



# Montana Tree Farm News

## Annual Tree Farm Conference and Field Day Saturday, October 1, Greenough, Montana

This year, Montana Tree Farmers will hold our Annual Meeting and forestry tour Saturday, October 1st, near Greenough, Montana, approximately 30 miles northeast of Missoula on Highway 200. We will gather at Lubrecht Experimental Forest headquarters—marked by signs on the right side of Highway 200 when traveling east from Missoula. The day's activities begin at the Castles Forestry Center with an overview of the history of Lubrecht Forest and the many research projects that are being conducted here. We will also get an update on the new national Tree Farm standards and how they will apply to Montana Tree Farmers.

Our field tour will visit the E Bar L Ranch, owned by the Potter Family, located northeast of Lubrecht Experimental Forest. The Potters were our 1993 Tree Farmers of the Year. The E Bar L has been in the Potter family for three generations. Today, Bill and Betty Potter run a guest ranch and harvest timber on 2,000 acres along the Blackfoot River. Vacationers come to the E Bar L Ranch as much for the grandeur of the big open-growing ponderosa pine trees as for the gourmet meals, horseback rides, and trout fishing.

Bill Potter, now in his 80's performs much of the logging himself with a farm tractor and logging equipment that he designed and built. This equipment will be of interest to small and large landowners alike. The Potters have a detailed forest management plan that helps ensure a sustained yield of timber. They are working toward converting many of the even-aged ponderosa pine stands into multiple-aged stands. University of Montana Silviculture Professor Dr. Carl Fiedler has established and monitored permanent growth plots on the E Bar L Ranch to assess forest growth in multiple-aged forest management systems. Carl will give a presentation about what has been learned from these growth plots.

The Potters have developed an innovative conservation easement with the Nature Conservancy that employs  
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## Annual Meeting Agenda:

- 9:00 - 9:15 A.M. - Meet at Lubrecht Experimental Forest, Castles Forestry Center for registration. ( coffee and donuts)
- 9:15 - 10:15 A.M. - History of Lubrecht and presentation on Forest Management Plans.
- 10:30 - Busses depart for Potter Tree Farm.
- 10:45 - 1:00 Tour Potter Tree Farm.
- 1:15 - 3:15 Dinner and Awards Banquet at Lubrecht.
- 3:15 - Declare winners of silent auction and depart for home.

## Silent Auction

Here we are again, getting excited about another Tree Farm Annual Meeting and another great Silent Auction! Thanks to your generous support, last year's auction broke the record book! I would like to sincerely thank all who donated auction items and the buyers who took the treasures home!

We expect to have some outstanding auction items this year, including a custom Kolb chainsaw-carved bear or possibly a Hicswa lodgepole bench! The monies generated from this auction help defray some of the costs of our annual meeting, fund Tree Farm activities throughout the year, and help recognize folks who contributed to the Montana Tree Farm program's success.

We are always looking for new auction items. If you have something that you would like to donate, please contact me or any of the Tree Farm board members, or if you forget, just bring it along! I hope to see you at Lubrecht and lets not let this auction be so SILENT! Spending your money is supposed to be FUN!

Paul R. McKenzie  
Tree Farm Silent Auction Coordinator  
(406) 892-7005 or pmckenzie@stoltzelumber.com



## Comments from the Chair

Gary Johnson

Please set aside October 1st as the day to meet with fellow Tree Farmers and supporters throughout Montana. We will meet at Lubrecht Experimental Forest and the Potter Tree Farm for a day of discussing key issues, observing forest practices, and visiting with friends. Much has happen since we met last October.

Early this year, the American Tree Farm System's (ATFS) National Operating Committee adopted a new five-year strategic plan called Vision 2010. Although there are many sections to the plan, it features outreach efforts to forest owners who do not manage their land, strengthening Tree Farmer influence on Capitol Hill, giving greater recognition to outstanding Tree Farmers and volunteers, and green certification.

In June, I had the opportunity to represent the Montana Tree Farm System at a meeting in Denver on "*Non-Federal Forestlands - Partnerships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*". The National Association of State Foresters in partnership with the USDA Forest Service hosted three meetings across the country to bring together partners with an interest in protecting and enhancing private, tribal and local government forestlands. Attendees included family forest landowners, forest industry, environmental organizations, local governments, tribal representatives and the academic community. The goal of the sponsors was to use these meetings to identify ways to enhance the broad array of benefits produced from non-federal rural and urban forestlands through partnerships. Although the results of the three meetings have not been finalized, I feel confident that there will be opportunities to work together with other organizations to broaden the public's understanding of the value of family forestlands.

Today's world is calling for greater assurances that products from certified family forests are coming from some of the best managed forests in the world. Nationally, the ATFS staff is seeking international recognition for ATFS certification. Locally, Montana Tree Farm certifiers are working hard to eliminate the re-certification backlog. We have some Tree Farms that have not been inspected for several years. TREE FARMERS, please check your last re-certification report. If the date is 1999 or earlier or if a Tree Farm certifier has not contacted you since 1999, please contact the Certification Coordinator for you area. We need to get the backlog behind us.

Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting on October 1st.

## Stewardship Update

Cindy Bertek, Stewardship Coordinator

I recently was appointed Coordinator of the Forest Stewardship Program, which is offered by MSU Extension forestry and housed at the University of Montana. I am excited about having the opportunity to provide information and education for forest landowners. In addition to my previous experience as a state forester and an industrial forester in western Montana, I also was also a teacher in public schools.

The past few years Extension Forestry has offered a riparian and a roads workshop along with the Stewardship Workshops. These were well attended and some Stewardship grads have requested they be continued. In order to provide for the needs of private non-industrial private forest land owners, we are working on adding these to our regular annual calendar. The Stewardship program is landowner driven and we welcome comments and ideas to help serve landowners needs in our changing environment. Applications are being accepted now for the Riparian Workshop in Helena, August 15-16 and 23 and the Forest Stewardship Workshops at Yellow Bay, August 18-19 and 26, and in Hamilton September 15-16 and 23.

The Stewardship Workshops provide information and training to landowners to help them learn about their forests. During the workshops, individuals develop objectives and learn to do an inventory of their resources. They also learn about wildlife needs, silviculture, watersheds, and soils. With this information they can decide what management their forests need to achieve their objectives. The final product is a management plan that each landowner develops. Stewardship graduates are more confident and comfortable with their role in managing forest land as a result their newly gained knowledge, and many seek to learn more.

Please feel free to drop by my office at 209 in the Forestry Building on the U of M campus or to contact me by phone [243-4706] or e-mail [[cindy.bertek@cfc.umt.edu](mailto:cindy.bertek@cfc.umt.edu)].





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the Lubrecht Experimental Forest to ensure that sustainable management continues in future generations.

After our tour of the E Bar L, we will return to Lubrecht Experimental Forest for a catered barbeque dinner and awards ceremony. Stephanie Brown, the Tree Farm system's National Director of Field Operations will give us an update of the National Convention and issues important to Tree Farmers.

Our awards include Tree Farmer of the Year, TF Inspector of the Year, TF Logger of the Year, and Environmental Educator of the Year. The Silent Auction, which is the main fundraiser for the event will have many enticing items—see related story. Door prizes and mementos will be showered on those who attend.



## Registration Form: Tree Farm Tour and Luncheon

Saturday, October 1, 2005

Preregistration is necessary to get an accurate meal count. *Registration must be mailed by Sept. 22.* Registration fee is \$20 per person. Attendance limited to 100.

Name ( s ) : \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:\*\* \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Persons Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Special diet needs and no. of people: \_\_\_\_\_

( regular meal is barbeque)

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*If the tour is filled, late applicants will be notified ASAP.

Please send this form and your check to:

Montana Tree Farm Program  
PO Box 17276  
Missoula, MT 59808



## EQIP Aids Private Forestlands

## Forest Insects and Diseases

Amy Kearney

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is another tool available to non-industrial private forestland owners to address forestry resource concerns. EQIP is administered by the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Each county has an office and they are generally located at the USDA Service Centers.

The purpose of EQIP is to address agricultural resource concern which includes forest resources. People can sign up continuously (any time) and there are several general funding periods for projects. There was a special sign up just for forest landowners in April 2005. Eighty-five people in Montana signed up requesting about \$1 million in project proposals. Forty-nine requests were funded totaling about \$500,000. Projects funded were mainly tree planting and pre-commercial thinning.

Montana Tree Farmers are potential users of this program. It is a cost-share program where the government generally pays 75% of the cost and the producer pays 25% of the cost of the project. The next time a forest landowner is planning a tree planting or pre-commercial thinning project consider signing up for some technical and financial assistance. Stop by your local NRCS office. Discuss your project with a NRCS representative and sign up for EQIP funding and technical assistance.

Feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Robert Logar  
State Staff Forester  
NRCS - Bozeman, MT  
(406) 587 - 6836

Have you noticed brown lodgepole pine sweeping the landscape near Butte, or pockets of dead and dying Douglas-fir trees on hillsides along I-90? Maybe you've noticed trees fading on your own property and have wondered what particular agents are at work. As a private landowner in Montana, you have numerous resources available to help you understand and manage the insects and diseases affecting your forests.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) houses the Forest Pest Management Program which directly supports monitoring and management of these issues on state and private lands. I was recently hired as the new program manager and entomologist. I have joined forces with a contract pathologist who has been assisting the State of Montana for several years. Together, we can help diagnose forest pests by visiting your property or by identifying samples submitted to our laboratory.

A wide variety of informational materials are also at your disposal such as brochures, field guides, and technical papers. Workshops and presentations are offered throughout the year and can be tailored to suit the needs of specific audiences as requested. The program is currently expanding and I welcome ideas on how my program might help provide needed information. I look forward to meeting many Tree Farmers at the annual meeting in October. Until then, I can be contacted through email at [akearney@mt.gov](mailto:akearney@mt.gov).

### Delivered Log Prices in Montana

The chart below shows the average *delivered to the mill* sawlog and veneer log prices in Montana during the first quarter of 2005. The prices are determined from surveys conducted by the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research. Landowners can approximate stumpage prices by subtracting logging and log hauling costs from the delivered log price.

Quarter 1, 2005				
Delivered log prices per thousand board feet, Scribner Scale				
		Sawlogs		Veneer logs
		Eastern Montana	Western Montana	Statewide
Ponderosa Pine	Yellow	463	494	xx
	Bull	358	391	xx
Lodgepole Pine		435	438	xx
Douglas-fir		429	453	512
Western Larch	xx	453	512	
Engelmann Spruce		435	439	xx
Subalpine fir		375	384	xx
Grand fir	xx	xx	382	xx
Western Red Cedar	xx	xx	525	xx
Hemlock	xx	xx	392	xx
White Pine	xx	xx	468	xx
Other species	xx	xx	xx	408

Typical logging costs (for three logging systems) and log hauling costs are

Helicopter logging	\$300 to \$350 per MBF
Cableline logging	\$170 to \$220 per MBF
Ground/Tractor logging	\$100 to \$200 per MBF
Log Hauling	\$50 to \$100 per MBF

#### Board foot to ton conversions (logs)

1,000 BF Douglas fir	= 6.2 to 8.5 tons
1,000 BF Ponderosa pine	= 7.1 to 9.7 tons
1,000 BF Western Larch	= 7.6 to 10.4 tons
1,000 BF Western Hemlock	= 6.1 to 8.8 tons
1,000 BF White Pine	= 5.2 to 7.5 tons
1,000 BF Lodgepole pine	= 5.9 to 8.5 tons
1,000 BF Englemann spruce	= 5.8 to 8.4 tons
1,000 BF Grand fir	= 6.9 to 9.9 tons
1,000 BF Subalpine fir	= 6.7 to 9.7 tons
1,000 BF Western red cedar	= 4.0 to 5.9 tons

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## Tree Farm Awards \$500 Scholarship

## Seedlings from the Montana State Nursery

John Justin, Nursery Manager

The Montana Tree Farm Program is proud to announce that Danielle Stokes is the Montana Tree Farm Scholarship winner for 2005. Danielle is a high school graduate from Conrad High School and is a second year Forestry Major at the University of Montana. She is active in the Forestry Club and serves as a recruitment officer for the club. She is also active in the Forestry Club's "Woodsmen Team" where she competes in the double buck, choker race, and caber toss. Most notably she is a three-time champ in the axe throwing competition.

This summer she is working for the USDA Forest Service in Choteau, Montana, as a Recreation Guard and also as a call-when-needed firefighter. She loves the outdoors and is exploring in all the avenues that the profession of forestry has to offer.

The Montana Tree Farm Program is glad to offer its assistance to Danielle's college education. Our scholarship winners are decided by commitment to the profession of natural resource management; participation in extra-curricular activities, grade-point average, and likelihood of supporting the Tree Farm Program in the future. Good luck with your education Danielle, the Montana Tree Farm Program is glad to help with your education!

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### Primary Forest Products Measurement Units

When primary forest products like logs and pulpwood are bought and sold in Montana, either a volume or weight measurement is used to determine the amount of material exchanged.

The following paragraphs explain the fundamentals of each system. The chart on the right below shows the Scribner decimal C log rule and the chart on the right shows conversions between volume and weight measurements.

**Volume** - buyer and seller agree on a dollar amount per unit of volume exchanged ( usually \$ per 1,000 board feet, where 1 board foot = 1"x12"x12" ) .

The board foot volume of a log is determined by measuring log length and log diameter at the small-end of the log. These measurements are used to calculate the log's board foot volume ( see table below ) . Volume deductions may be taken to account for log defects.

**Weight** - buyer and seller agree on a dollar amount per unit of weight exchanged ( usually \$ per ton, where 1 ton = 2,000 pounds ) . Product weight is determined by measuring the weight difference between a loaded and unloaded log truck.

Wood weight varies by species, log size, season, geographic area, and the time between harvest and weighing. Therefore, it is a good idea to ask the buyer to weight scale and volume scale the same truck load of logs so that a weight to board foot conversion can be developed for that particular timber sale.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation operates a seedling nursery in Missoula, Montana. The Nursery's mission is to produce the highest quality, locally adapted, source-identified seedlings for use in conservation practices in the state. Seedlings are available for purchase by any landowner or organization performing an accepted conservation practice. The primary uses for the seedlings are reforestation after fire or timber management, wildlife habitat improvement, windbreaks and shelterbelts, riparian restoration, living snowfences, and many others.

The sole focus of the State Nursery is production of Montana adapted seedlings. Nursery crews collect or purchase seed from hundreds of locations in the state to insure seedlings available for most planting sites in Montana. The nursery currently produces over 65 different tree and shrub species from over 120 different seed sources. Both bareroot and containerized seedlings are grown to insure the proper planting stock is available to landowners. Popular species include ponderosa pine, western larch, aspen, Rocky Mountain juniper, native willows and cottonwoods, native shrub willows, chokecherry, serviceberry, and numerous native shrub species. The nursery can also grow seedlings under a production contract using seed collected from a specific location.

The State Nursery is funded solely through the sale of seedlings. Seedling prices range from \$0.30 to \$1.75 each with significant discounts available for large purchases. Many species sell out quickly so ordering far in advance is advised. Seedlings can be ordered through local Conservation District or Extension Agent offices or by contacting the Nursery directly. To obtain further information and a complete list of plant materials available contact the Nursery at 406-542-4244 or visit our web site at [www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/nursery).

**Scribner Decimal C Log Rule (board feet in tens)**

Log Diameter (inches)	Log Length (feet)															
	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40			
4	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3			
6	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	6	6	6			
8	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	8	9			
10	6	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	11	13	14	14	15			
12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15	17	18	19	20			
14	11	13	14	16	17	19	20	21	23	24	26	27	29			
16	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40			
18	21	24	27	29	32	35	37	40	43	45	48	51	53			
20	28	31	35	38	42	45	49	52	56	59	63	66	70			
22	33	38	42	46	50	54	58	63	67	71	75	79	84			
24	40	45	50	55	61	66	71	76	81	86	91	95	101			



## Tree Farmer Reports From Iraq

Mark Boardman, CPT, Commander, Infantry  
Montana Army National Guard

*[Editor's Note: Mark was Chair of the MT Tree Farm Program until his deployment. Below are excerpts from his message dated June 13, 2005]*

Hello to all the friends and family members of Troop E.

We made a move last month from our plush "castle-like" homes in the city of Kirkuk, to tents! Fortunately we're in the process of getting moved again, over to some old Iraqi Army barracks. The 1SG has been busy rounding up air conditioners, electricians, plumbers, or whoever is involved with renovating our these barracks.

It's hard to understand why we were moved from a great home in the city to tents back on the main base. I can't give you all the details, but as you know the long term plan is to transition control of security and other things over to Iraqis. Kirkuk is an area where the Government and private sector is probably more advanced and organized than in most of the country, so moving out of the Patrol base in the heart of the city is one more step to turning Iraq over to Iraqis.

We're past the half way point and many troops have been back home on leave and many are headed back home soon. I know many of the Troops are ready to be back home and put this behind them. I am as well. However, we must finish what we've started and treat each day as alert as we can. Our job here is warranted and many times mundane, but it is necessary and important in re-building Iraq. The people here continue to appreciate our help in assisting them in establishing a free and democratic Iraq. Locally elected officials will govern by the rule of law, thereby establishing a functioning government in the process. Currently, Iraqis are working on a new constitution that is due no later than 15 August. All this forward movement has allowed the Iraqis to WIN and the terrorists to LOSE. The terrorists bring nothing but death and destruction, and we're doing our part in putting a stop to it.

The essential services for the Iraqis have continued to improve around our area of operations. Recently the people of Bajawan, local Iraqi contractors and department of health officials held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the Bajawan Primary Health Care Center. This clinic will provide

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for thousands of villagers outside of Kirkuk. Khader Sliaman Matar, a retired Iraqi school administrator from Bajawan, donated the land where the clinic is located. In addition to the Clinic, basic public services like water, sanitation, electricity, garbage and medical care have improved for citizens of the greater Kirkuk region.

Partly due to the security that our soldiers provide, the economy has also improved. Financial market structures and regulatory conditions that enable economic growth and development of a dynamic private sector are in place and growing stronger each day. When the citizens feel safe and secure then they will take risks and operate businesses and improve their standard of living. Recently, the Women in Business hosted a conference to discuss the opportunities. The Kirkuk Business Center is growing and is really working hard for citizens to be able to build businesses and assist local contractors in learning the process of being a business owner.

All of this success couldn't be possible without your loved one to assist the citizens of Iraq. It's sometimes hard for us to see this in the small picture. However, in the big picture, it is working, and the people won't give up as long as we're here. Freedom, democracy, security and prosperity go hand-in-hand, without us they don't have any.



# Report Card on the Condition of Montana's Forests

Robert A. Harrington, State Forester, MT DNRC

*[Editor's Note: This "report card" was issued in Dec. 2004. A more-detailed report is available at [www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry](http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry)]*

## **TITLE I - HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION / FOREST HEALTH IMPROVEMENT**

### **Collaboration on Forest Management Projects - B**

- It is premature to assess the full impact of the HFRA at streamlining planning and approval of fuel reduction/forest health improvement projects.
- Collaboration with the public and among traditional adversaries is improving, but much remains to be done to facilitate stakeholder involvement without stalling project proposals.

### **Community Wildfire Planning - B+**

- The development of Predisaster Mitigation Plans and Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Montana is proceeding well, yet more coordination and oversight is needed to ensure plans meet criteria established in the HFRA.
- Analysis is needed to determine the level of adoption and enforcement of "Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland Residential Interface Development" in Montana.
- Insurance companies should continue to be engaged to develop market-based incentives for proper development design in the WUI and fuel reduction around existing structures in WUI.

### **Forest Management, Fuel Treatment, and Forest Health Improvement - B-**

- Approximately 209,000 forested acres were treated in Montana in 2004, meaning it would take about 86 years to treat the 18 million acres of Montana forests at risk from damaging wildfire, insects, or disease.
- Federal agencies have responded well to meeting initial targets for fuel reduction on federal lands in Montana, though 54% of accomplishments on USFS lands were through prescribed fire alone;
- Since 2001, fuels around over 2000 homes in the WUI have been treated with federal cost share funds provided as a part of the National Fire Plan.
- Continued congressional funding of the National Fire Plan is critical to implementation of the Western Governors' 10-year strategy, fuel reduction around homes in the WUI, and on federal lands as well.

### **Appeals and Litigation of Forest Management Proposals - C-**

- It is premature to determine whether efficiencies provided in the HFRA and HFI will facilitate more collaboration and fewer administrative or legal challenges to forest management projects.
- Appeals and litigation of "traditional" forest management proposals in Montana continue to consume agency staff and resources better spent on project implementation.



## Report Card on the Condition of Montana's Forests

### TITLE II – BIOMASS

#### **Utilization of Biomass and Small Diameter Trees - C**

- Industry utilization of mill waste such as bark, wood chips, and sawdust is much improved over the past, but we are far from utilizing even a small fraction of the woody biomass and small diameter material that is contributing to forest health problems and wildfire risk;
- Adequate funding of research and demonstration of biomass technologies and a stable supply of raw material are key variables in developing markets for and utilization of woody biomass in Montana.

### TITLE III - WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

#### **Water Quality Protection and Stream Restoration - B+**

- The combination of voluntary forestry Best Management Practices and Streamside Management requirements has proven quite effective at improving and maintaining water quality on forest management projects. BMP audit results indicate that high-risk BMPs should be the focus of improving water quality protection even further.

### TITLE IV - INSECT AND DISEASE INFESTATIONS

#### **Insect and Disease Activity in Montana - D**

- Forest insect and disease populations are natural and healthy at endemic levels. However, dense and over mature forest conditions combined with ongoing drought have created insect and disease epidemics that threaten to completely change after forest ecosystems in Montana.
- Forest managers should continue to implement forest health improvement projects to increase tree vigor or change species composition to resist insect and disease outbreaks.
- Congressional funding for research and forest treatment projects should be maintained to allow forest managers to respond rapidly to increased insect and disease activity.





# Report Card on the Condition of Montana's Forests

## TITLE V - HEALTHY FOREST RESERVES

### **Protection of Working Forests and Forest Habitat - B**

- Subdivision of forested lands threatens ecosystems significantly more than fuel reduction or forest health improvement projects.
- Forest landowners should be compensated when forfeiting development rights, and current efforts by state agencies and land trust organizations to use state and federal funds to protect critical lands are to be applauded.
- Continued congressional funding for Land and Water Conservation and Forest Legacy programs is vital to maintaining critical forest lands in productive condition.

## TITLE VI - FOREST INVENTORY AND MONITORING

### **Inventory and Monitoring of Threats to Forest Health - B+**

- Ongoing inventory and monitoring efforts by state and federal agencies are providing excellent resources for forest managers to make informed management decisions;
- Continued congressional funding of inventory and monitoring functions within state and federal agencies is critical to meeting future forest health challenges.

## THE FOREST ECONOMY

### **Timber Supply - Commercial Timber Harvest - C+**

- Forest health and fuel reduction projects must alter the forest canopy sufficiently to modify fire behavior to prevent damaging fire effects. This generally involves removal of commercially valuable trees, benefiting the forest economy and subsidizing forest restoration work as well.
- Projected increases in timber offerings from National Forests in Montana is welcome news to the forest industry and timber-dependent communities;

### **Montana Wood Products and Logging Industries - B-**

- Maintaining a forest industry infrastructure will be critical to our success in meeting the forest health challenge before us. If it is lost, we will be forced to use tax dollars to pay for fuel reduction projects rather than using the value of commercial logs to do so.
- Leaders in state and federal government, communities, and businesses should work together to promote forest policies that improve forest health and provide a sustainable supply of raw material.



# Montana's Forest Practices Laws and You

Rob Ethridge

If you own or work on forested land in Montana, you need to understand the State's forest practices laws. Montana has three laws pertaining specifically to cutting forest trees: Notification Prior To Forest Practices ( Notification Law), the Control of Timber Slash and Debris Law (HRA Law), and the Streamside Management Zone Law (SMZ Law). The HRA Law and the SMZ Law also have rules associated with them. If this sounds daunting, don't worry; the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation ( DNRC ) has Service Foresters available to help you, and much of the law and rule information is available on the DNRC website at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/serviceforestry>. The following are some basic notes about each law.

## Notification Prior To Forest Practices ( 76-13-131 MCA)

The Notification Law states that an operator or landowner must notify DNRC prior to conducting forest practices. The law defines forest practices as harvesting trees; road construction or reconstruction associated with harvesting and accessing trees; site preparation for regeneration of a timber stand; reforestation; and the management of logging slash.

When you contact DNRC, a Service Forester will review your request and determine the need for an on-site visit. On-site visits are often conducted when proposed harvest operations have streams or other sensitive resources associated with them. These visits provide an opportunity before operations commence to look at sensitive situations on the ground and for the Service Forester to discuss options, mitigations, Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect water quality, and to provide information on the relevant laws and rules. The point is to identify possible high risk situations and address them before problems occur. The Service Forester can also answer questions you may have about your operations—even if the assessment does not indicate a site visit is required. This notification obligation is generally met through completion of a Hazard Reduction Agreement (HRA).

**Just as a note to landowners:** even if you're not ready to harvest trees, if you would like a Service Forester to visit your property to discuss forestry management issues and concerns, such a visit can be scheduled. The forester will answer questions, discuss goals and objectives, discuss management options, explain laws and rules, demonstrate sample marking, and provide a variety of other services. You can find contact information for Service Foresters for your area on DNRC's website at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/personnel>. Many landowners have also found contacting a private forestry consultant for services prior to entering into a logging contract is a very useful option.

## Control of Timber Slash and Debris ( 76-401 to 415 MCA)

The Control of Timber Slash and Debris Law ( HRA Law ) is intended to reduce fire hazards associated with timber slash, increase firefighter safety and promote protection of property and natural resources. The general premise of the law is to reduce slash accumulations such that a fire burning on a "standard day" ( 87° F, 17% RH and 12 MPH winds ) will maintain a flame length of four feet or less. It has been determined that firefighting forces can attack these flame lengths safely with ground forces.

Before trees can be harvested, the landowner or his contractor must notify DNRC, enter into a HRA Agreement with DNRC to clean up slash to the standards set by the law, and pay any associated fees or bonds. This requires filling out an HRA Application, which includes a set of questions which are used to determine the need for the site visit. ( The application is available electronically on Service Forestry's web site.) An agreement is prepared from the application; once it is completed and signed, you will be given an HRA number. You must have this number before delivering any logs to a mill, as the HRA law prohibits mills from accepting logs without the HRA number. Once you have the HRA number you are set to go.

The HRA law requires a bond and certain fees. There is a \$25.00 application fee, which goes to DNRC for program administration, due before the HRA number is assigned. In addition, for each 1,000 board feet delivered,

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## See you at the Annual Tree Farm Conference in October!



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### Forest Practice Laws continued.....

a mill will withhold \$6.75 to send to DNRC. Sixty cents of that amount goes to DNRC for program administration; fifteen cents goes to Montana State University Extension Forestry for support of private landowner education programs; and six dollars is held in bond until the harvest is complete and DNRC approves slash clean-up. Once the clean-up is approved, the bond money is returned to the person whose name is on the HRA agreement, whether it is the operator or the landowner.

### Streamside Management Zone Law ( 77-5-301 through 307)

The Streamside Management Zone Law ( SMZ Law) protects areas around streams, lakes or other bodies of water from impacts associated with forest practices associated with a timber sale. The law creates a buffer of 50 to 100 feet wide on all sides of these water bodies, the width depending on the slope of the ground on which forest management practices are conducted.

When the law was developed, lawmakers developed a set of findings regarding SMZs. They found that the integrity of forest streams is important to Montana's water quantity and quality for many reasons. These forest streams are highly susceptible to impacts from development, and that in many cases forest practices in SMZs were causing excessive and unnecessary impacts to banks, beds, vegetation and water quality. They also determined that through careful management in SMZs, owners and operators could still achieve timber harvest goals without sacrificing water quality or impairing beneficial uses of water.

There are many individual definitions and rules pertinent to understanding the SMZ law, certainly more that can be discussed here. Copies of the complete text of the SMZ Rules are available from your local Service Forester. It is very important for landowners to know that the law identifies the landowner as the responsible party for all SMZ violations, unless that responsibility is transferred to another, such as the logger, by a formal contract with that logger.

These laws and rules ( especially the SMZ law and rules) can be complex and confusing. Service Foresters are there to assist you to understand; please take advantage of their services. You can find contact information for your area on DNRC's website at <http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/personnel/personnel.asp>.



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Montana Tree Farm News is co-sponsored by:  
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