



In the News

Aviation Biofuel

Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark announced, in January, his proposal for legislation establishing a Washington State DNR forest biomass pilot project that would create jet fuel from wood waste. Goldmark made the announcement during his keynote address to the Pacific West Biomass Conference in Seattle.

“Aviation biofuel is a product that can provide a renewable, locally grown energy source combining Washington’s forestry heritage and our technology future,” said Goldmark. “The Forest Biomass Initiative has a unique opportunity to help new, efficient technologies get to the marketplace in a pragmatic and sustainable way. Finding a higher use for residual forest biomass will help maintain our working lands that provide so many other benefits to the public, like habitat and clean water.”

Goldmark’s executive request legislation would allow DNR to create a pilot program to generate aviation biofuel from wood waste and mill residue. The bill will also convene a stakeholder group to develop a strategy for moving a sustainable biofuel industry forward.

“We see this as a move in the right direction, aligning Washington’s public and private sector that are emerging world leaders in this new sector,” said Dr. John Gardner, PhD., Washington State University Vice President of Advancement. “Washington State University stands ready to provide the critical research and development, as well as bring our broad network together already working on sustainable, next generation biofuels.”

Boeing, Port of Seattle, and Washington State Department of Commerce are supportive of this effort which was borne out of the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Northwest network, a diverse coalition of business, environmental, and government entities who are developing recommendations to create an aviation biofuel industry.

For more information on forest biomass and the Forest Biomass Initiative, visit <http://www.dnr.wa.gov>

New Tongass Supervisor

The U.S. Forest Service named Tricia O’Connor as the new Tongass National Forest deputy supervisor. O’Connor has been serving as acting deputy since July.

The job, she says, encompasses almost every part of Tongass operations. She will focus on both day-to-day operations of the forest plus “building external relationships and communicating in all aspects of Tongass management.”

O’Connor was previously a district wildlife biologist in Montana’s Lolo National Forest and has been a Yakutat District Ranger.



Beetle-killed Trees in Wyoming

The Billings Gazette reported that forestry officials found another 314,000 acres of trees dead from mountain pine beetles in Wyoming in 2010. This brings the total devastation to 3.1 million acres since 1996.

A recent aerial survey also detected an additional 71,000 acres of dead trees in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and roughly 69,000 acres in the Shoshone National Forest.

The Wyoming Legislature has been made aware of these figures. Tony Dixon, acting regional forester with the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Region, said officials are working to reduce the risk by falling dead trees as well as looking in to ways to use diseased trees.

"When we revise our forest plan, which is coming up, that'll be addressed in there," said Susie Douglas with the Shoshone National Forest. "This (epidemic) is a cycle, so this restoration thing is nothing new. It's just bigger than it used to be."

McClintock calls for review of USFS policies

In early January, Congressman Tom McClintock (R-Granite Bay) called for a review of the agency's policies, saying they are hurting businesses and residents.

A portion of McClintock's remarks are as follows: Much of my district comprises forests managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Over the last two years, I have received a growing volume of complaints protesting the increasingly exclusionary and elitist policies of this agency.

These complaints charge the Forest Service with [several omitted]:

- Expelling long-standing grazing operations on specious grounds — causing damage both to the local economy and the federal government's revenues.
- Obstructing the sound management of our forests through a policy that can only be described as benign neglect, creating both severe fire dangers and massive unemployment.

Practiced in the marketplace, we would renounce these tactics as predatory and abusive. In the public service sector, they are intolerable.

Combined, these actions evince an ideologically driven hostility to the public's enjoyment of the public's land — and a clear intention to deny the public the responsible and sustainable use of that land.

It is time for Congress to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the abuses by this increasingly unaccountable and elitist agency, to demand accountability for the damage it has done — and is doing — to our forests' health, to the public's trust, to the government's revenues, and to the nation's economy — and to take whatever actions are necessary to restore an attitude of consumer-friendly public service, which was Gifford Pinchot's original vision and for which the U.S. Forest Service was once renowned and respected.