



In The News

Oregon Creates New State Forest

It's been more than 60 years since Oregon created a new state forest -- the Sun Pass State Forest in Klamath County in 1948.

This year, the state purchased 43,000 acres of young pine trees from Fidelity National Timber Resources Inc., of Whitefish, Mont., for \$15 million. The land is located on U.S. Highway 97, approximately 45 miles south of Bend, Ore.

The state intends to keep the land in timber production rather than see it developed. It will be some time before harvesting, as the trees need time to mature.

Extension of Roadless Moratorium

In late May, the Obama administration extended the roadless areas moratorium for another year.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will continue to make decisions on projects in roadless areas while waiting for federal courts to resolve the legal issues.

In a nutshell, the issues to be resolved concern whether there should be continued protection for roadless areas or more thinning projects to reduce wildfire danger and insect infestations.

New Sawmill Opens in Emmett

On May 21, the Gem County Commissioners, Gem County Chamber of Commerce, and Emerald Forest Products announced the opening of a new sawmill in Montana.

The mill is owned in partnership with Dick Vinson from Thompson Falls, Dennis Drake, of Horseshoe Bend, and the Pruyn Family of Missoula, Mont., and Houston, Texas.

"Gem County didn't give up on us, and we [Emerald Forest Products] are not going to give up on them," said Vinson. Along with the \$4 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) grant, Vinson has spent over \$6 million on equipment and labor to finish the mill, which employs 47 workers.

Mills Hopeful, but Realistic

Managers of North Olympic Peninsula mills say it's hard to predict a full industry recovery.

"We're hoping for the best, but we are also realistic," said Jim Woodward, manager of Interfor Pacific's planer mill in Forks.

U.S. lumber demand is expected to increase in 2010 by 6.1 percent to 32.9 billion board feet after reaching "modern lows" of about 31 billion board feet last year, according to the Western Wood Products Association. WWPA also anticipates a demand of 36.1 billion board feet the following year as new home construction recovers.



Grant for Job training

The U.S. Department of Labor issued a \$1.8 million grant for job training and other assistance to about 450 workers laid off by wood products companies in western Montana.

The Department of Labor and Industry will administer the program to help workers laid off by Plum Creek Timber Co., between January 8 and June 25, 2009, and by Smurfit-Stone Container Corp., in early 2010.

The Montana communities that will benefit from the funds include: Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, Lake, Mineral, Missoula, and Ravalli counties.

Plum Creek stock buyback

The Plum Creek Timber Company Inc. completed a repurchase of \$50 million of its stock, completing its previously announced \$200 million open-market share repurchase program.

The company expects to seek authorization of a new open-market share repurchase program at its next scheduled Board of Directors meeting. During the second quarter, the company repurchased approximately 1.37 million shares at an average price of \$36.37 per share. As of June 1, 2010 Plum Creek had approximately 161.6 million shares outstanding.

“Disciplined capital allocation is at the heart of Plum Creek’s long-term strategy for shareholder value creation. We are convinced that the most compelling timber investment available in today’s market is our own stock,” said Rick Holley, president and chief executive officer.

Canopy Connections Program

Oregon students will take their learning and outdoor experiences to new heights on the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, thanks to an award from the USDA Forest Service. The competitive award, formally announced by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, is one of only 21 issued to conservation education programs across the country as part of the “More Kids in the Woods” challenge, which promotes active lifestyles and connects children to nature by funding conservation education activities.

“We must promote healthy, active lifestyles and encourage our kids to get off the couch and go outside,” Vilsack said, in his announcement of the recipients. ““More Kids in the Woods’ helps kids make the connection between healthy forests, healthy communities, and their own healthy lifestyles.”

The H.J. Andrews-based program, known as “Canopy Connections,” annually hosts about 100 students from primarily underserved middle schools in the Eugene-Springfield communities of Oregon. One of more than 130 programs considered as part of the competitive challenge, it was selected for its ability to provide students with opportunities for quiet observation time, creative writing, and art and science inquiries that are centered on personal, guided ascents 70 feet into the forest’s old-growth Douglas-fir canopy.