
FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ✪ Wildlife ✪ Water Quality ✪ Soil Conservation ✪ Best Management Practices ✪ Recreation ✪ Aesthetics

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Support for Initiative

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) recently announced its support for President Bush's **Healthy Forests Initiative**. NASF President Larry Kotchman praised President Bush for keeping his proposal consistent with the goals and objectives of the National Fire Plan (NFP). "There is an urgent need for broad-based fuels reduction efforts to prevent another fire season as severe as the one we are experiencing now," he said. Kotchman added that the risk to life and property calls for immediate action and commended President Bush for his dedication to the nation's forests and communities.

The Healthy Forests Initiative is designed to compliment the four goals of the National Fire Plan:

- Prevention and suppression,
- Fuels reduction,
- Restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems,
- Promoting community assistance.

By streamlining the process for completing environmental regulations and decreasing the amount of time that agencies spend dealing with litigation, President Bush hopes to step up NFP efforts already underway.

Kotchman also said, "We look forward to continuing to work with our federal partners in the implementation of the National Fire Plan."★

For more information: www.safnet.org/index.shtml

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President's Wildfire Plan

President Bush's controversial push to streamline the regulatory process of clearing out overgrown western forests to reduce the risks of wildfires was presented to Capitol Hill early September by two cabinet secretaries.

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman and Interior Secretary Gale Norton urged bipartisan support for the president's Healthy Forests Initiative that environmentalists fear will open the door to expanded commercial logging, but which supporters say is necessary to clear out dangerously dry kindling from drought-stricken woods.

Foresters and many lawmakers say that objections to commercial logging on federal lands have prevented the removal of underbrush and small trees that fueled many of the large fires seen in the West in recent years.

The first piece of the legislation would identify fuels-reduction projects for the next 10 years in critical areas where fire posed the greatest threat to homes and watersheds, and areas where large numbers of trees have been killed by insects.

The second part brings private enterprise into the picture by authorizing the Interior Department and Agriculture Department to enter into long-term "stewardship" contracts in which timber companies would maintain areas of forest over several years.

The third and fourth segments of the proposal deal with the overhauling of the rules governing fuels-reduction projects and an opportunity for environmentalists and other private citizens to challenge individual proposals. The goal, the agencies said, was to inject "common sense" into rulings on appeals and ensuring that judges hearing appeals have the authority to consider the economic impacts of treatment projects.★

For more information:

www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/healthyforests,

www.doi.gov/news/020822b.htm ,

www.usda.gov/news/releases/2002/08/0352.htm

The Private Lands Enhancement Program

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides, at no charge, technical assistance to persons desiring to include wildlife management considerations in present or future land use practices.

The goal of the Private Lands Enhancement Program is to provide expertise to land managers in the preservation and development of wildlife habitat and the proper management of the various wildlife populations that utilize that habitat. Through this effort, the Department hopes to slow or reverse the decline in quantity of the State's wildlife habitat and improve the quality of remaining habitat.

Upon written request, a biologist will schedule a personal meeting with the land manager and an inspection of the property. The land manager will be asked to define the various needs and uses of the

property and to establish an objective for wildlife considerations. Once the property's potential has been determined and constraints thereon identified, the biologist will provide recommendations, which may include a written management plan.

Specific recommendations are given concerning habitat management practices, wildlife considerations in livestock management, availability of water, food plot development, management of concerned wildlife populations, and harvest of game species.

Wildlife biologists will continue to assist cooperators through periodic visits to help interpret survey information, formulate harvest recommendations and recommend adjustments in the program as needed.★

For more information:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/conserves/privatelands.htm>

Sales Tax Exemptions for Timber Landowners

Thanks to the Texas Reforestation and Conservation Act of 1999, timber landowners may receive a refund from the Comptroller's office for a portion of the sales tax paid if they purchased the following items for use in timber production on or after October 1 of last year:

- Seedlings;
- Defoliants, desiccants, fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, and machinery or equipment (including repair) exclusively used in timber production;
- Machinery and equipment used by an original timber producer to process, pack or market his products;
- Irrigation parts.

The amount of refund or credit is based on the date of purchase:

- 33% for purchases from October 1, 2001 through 2003;
- 50% for purchases in 2004 and 2005;
- 75% for purchases in 2006 and 2007;
- 100% for purchases in and after 2008.

Landowners must send a refund claim to the Comptroller's office. If approved, a refund check is mailed from the Comptroller. The claim should include a signed refund request that identifies the retailer (name and tax permit number), the reason for the refund ("exclusive use in timber production"), the amount to be refunded, and a *copy* of the retailer's invoice or receipt showing the amount of state and local tax paid. Landowners should keep the original receipt in their records in case an audit occurs. Landowners must postmark their claim before December 31 of the calendar year following the year in which the tax was paid. Refund requests should be mailed to:

Comptroller of Public Accounts
Sales Tax Refunds Verification Section
P. O. Box 13528
Austin, TX 78711-3528

Also effective October 1, 2001, the purchase, lease or rental of trailers (self-propelled machines modified for timber production) used in timber operations are exempt from motor vehicle tax (6.25% tax rate). Another change in the sales tax law exempts natural gas and electricity used in timber operations.★

For more information: <http://www.texasforestry.org/new.htm>

BITS · AND · PIECES

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR LOGGING PROFESSIONALS:

2002 BMP WORKSHOPS

OCT. 11 LUFKIN
NOV. 8 LUFKIN

-Fee (per workshop): \$10 for TFA/TLC members; \$35 for non-members

-For registration, call TFA at (936) 632-8733

❖ For more information on the National Fire Plan, go to www.fireplan.gov.

❖ The implementation of BMPs has prevented an estimated 12,000 tons of sediment from reaching East Texas streams and almost 96,000 tons of erosion from occurring on East Texas forests each year.

❖ TFS's Best Management Practices program has trained over 2,500 loggers and foresters since 1995.

❖ The Texas Forest Service is now accepting on-line pine and hardwood seedling orders on the TFS website at http://txforestservicetamu.edu/forest_management/indian_mound_nursery/index.html. This service is available to help landowners with their upcoming reforestation efforts. Special features on the on-line service include: volume discounts, flexible payment methods, flexible shipping methods, automatic e-mail notification, a secure website, and facilitated customer access.

For windbreak and wildlife planting in West Texas, go to http://txforestservicetamu.edu/forest_management/west_texas_nursery/index.html.

❖ Questions on timberland property taxes in Texas? Go to http://txforestservicetamu.edu/landowner_assistance/forests_taxation/taxQA.html and find out how property taxes are determined in Texas, about timber-use appraisals and changes for 2002.

WE WISH TO THANK THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS QUARTER'S NEWSLETTER:

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Forestry and Water Quality

A report released by the Texas Forest Service titled "Voluntary Implementation with Forestry Best Management Practices in East Texas" shows that the forestry community has achieved the highest rating ever for protecting water quality. Nine out of ten sites that involve forestry activities participate in environmentally sound practices.

Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) are practices determined to be an effective and practical means of preventing or reducing the amount of water pollution generated by forest management. In 1992, the Texas Forest Service started the Best Management Practices Project, which encourages landowners to protect water quality through voluntary means. This project provides technical assistance to landowners, professional workshops for loggers, public education, and random forestry site inspections.

The TFS project monitors 150 random sites every two years to measure how well voluntary efforts are being implemented. The three ownership groups targeted are public (national forests), forest industry (Temple-Inland Forests, International Paper Company, and Louisiana-Pacific Corporation), and private landowners.

Public ownership had the highest rating (98.4%) in protecting water quality, followed by forest industry (96.1%) and private landowners (86.4%). The three groups had a combined rating of 91.5%. Ratings are significantly higher when:

- a professional forester is used,
- the logger has attended the BMP workshop,
- the landowner is familiar with BMPs,
- the landowner is a member of a forestry organization,
- BMPs are included in the timber sale contract.

Education is the key to continued success in this project. According to the report, "continuing effective educational programs for non-industrial private landowners and BMP training for loggers can minimize water quality impacts from silvicultural operations."★

For more information:

http://txforestservicetamu.edu/forest_management/best_management_practices/bmp_implementation_monitoring.html

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New TSAF Website

The Texas Society of American Foresters (TSAF) recently developed a website. The website provides a downloadable version of the TSAF newsletter (*The Texas Forester*), the executive committee and chapter officer contact information, related links, details on continuing education workshops, chapter and annual meetings, the Koontz Fund, a listing of TSAF's past leaders and award recipients, as well as Dr. Bob Baker's *Highlights of Texas Forestry*. Once meeting plans are finalized, members will also be able to download registration forms for the annual meeting next spring.

Visit the site and let the TSAF Executive Committee know what you think. The website needs to be useful to TSAF members as well as letting others know about the organization. The website was made possible through a Koontz Fund grant and a National SAF grant.★

For more information: www.tsaf.org

