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Greetings;

As a follow-up to last month's bulletin on the New Mexico Legislature, I thought I would pass on what the American Forest Foundation is tracking in Washington D.C. The 2011 Appropriations bill includes funding for four programs in particular that the AFF is advocating for:

- Increase funding of USFS Stewardship program to \$45million. This program provides assistance to private woodland owners in New Mexico.
- Increase the USFS Forest Health management Program-Cooperative Lands to \$66 million. This program supplies cost-share for forest thinnings and other improvement practices.
- Increase the USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis program to \$76 million. This program provides inventory information for state and private woodlands.
- Increase funding for the EPA's office of Environmental Education to \$14 million. This program provides support for the AFF's Project Learning Tree.

With a federal budget of well over \$3 trillion the amount that is spent to support state and private forestry is truly miniscule.

If you would like more information about federal legislative issues you can contact the AFF's manager of public affairs, Melissa Harden @ (202)-463-2456 or mharden@forestfoundation.org.

On another note. The Tree Farm program is now third-party certified as sustainably managed forest land. We have always had a requirement that a woodland owner have a management plan in place to be part of the Tree Farm program in New Mexico. Through the third party assessment we went through last year it was brought to our attention that many of our Tree Farm plans were written years ago and needed to be re-visited and brought up-to-date.

We are offering an opportunity to get your plan updated. On May 8th we are hosting a plan writing workshop where volunteer foresters can walk you through the process of updating your plan to meet our new third party requirements. This first work-shop will be at the Mora Research Station. More info will follow in April. We are also planning on additional workshops in other parts of the state later in the year. Please let me know if you are interested in attending a work-shop.

Tree Farm National Leadership Conference

Joe Stehling, Hidden Lake, Angel Fire, joined New Mexico Socorro District Forester Doug Boykin, and commercial forester and president of the New Mexico State Tree Farm committee Harry Morrison in attending the American Forest Foundation Tree Farm National Leadership conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, 23 – 25 February, 2010. The purpose of the conference was to bring together state Tree Farm Committee leadership from 41 states to discuss issues that affect sustainable tree farming in the US and exchange ideas to further expand our knowledge of sustainable Tree Farming. A Tree farm is a privately-owned tract of forest anywhere from 10 acres to several thousand acres. The Tree Farm owner is a member of the American Tree Farm System, which was established in 1941 to encourage private forest landowners to conserve and protect their forests. The Tree Farmer owns 10 or more acres of forested land and has a written management plan by which he improves and enhances his woodlands for forest health, wildlife, water, and recreation. He does this largely “out of his own pocket”. In the United States, National Forests compose less than 10% of the forested land. Private landowners constitute 73% of the forests. There are 175 certified tree farms in New Mexico.

The conference covered such topics as certification, audit, and inspection requirements – Tree Farms are now internationally certified to provide wood for “green” construction; - working with state and federal agencies; developing goals and objectives to improving the tree farm system in the various states; succession planning to keep forests connected with families to stem the loss of forestland; and obtaining grants that provide money for forest health enhancement projects on privately owned land.

Submitted by Joe Stehling, 2009 Tree Farmer of the Year, Vice Chairman of the New Mexico State Tree Farm committee, and voting member of the New Mexico Forest Stewardship Committee.

