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FORUM

YOUR MEMBER-TO-MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Letters

A SATISFIED CUSTOMER

Deborah Gangloff: I enjoyed reading your Autumn issue with the "Earthkeepers" article on David Sibley's tree guide. I have his excellent bird book, and I'm looking forward to getting a copy of his next work.

Also, you guys are doing a great job on the "Big Tree Register" - the online version is fantastic! Keep up the good work!

*William B. Cannon
Hood River, OR*

UNDERSTANDING FORESTRY'S BASIC MATH

Deborah Gangloff: I found the Autumn issue of *American Forests* to be full of interesting and timely articles, especially "Forests and Climate Change" and "Weathering a Perfect Plague."

I drove through part of the national forests in north-central Colorado a couple of years ago, and the pine beetle has certainly made them the source of a "perfect storm," as well as the poster for a century of poor forest management. Steve Pyne is just completing a 10-year update of his earlier Forest History Society Issue Series book on *America's Fires*. In it, he chronicles foresters' and the Forest Service's antipathy toward fire from the beginning, which led to far denser second-growth forests than ever occurred naturally. Compound that with later misguided efforts to eliminate harvesting in national forests, which led to massive areas of dense, unthinned stands of aging tress, and it is indeed a perfect plague.

Thinking of the "Forests and Climate Change" article and your own editorial, "The Legacy of Trees," there is a growing awareness of the many things that forests can and must do for our ever-growing population. The National

Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry captured it well in its report: "Forest loss has and continues to reflect the social and economic development of the nation. In 1850 the United States had the equivalent of 40 acres of forest per person; in 2007 this per-capita amount had dropped to 2.5 acres."

If we extend this to the forecast population of 400 million by 2050, it falls to about 1.8 acres of forest per person to provide wood, water, green space, carbon buffering, recreation, and all the other things we need. To me, that's the basic math of American forestry, and the context in which citizens need to understand the opportunities, the travesty of mismanagement, and the failure to see the big picture. Keep up your good work.

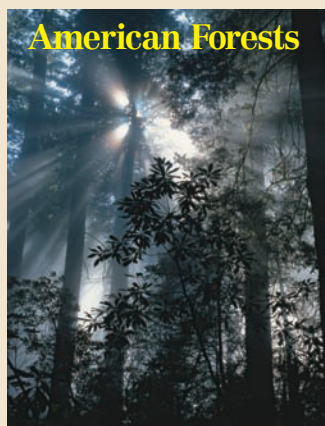
*R. Scott Wallinger
Seabrook Island, SC*

THE CASE FOR OPTIMISM

Deborah Gangloff: Congratulations on the Autumn 2009 issue. It tells a story of optimism regarding the future of American trees.

I was impressed by Gary Lantz's description of the *Dendroctonus* attack on western forests. He rightfully gave much space to the magnitude of the problem but, in my view, too little to the evidence that silvicultural thinnings produced healthier trees that are less susceptible. Also, almost in passing, he stated that the attack was on trees of more than five inches dbh (diameter at breast height).

These two points join the optimism of the rest of the issue: 1) that where small trees escape, regeneration and carbon sequestration may be natural and prompt, and 2) that if we had been thinning these forests as production forestry dictates, the attack might have remained spotty, as is usual. In Arizona,



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beetle attacks on the ponderosas were weakened by intense competition. Hopefully this scourge will lead to legislation or well-financed policies in both the U.S. and Canada supporting reduction of coniferous forest densities, particularly now that thinnings might be used for biofuel.

Frank H. Wadsworth
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Mr. Wadsworth: Thanks so much for your recent letter - I always appreciate it when you take the time to let me know what you think! The opinion of all our readers is much valued.

I am glad that our optimism for the future of our forests came through the pages of the magazine. As daunting as the problems are that face our forests, we believe that with sufficient investment, science-based solutions will lead to real policy change.

Deborah Gangloff, PhD
Executive Director

HOPE FOR FOREST FUELS

American Forests: As a 1981 graduate in forestry from Michigan Technological University, I read with great interest the article in your Summer 2009 issue, "Thermal Biomass: Burning for Acceptance."

I am hopeful that our country's politicians will get the opportunity to read the opinion in said article, and adhere to its statement that wood chips and especially pellets can be used to heat buildings in lieu of other means, thereby using up some "forest fuel" in the eastern states as well as the West, where we now find so much ready fuel.

It is also very important to note that the timber this article proposes to use will make it easier to plant reforestation projects in areas where this fuel has been harvested. It is my hope that reforestation projects will help trees to spread back into their original ranges, which had dwindled precipitously for all forest species even back when I was studying about them. The effort to reforest these places will be made all the easier because the ankle-bending slash and fallen trees won't be there to impede those who would be there to replant.

Here's hoping that even if the politicians don't accept our forest fuels for heating purposes, reforestation efforts can be broad and widespread enough that other uses for our current crop of trees and their byproducts can be accommodated as well.

Marc Larue Gillette
Niles, MI

WWI MEMORIAL TREE THRIVES IN NEW YORK

Deborah Gangloff: I have just read your editorial on World War I Memorial trees in *American Forests*, Spring 2003 issue, titled "Memorials That Live On: Some Good Ideas Should Last for a Lifetime." I also read Michelle Robbins' article on the same topic, titled "Rooted in Memory."

In these articles you both mention the uniqueness of a memorial tree that was planted in Arkadelphia, Arkansas in soil from every state of the nation and every allied country. Ms. Robbins mentions that the Arkadelphia tree is no longer standing.

I thought you might be interested to know that here at Farmingdale State College we also have a WWI Memorial Tree, planted in 1921. A plaque at its base reads, "Its roots rest in soil from all the allied nations, from every state and dependency of our country, from the bloody angle of Gettysburg and from the Arc de Triomphe of France." Luckily our Memorial Oak is still thriving today. You can see photos of it on our website, www.farmingdale.edu.

Karen Gelles,
Greenley Library,
Farmingdale State College
SUNY

We love to hear from our readers, so if you have comments or feedback for *American Forests*, please write to us at kmarland@amfor.org. Also, if you know someone who is an advocate for trees and forests in their community, you can send us your Earthkeeper nominations to the same email address.

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