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USDA FOREST SERVICE  
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## Is America on Track Toward Sustainable Forests?

**Speech Delivered by Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth  
Society of American Foresters, Annual Convention  
October 26, 2003**

Thanks for that generous introduction. As a professional forester and a member of the Society of American Foresters for almost four decades, it's a great honor to address you here today.

I was asked here today to discuss the future direction of the Forest Service. For almost a century now, we have pursued sustainable forest management, and I believe that same pursuit will continue to drive our future. So I'll discuss our future by raising a basic question: Are we on a trajectory toward sustainable forests in America? I'll approach this question in two ways:

- First, I'll discuss the recently released National Report on Sustainable Forests.
- Second, I believe that the report shows that we face four major threats to sustainable forestry. So I'll close with a plea for informed dialogue leading to action against the four threats.

### **National Report**

The National Report on Sustainable Forests is the first in a series of similar reports to be released on a regular basis. The reason for the report is simple: To know whether we are on track toward sustainability. For that, we need to know the extent and condition of the forest resource. We also need to know how the biological condition relates to our economy and society. In other words, sustainability depends on *how* its social, economic, and ecological components *interrelate*. That idea is so important that it has earned a name of its own—the "triple bottom line."

The purpose of the National Report on Sustainable Forests is to tell us whether the triple bottom line is in the red or in the black. The report culminates years of multinational efforts to measure and monitor indicators of forest sustainability. Through the Montreal Process, we agreed on 67 indicators of forest sustainability organized under 7 criteria for sustainable forest management.

For many of those 67 indicators, our information is far from complete. But we do have good information about some of the indicators, and we know *something* about all of them. Looked at in their entirety, the indicators tell us something about the triple bottom line.

The report tells some interesting stories about forests in the United States. In the last four centuries, about a quarter of our original forest area has been converted to other uses. But for the past hundred years, there has been no net loss. Yet our population and economy have continued to grow—in fact, the growth has been rather impressive. There are several reasons why:

- First, conservation awareness, beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, led to a vastly different attitude toward forests. Forests came to be viewed as a resource that could provide benefits forever if they are carefully managed and used.
- Second, the environmental awareness of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century carried this thinking forward. In recent decades, we've seen remarkable improvements in some aspects of forest sustainability, such as species protection, water quality, and timber productivity.
- Third, improvements in technology have helped. For example, we've greatly increased how fast we can grow wood in intensively managed forests. We've also reduced the amount of raw material that is wasted in producing lumber and other wood products, and we've increased the amount of wood fiber that is recycled. Our agricultural productivity has also increased, making it possible for many croplands to revert to forest.

### **Threats to Sustainability**

To me, the progress we have made is remarkable, given the many demands of our growing society and economy. However, we still face four major threats that can throw us off course.

One major threat is loss of open space. Urban sprawl, transportation corridors, and changes in forest ownership are fragmenting the forest estate. That makes it difficult to meet the multiple demands on forests, even though the total forest land base is stable.

For example, we no longer satisfy all our wood needs domestically. The United States is a net importer of wood products, to the tune of about 20 percent of our domestic demand. There's an upside to that—our willingness to buy wood products internationally helps us sustain our own forests for nonconsumptive uses, such as aesthetic enjoyment and ecological services. But there are also a couple of downsides:

- Domestically, the forest products industry is a shrinking part of our national economy. That changes incentives for land ownership, making forest parcels smaller. Parcelization in turn affects how forests are managed and what goods and services they can provide.
- Internationally, if we import forest products from countries with fewer environmental protections, then we run the risk of exporting our environmental problems to them. If we are truly serious about sustainable forests, then we'd better take a hard look at the choices we are making, including our consumption choices and our "not-in-my-backyard" philosophy.

Another unintended consequence of globalization directly influences biological aspects of forest sustainability. Imported diseases have all but destroyed two of America's favorite forest trees-American elm and American chestnut. Other tree species have suffered similar fates, such as western white pine. The rate at which we are importing forest insects, diseases, and invasive plants is growing. It poses one of the greatest threats to forest sustainability.

A third major threat is fire and fuels. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we got extremely good at fire control. That made our forests more dependable for timber production and other uses. But, as you know, fire exclusion in some forest types helped throw many areas out of balance. Today, hundreds of millions of acres nationwide are at risk from uncharacteristically severe fires.

Coupled with the growing wildland/urban interface, the fire and fuels situation today has become a national emergency, as the huge fire seasons of 2000 and 2002 demonstrated. The fire and fuels situation critically affects many aspects of forest sustainability, including biodiversity, productivity, water quality, carbon sequestration, and social and economic expectations.

The fourth major threat is unmanaged outdoor recreation, particularly the unmanaged use of off-highway vehicles. OHVs are growing in popularity, and they are a legitimate use of national forest land. Tens of millions of OHVs are now in use-far more than just 10 years ago.

Most OHV users are responsible, but the tiny percentage of problem users have left hundreds of miles of unauthorized roads and trails. We are seeing some terrible effects-streambanks collapsed, trails washed out, sensitive meadows destroyed. If we're serious about sustainable forests, we're going to have to extend and improve our management of recreational uses.

### **Mixed Picture**

At the outset of my remarks, I asked a basic question: Are we on a trajectory toward sustainable forests in the United States? We think so-but, to be honest, we just don't know.

Partly, we don't know because we don't yet have a full picture. For many of the indicators of forest sustainability, we simply lack information. A prime example is nontimber forest products. With the exception of recreational use, we know very little at the national or regional scale about the productivity, supply, and demand for these goods and services. We also have very incomplete information about the condition of soil and water resources in forests.

But even where we *do* have good information, the sustainability trends do not always tell the same story. For example, the trends for total forest land area, timber growth, wood product manufacturing efficiency, and recycling all point toward sustainability. But other trends are cause for deep concern, including the trends for biodiversity; for loss of open space; for outdoor recreation; and for fire and fuels as well as insects, disease, and invasive species.

So I think our future is cut out for us in the Forest Service. If we're serious about sustainability, we've got to spend a lot of time and effort on gathering the information we need to round out the picture. But the main thing we've got to do is to focus on the four big threats-loss of open space, invasive species, fire and fuels, and unmanaged outdoor recreation.

In closing, I want to make a plea for informed dialogue and decisive action. I am confident that my view is based on sound information, but I realize that it is my view. The diversity of land ownership in the United States means that the path we choose to take toward sustainability must

be based on informed dialogue. There will be plenty of opportunities for dialogue here at this convention, and more will be coming soon through the national Roundtable on Sustainable Forests. Please take those opportunities. We need a vigorous national debate on the four threats for the future of our forests.

## **USGS Research Indicates Fire Suppression and Fuel Buildup are Not Responsible for Chaparral Shrubland Fires in Southern California**

**For Immediate Release:** Oct. 30, 2003

**Contact:** Gloria Maender, 520-670-5596, [gloria\\_maender@usgs.gov](mailto:gloria_maender@usgs.gov); Jon Keeley, 559-565-3170, [jon\\_keeley@usgs.gov](mailto:jon_keeley@usgs.gov)

With the loss of life and property being experienced in the fires burning in four Southern California counties, research by the U.S. Geological Survey on fire in the region reveals that to effectively manage fires to help prevent loss of life and property in Southern California shrublands, it is essential to understand the natural role of fire in chaparral ecosystems.

Large, high-intensity fires sweep the chaparral landscape in this region each year, threatening lives and homes, as is occurring with such devastation in this area. Ecologists have long known that chaparral ecosystems burn extensively and often, and that much of the dominant vegetation in these systems is highly adapted to a fire-prone environment. Many native plants here have seeds that require fire to germinate, or need the kind of disturbed habitat fires leave behind to grow. It was long thought that fire suppression played the same role in chaparral shrublands as it has in forests, creating a build-up of fuels that can eventually lead to more destructive fires.

"Past fire suppression is not to blame for causing large shrubland wildfires, nor has it proven effective in halting them," said Dr. Jon Keeley, a USGS fire researcher who studies both southern California shrublands and Sierra Nevada forests. "Under Santa Ana conditions, fires carry through all chaparral regardless of age class. Therefore, prescribed burning programs over large areas to remove old stands and maintain young growth as bands of firebreaks resistant to ignition are futile at stopping these wildfires."

In recent studies Keeley and his colleague, C. J. Fotheringham of the University of California, Los Angeles, analyzed historical records for counties dominated by shrublands subject to periodic high-intensity wildfires, from Monterey County in the north to San Diego County in the south. They found that although fire suppression is critical to protect homes, buildings and other structures, fire suppression does not prevent large wildland fires in southern California shrublands because these fires usually occur with powerful Santa Ana winds that blow at high speeds from the desert to the coast. In the present fire, hot Santa Ana winds of over 60 mph greatly increased the intensity and the movement of the fire. These winds occur each autumn, at the time when natural fuels are driest.

A close analysis of state fire records reveals the real story, said Keeley. Since 1910, chaparral fires have become more frequent as the human population has grown but fire size has not increased. The researchers found that large, intense fires were equally common in the years before widespread fire suppression as today, and do not appear to be the result of fuels build-up. In this highly fire-prone ecosystem, suppression efforts appear not to have greatly altered patterns of fire incidence. Keeley notes that the greater financial cost of fires today is most likely the result of constant urban expansion into areas subject to frequent burning.

For example, written documents reveal that during the 19th century human settlement of southern California altered the fire regime of coastal California by increasing the fire frequency. This was an era of very limited fire suppression, and yet like today, large crown fires covering tens of thousands of acres were not uncommon. One of the largest fires in Los Angeles County (60,000 acres) occurred in 1878, and the largest fire in Orange County's history, in 1889, was over half a million acres.

The main ignition source of chaparral wildfires under natural conditions is lightning, but lightning-ignited fires are of an order of magnitude fewer in coastal ranges than in interior ranges of California and much of the western United States, said Keeley. Keeley hypothesized that before the arrival of humans, the majority of area burned occurred at overlaps of summer and autumn weather events. Small lightning-ignited fires of summer occasionally persisted until the arrival of autumn Santa Ana conditions. Such fires then rapidly increased in size and might continue to burn until winter rains finally doused them.

Most fires in California shrublands are human-caused, and the beginnings of human influence on the natural fire regime date to pre-Columbian peoples, who used fire to convert the dense shrubland to a more open mosaic of shrubland and grassland, long before the arrival of Euro-Americans, said Keeley.

Fotheringham and Keeley noted that that throughout much of the shrubland landscape humans play a dominant role in promoting fires beyond what was likely the natural fire cycle. Future fire management, they said, needs to take a strategic approach to prefire fuel manipulations and move beyond evaluating effectiveness strictly in terms of area treated. Fire management should consider designing strategies tailored to different regions, as there are marked differences between the central coastal region and southern California in source of ignition, season of burning, and historical patterns of population growth and burning.

In terms of management implications, the fire researchers note that:

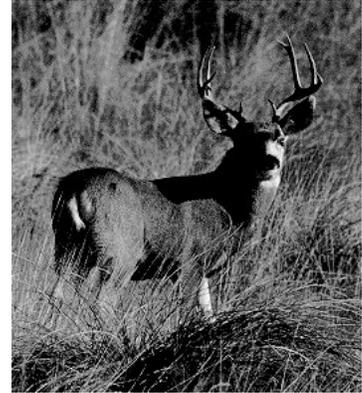
- The contemporary fire regime in these shrublands mirrors the natural crown fire regime far more than is generally accepted and that catastrophic crown fires may be an inevitable feature of this landscape.
- There may be little justification for using fire for resource benefit, since vast portions of shrubland landscape currently experience a higher-than-normal fire frequency.
- While landscapes managed by rotational prescription burning may contribute to easier containment of fires burning under moderate weather conditions, they are of limited value during severe weather such as the Santa Ana winds causing such destruction to life and property now.
- Limited and strategically placed prescription burns are the most cost-effective way to help prevent large catastrophic wildfires in southern California chaparral habitat.

The USGS serves the nation by providing reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life.

To receive USGS news releases go to [www.usgs.gov/public/list\\_server.html](http://www.usgs.gov/public/list_server.html).

## **New Book on Mule Deer Conservation: Issues and Management Strategies** (Excerpt from Inside IAFWA Newsletter)

The Berryman Institute at Utah State University announced the publication of a new book on mule deer conservation. The book was written by mule deer biologists in the Mule Deer Working Group of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and was published by the Berryman Institute. The Mule Deer Working Group was established at the midwinter meeting of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Tucson, Arizona in 1998. Agency directors at this meeting established the working group as an official full committee of WAFWA for this effort. Each state and province assigned one person to this committee. In addition, a representative from the Wildlife Management Institute was appointed to serve as a technical adviser. The mission of the MDWG is "to find solutions to our common mule deer management problems and to optimize cooperative research and management in the Western states and provinces." This is the first major publication of the committee's cooperation. *Mule Deer Conservation: Issues and Management Strategies* is available for \$22 per copy, postpaid from The Jack H. Berryman Institute, Utah State University, 5270 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322-5270. Credit card orders are also accepted by phone at 435-797-8876 or by mailing a completed order form (available at [www.berrymaninstitute.org](http://www.berrymaninstitute.org)) to the Berryman Institute. Bulk orders of five or more copies are discounted to \$20 per copy.



## **Federal Agencies Take New Look At Controlling Wildfire Costs**

**JEFF BARNARD, Associated Press Writer**

**October 29, 2003**

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) -- Faced with bigger, more expensive wildfires and a decreasing willingness of Congress and the White House to pay for them, federal agencies are looking for new ways to control costs.

But as long as the fuel buildup remains high in the nation's forests, the two percent of fires that escape initial attack will continue to be expansive, said U.S. Forest Service Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop, who oversees firefighting.

"Absent any high level of success in initial attack and absent success over time in terms of reducing the buildup of fuels in the forest, we will be making only marginal improvements," Holtrop said in a telephone interview.

Special teams spent the summer examining spending on five large wildfires in the West and a new blue-ribbon panel will be developing recommendations from the reports by next year's fire season to deal with a problem the government has wrestled with unsuccessfully for decades.

The U.S. Forest Service is also developing a new \$33.8 million computerized model of the national landscape, called LANDFIRE, to sort out the places where fire danger is greatest and where scarce fire-prevention dollars can have the biggest bang for the buck.

"What we have heard is that large fires now are more complex to suppress than they were 20 years ago," Assistant Secretary of the Interior Rebecca Watson said in a telephone interview. "They are more dangerous and they are more expensive."

The federal government spent \$1.7 billion fighting wildfires that burned 7 million acres in 2002, an average cost of \$243 per acre. That compares to \$1.4 billion spent in 2000 on fires that burned 8.4 million acres, an average of \$167 per acre.

In the past, Congress routinely reimbursed firefighting costs, but since last year the Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management have had to cover a major portion.

The White House Office of Management and Budget is also demanding more fiscal accountability.

One of the biggest factors driving up costs is the increasing number of homes in the woods, making firefighting more complex and expensive, said Watson.

Once a fire gets big, the major factors that determine how expensive it will be are beyond the immediate control of firefighters -- weather, how much fuel is available to burn, and how volatile the fuel is, Watson added.

For the past century, the Forest Service and BLM have tried to put out nearly every fire they could, an effort which scientists now recognize led to too much fuel in forests that evolved with fire.

The Forest Service still catches 98 percent of fires when they are small, and is working to make cost containment a part of firefighting culture, the way safety is now, said Holtrop. However, it is also allowing an increasing number of fires to burn as long as they don't threaten communities or valuable resources.

To reduce fuel buildups, President Bush's Healthy Forests Initiative has proposed easing environmental restrictions to speed thinning projects, but has been opposed by environmentalists, stalling in the Senate.

Recognizing that all the 190 million acres across the nation considered at high risk of fire cannot be treated, the Forest Service will be looking to the LANDFIRE model being developed by the Fire Sciences Laboratory in Missoula, Mont., to target thinning and prescribed burns, said Holtrop.

Matt Rollins, a research fire ecologist on the project, said the portion covering the West should be done in three years, followed two years later by the East, and another year later by Alaska.

The blue-ribbon panel, to be named before the end of the year, will look at reports on five major fires last summer by teams made up of Forest Service and BLM experts, said Watson.

Generally, the teams reported firefighting costs were reasonable in light of fire severity and resources at risk.

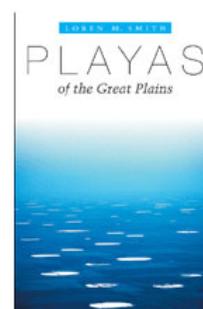
However, the teams consistently found the primary tool for deciding how much to spend fighting a fire -- the Wildland Fire Situation Analysis -- was too complex, and did not help fire managers make decisions on complex fires.

## **New Chronic Wasting Disease Website on Research Matters**

The US Geological Survey's Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit in Wisconsin has developed a new website, in collaboration with the National Wildlife Health Center, Wisconsin DNR, University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, that displays the latest research information on chronic wasting disease (CWD). Located at [http://wildlife.wisc.edu/coop/CWD/CWD\\_Introduction.html](http://wildlife.wisc.edu/coop/CWD/CWD_Introduction.html), this website describes the research projects underway at the research unit and provides a bibliography of the Unit's current publications and presentations.

## **New Book Details Natural History, Ecology of Playa Lakes**

Distinguished playa researcher and former Playa Lakes Joint Venture board member Dr. Loren Smith has authored a new book, Playas of the Great Plains, which synthesizes decades of research on the wetlands. Smith rigorously examines playa functions, origins, values and ecology in an accessible writing style that can be appreciated by scientists as well as the general public. Copies of the book are available through University of Texas Press.



## **Drugs May Harm Frogs and Fish in the Wild**

ATHENS, Ga. - University of Georgia researchers have discovered developmental problems in frogs and fish exposed to minute quantities of common antidepressants that can pass from humans through sewage treatment systems into rivers and streams.



The scientists have been studying the toxicity of a widely used group of antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which are commonly prescribed for depression, anxiety, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, eating disorders and social phobia.

Some of the drugs, including Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil and Celexa, have been found in low concentrations in surface water, particularly wastewater.

"While these compounds are not acutely toxic at concentrations detected in the environment, our longer-term studies indicate delayed development (in fish) and delayed metamorphosis (in frogs)," said Marsha Black, a University of Georgia aquatic toxicologist who led the study.

The researchers found that low concentrations of fluoxetine — Prozac — the most commonly prescribed of the drugs, significantly slowed development in *Gambusia*, or mosquitofish, which are often used to study toxicity on aquatic organisms.

"We found that male sexual development slowed by two to four weeks," said Ted Henry, a researcher on the project.

When the fish were around 80-85 days old, the sexual maturity of those exposed to low levels of fluoxetine was significantly delayed, he said. But by the end of the study, when the fish were 145 days old, the same fish had caught up developmentally with the unexposed fish, Henry said.

"We're scratching our heads right now as to exactly what this means," Black said. "But we know that in water, timing is everything. Reproduction for some species is timed to coincide with algae blooms for example. And possibly if sexual development is delayed, timing of reproduction could be affected and you could see some population impact."

The researchers also found that metamorphosis in frogs exposed to low levels of fluoxetine took longer than usual. For frogs, particularly the land-based frogs of North America, such a delay could be a matter of life and death, because frog eggs are often laid in temporary pools that dry up, Black said.

If the water evaporates before the tadpoles change into frogs — a process called metamorphosis — they die, she said.

Black believes the results may indicate a disruption of thyroid functions and plans to explore that theory in future research. The thyroid gland regulates metabolism.

"We know that the thyroid levels peak with metamorphic climax, when the legs and arms form and the tail resorbs," Black said. "We believe that fluoxetine inhibits the thyroid so we're measuring the thyroid hormone levels next."

In the next phase, they'll also closely examine the reproductive tissue of the fish affected by fluoxetine to determine whether drug exposure affects reproduction and embryo production.

The results of their initial research, funded by a \$523,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), will be presented at the 24th Annual Meeting of the Society of Environmental Toxicity and Chemistry Nov. 9-13 in Austin, Texas.

The drugs in the Georgia study fall into a broad category known as "pharmaceuticals and personal care products" that have become an emerging environmental concern. They include prescription and over-the-counter drugs that are excreted in tiny amounts by humans and pass through treatment systems into streams.

One of the largest concerns so far has been possible hormonal disruption in fish by natural and man-made estrogen and the release of antibiotics that could lead to drug-resistant pathogens.

A recent study by Baylor University toxicologist Bryan Brooks found traces of fluoxetine in the tissue of bluegills in a Texas creek fed by discharges from a wastewater treatment plant.

"Treated municipal drinking water should be fine, but pharmaceuticals may not be filtered out of wastewater," Black said. "We should be putting a high priority on implementing technologies that remove ... pharmaceuticals from municipal wastewater discharges."

## **Alaska Board of Game Approves Aerial Shooting of Wolves**

November 4, 2003 ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) --

**RACHEL D'ORO, Associated Press Writer**

The Alaska Board of Game on Tuesday approved the state's first program in more than 15 years to shoot wolves from aircraft, despite a campaign by opponents decrying the plan as inhumane.

"This is not something new; the board has been working on this for the last several years," said board chairman Mike Fleagle, who lives in McGrath, near one of the areas targeted because of declining moose populations blamed on wolf predation.

"We understand the importance of moose populations, particularly for subsistence reasons," Fleagle said at a news conference to announce details of the aerial control programs around McGrath in the Interior and large portions of the Nelchina basin east of Anchorage.

The action by the board is sure to stir emotions in and outside Alaska. On Monday, about 25 sign-waving wolf advocates protested a block away from the Millennium Alaskan Hotel, where the board was meeting. They were accompanied by four wolf-dog hybrids dressed in mock bulletproof vests.

Some of the advocates returned Tuesday, when the panel took up the issue.

Karen Deatherage, with Defenders of Wildlife, and other opponents said the decision was made based on weak numbers, not sound scientific surveys. Deatherage also said the board's action is a slap to Alaska voters, who twice in recent years have said no to aerial shooting of wolves.

"They've trampled on the voters' wishes and opened the door to the wholesale slaughter of hundreds of wolves," she said. "Personally, it makes me very sad."

Deatherage said her group and other advocates plan a public awareness campaign to urge people to contact Gov. Frank Murkowski and let him know this is an "absolutely unacceptable treatment of Alaska's wildlife."

She said other national groups are considering a tourism boycott, a threat in the early 1990s that helped persuade then-Gov. Walter J. Hickel to call off the last planned lethal wolf-control program.

Some members of the game board said they believe other Alaskans, particularly hunters and rural residents, want lethal wolf control to help boost populations of game animals.

Two rural hunters thanked the board for its decision at the news conference.

"We really depend on moose and caribou ... and in the past year I've seen a great decline in the cow and calf populations," said Ken Johns of Copper Center who supports lethal wolf control done in a "professional and qualified way."

Wolf control has had a spotty history of acceptance since before statehood. Over the years, bounties have been paid and wolves have been poisoned, trapped and shot from airplanes. In some areas, wolf numbers fell so low that moose and caribou flourished and then crashed because of over-browsing.

Support for widespread wolf control began to drop after statehood in 1959. Bounties were canceled and aerial sport hunting was banned in 1972. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game continued its predator-control efforts until 1986. A planned aerial wolf-control plan in the early 1990s was killed off by threats of a tourism boycott.

In ballot measures in 1996 and 2000, Alaska voters essentially banned aircraft-assisted land-and-shoot wolf hunting. However, regulations allowing state biologists to shoot wolves from the air for predator control remain on the books, but Murkowski has refused to let state employees do the work.

The state will use private citizens in their own aircraft to shoot the wolves in some target areas, under a law adopted by the Legislature last spring.

Under the plan, about 40 wolves will be shot from planes in hunting unit 19D East, near McGrath, over a 1,700-square mile area.

In the Nelchina region, known as hunting unit 13, wolves will be shot from the ground after being spotted by planes. Between 100 and 130 wolves are targeted in the 7,800-square-mile region, said Matt Robus, director of Fish and Game's Division of Wildlife Conservation.

The McGrath area effort will begin as soon as there's enough snow cover to see the animals and the Nelchina effort could begin by January, Robus said.

"We want to emphasize that these are predator control programs -- not hunts -- for the purpose of targeting prey until moose rebound to higher numbers," he said.

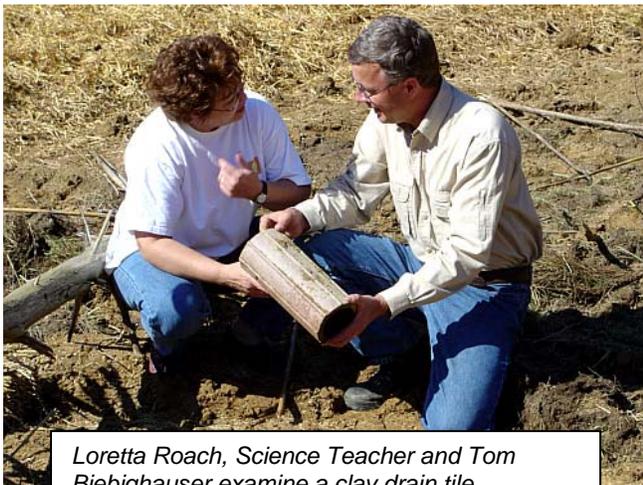
The board had considered taking up a proposal from residents of the Skwentna/Rainy Pass region for some kind of aerial control, but postponed a decision until its spring meeting in Fairbanks.

## Starting a Wetland Restoration Project

You may fortunate enough to locate a remnant patch of prairie from time to time yet one rarely finds a place where a wetland occurred. Evidence of drained wetlands is likely found on every national forest in the Southern Region and Eastern Region, however, these productive ecosystems were degraded so many years ago that signs of their presence are easily overlooked. Most wetlands were drained and filled for agriculture prior to becoming National Forest System land. Many of these fields have now grown up to trees, masking signs of their prior aquatic state.

Tom Biebighauser is helping Forest Service personnel learn how to identify drained wetlands on National Forest System land. Biebighauser, Wildlife Biologist on the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky, has restored and created over 700 wetlands since 1989. Tom accompanies biologists, hydrologist and soil scientists into the field where they identify wetland restoration opportunities. Lately he has been leading one- to two-day workshops where participants learn more about wetlands and how to restore them. Workshops were conducted on the Talladega National Forest, Daniel Boone National Forest, Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge and for the Upper Susquehanna River Coalition in New York where participants gained hands-on experience by actually building a wetland.

Contact Tom at [tombiebighauser@fs.fed.us](mailto:tombiebighauser@fs.fed.us) if you would like to learn more about restoring wetlands. He's available to visit your national forest and even to lead a wetland restoration workshop on your ranger district if you're interested.



*Loretta Roach, Science Teacher and Tom Biebighauser examine a clay drain tile uncovered during a wetland restoration workshop at Dewitt School in Knox County, KY. They are kneeling in the newly restored wetland.*



*One year old restored ephemeral wetland in Menifee County, KY.*



*Ephemeral wetland being filled with a tractor in Morgan County, KY*

## **Osborne, Pomeroy Introduce “Open Fields” Legislation Legislation Offers Incentives to Farmers, Ranchers to Open Private Lands for Outdoor Activities**

**For Immediate Release:** Friday, November 7, 2003

**Contact:** Erin Hegge, (202) 225-6435

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressmen Tom Osborne and Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) introduced the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program of 2003 to provide incentives to landowners who voluntarily agree to open their land for hunting and other wildlife-related activities.

“Over the past several decades, the number of pheasant hunters has significantly decreased. This reduction in numbers can partially be contributed to a decline in Nebraska’s pheasant population, but is in large part due to the decrease in hunter access to private lands. With \$42 million spent on pheasant and other hunting activities each year in Nebraska, the potential is far greater for the local and state economy. This legislation will be an added source of income for our farmers and ranchers and area businesses.” Osborne stated.

“This legislation is a three for one: increases outdoor opportunities for hunters, will attract more visitors to our rural communities in North Dakota, and provides our family farmers with extra income,” Pomeroy stated. “The measure will make outdoor activities more accessible and give our rural economy a boost.”

The legislation provides \$50 million annually for state programs from the United States Department of Agriculture. Each state would design and implement its own access program to fit the needs of their state’s sportsmen and landowners. “Nebraska currently has programs in place to provide incentives to allow more access to private land and this legislation works to strengthen such programs that often fall victim to state budgetary constraints.” Osborne stated.

Senators Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Pat Roberts (R-KS) have introduced similar legislation in the Senate.

### **New Employee Orientation**

There is a new “live” New Employee Orientation training being held in Salt Lake City, Utah (February 2004). Contact your HR Training Coordinator for details. This training was previously held in the east. If you can’t make it to Salt Lake City visit the online "New Employee

Orientation." It has been around for a number of years but now widely known. The online website is an amazing collection of information. Visit the site at:  
[http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/hrm/training/neo/neo\\_home.html](http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/hrm/training/neo/neo_home.html)

## 2004 National Wetlands Awards Request for Nominations

The National Wetlands Awards are presented annually to individuals who demonstrated outstanding innovation and dedication to our Nation's wetlands. Nominations are currently being solicited in each of six categories: Education and Outreach; Science Research; Conservation and Restoration; Landowner Stewardship; State, Tribal, and Local Program Development; and Wetland Community Leader. This is an excellent opportunity for you to recognize individuals who have made significant wetlands contributions. A Selection Committee composed of wetland experts drawn from business, conservation organizations, and state and federal government will review all nominations and select the winners. To download the 2004 nomination form, please visit <http://www.eli.org/nwa/nwaprogram.htm>. **The deadline for submitting nominations is December 15, 2003.** The Forest Service sponsors this award along with the Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Environmental Law Institute. The award is open to individuals only, not organizations or corporations. While Federal employees are not eligible, State and local government employees are. If you have any questions about the awards program, please contact Karen Solari at [ksolari@fs.fed.us](mailto:ksolari@fs.fed.us).

## Request for Nominations—2003 Taking Wing Awards

It is time for nominations for the annual Taking Wing Program Awards. **Nominations are due by January 5, 2004.** The 2003 awards will be presented at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, March 16-20, 2004, in Spokane, Washington. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase Forest Service migratory bird conservation, recognize Forest Service field line officers and staff responsible for outstanding work, and demonstrate our appreciation to partners.

The Taking Wing Awards recognize outstanding projects and programs that further conservation of migratory birds and their wetland and water-related habitats. Please remember that the Taking Wing Program was expanded in 2002 to include all natural resource staff areas of the Forest Service, including State and Private Forestry, National Forest System, Research and Development, and International Programs. All Deputy Program and Staff areas are encouraged to nominate their programs and partnerships that contribute to migratory bird conservation.

The Awards may be given in six categories: 1) Habitat; 2) Capacity-Building Partnerships; 3) Public Awareness; 4) Leadership; 5) Community Involvement; and 6) Investigations. An award may or may not be given in each category each year. For additional information and nomination forms, please contact Jack Capp, Acting Taking Wing Coordinator, International Programs, at 202-273-4725 or [jcapp@fs.fed.us](mailto:jcapp@fs.fed.us).

## How Do You Do Bats?

The Inventory and Monitoring Subcommittee of the Western Bat Working Group is attempting to develop a standardized protocol for surveying bats in the western states and provinces.

Since bats occur across North America, a standardized protocol may be possible to develop for the entire continent based on the results of a questionnaire of the circumstances under which people currently survey bats.

Ted Weller, a research wildlife biologist specializing in bats who is based at the Pacific Southwest Research Station's Redwood Sciences Lab, is requesting people to fill out a short and simple questionnaire on how they survey bats.

The results of the 3-minute questionnaire will help determine the most practical, yet scientifically valid, approach to surveying bats. Weller said the Inventory and Monitoring Subcommittee developed the questionnaire to establish a quantitative measure of the relative importance of common scales and goals in bat surveys.

The subcommittee plans to tailor the protocol to the needs of the users based on the results of the survey questionnaire.

**Please complete the questionnaire by January 30, 2004.** Weller requests respondents to send completed electronic questionnaires in WORD or WORDPERFECT to him at [tweller@fs.fed.us](mailto:tweller@fs.fed.us). Surveys can be faxed (707-825-2901) or hardcopy mailed to Ted Weller, USDA Forest Service Redwood Sciences Laboratory, 1700 Bayview Drive, Arcata, CA 95521. *(Submitted by Sandra Jacobson, USFS, Boundary Spanner for the Redwood Sciences Lab)*



## **Wildlife Habitat & Plant Management Workshop**

**Contact:** Shelly Witt, 435-753-4838 or [switt@cc.usu.edu](mailto:switt@cc.usu.edu) or [switt01@fs.fed.us](mailto:switt01@fs.fed.us)

**Did you hear?** The dates are moved from fall to spring for the *Wildlife Habitat & Plant Management* workshop – hosted this year at Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff AZ...near the Grand Canyon.). It is now **March 23-April 1, 2004!** It has received great reviews. Dr. Carol Chambers & Cadre ensure everyone has fun & learns! Field trips actually relate to the topics

– a weekend trip to the Grand Canyon (optional) – interactive learning (not talking heads). For details (agenda, travel info, etc) visit the workshop website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/education/workshops/WHPM/index.html>

Tuition: \$2,200 (includes lodging, meals, materials, travel to Grand Canyon, etc.) It sounds expensive, but break down the numbers and it is a screaming deal.

Sign up now! Bring a colleague from your home unit or another agency.

## **Vacancies**

**Federal job announcements can be found at:**

[http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency\\_search.asp](http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp)

## **Hotlinks!**

- Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/>
- 2003 News Releases: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2003/releases.shtml>
- FS Today Newsletter: [http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs\\_today/](http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs_today/)
- National Fire Plan: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/nfp/>
- Roadless Area Conservation: <http://roadless.fs.fed.us/>
- Large-Scale Watershed Restoration Projects: <http://www.fs.fed.us/largewatershedprojects/>
- Land and Resource Management Plans: <http://www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/nfmalrmp.html>

- Watershed and Air Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/>
- Lands and Realty Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/>
- Road Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>
- Recreation, Wilderness and Heritage Resources: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/>
- Forest Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/fm/>
- International Programs: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/>
- Research: <http://www.fe.fed.us/research/scientific.html>
- Healthy Forests Initiative: <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/HFI.shtml>
- Partners in Planning: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/planning/guide/index.html>
- Landowner Assistance Programs **(NEW)**:  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/index.shtml>

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Once you select a link, please be sure to hit the “Refresh” button to ensure that you are loading the most current version of the web page!

**On The Wild Side** is a monthly update provided by the National Forest System Wildlife Program of the USDA Forest Service. Contributions are welcome and should be submitted to Debbie Pressman at [dpressman@fs.fed.us](mailto:dpressman@fs.fed.us) or Jina Mariani [jmariani@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmariani@fs.fed.us) no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. We reserve the right to edit contributions for clarity and brevity.

Positions listed are for outreach purposes only and are not full announcements. Interested individuals should contact the forests referenced or consult the USAJOBS website.

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