Montana Forest Products Marketing News

MSU Extension Forestry

April 2005

Forestry Mini-College to be held April 23rd

Thanks to a number of generous sponsors, The MSU Extension Forestry office is offering *Forestry Mini-College*, a one-day educational workshop open to anyone interested in forestry. The workshop is scheduled for Saturday April 23, 2005 in the forestry building on the UM campus in Missoula. The event features a number of one-hour courses on a variety of forestry topics, all taught by local forestry professionals. The list of topics includes: forest health—insects and disease, noxious weed control strategies, the economics of common Montana forest products, tips for enhancing wildlife populations, wildfire hazard reduction, estate planning, how private landowners can harness computers in land management activities, a description of logging systems commonly used in Montana, and an overview of Montana's forestry laws.

The $20.00 registration fee includes a catered lunch, coffee/snacks between classes, and any handout materials from the classes.

Call the extension forestry office for more information 406-243-2773, or register by downloading the registration form here.

Inside this issue:

Helicopter Logging	2
Cky-Ber Enterprises gears up	3
Upcoming Events Calendar	4

University of Montana Considers Biomass Heat

Biomass is defined as the weight of all living things in a biological community. In forest communities, for example, biomass includes things like wood, leaves, and cones. In recent years, foresters have been removing biomass from Western forests to reduce the chance for catastrophic wildfire. However, biomass removal is costly, so efforts are underway to develop viable commercial markets for biomass material. For example, one possibility is burning it to heat buildings.

Recognizing these trends, officials at the University of Montana have authorized a Missoula firm, CTA architects and engineers, to perform a biomass heat system assessment, which will determine the suitability and efficiency of converting from the University's current natural gas fired heating system to a biomass system. The assessment team collects information about the current heating system infrastructure and reviews a record of heating costs under the current system. This information is then used to determine the capital investment cost associated with the conversion to a biomass system. Also calculated is potential cost savings from using biomass fuel rather than the current fuel. The assessment is free to the University thanks to the Forest Service's Fuels for Schools program.

Check it out:

Categorical Exclusion Timber Sale Halted click here

Grant Aid offered to laid off timber workers click here

New Sawmill in Superior, Montana click here

Helicopter Logging: A Viable Timber Harvesting Option?

Montana's forest landowners can choose from a number of logging systems when harvesting timber. For example, there are still loggers felling trees with chainsaws and then using horses to skid logs out of the woods. At the other end of the technology spectrum, helicopters are being used to "fly" logs out of the woods. Landowners might consider helicopter logging if their property is too steep for ground-based equipment, they want to avoid damaging the remaining trees, or they do not want to build roads.

Local *MFPMN* readers may have noticed a recent helicopter logging job near East Missoula. The landowner, Plum Creek Timber Company, did not want to build any roads in that area, so they contracted with Carson Helicopter of Grants Pass, Oregon to transport nearly 1 million board feet of logs (about 250 truckloads) from the woods to a log landing.

A helicopter delivering a load of Plum Creek Timber Company logs to the landing

In a typical helicopter logging job, a logging crew fells and delimbs all trees before the helicopter even shows up. Delimbing in the woods is important because it allows the helicopter to maximize the payload of logs on each trip to the landing. Another payload consideration is locating the log landing at a lower elevation than the felled trees so that the helicopter doesn't have fly "uphill" while under load. Maximizing payload is important because helicopter logging is not cheap. According to Tom Ray, Plum Creek's general manager for Northwest resources, it typically costs a landowner about $350 per thousand board feet, or expressed in other terms, helicopter logging costs about $4,000 per hour.

Once the helicopter starts working, ground crews in the woods hook the logs to chokers, which are then hooked to the helicopter. Carson's Super S-61 logging helicopter can carry an 11,000 pound payload and their daily production can be as much as 100 to 120 thousand board feet.

Montana's private landowner's interested in this type of logging should contact their local DNRC service forester who can provide them with a list of helicopter loggers and professional foresters.

Cky-Ber Enterprises Gears Up for Restoration Forestry

Last month's *MFPMN* included a story about a research project that explored ways to more efficiently transport and process logging slash. This article follows-up on that report with the story of Craig Thomas, owner of Cky-Ber Enterprises in Stevensville, MT.

Craig Thomas, a Bitterroot Valley forester and logger who owns Cky-Ber Enterprises, is about to buy equipment (similar to that shown above), which will be used to collect logging slash at logging sites and then deliver the slash to a concentration yard in Stevensville, MT

Thomas, a forester and logger, is currently doing the logging on the *Pattee Blue Project* — a Forest Service ecosystem restoration project aimed at reducing fire danger in Missoula's Pattee Canyon and Blue Mountain recreation areas.

During a recent visit to the project site, Thomas explained that a major objective was to remove many of the small trees from the crowded forest. This approach would leave a visually pleasing forest of larger trees and at the same time reduce the amount of fuel in the forest should a wildfire occur. This type of timber harvesting is called restoration forestry—an attempt to restore the health of overcrowded forests.

Restoration forestry projects yield traditional forest products—logs, post/pole material, and pulpwood, but they also produce large quantities of logging slash and trees that are too small or misshapen to be merchantable.

Thomas believes the future of forestry in Montana will include many restoration forestry projects so he is gearing his business to adapt to changing forestry practices. He is preparing to purchase 12 of the roll-off containers described in last month's story about disposing logging slash. After the purchase, he envisions a system where landowners pay him a tipping fee for leaving a container at their logging job. When the container becomes filled with logging slash, he will use a specially designed truck to bring an empty container to the site and haul the full container back to his concentration yard, which is located just north of Stevensville. Material will accumulate at his yard until there is enough to bring in a tub grinder and convert the slash to hog fuel. The hog fuel will be sold to local markets.

Thomas believes landowners will find value in his service because hauling slash away in containers is less troublesome than the alternative of burning the slash on site.

For more information, Craig Thomas can be reached at 406-777-3041 (home) or 406-370-7103 (mobile).

MSU Extension Forestry

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Montana State University Extension Forestry is a branch of the MSU Extension Service and is housed cooperatively with College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana in Missoula, Montana.

The mission of Extension Forestry is to provide education and outreach to non-industrial private forest landowners, forestry industry, and other forestry-related organizations in Montana.

Extension Forestry carries out its mission by providing its clients with educational workshops, publications, news releases, brochures, and videos. Common topics include forest stewardship planning, forest insect and disease, windbreaks/living snow fences, alternative forest management practices, wildfire hazard reduction, forest products marketing, and tree pruning & care.

We're on the Web:

http://www.forestry.umt.edu/hosting/forestproducts/index.htm

Did a friend send this newsletter to you?

If so, sign up and we can send the newsletter directly to your email address.

Do you have comments, story ideas, or other suggestions?

If so, send them to Roy Anderson, newsletter editor

Calendar of Upcoming Events

*click here to link to a nationwide continuing forestry education events calendar

Intermountain Logging Conference

April 5th-8th, Spokane, WA
click here for agenda

Forestry Day at Fort Missoula

April 23, 9AM-3PM, Missoula, MT
call Scott Kuehn for info 406-258-2124

Specialized Equipment for Fire & Fuels Workshop

May 3 & 4, Missoula/Arlee
call Scott Kuehn for info 406-258-2124

Forest Stewardship for Loggers Workshop

April 11-14th
Yellow Bay (UM Biological Station)
call 406.752.3168 or mla@logging.org

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Training

Missoula, April 25
Kalispell, April 28
call 406.752.3168 or mla@logging.org

Family Forestry Expo

May 2-8
Columbia Falls, MT
call Dave Buckallew 406-892-7005

Forestry Mini-College

April 23
Missoula, MT
click here for agenda

Alternative Forest Harvesting Practices

Missoula April 26
Kalispell April 29
406-243-2775 or extfor@forestry.umt.edu

Forest Stewardship for Landowners Workshop

May 16,17,23
Whitefish, MT
call 406-243-2773

Montana State University Extension Service is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference
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