



Funds for some Washington landowners

The SFLO (Small Forest Landowner Office) reported that in Eastern Washington, cost-share funds continue to be available from the U.S. Forest Service to reimburse landowners for up to 50 percent of the cost of hiring a consulting forester to prepare a Forest Stewardship Plan and for thinning, pruning, and slash disposal work to reduce wildfire and bark beetle

For details and the application form, go to dnr.wa.gov and type "Eastern Washington Cost-Share" in the search box or call (888) 783-9548.

Forest Owners Field Days

SFLO says that Forest Owners Field Days — popular regional educational events in Washington — are tentatively planned for June 18 in Jefferson County and August 10 in Klickitat County. Since 1996, nearly 9,000 landowners have attended these events at venues all across the state. For further questions, applications, or for additional information, contact Steve Gibbs at (360) 902-1706.

The Highway Bill: Timetable and Priorities

AgHaul, the Agriculture and Forestry Transportation Reform Coalition reported that in early March, Congress passed a seven-month extension of the existing transportation funding structure just before the last one expired, keeping the current funding formula in place through the fiscal year that ends this September 30. At the same time, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Florida) reiterated the need for a new long-term highway bill that addresses new realities, rather than merely continuing to fund projects along the lines established in the middle of the past decade.

The Chairman insisted that only a six-year bill would be acceptable and made note of the parameters laid down by the House's Republican leadership: that there would be no increase in the fuel tax and there would be no infusions from general funds to make up for any misalignment between ambitious projects and actual revenue streams — "working within the trust fund and not going outside," as he put it. The Chairman outlined a fast-paced timetable for the much delayed Reauthorization process, indicating that it would start "at the end of March," move through the Committee during spring, and bring a bill to the floor by August, in time for implementation during the budget year that begins October 1.

Washington should take lessons from Oregon

Rex Storm, Forest Policy manager with the Associated Oregon Loggers, reported that "declining compliance prompted the Washington Dept. of Natural Resources to explore tougher and more costly regulations on forest operations in that state." "A review of 427 operations from 2006-08 found 21 percent of the road-related activities and 22 percent of streamside and wetland projects in non-compliance," he said. "Contrasted with Oregon, the last full compliance audit of Oregon's Forest Practices Act — and annual operations compliance since then — has shown an average non-compliance rate of only two to three percent."

California, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington are leaders in promoting cleaner renewable wood heat. America's oldest heating source — firewood — is experiencing a comeback with wood heat soaring 50 to 80 percent in the last decade in some states, but only a handful of states are prepared to leverage America's newfound enthusiasm for wood heat.

The "Residential Wood Heat Report Card," a report released in February by the Alliance for Green Heat, finds that most states do little to promote and manage what is often the second or third most popular heating fuel in hundreds of rural



counties around the U.S. “Wood heat is overwhelmingly America’s most common form of residential renewable energy, but states are just beginning to tap into its potential to drastically lower fossil fuel use while managing emissions,” said John Ackerly, president of the Alliance for Green Heat.

The Alliance graded each state on six categories, including policies that help reduce wood smoke, promote the cleanest appliances, restrict the most polluting ones, and provide educational information on the best wood heat practices. The states that got the top grades, such as California, Colorado, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Washington, are states that are often at the forefront of developing renewable energy, but are not necessarily the states with the highest per capita wood heat use.

The Report Card sheds new light on a very old form of renewable energy that is still used by millions of Americans. The EPA estimates there are about 12 million wood stoves compared to only 300,000 solar photovoltaic systems in homes in the U.S. “This country can achieve renewable energy and energy independence goals significantly faster and cheaper by deploying modern thermal biomass systems,” said Mr. Ackerly.