



VEGETATIVE FIREBREAKS PROTECT PROPERTY AND LIVES

The fires that burned through North Dakota in 2002 and the destruction of the town of Shields awakened many residents of rural North Dakota to the hazards of wildfire. These residents looked outside their windows and saw their properties surrounded by CRP, pasturelands or other grass acreage, and realized the potential for a catastrophic wildfire threatening their residences and working areas. The North Dakota Forest Service was able to provide these landowners with technical and financial assistance for installing practices that would protect their rural home sites.

Utilizing funding available through the National Fire Plan, 39 rural residents applied for over \$118,000 of cost-share assistance to protect homes, working areas, barns and other facilities. Landowners used this funding to install “vegetative firebreaks” around their properties. A vegetative firebreak is a specially designed windbreak that slows the spread of wildfire and gives rural firefighters an opportunity to defend isolated, scattered home sites.

A vegetative firebreak has three zones. The outside zone (farthest from the house) is a mowed grass strip that is designed to lower flame heights. The middle zone is a tilled strip of soil that creates a fuel break and greatly slows or stops the fire. The inside zone (closest to the house) is a windbreak with less flammable trees



National Fire Plan funding and technical assistance are available to rural landowners for installing and updating vegetative firebreaks to save lives and protect property from wildfire.

and shrubs that reduce wind speeds and further slows the spread of wildfire.

In addition to cost-sharing the installation of new vegetative firebreaks, landowners have inquired about methods for renovating windbreaks to enhance fire safety. In most instances, simply installing a tilled soil strip around the outside of existing farmstead windbreaks would greatly enhance wildfire protection.

Grass wildfires are deceptively dangerous. They are very susceptible

to subtle changes in weather and a small smoldering brush pile can blow up into a raging wall of fire with slight changes in wind and humidity. These fast moving fires can threaten lives and property with hardly a moment's notice.

For more information on installing a new vegetative firebreak around your home site or updating a current windbreak to enhance wildfire protection, please contact Jason Weinerman at (701) 549-2441 or Trent Bristol at (701) 328-9916.

View from the Top of the Tree

According to *America's Forests 2003 Health Update* recently issued by the USDA Forest Service, approximately 70 million acres of forests in the United States are at risk of mortality from insects and diseases. Four devastating pests are responsible for two-thirds of the risk: gypsy moth in the East, southern pine beetle in the South, root disease in the Interior West, and bark beetles in the West. In addition, global trade and travel are increasing the potential for the introduction, establishment and spread of thousands of invasive insects, pathogens and plants. Unfortunately, gypsy moth, American chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, and leafy spurge are classic examples of non-native invasive species that have caused enormous damage to our forests and rangelands. Overall, the report identifies a growing number of health issues threatening America's rural and urban forests and trees.

Managing insect and disease outbreaks is a primary responsibility of the USDA Forest Service and State Foresters. The early detection, control and prevention of damaging insects and diseases are critical to the health of forests. Forest Health Management is a collaborative national program for surveying and monitoring forest health conditions, delivering technical assistance, and providing prevention and suppression support. State forestry agencies receive financial assistance through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry Program to support projects aimed at managing pests on all forest ownerships.

Forest Health Management programs have benefited North Dakota by providing assistance for conducting annual forest health surveys, and understanding management measures for insect and disease outbreaks. The recently published *North Dakota Forest Health Report 2001-2002* also raises specific concerns for native, planted and community forests in our prairie state. The impact of Dutch elm disease and the decline of over-mature aspen stands have resulted in the significant loss of trees in communities and native forests. Herbicides, drought and floods also present unique forest health management challenges.



Larry A. Kotchman
State Forester

Protecting the health of America's forests is a primary goal of the National Association of State Foresters. This year, I will have the privilege of providing leadership for this effort by chairing its Forest Health Protection Committee. The committee is responsible for informing and updating State Foresters on critical forest health issues; improving public awareness of forest health issues; and improving the funding, implementation and effectiveness of forest health protection programs. This fight to protect America's forests will clearly require an unprecedented level of collaboration and coordination among our federal, state, local and tribal partners. I hope you will all join me in this important effort!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry A. Kotchman".

Partnership Formed with ND Department of Transportation

By: Tom Claey's, Sustainable Forestry Coordinator

The North Dakota Department of Transportation and the North Dakota Forest Service signed a three-year Participation, Construction and Maintenance Agreement for statewide mitigation tree planting projects. In 2003, the first year of the agreement, approximately 34-acres of trees and

shrubs were planted in Benson and Rolette Counties on reclaimed construction sites. The new tree plantings followed Natural Resources Conservation Service guidelines for site preparation, stock selection, storing, handling and planting.

The North Central and Rolette County Soil Conservation Districts played a key role in the tree planting efforts. Follow-up practices, such as mowing

and fall chemical application took place during the 2003 field season.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation and the North Dakota Forest Service have a long history of working together on tree planting projects. This newest agreement solidifies this mutually rewarding partnership to enhance North Dakota's roadways.



How to Obtain Tree City USA Recognition

By: Gerri Marchus, Community Forestry Specialist



If your community has recently participated in the grant programs administered by the North Dakota Forest Service, there is a good chance that your town meets the requirements to become a Tree City USA. To qualify, a community must meet four standards:

- A forester, city department or tree board designated by ordinance to be responsible for community tree care.
- A community tree care ordinance in effect.
- An active community forestry program, evidenced by an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita.

- An Arbor Day proclaimed and observed.

The National Arbor Day Foundation, in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, created the Tree City USA program in 1976. The program recognizes communities for developing programs to preserve and enhance their community's forestry resources.

Tree City USA "Growth Awards" are also available to any community that qualifies as a Tree City USA. The Growth Awards recognize a high level of tree care and innovative environmental improvements. Eligible activities are outlined in the Growth Award application.

Since the inception of the program 27 years ago, the program has grown to include 53 North Dakota communities

named as Tree Cities for 2002. Total community forestry expenditures in these communities totaled over \$3.1 million. The commitment towards community forestry programs continues to grow each year. People have become more aware that towns and cities that are alive with healthy, cared-for trees are simply better places to live!

Tree City USA Recertification

Applications for Tree City USA recertification for 2003 are due in the local community forestry offices by December 15, 2003.

If you need assistance or an application, please notify Gerri Marchus at (701) 652-2951.

Clearing a Trail to the Historic Cottonwoods

By: Glenda Fauske, Information and Education Coordinator

Many agencies, organizations and individuals, concerned about preserving a part of the Missouri River's historical past, got together on October 15. Together, they chain-sawed logs and pruned dead branches blocking the trail to the historic cottonwoods in Smith Grove near Washburn. They also raked debris from around the base of the trees. Today, the winding path is clear and ready for visitors to safely and easily hike, or ski along in the winter.

The group also planted 20 young saplings, raised by the Towner State Nursery from the Smith Grove cottonwoods, in forest openings. To ensure their survival, a brigade of folks hauled buckets of water to them.



Volunteers from many walks of life helped clear the trail to the historic cottonwoods in Smith Grove.

Those taking part in the trail clearing included forestry and horticulture students and staff from MSU-Bottineau; local volunteers; and personnel from the ND Forest Service, ND Game and Fish Department; ND Parks and Recreation Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Nature Conservancy.

Two hundred years ago, Lewis and Clark and the Corp of Discovery camped near this grove of cottonwoods along the Missouri River south of Washburn. Nine remaining trees around 300-years old are still standing in this 27-acre forest known as Smith Grove. The grove was named after the family who sold the plot to the ND Game and Fish Department in 1971.

GreenWorks! Project Carries Over to Classroom

By: Jackson Bird, Community Forestry Coordinator

The elementary students at Theodore Jamerson School in Bismarck applied for and received a GreenWorks! grant this spring from Project Learning Tree (PLT). The funds were used for a community tree-planting project at United Tribes Technical College. The mayor of Bismarck proclaimed it GreenWorks! Day in the city and attended the public ceremony. Everyone watched as elders blessed the trees with a traditional tobacco ceremony.

Six months later, the students wanted to learn more about the importance of trees in the environment, and an education component that could be carried out in the classroom began! With assistance from ND Forest Service staff, instructor Hank LaBore

developed activities for the K-8 grade classes. The activities were geared to educate the students on tree growth, identification, and care.



Theodore Jamerson elementary students want to learn more about trees after participating in a GreenWorks! community service learning project.

The K-2 grade class completed a coloring book and Tree Bingo. Grades 3-5 prepared leaf mounts and made tree cookie necklaces. Grades 6-8 made a tree-measuring triangle to determine the height of the trees planted in the spring.

Cultural information was shared on each tree species. Students also toured the Lincoln-Oakes Nursery and were awarded a "Junior Forestry Tree Identification Certificate."

Teachers who have attended a PLT workshop are eligible to apply for up to \$2,500 in GreenWorks! grant funds each fall for community service learning projects. Any educators interested in more information may contact Glenda Fauske at (701) 228-5446.

Real Christmas Trees Provide Benefits Long After the Holidays

By: Glenda Fauske, Information and Education Coordinator

Real Christmas trees are not only important for the holiday season, but they provide many benefits for conservation, wildlife, and fisheries habitat long after the holidays! Christmas trees have been successfully used for mulch on new tree plantings and for fish habitat development for the past thirty years.

Many small and large communities collect and chip Christmas trees for mulch as part of their waste reduction goals. Some coordinate curbside pickup, while others have identified drop off sites. Communities offer free wood chips to residents for mulching, and use them on their boulevard and park plantings.

Real trees can also be used for fisheries habitat in smooth bottom lakes and reservoirs. Tree reefs have a life



Real Christmas trees are bundled together and submerged in 10-30 feet of water to create "reefs" that provide cover from predators, spawning habitat, and development of food organisms.

expectancy of more than 15 years. Emil Berard, ND Game and Fish Department, says "Since the first tree reef was put into Parshall Bay on Lake Sakakawea, Game and Fish has used tens of thousands of discarded Christmas trees to build dozens of reefs

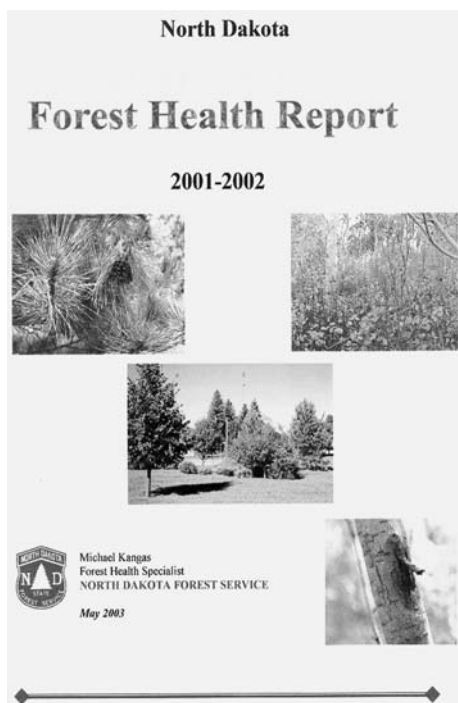
in over twenty lakes across the state."

The ND Game and Fish Department carefully controls the tree reefs because they need a permit from the Corps of Engineers. If reefs are placed in the wrong lake, they could do more harm than good.

Angler organizations or volunteers interested in building tree reefs may contact Emil Berard at eberard@state.nd.us. Citizens interested in learning if their community is involved in a tree recycling program may contact the ND Solid Waste Management Association at (701) 298-6944.

“Forest Health Report” Available

By: *Michael Kangas, Forest Health Specialist*



The North Dakota Forest Service has put the finishing touches on the “North Dakota Forest Health Report 2001-2002” and it’s available to the public! It summarizes forest pest conditions observed within the state over the past two years. This report is the first of a biennial reporting process that assesses the influence of insects and diseases on overall forest health.

The document provides a thorough description of the forest resource types in North Dakota, including native forests, rural plantings and community forests. In addition, the general condition of each forest resource type is discussed to provide the reader with a broader

understanding of the factors that influence the health and sustainability of these important resources. Lastly, the biology, distribution, and impact on forest health of specific insect and disease problems are described.

The report is a useful guide to anyone who is interested in forest health management. Its content is not excessively technical, targeting a broader audience. Other highlights include color photos, graphs, and maps. A copy may be obtained by contacting your local North Dakota Forest Service office or Michael Kangas at (701) 231-5936. In the near future, it will also be made available on the ND Forest Service website at www.state.nd.us/forest.

Plains States Forest Health Tour

By: *Michael Kangas, Forest Health Specialist*

The North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) hosted a Forest Health Tour in Bismarck this September. The purpose of this tour was to educate participants about plains forestry and forest health issues within the region.

Attendees included Regional Forest Health pathologists and entomologists representing the Plains States, Intermountain-West, and Lake States. Other participants included North Dakota Forest Service personnel, North Dakota State University (NDSU) staff, City Foresters Paul Blumhardt (Bismarck) and Scott Liudahl (Fargo), and the National Forest Health Monitoring Coordinator Borys Tkacz (Washington, DC).

The tour consisted of site visits to rural plantings, native forests, community forests, the NRCS Plant Materials Center, and the Lincoln-Oakes Nursery. In addition, Dr. James Walla (NDSU) presented information about X-disease of Chokecherry, and Roy Laframboise (NDFS) gave a presentation on Shoot Blight of Ponderosa Pine.

The tour was a success and will enhance future coordination regarding forest health issues within the plains states region.



The Forest Health Tour addressed the needs of community forests, native forests, and rural tree plantings found in North Dakota.

2003 Trees Award Winners Recognized

By: Tom Claeys, Sustainable Forestry Coordinator



Trees Awards

The 2003 Trees Award winners were recognized at the Trees Bowl and Awards Ceremony held in Fargo on September 27. Nominations were received from across the state. The award winners were recognized by the North Dakota Forest Service and North Dakota State University for their outstanding forestry contributions. Forestry activities include: tree planting, preservation or maintenance; community forestry efforts; forest management practices; forest recreation; environmental education; or fire mitigation, protection and suppression.

The award winners were honored at a recognition ceremony at North Dakota State University. President Joseph Chapman and State Forester Larry Kotchman presented each winner with a special Trees Award plaque and a limited edition print. A luncheon followed the awards ceremony.

The award winners were also recognized on the field during half-time of the NDSU Trees Bowl football game that afternoon.

The 2003 award winners include:

COMMUNITY
City of Bottineau

CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT
Dave Olstad, Valley City

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE
Robert Waliser, Selfridge

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR
Jim Collins, Jr., Bismarck

EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT
Eastern Grand Forks SCD

FIRE DEPARTMENT
COOPERATOR
Washburn Fire Department

FOREST STEWARDSHIP
LANDOWNER
Bruce Pantzke, Fargo

MEDIA OUTREACH
Jamestown Sun

NATURAL RESOURCE
PROFESSIONAL
Kathy Duttenehfer, Bismarck

SMOKEY BEAR POSTER
CONTEST
McKenna Schmidt, Flasher

TREE CELEBRATION
City of Williston

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION
Bowman Fire Department

YOUTH TREE PLANTERS
Garrison High School Vo-Ag

DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP
AWARD
Dr. Sharon Anderson, Fargo



The 2003 Trees Awards winners were recognized for their forestry contributions at the Fargodome during the NDSU Trees Bowl on September 27.

National Fire Course Offered in North Dakota

By: *David Geyer, Fire Management Specialist*

The North Dakota Forest Service will be coordinating a fire behavior course that will involve instructors from around the nation, and will be used as a tool to help in fire management. It is the first time such a course will be offered in North Dakota.

The course will teach fire managers the proper use of the National Fire Danger Rating System, or NFDRS for short. This system uses a set of computer programs and step-by-step problem solving procedures that allow the management agencies to better predict current and future fire danger for a given area. The programs used

for predicting this fire danger are based on condition ratings of fuels, topography, and weather. They are then reused to calculate the relative ratings of potential growth and fire behavior of any wildfire. This information can help managers by guiding pre-suppression activities, evaluating readiness levels, and in selecting the appropriate level of initial response.

The course is being sponsored with interagency cooperation from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, ND Forest Service, National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The course will be offered in Fargo at the Skills and Technology Center from March 29 – April 2, 2004, and is limited to twenty students. For additional information, contact David Geyer at (701) 328-9985.

“New” Wildfire Community Planning Guide

Almost every community in North Dakota deals with some risk from wildfire. The need for better planning to address the threat of wildfire has long been recognized, and now communities will have a new tool for coping with the wildfire threat. A “Community Wildfire Planning Guide” leads communities through a step-by-step process that emphasizes the identification of stakeholders, description of the community, and assessment of the infrastructure, including wildfire risk factors. The guide provides examples of workable wildfire plans, useful websites and potential grant funding. Call (701) 328-9944.



Forestry Datelines

January 15	Marketplace for Entrepreneurs Alerus Center, Grand Forks Contact: Marilyn Kipp (888) 384-8410	March 31- April 1	NDCDEA/ND Tree Promotion Meeting Comfort Inn, Bismarck Contact: Tom Claeys (701) 228-5486
January 25-27	ND Nursery and Greenhouse Annual Convention and Trade Show Ramada Plaza Suites, Fargo Contact: ND Nursery and Greenhouse Association, PO Box 34, Neche ND 58265 or (701) 886-7673	April 28	KNDC Poster Contest Awards Ceremony Lewis and Clark Center, Washburn Contact: Glenda Fauske (701) 228-5446
March 2-4	ND Fire Council Location TBA Contact: Mike Santucci (701) 328-9946	May 7	ND State Arbor Day Celebration Fort Buford Historic Site, Williston Contact: Tom Claeys (701) 228-5486
March 15	Keep North Dakota Clean Poster Contest Deadline Contact: Glenda Fauske (701) 228-5446		

People in Forestry



Bernice Johnson
Administrative
Secretary

Bernice Johnson was selected as the Administrative Secretary for the North Dakota Forest Service. She began her duties on July 14 in the Bismarck office.

Johnson will be responsible for the office records management for the program areas at Bismarck. A native of North Dakota, Johnson recently received her degree in Business Administration from the University of Mary in Bismarck. She can be reached at (701) 328-9944.

FORESTRY AWARDS were presented to three individuals at the State Capitol in Bismarck on November 19 to recognize their outstanding contributions to the state and regional forestry programs.

Paul Blumhardt, Bismarck City Forester, was recognized for his contributions to the development of Bismarck's City Forestry Program.

Roy Laframboise, Towner State Nursery Manager, and the staff for leadership and management in producing superior seed sources in the northern plains.

Glenn Roloff, USDA Forest Service-Region One, is retiring after more than 43 years of service to the USDA



(L-R) Paul Blumhardt, Bismarck City Forester; Roy Laframboise, Towner State Nursery; and Glenn Roloff, USDA Forest Service, were recognized for their outstanding forestry service.

Forest Service. He has been instrumental in the development of many partnerships to deliver cooperative forestry programs to the people of North Dakota.

“The Prairie Forester,” a publication of the North Dakota Forest Service
Molberg Forestry Center, 307 First Street East, Bottineau, North Dakota 58318-1100 • Phone 701-228-5422
STATE FORESTER: Larry Kotchman • EDITOR: Glenda Fauske

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

North Dakota Forest Service
Molberg Forestry Center
307 First Street East
Bottineau, North Dakota 58318-1100

PERMIT NO. 41
58318
BOTTINEAU, ND
PAID
US POSTAGE
STANDARD
PRESORT