

'Droughty' soils model could aid forest health

By Chris Branam
Oregon State University

CORVALLIS, Ore. — Scientists have developed a new approach to modeling potentially drought-prone soils in Pacific Northwest forests, which could aid natural resource managers to prepare forested landscapes for a changing climate.

The study, published in the journal (*Forest Ecology and Management*), presents a "droughty" soil index model that can aid land management activities that enhance forest health and productivity, said study lead author Chris Ringo, a senior faculty research assistant at Oregon State University.

"There are widely different abilities of different soil types to absorb, store, and supply moisture to vegetation throughout the year," Ringo said. "We demonstrated that the combination of climatic information and information on physical soil characteristics does a better job of identifying soils that experience prolonged periods of low summer moisture levels than either set of information does by itself."

The study, a collaboration of OSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, defines droughty soils as those that have a propensity to dry out during the summer months and thus may be particularly vulnerable when prolonged drought occurs.

Knowing how much moisture forest soils hold is important in the Pacific Northwest, as over two-thirds of the region's annual precipitation occurs between October and March. An average of less than two inches of rainfall occur in the summer months.

The model can also help fire managers identify sites to install soil moisture sensors to assist in fire danger

modeling.

In addition, the model can assist the Forest Service as it targets areas in the Pacific Northwest that are degraded for landscape restoration, said Ringo, a researcher in OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Low soil moisture in combination with high temperatures can induce significant stresses on forests, increasing vulnerability to attacks of insect and disease, as well as increasing wildfire risk.

To model the likelihood that soils experience prolonged summer drying, researchers used readily available spatial datasets depicting available water supply, soil depth, and evapotranspiration — the process by which water is transferred from the land to the atmosphere by evaporation.

FESTIVAL: Annual event kicks off on Friday, August 31

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this inspires ideas for things that we desperately need. I also enjoy painting my crazy vivid dreams."

Phallon is very excited about the classes.

"Each child will paint their own masterpiece," she says. "This is for kids who enjoy art and ones who are less confident in their abilities. I try to take every day shapes to help kids build on the fundamentals easily and with confidence. We often enjoy several ways to apply the paint in fun ways."

There will be a \$15 charge for the class; call the BBR Activity Center at 541-595-1282 to register.

The public is invited to let their kids and grandkids be creative while they browse the works of the many artists that will be displaying their art. in the beautiful setting of Black Butte Ranch.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Megan Pahallon enjoys teaching art for kids.

Art at the Ranch is presented by Black Butte Ranch Association and Black Butte Ranch Art Guild August 31 and September 1.

The event kicks off Friday evening, August 31, with an artists' reception and silent auction at BBR Lodge, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. On display in the Lodge will be works of several artists featured in the next day's art fair. Coyote Willow will perform.

Saturday's art fair on the Lakeside Promenade runs

from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., featuring a wide variety of Northwest artists and crafters displaying their work.

Live music will provide a festive mood for the day, featuring The Anvil Blasters, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Honey Don't from 1 to 4 p.m.

The annual Plein Air Paint Out will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Artists will be creating their own works of art, right before the eyes of the public. The People's Choice Award will be announced at 2 p.m.

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