



NEWS

Forest Service Focus Groups

The Forest Service convened three focus groups during the month of April. For each, 8-10 people from outside of the agency met for a full day to discuss how the agency might add value to emerging ecosystem service markets. We invited landowners, state foresters, representatives from partner organizations, and academics to address our position and role in this arena: *Should the FS be involved? What are potential opportunities for engagement? How can we best fulfill our mission? What are the challenges/risks we need to address?* Designed as listening sessions, these focus groups offered creative commentary and a host of ideas that will inform our exploratory process. Summaries of the focus groups will be available mid-May at www.ecosystems-services.usda.gov.

State of Texas Ecosystems Services Pilot Program

With support from USDA Cooperative Forestry, the Texas Forest Service is partnering with Forest Trends to develop the *Ecosystem Services Pilot Program*. The purpose of the program is to assist the state's forest owners in maximizing the value of their forests. Over the next year, the Forest Trends Business Development Facility will help the state work with forest owners to identify ecosystem service buyers and opportunities, and negotiate market transactions.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ecosystem Services Workshop, Washington D.C.

The Forest Service will be participating in a workshop May 18-20 entitled *A New Currency for Conservation: Markets and Payments for Ecological Services from Our Nation's Forests and Farms*. The agenda will focus on improving existing federal conservation initiatives and exploring emerging markets and payments for ecosystem services. Special sessions will feature Farm Bill incentive programs and conservation initiatives for southern forests. Sally Collins, Associate Chief of the Forest Service, is an invited guest speaker. The workshop is hosted by American Forests, Southern Environmental Law Center, Environmental Defense, and Winrock International.

Sponsors include American Forest Foundation, Longleaf Alliance, Pacific Forest Trust, Society of American Foresters, Wildlife Management Institute, USDA Forest Service, the Southern Roundtable on Sustainable Forests, Giannini Foundation, and Pinchot Institute for Conservation.

RESOURCES

Ecosystem Services Weblog

The Ecosystem Services Weblog is now active, thanks to Ed Mundy, Randy McCracken, and Jennifer Hayes at the Southern Research Station. 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.

Visit www.ecosystems-services.usda.gov

Forest Trends and the Katoomba Group launch MarketWatch

Check out *MarketWatch*, the latest addition to the Katoomba Group's Ecosystem Marketplace: www.ecosystemmarketplace.com. *MarketWatch* tracks actual trades in carbon, water, and biodiversity across the globe. The Ecosystem Marketplace is an informational resource on ecosystem services. With support from the Forest Service, the website offers timely, relevant, and comprehensive information on price trends, deals, events, and resources.

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