

# Tribal forests certified as sustainable

*A good tribal natural resources management plan made approval for Forest Stewardship Council certification easy and at little cost to the tribes*

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Soon out-going lumber at Warm Springs Forest Products Industries (WSFPI) will bear the label of certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

In a Tribal Council meeting early last week, Council members voted to try certification for a year and measure the economic advantages for WSFPI when the year is completed.

FSC certified forests meet rigorous environmental, social, and economic criteria for forest management.

All tribal lands used for logging will be certified.

Meeting FSC criteria for the tribes was a breeze, says Larry Potts, WSFPI general manager.

In March, the tribes received a \$30,000 grant from First Nations Development.

The grant paid for an in-depth assessment performed by an independent, third party certifying agency, Smart Wood.

Already, the tribes practice of sustainable forestry was in sync with FSC criteria because a tribal natural resources integrated management plan designed to protect tribal ecology, economy, and cultural resources.

For this reason, Smart Wood gave the go ahead for tribal forests, with five conditions to be



Soon out-going lumber at Warm Springs Forest Products Industries (above) will bear the FSC label of sustainable forestry (below left).



The FSC logo displays a check for excellence and a tree for the forest.

met in the course of two years, saying criteria was easily met or exceeded for FSC certification.

FSC principles and criteria for forest stewardship include conserving biological diversity and functioning ecosystems; maintaining high conservation value forests; advancing the economic and social well being of workers, local communities and indigenous groups; and establishing long-term sound management practices.

In order to use the label 70 percent of solid wood products and assembled lumber products must be certified.

Chips and fiber would require at least 17.5 percent by weight of the total and at least 30 percent by weight of the new virgin wood used in manufacturing the product.

The remaining uncertified percentages would be from pub-

lic lands logged by the tribes. Due to limited resources on the reservation, logging outfits need to go off the reservation to meet market demands.

A 30-day notice will relieve the tribe of its contractual obligations if the enterprise does not see significant economic advantages.

Certification typically lasts five years and costs \$3,000-\$5,000 for annual audit fees.

Costs for the first year of FSC certification were covered by the First Nations Development grant.

Potts hopes to start selling FSC certified lumber by October.

Forest use by tribal members for subsistence will not be affected by certification.

#### Advantages for the tribe

Actual certification for sustainability, along with the FSC stamp, will have considerable marketing advantages for tribal lumber, says Potts.

He estimates additional premiums for lumber with FSC logo could potentially amount to \$1 million in the first year.

"But I believe it will be much higher than that," he adds.

The costs of managing a sustainable forest are high, which the tribes are already doing.

The higher market value of FSC certified wood could help offset those additional costs.

"What we are trying to do is drive more value out of the finished product," says Potts.

Without FSC certification the market would not recognize the tribes' efforts of forest sustainability.

For this reason the tribes cannot certify itself even though the forest sustainability plan is similar to the criteria for Smart

Wood.

Working with the FSC provides outside verification, credibility, and provides a logo, explains Potts.

Customers and clients will see the WSFPI and FSC logo side by side, publicly demonstrating the environmental integrity of the tribes.

The positive publicity could aid with off reservation high profile projects like the pending casino on the Columbia Gorge.

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Larry Potts  
WSFPI general manager

## Mill to purchase new boiler system

Warm Springs Forest Products Industries made a request to Tribal Council last week for a loan amounting to nearly \$12 million, saying the loan would save the enterprise \$2 million over a 10-year period.

Tribal Council approved the loan.

The loan money will be used to replace the boiler system at the Mill. Annual payments for the boiler of \$800,000 will be made to Wellows, Inc., the company providing the new boilers.

The boiler equipment cost is \$4.4 million and \$7.4 million for operating and maintenance costs until 2014. Interest would tack on an additional \$1.2 million. The boilers will be more energy efficient and fulfill EPA air quality requirements for operation of the Mill. The capacity of each boiler will be 80,000 pounds per hour.

Boilers provide half the power for the plant. The steam is used to dry lumber and run turbines.

Larry Potts, WSFPI general manager, said the loan would have a large benefit to the community. From 131 staff members at WSFPI, 105 are tribal members or married into the tribe. Payroll for tribal members or MITS amounts to nearly \$6 million per year. Council expressed concern that the Mill would close down before repayment of the loan would be completed. In recent years due to a waning industry, the Mill has reported losing up to \$2 million in revenues per year. Potts said providing the loan would enhance the enterprise's ability to succeed financially in the coming years.

"But not providing this loan would certainly begin to pave the path for the mill to close down," deadpanned Potts to Council.

## Advocates discuss commercial code

Community advocates for a uniform commercial code (UCC) on the reservation met in early September to further tackle issues and impacts a code would have on the Warm Springs community. Advocates are planning a workshop with Tribal Council in mid- to late-October.

"We discussed how to implement a UCC while protecting tribal sovereignty and tribal members. We want to do this while making the reservation attractive to outside lenders," explained Shawnele Shaw, Warm Springs Community Action Team community advocate.

The group is also making an effort to make the code user-friendly. It will be posted on the Warm Springs website.

Warm Springs already has community elements that would be included in a commercial code.

The group hopes to build on these already existing elements. Some examples are the Warm Springs business privilege tax, a tax break designed to encourage outsiders to set up businesses on the reservation and regulations on tobacco, liquor, and alcohol sales for reservation businesses.

"We want to incorporate these elements into the code and then add other elements," said Shaw.

A UCC on the reservation would promote economic development by creating a uniform set of standards that would provide outside lenders legal protection.

## B and B Complex Fire simmers down

Seasonal weather and good hard work helped simmer down the B and B complex fire this week, said Ken Lydy, Warm Springs assistant fire management officer.

Fresh snowfall could be seen on some mountain peaks early Tuesday morning. Scattered showers and cooler temperatures were expected into mid-afternoon on Tuesday.

As of Tuesday morning 88 percent of the fire on the east side of the Cascades was contained and 70 percent on the west side of the Cascades.

The 20-person Warm Springs Hotshot crew was sent home for few days of rest. There are still three Warm Springs camp crews assisting in containing the fire. Total fire crews have been reduced to 1,604 people.

The fire, made of the Booth and Bear Butte fires, consumed just over 90,000 acres by Tuesday morning. Just over 3,000 acres were burned on reservation lands.

Mop up and rehabilitation on the northwest corner of the fire would be completed by the end of Tuesday.

The travel advisory for US Highway 20 was lifted Tuesday afternoon after crews finished removing hazardous trees. Delays were still expected.

The investigation for the cause of the fire has been completed and the results should be released sometime next week by the federal government.

An Arson Task Force will meet on Friday in Bend to discuss the fire.

The certification would also provide verification that the tribes are implementing the integrated natural resources management plan on the reservation.

The price of framing lumber composite products has fluctuated greatly with the nation's economy in the last 10 years. Potts says the price is at its lowest in 10 years right now.

Eventually he expects the price to settle at around \$300.

As part of the company's strategy to drive up that price, he thinks certification could push up the price an additional \$30 to \$50.

#### Conditions

Smart Wood requested the tribes fulfill five conditions in the first two-years of certification.

Within one year from the award of certification, CTWS forest management must develop formal feedback mechanisms to respond publicly to Tribal members comments, questions and concerns regarding forestry practices.

Also within one year from the award of certification, contracts must be modified to include a section of safety requirements and a requirement that private contractors working with WSFPI accept responsibility for compliance with all relevant forestry, labor laws, and regulations.

Potts says all of these requirements are already happening and it is just a matter of altering the language in contracts to make them more explicit.

The third condition to be completed in one year after certification is that WSFPI perform a landscape and spatial analysis of old growth trees, using the FSC Pacific Coast Working

Group Type I, II, and III definition to assist in making harvesting decisions.

This will prevent the net loss of old growth structure that happens over time.

The tribes are already monitoring old growth but the organization plans to give the tribes additional guidance.

By two years CTWS will prioritize road problems, develop a strategy for addressing high priority roads and begin the necessary maintenance. Potts says because of the tribal natural resource plan, roads are already pretty well maintained.

Roads are the biggest contributor to stream sedimentation, so proper maintenance is crucial to a sustainable ecosystem.

"This condition is not forcing the tribe to spend money, but instead asking for a more definitive plan for road maintenance," explains Potts.

Before the first load of certified logs are shipped, WSFPI needs to develop a trip ticket or rubber stamp that has the CTWS unique FSC Chain of Custody (COC) certification code number.

The COC is a method of tracking wood from FSC well-managed forests.

"COC ensures we are not mixing non-certified wood with certified wood," says Potts.

Without the COC, the FSC would not have the credibility in the marketplace it has.

It is an assurance tracking system that follows the flow of wood from a certified forest to finished products.

A WSFPI COC plan will be in place in 15 days, says Potts.

A branding system to track certified logs also needs to be implemented.

## Interns find Warm Springs clinic offers an interesting perspective

Kari Due will only work at the Warm Springs Wellness Center for two weeks.

She's the first of four interns this fall on their way to becoming registered dietitians.

Her time at the clinic is part of 10-month internship for undergraduates with a degree in nutrition.

A recent graduate at Oregon State University, Due was drawn to the Warm Springs clinic because she felt experience at a public health facility would be beneficial. The strong focus on diabetes care also attracted her.

"There's always several interns that want to come here," said Laura Spaulding, nutritionist at the center.

Warm Springs has an outstanding reputation for diabetes care and prevention.

The clinic's statistics on regulating blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure, and kidney functions of diabetes patients are some of the best in the country.

## Tribal census to begin in October

The beginning of the tribal census has been postponed until Oct. 6, as census officials wrap up the hiring process.

For the limited duration of six weeks, 17 individuals were hired to conduct the door-to-door census. But officials are waiting for more applicants for the data specialist position. Lavonne Rotz, tribal data administrator, anticipates census employees will be trained the last week of this month.

Volunteers for the project are also being sought. Rotz estimates about 17 volunteers are also needed to work with the temporary employees. She hopes to form a cooperative relationship with tribal offices like the counseling center, the senior center,



Dietician Intern Kari Due

It is one of 17 nationwide Indian Health Centers deemed a Diabetes Center for Excellence. That recognition brings in extra funding for the diabetes program and case find diabetes patients. And it brings in interested young dietitians like Due.

"I am very interested in regulating diabetes through diet," said Due.

She was also drawn to the clinic because there is a strong focus on foods and herbs used as medicine.

"That connection is up and

coming in the field," said Due.

Warm Springs Nutritionist Sara Lee Thomas, RD, specializes in regulating food with herbal supplements.

Interns start with a class on cultural sensitivity. They are taught about specific issues relating to Native American populations.

"We were taught not to generalize about their culture and take each person on a one to one basis," explains Due. Also age sensitivity issues and a patient's related nutritional and social needs.

Interns work with Women with Infant Children (WIC) Program and tour the Senior Center, and High Lookee Lodge.

"I'm hoping this is a positive experience that will help me figure out what I want to do next," said Due on her first day.

Last year's intern Diane Cook found that positive experience and came back for more. She was recently hired as a full-time nutritionist at the clinic.

and the housing department. Volunteers could double up on their work because of their contact with the community.

Obtaining correct information about tribal members through a census will aid in assessing the needs of the community, explained Rotz. For example, if the census reveals there is a high population of disabled veterans on the reservation then a veteran's center could be opened.

In addition, the tribes will complete their 2000 census challenge with the federal government at the end of this month. In turn, the federal government will investigate the findings of the tribe. But chances are good we will win the federal govern-

ment, said Rotz.

If the tribes win, the reservation will see more federal money based on the 2000 census for housing, poverty issues, and more. Another census challenge to take place next spring will bring additional funding to Warm Springs housing department. Correct census information will also aid the CTWS in access to federal funding.

The main part of the census will last about one month. But tribal members can expect to be contacted as late as January.

Residents will not be bothered before 9 a.m. or after 8 p.m. The census will take place 7 days a week. For information, call Vital Statistics at 553-3252.