

# Potential effects of global warming debated at woodlands annual meet

By SHANE WELSH  
Staff Writer

"People who have woodlands need to think about this problem: what to do about global warming," said Tom Atzet, a retired U.S. Forest Service employee.

He spoke during the annual meeting of Josephine County Small Woodlands Association in Grants Pass to discuss proposed Biscuit Fire timber salvage.

Guest speakers who took opposing sides of the "debate" were forest ecologist Tom Atzet, and Romain Cooper, Siskiyou Project representative.

Atzet briefly presented data from the perspective of the forest industry, which demonstrated global warming and how it will affect climate and forest management.

"There is little doubt that global warming is taking place. The question is, where are we going from here?" posed Atzet.

"In terms of small woodlands, we should consider what types of trees and vegetation will work best as global warming becomes a more predominant factor," said Atzet.

Atzet noted that, "with the increase in temperature all over the world, we are seeing lower lows, and higher highs.

"There are increases in precipitation that we have not seen before. Part of what we are seeing in our forests can be explained by differences in temperature, and the effects of global warming," he said.

"We will be seeing deeper freezes that may last longer into the spring than in the past. A lot of species (of trees) are going

to be in big trouble because we have oscillations in temperature that we haven't seen before," said Atzet.

"The Manzanita and Ceanothus species are California-related and very well adapted to low water and high temperatures," he said. "Oaks are the same way; they are a species that are more abundant in California (where the temperature is higher on average)."

## Possible climate changes could affect forest conditions.

"In order to maintain soil and forest productivity, these types of species are going to be very valuable here if we have global warming and more drought during summers," said Atzet.

Atzet suggested that climate changes could adversely affect forests, causing hotter blazes like those of the 500,000-acre Biscuit Fire that threatened Illinois Valley with evacuation two years ago.

Cooper's presentation focused on the Siskiyou Project's perspective on Biscuit Fire salvage operations.

"We have to figure out what is in the public interest," he said.

"Biscuit Fire was a very wild fire," said Cooper. "It was ignited by lightning instead of humans, and it burned over what is largely a natural area; the Kalmiopsis Wilderness.

"Only 22 percent of the fire burned in logged and roaded landscapes," he said.

"Federal agencies such as the forest service have to go through a process we

call NEPA or National Environmental Policy Act. What this entails in any project is that an agency asks citizens about their concerns, analyzes data and comes out with a proposed action for what they would like to do.

"Then they use this information to develop an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)," explained Cooper.

"When the draft EIS was released, the U.S. Forest Service offered what they called a preferred alternative...for what they felt was the best alternative to managing the Biscuit salvage.

"The way Siskiyou Project categorized this draft EIS was that it was very heavy on post-fire logging.

"This proposal recommended logging 15,000 acres," he said. "We felt there were strong risks in taking that much wood off of that much landscape."

Instead, "We offered up an alternative that stressed natural recovery. It wasn't black-and-white; it didn't say we don't want to plant anything, or we don't want to log anything. We (Siskiyou Project) continued to stress natural recovery on the land; most of which has never been logged. We want to see the ecosystem continue to evolve as it has for thousands of years."

"We feel that it's really hard with our limited knowledge to know what is best vegetatively for the future. This is a very special place and we want to keep it functioning naturally.

"We are still waiting for a final EIS," added Cooper.



**THE CHATEAU UNVEILED** - The Chateau at Oregon Caves National Monument, 20 miles east of Cave Junction, held its preview grand opening on Friday, April 30 (photo below). Fine dining is available daily from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. The Caves Diner, a 1930s-style coffee shop and fountain, is open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. In top photo (from left) Emily Ring, gift shop aide; Josiah Dean, Chateau general manager; Ron Phillips, executive director of I.V. Community Response Team/Oregon Caves Outfitters; and Rebecca Pearson, Gift Gallery coordinator, and staff are ready for the season. For more information, see the ad on this page.



## O'Brien temporary head of county health

Leslee O'Brien has been appointed interim director for Josephine County Public Health Dept.

Josephine County

Board of Commissioners appointed O'Brien to replace Pam Dykes, who accepted a position at Benton County Health Dept., effective May 1.

O'Brien's credentials include Oregon and California registered nurse licensure, California Community College lifetime teaching credential, and certified professional in health-care quality.

She received her master of science degree in nursing administration in 1993 from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

The interim director position will include administration of the following department divisions: Public Health, Environmental Health, Animal Protection and Regulation, and Correctional Health.

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**TUESDAY, MAY 11**  
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