Rough times ahead for forest roads?

Kevin Weeks, ODF public affairs specialist

One of the most followed issues for forest landowners in Oregon involves the future of regulation for forest roads – and there’s a three-pronged fork in the road. The response stems from a 2011 decision from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals viewing forest roads as needing a non-point source discharge permit under the federal Clean Water Act.

One path is occurring in Congress. The Oregon, Washington and Idaho congressional delegation introduced the Silviculture Regulatory Consistency Act; it directs the EPA to maintain the exemption forest roads currently have in the Clean Water Act. The House and Senate bills have not received a hearing as of February 2012. A ‘time-out’ provision was included in the general government budget bill signed by President Obama in December, that directs the EPA to not enforce regulations on forest roads until after September 30, 2012.

On the judicial path, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering an appeal of the Ninth Circuit decision. Oregon, with 25 other states and 35 natural resource groups, is asking the Court to hear Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) vs. Decker during the coming year. In December, justices considered the case and have requested input from the U.S. Solicitor General before deciding if NEDC vs. Decker will move forward.

In the third fork of the road, Oregon DEQ is beginning work on establishment of a general permit system for forest roads to comply with the Ninth Circuit Court ruling. DEQ has a collaborative stakeholder process for establishing permit thresholds in Oregon, and during 2012 ODF and DEQ are working closely on development of permit protocols for private forestlands in Oregon.
Oregon’s Heritage Tree Program: a unique link to the past
Cynthia Orlando, ODF public affairs specialist

Did you know Oregon’s Heritage Tree Program is the first state-sponsored heritage tree program in the country? Its goal: to increase public awareness of the important contributions trees have made to Oregon’s history and present-day quality of life. The committee, founded in 1995 by a dedicated group of individuals, originally formed under the auspices of the Travel Information Council.

Whether the trees exist singly, or comprise an entire grove, they tell a story about significant people or events from the past, and, there are heritage trees in every region of the state.

In the Willamette Valley, the Signature Oak at Silverton’s Oregon Garden is the oldest and largest tree of an Oregon white oak grove that predates valley settlement by European immigrants. Other Heritage Trees include a Black Locust tree planted in LaGrande in 1862 by an Oregon Trail emigrant, and a magnificent 205-foot sequoia in Ashland’s Peter Britt Gardens planted in 1862 by Britt the day his son was born. “I admire our state heritage tree program because it uses our living cultural trusts—our venerable trees—to tell Oregon’s stories,” says program chair Jennifer Karps, City of Portland. “And,” she adds, “we’re always looking for new trees to nominate.”

What does it take for a tree to be officially recognized as an Oregon Heritage Tree? The committee carefully considers and discusses several criteria including historic and statewide significance, tree health, and, accessibility to the public.

The committee is made up of volunteers from a variety of fields including forestry, the park service, and other heritage programs. They’re currently seeking a new member in the Sisters/Bend/Redmond/Sunriver/Antelope area to represent central Oregon.

To apply for the committee or to nominate a tree: http://ortravelexperience.com/oregon-heritage-trees/about-heritage-trees/

Photos by Cynthia Orlando, ODF
Popular forestry manual is updated, available

Those working in Oregon’s forests can gain a better understanding of the Oregon Forest Protection Act and how to comply with its provisions by obtaining a copy of a recently-updated manual from the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. *Oregon’s Forest Protection Laws - An Illustrated Manual, Second Edition* includes clear diagrams and vivid photographs about road building, harvest operations and reforestation.

You can order a copy at Oregonforests.org. Look under “Facts & Resources” pull-down menu, select publications, and scroll down the alphabetized list.

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**Accolade Elm**

*(Ulmus Accolade)*

Known for its ease of establishment and vigorous growth, the Accolade Elm is characterized by arching limbs and a graceful vase shape like that of the classic American Elm. A cross of Japanese and Chinese species, it was cloned in 1924 from a hybrid at Chicago’s Morton Arboretum.

Voted “Tree of the Year” by the Society of Municipal Arborists, it is drought-tolerant, cold hardy, and resistant to the dreaded Dutch Elm disease. This tree is upright and American elm-like – but more compact, reaching 40 to 60 feet in height, and 35 to 40 feet in spread. Foliage is dark, glossy green, and leaves are alternate, simple and doubly serrated. Accolade Elm features good, strong yellow fall color, and grows well in almost all soils unless they’re exceedingly wet.

Tree lore: A famous elm tree in the U.S. was the Liberty Tree, which stood in Boston near Boston Common in the days before the American Revolution. The tree became a gathering place and rallying point for the growing resistance to the rule of Britain over the American colonies.

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**WHAT:**
Oregon Urban & Community Forestry Conference

**Community Natural Areas: Restoration, management and enhancement**

**WHEN:**
June 7, 2012

**WHERE:**
World Forestry Center, Portland

**MORE INFO:**
http://oregoncommunitytrees.org
New priority wildlife guide available

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) has published a new guidebook to help family forest landowners and forestry professionals protect priority plant and animal species. The guidebook is also a great resource for K-12 students and teachers who want to learn more about plants and wildlife.

*A Guide to Priority Plant and Animal Species in Oregon’s Forests* is available to download or order at: [Oregonforests.org](http://Oregonforests.org)

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### From the State Forester

“The seven citizens who make up Oregon’s Board of Forestry oversee the Department of Forestry, with its principal missions in fire protection, management of state forests, and protection of natural resources on privately owned forestland. The Board also looks to—and beyond—the horizon, crafting policies and strategies intended to keep all of Oregon’s forests healthy, intact, and providing a sustainable, diverse flow of benefits.

Although the structure of the Board and the challenges and opportunities that our forests present have changed over the decades, a recognition that healthy forests are essential to Oregon’s long-term interests has remained a constant.

I’m pleased to let you know about three new Board members recently nominated by Governor Kitzhaber and confirmed by the Oregon Senate.

Nils Christoffersen, of Enterprise, is Executive Director of Wallowa Resources, a non-profit that brings people together to balance economic wellbeing with the stewardship and conservation of natural resources. Tom Insko, of La Grande, is a long-time executive with Boise Cascade, and is currently its regional manager. Cindy Williams, of Medford, is a fisheries biologist with 30 years of service in state and federal government and in the non-profit world.

They replace Peter Hayes, Cal Mukumoto and Jennifer Phillippi, whose terms expired. I thank the departing members for the insight, expertise and unique perspectives they brought to the Board’s important work.

We’re poised to move ahead with a strong Board—citizens from rural and urban Oregon, from both sides of the mountains, and with diversity in skills and life experiences. It’s a Board well positioned to continue a tradition of service to Oregonians and our forests.

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**Doug Decker**

**State Forester**

“It’s a Board well positioned to continue a tradition of service to Oregonians and our forests.”