will pay out all of their taxable income and owe no corporate tax at all.

"This conversion will position us to be more competitive in our timberlands business," President and CEO Dan Fulton said in a statement. "In addition, we are able to convert with our existing business mix of timberlands, wood products, cellulose fibers and real estate."

The Federal Way, Wash.-based company said the conversion may occur as soon as next year, depending on the economic recovery and changes in tax policy.

 Shares rose 60 cents to close at $43.11, earlier reaching a new 52-week high of $46.80.

Fitch Ratings said Tuesday that Weyerhaeuser’s planned conversion won’t affect its debt ratings. In September, the agency downgraded the company’s long-term senior unsecured debt and issuer default ratings to junk status from investment grade and maintained a negative outlook.

Under its conversion into a REIT, the company must issue shareholders a special, taxable dividend of its earnings by the end of the year of conversion. Weyerhaeuser has pegged its 2010 profit at just under $6 billion. It plans to pay a significant portion of the dividend in stock.

The company also said it will ask shareholders at its annual meeting in April to approve changes in its structure, eliminating its classified board and removing super majority voting provisions.

Weyerhaeuser will join fellow forestry REITs Potlatch, Rayonier Inc. and Plum Creek Timber Co.

Publications of Interest

**Big Game from Hunt to Home.** Recently revised (January 2010), this 36 page publication covers the range of topics important to anyone who hunts and wants to maintain meat quality (assumes you actually harvest an animal). There are chapters on how to take care of deer, elk, bear and antelope in the field, transporting big game meat, aging, skinning and boning big game, preparing big game meat and preserving. There are even some good recipes you might try. To order in Oregon you can call 1-800-561-6719 or go to [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/) and search for PNW 517.

**Managing Organic Debris for Forest Health.** PNW 609. This publication gives a good review of inland northwest forest soils and how to manage organic matter for multiple objectives. You can order from your local OSU Extension Office or visit the OSU Extension online catalog [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/) and search for PNW 609. Cost is $7/copy.