

resources

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The following resources for land managers are available online or by calling the agencies and organizations listed. Listing these resources does not imply Conservancy endorsement of any agency, business, non-profit organization, or management practice.

Black Hills Forest Resource Association. Member supported organization dedicated to improving forest management on the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota and Wyoming. Internet address: www.bhfra.org/. Mailing address: 2218 Jackson Blvd., Ste. 10, Rapid City, SD 57702. Phone: (605) 341-0875.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). "An international not-for-profit membership-based organization that brings people together to find solutions to the problems created by bad forestry practices and to reward good forest management." Provides accreditation to independent third-party groups who certify forest managers and producers to FSC standards. Internet address: www.fsc.org.

Global Forest Partnership. A "Conservation Initiative" of The Nature Conservancy that addresses threats to forests. Internet address: www.nature.org/initiatives/forests.

Maser, C., and W. Smith. 2001. *Forest certification in sustainable development: healing the landscape*. CRC Press LLC, 2000 N.W. Corporate Blvd., Boca Raton, Florida 33431. 235 pp.

Society of American Foresters (SAF). National scientific and educational organization representing forestry professionals. The mission of SAF is to "advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry." Internet address: www.safnet.org. Mailing address: 5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814. Phone: (866) 897-8720.

The Forest Guild. Organization. Foresters and land stewards working to provide examples of sustainable forestry. Internet address: www.forestguild.org. Mailing address: P.O. Box 519, Santa Fe, NM 87504. Phone: (505) 983-8992.

Wyoming State Forestry Division. Working in partnership with other state and federal programs, provides advice and planning assistance to private landowners, communities, counties, elected officials, and government land management agencies. Internet address: <http://slf-web.state.wy.us/forestry.aspx>. Mailing address: 1100 W. 22nd, Cheyenne, WY 82002. Phone: (307) 777-7586.

Scientific Certification Systems (SCS). Accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to certify forest management operations and wood product producers. Internet address: www.scs-certified.com/forestry.

SmartWood. Program under auspices of the Rain Forest Alliance, the "world's leading FSC certifier of forestlands." Internet address: www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/forestry/smartwood.



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land stewardship news •

wyoming



Prescribed burn on The Nature Conservancy's Tensleep Preserve. © TNC

An ongoing commitment to Wyoming's lands, waters and wildlife

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

Dear Wyoming Land Stewards:

Since moving to Wyoming over eight years ago, I am increasingly impressed with the dynamic and sometimes misunderstood natural cycles of our Wyoming landscapes. The casual observer may look at a majestic stand of wilderness forest and take great solace in believing the scenic view will be conserved forever for all future generations to enjoy. The land is "protected" from change.

But a truly discerning nature observer knows that such situations rarely occur. While forests, rangelands, wetlands, and other habitats can give the impression of stability to our human senses, in fact these wild places are constantly responding to natural change and disturbance. Often, disturbance is a required element needed to ensure the health of an ecosystem. However, the human species often takes a negative view of disturbance.

One of the best examples of this negative view is our historic attitude toward fire. Our national forests were established to conserve timbered lands in the public trust. Forest fires were considered destructive and detrimental to forest health and the economy. For over a century, the mandate to suppress forest fires dominated our approach to forest management. Unfortunately, this approach had unintended consequences. Many forests, especially those

dominated by lodgepole pine, are dependent on fire to promote healthy stands. Without fire, lodgepole pine cones may not open and release seeds. Without seeds, the forest can't regenerate. And without fire, many coniferous forests develop "dog hair" stands characterized by the growth of many small trees rather than large, healthy trees.

As our knowledge of forest ecosystems increases, we've learned more about the importance of natural disturbances including fire, insect and disease outbreaks, interactions with wildlife, and how these and other disturbances impact our forests. We've also learned that there are ways humankind can use disturbance to improve ecological health and benefit the economy. As land stewards, it should be our goal to use disturbance, natural and human-induced, to the advantage of the ecological resources we value so much in this state.

Yours in Conservation,

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P.S. Please contact me if you would prefer to receive this newsletter via email.

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stewardship news

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY AND FOREST CERTIFICATION

As demand for wood products grows, forest managers will be hard pressed to develop management scenarios that provide economic income and ensure land health. Forestry management plans must be economically and ecologically sustainable over the long-term. Ecological sustainability is necessary to conserve biodiversity and maintain the natural conditions that promoted growth of forest lands in the first place. Economic and ecological priorities for timber management can be tied together in an approach known as “sustainable forestry.”

What is sustainable forestry?

Finding a good definition of “sustainable forestry” can be a real challenge. Different people with varying backgrounds will have different opinions on how forest lands should be managed for sustainability. Some managers may emphasize timber production, others will focus on ecological values. But from the perspective of The Nature Conservancy, any definition of sustainable forestry must meet three vital criteria: stewardship practices must be 1) ecologically viable, 2) economically practical and 3) socially responsible.

Meeting these criteria means conserving large patches of forestland connected by wooded corridors to allow for wildlife movement. It also means introducing prescribed burns to woodlands historically dependent on fire. And road density is limited.

Profit is important to most landowners. Stewardship practices designed to improve habitat and allow landowners to profit financially will help promote sustainable forestry. Finally, it's socially responsible to ensure that management practices consider economic and social impacts to surrounding communities and that negative impacts (e.g. soil erosion, decrease in water quality, etc.) are minimized.



Not your stereotypical “logging” area: a thinned forest on a conservation easement property shows the ecological benefits of responsible forestry. © Randy Craft/TNC

What is forest certification?

Forest certification is a quality assurance program that establishes standards for ecologically sustainable timber production. Consumers who buy certified timber products will know that their purchases come from forests managed in an environmentally-sensitive manner. Forests managed under certification protocols have long-term management plans prepared by natural resource specialists. A “chain of custody” is established for all timber harvested from sustainably managed forests and tracks ownership as products pass from the landowner to the consumer. Forest certification also has marketing and educational components.

Why should a landowner consider forest certification?

A forest certification program has three main goals. One goal is to have landowners, the forest industry, and the general public establish a vision of ecologically viable forestry. This is important if we are ever going to resolve the controversial issues surrounding timber harvest. Secondly, certification acknowledges operations that adopt forestry management standards required by the program. And thirdly, certification rewards land managers in the marketplace for adherence to the forest management standards.

Several forest certification schemes are available to forest owners. See the “resources” section of this newsletter for more information.

Aspens. © Joe Kiesecker



Forest stewardship plans are prepared by professional forest managers. The plans outline how the landowner will harvest timber in a sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner.

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conservation easement questions

Is logging allowed on conservation easements?

Logging on public lands is one of those “lightning rod” issues that can dominate the news, particularly regarding our western forests. There seldom appears to be any common ground among stakeholders.

When negotiating a conservation easement with a landowner, Conservancy staff do not automatically assume that logging is detrimental to a forest. Many of our easements allow non-commercial cutting of timber. Some easements even allow commercial harvest. Whether an easement allows timber harvest largely depends on what rights and restrictions will best promote healthy forest habitat.

On easement properties where timber cover is relatively sparse, timber harvest may simply be addressed in the consistent uses section of the easement document. In these situations the landowner is allowed to cut trees for firewood, fencing, and construction materials, all for use solely on the property. Tree cutting is usually allowed to protect people and property from wildfire, promote forest health, and to control timber encroachment onto grasslands and croplands.

Forested easement properties often need a detailed approach to forest management. In these cases, it may be appropriate to write a “Forest Stewardship Plan” that is referenced in the easement document. Forest stewardship plans are prepared by professional forest managers. The plans outline how the landowner will harvest timber in a sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner. Harvest schedules can be included and the harvest method can be specified. Forest stewardship plans are flexible and can be modified upon mutual approval of the Conservancy and the landowner.



Timber harvest that promotes healthy forest habitat may be allowed on Conservancy easement properties. © Randy Craft/TNC

Some forests on conservation easement properties face threats today that were not prevalent ten years ago. Bark beetle infestations have increased dramatically and kill thousands of trees annually. Dead trees caused by beetle kill can become a fire hazard requiring that managers implement fuels reduction activities on both public and private lands, including conservation easement lands. For example, the Conservancy collaborates with the Forest Service, the Wyoming Forestry Division, and the Bureau of Land Management on fuels reduction projects in the Casper and Dubois communities. Fuels reduction is accomplished using a combination of mechanical thinning and prescribed fire. These activities will take place on property owned by the Conservancy, and, with landowner permission, on properties having conservation easements.