



# The Montana Forester

Newsletter of the Montana Society of American Foresters

## Long-Term, Landscape-Level Stewardship Contracting: Is it the Answer for Montana?

By Roy Anderson

The mission of the US Forest Service is to, “*sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*”

To meet that mission, some support a complete preservationist approach—simply letting nature take its course. While that argument appeals to our spiritual side—it feels good to know there are wild places in the world—I see a problem. As has happened for millions of years, natural events such as fire, insects, and disease will act on the “wild” forest. The problem is that the border between many “wild” forests and urbanized areas is fuzzy. Thus, when the natural events occur, their timing, extent, and impact on humans and the things we value will be out of our control—perhaps most notably the impact of wildfire.

Forest management can mimic natural events, with the added advantage that it does so in a controlled manner. The problem here is that over the last twenty-some years, preservation advocates, opposed to nearly any form of forestry, have used environmental laws and the courts to suspend forest management. Consider that in USFS Region 1, over 500 million board feet of timber is currently tied up in appeal or litigation. Included among the projects in limbo are over 95 percent of all Forest Service commercial thinning, forest restoration projects, and timber sales offered in Montana since 2001.

There is no easy solution to these issues, but perhaps long-term, landscape-level stewardship contracting offers a way to move forest management out of the court room and back into the forest.

There are number of reasons it could work: under a stewardship contract, the economic value of harvested timber is applied to local stewardship and restoration projects. Thus, projects are less dependent on appropriated federal dollars. A more holistic, landscape approach can integrate and improve forest management activities. Long-term contracts encourage private investment in the infrastructure needed to do the work. And, in the process, jobs are created that sustain a traditional way of life in rural communities.

But, perhaps most importantly, through stewardship contracting induced collaboration, the players—the Forest Service, Local Communities, the Timber Industry, and Conservation Groups—can reinvent their relationships with each other. For such collaboration efforts to be effective two things are needed. One, it’s important to remember that no player will get everything they want, instead, every player will get enough to live with. Two, all of the players need to build enough mutual trust to insure that stewardship and restoration projects actually happen, rather than become derailed in the court room.

Still, some might not like stewardship contracting as a way of doing business. To them I ask, how much longer is the current reality viable? Cynics might say collaboration will never happen. It already has happened. Look at Arizona’s Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The Forest Service, Local Communities, The Timber Industry, and The Center for Biological Diversity were able to move beyond deep philosophical differences in order to implement the 10-year, 150,000-acre White Mountain Stewardship Contract. They are two years into it, and despite having a

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very limited timber industry infrastructure, forest management work is being done.

They are also running into problems. But as Robert Taylor, a White Mountain Stewardship Contract administrator said at the recent Lubrecht Forest stewardship contracting conference, “we are working through our problems by constantly nurturing a spirit of partnership among all the parties involved, rather than falling back to the traditional ‘gotcha’ mentality when something goes wrong.”

Can something like the White Mountain Stewardship Contract work in Montana? I believe it can and I think the seeds have already been planted through the Beaverhead—Deer Lodge partnership where traditional rivals—conservation groups and the timber industry—are leading the way. And even though their ideas have been met with some resistance, it is the start of collaboration and building trust.

As professional foresters, I believe it is our duty to become informed about long-term, landscape-level stewardship contracting. If you believe this tool has the potential to move this region beyond the litigation conundrum, then reach out through organizations like SAF and through your personal contacts to the other stakeholders. Let them know that here is a tool that can benefit both society and our forests.

## Membership News

By John Casselli, membership chair

The current statewide membership is 345. The total reflects 35 members who were purged for non-renewal of dues. Losing 35 members was the largest loss in any of the last 3 years.

Reduction in membership can be attributed to various factors including personal, financial and professional reasons. If you would like to continue your SAF membership but

financial reasons may be a concern at this time, (especially students or recent graduates) please contact the national membership office. They can help!

The Montana recruitment goal for 2006 is 23 new members. The total recruitment goal for all states within District IV is 108. The State Executive Committee would encourage members to be involved with re-

cruitment efforts. Consider passing on a *Journal of Forestry* or *Forestry Source* to a co-worker, referring someone to [www.safnet.org](http://www.safnet.org) for resource information, or simply ask a non-member to a chapter meeting or other event this fall. Recruitment does not need to take a large amount of time, just a desire to maintain and grow your SAF organization!

## John Ottman Receives District Field Forester Award

After receiving the Montana SAF Chapter field forester award at the spring annual meeting, the awards committee nominated John Ottman for the district field forester award. He was selected as the district field forester and now will move into the pool of candidates for the National field forester of the year.

Congratulations John! And good luck in the national competition.

Below is an excerpt from John's nomination form:

*“Early in his career with Champion International and later with White Pine Sash, John displayed the desire for excellence and innovation in silviculture. Those interests fully developed in the mid-1990’s when John was the first to use and promote cut-to-length (CTL) harvesting and forwarding systems. John’s goal was to utilize equipment that allowed the highest level of “light on the land” harvesting ever achieved in Montana. By 2000, John had used CTL/forwarder systems to skid logs as far as two miles. Not only was John successful using these systems in his own business, he persuaded many other foresters and logging contractors to adopt the technology.”*



John Ottman and his dog Tony working a prescribed burn on the 2000 acre Paul Rossignol Ranch near Lolo, Montana. After four years of working with Ottman Forestry, Mr. Rossignol was selected as Montana's 2004 State Tree Farmer of the Year.



# Minutes: June 21, 2006 Montana SAF Executive Committee Meeting

As submitted by Mark Teply, MT SAF Secretary

- Location: Seeley Lake Ranger District
- Attendance: Tim Love, Larry Westcott, Mark Teply, Lyle Laverty, Bev Yelczyn, April Rainey, Gordy Sanders, Chris Damrow, Bob Harrington, Dave Jones
- Call to Order: Tim Love
- Discussion: Leadership Conference Overview provided by Lyle Laverty Attendance about 50 – some Montana attendees; Fellows review board is going forward; District IV Field Forester is John Ottman; SAF and State Foresters are preparing a position paper on the National Policy on Sustainable Forest Management. P.S. will frame issue, communication strategy, legislative strategy
- Minutes approval: Meeting minutes from executive committee meeting on 3/30/06 – M/S/P
- Reports
- Treasurer: by Mark Teply. As of 6/12/06, checking account balance of \$12,928.25 - M/S/P
- Libby: by April Rainey Held a field trip in May , June meeting at Raven; topic will be State Meeting 2007; Loggers Days is coming up; Attempts at recruiting for MNRYC With local teachers; sees need to actively promote with schools; However, no followup and therefore no recruits; Breakfast meeting in mid-summer; Chapter is also sponsoring Provider Pals
- Flathead: by Chris Damrow, Forestry Expo in May; had about 1000+ 5th graders & 800 weekend visitors; Attended Provider Pals presentation with the Libby Chapter; Planted an Arbor Day tree; needs replanting after cattle damage; Next meeting will be in August
- Eastside: by Mark Teply, Mount Helena Monitoring Project in May; about 120 7th graders participated
- Missoula: by Bob Harrington, KUFM commentary would be aired 6/21 in evening; Calling those who owe dues; Forestry Days activity was a tree planting; MNRYC is upcoming; Extension will be taking on promotion; Otherwise, off for the summer
- Awards: by Tim Love, 50 year members who could not attend State Meeting were personally awarded; John Ottman rec'd District Field Forester award; will be put in pool for National;
- Policy: by Gordy Sanders, Distributed National Policy Committees 2006 Top Five Threats to Sustainability: Forestland conversion, Forest health, Global competitiveness, Domestic capacity, Connecting land and people. This will frame work on forest policy by setting priorities for the committee. These are also potential KUFM commentary topics to consider. Distributed CRESA bill National SAF response. Also working on National definition of Old Growth -Position being that it has no place in legislation. Other position statements that have come to the fore...Suburban sprawl, Herbicides, Forest biotech, FIA position statement has been approved,
- Communication: By Bev Yelczyn, actively getting award members recognized; Local papers and in Forestry Source; Ernie's obituary was sent to national; Noted this evenings KUFM commentary; Made a presentation at Sentinel HS; Noted that Sawmill Gulch CD is available
- Membership: by Tim Love for John Casselli, Steady membership at about 280; 38 are on the purge list; Heads up that there will be 4 50-yr members next year;
- Foresters Fund: by Gordy Sanders, Noted two successful projects so far this year; Recognized in Forestry Source; No new proposals during 6/15 cycle; next deadline is 9/15; National is looking for auction donations
- Historian: by Tim Love for Scott Kuehn, Sawmill is operating on 7/14; looking for help
- Website: by Tim Love for Sherri Williams, Web page needs review; Need someone to oversee
- Education: by Tim Love for Cindy Bertek, Will coordinate education information with Sherri
- Old Business: 2006 State Meeting - Thoughts, Much discussion and best summarized by Bob Harrington that SAF is positioned to make a coordinated effort addressing many of the issues and concerns brought forward; but there is no strategy and he suggested that ECM consider these issues and concerns as themes for upcoming state meetings with idea that they result in strategies that SAF can implement. On this, there was much agreement and led to discussion of 2007 meeting.
- 2007 State Meeting – Planning. General concept: Presentations that provide background on a theme (issue). Then use meeting as opportunity to build strategy for addressing General topics: Sustainability; stewardship, long-term planning Practically: Almost unanimous support for a combined meeting Spokane is affordable; IE finding out more Flathead/Libby was ok with this With no opposition, we should proceed Peter Kolb will work with others to refine topic. Other old business—HSD issues are being forwarded
- New Business: None
- Next Meeting: September 8th at Seeley Lake at 1000; Conference call will be made available Possibly scheduled for Missoula to include IE leadership for meeting planning

Adjourn



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American Foresters

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Upcoming Workshop:

## Small Scale Logging Equipment Demonstration

**9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Lubrecht Forest**

**Greenough, Montana**

Call Caren Stewart at (406) 243-2773 for more information