



USDA Forest Service Ecosystem Services

JULY 2005 UPDATE

NEWS

New FS Ecosystem Services Advisory Group

Forest Service leadership recently formed an internal cross-deputy Advisory Group to guide policy and management discussions related to payments for ecosystem services. The importance of valuing ecosystem services has been identified as a USDA priority by Mark Rey, Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment – this gives the Forest Service the opportunity to set new goals for enhancing, protecting, and restoring ecosystem services. Individuals from the Forest Service's six deputy areas were appointed to the Advisory Group, led by Dave Cleaves, Director of Resource Valuation and Use Research. A new two-year position in the Chief's Office will work with this group and serve as a full-time point of contact and coordinator of ecosystem services-related activities across Forest Service deputy areas.

Cooperative Conservation in the Lower Mississippi

The Forest Service will soon begin leading a collaborative effort to use market-based incentives to restore bottomland hardwood forests in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Partnerships with industry, conservation organizations, landowners, and communities are central to this conservation initiative. The Forest Service will focus USDA programs, science, and technology on the Mississippi watershed and test market mechanisms that may provide alternative revenue streams to private landowners. A key goal of the initiative is to help landowners invest in reforestation and become better stewards of the ecosystem services they provide to the public. Elizabeth Estill, currently Deputy Chief of Programs, Legislation, and Communication, will begin leading this effort in September, building on outcomes of the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (August 29-31).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Presentation Thursday, July 21 12-1 PM: Sara Scherr will provide an overview of emerging markets for ecosystem services at the Forest Service International Program's conference space, 1099 14th Street NW, Suite 5500W. Sara is Director of Ecosystem Services at Forest Trends and Director of Ecoagriculture Partners. During her

presentation she will describe different types of payments and market-based instruments, global trends and developments, opportunities in the U.S., and potential roles for the Forest Service. This is a brown-bag lunch discussion hosted by the Forest Service Ecosystem Services Advisory Group and International Programs. The presentation is open to the public; please see the attached announcement for RSVP and security information.

RESOURCES

Ecosystem Services Weblog: ecosystemservices.usda.gov

The Ecosystem Services Weblog continues to be active. This is a forum for collaboration and debate concerning markets and payments for ecosystem services. We hope that you will use the weblog to engage in discussion and share information - we welcome your input on Forest Service efforts and updates on your related work and activities. The blog is an inter-agency sponsored site that is still "under construction"; if you have any comments on how it can be improved, please email Jennifer Hayes at jenniferhayes@fs.fed.us.

NatureServices.org

Presentations from the May workshop entitled *A New Currency for Conservation: Markets and Payments for Ecological Services from Our Nation's Forests and Farms* are now available at www.natureservices.org. The workshop, hosted in part by American Forests, the Southern Environmental Law Center, Environmental Defense, and Winrock International, focused on improving existing federal conservation initiatives and exploring markets for ecosystem services on private lands.

New publication from CIFOR

The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) recently released an Occasional Paper on payments for conservation. The paper offers a definition for 'payments for environmental services' (PES) and describes the practical elements of PES design. In comparing PES with other conservation approaches, the author evaluates its effectiveness and the benefits and limits of its use... Wunder, S. 2005. *Payments for environmental services: some nuts and bolts*. CIFOR Occasional Paper No. 42. 32pp. Available at: www.cifor.cgiar.org/publications/papers

*Do you have news or events to share?
Send a brief description by email to began@fs.fed.us*