

FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water ◇ Soil ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Forest Health ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

DEFINING WOODY BIOMASS

information from Society of American Foresters, Bethesda, MD; plus other websites

For more information:

- <http://www.eforester.org/fp/positionstatements.cfm#bioenergy>
- <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-2454>
- [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:h2454:](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:h2454)

The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (H.R. 2454) passed the U.S. House of Representatives on June 26, 2009. It has now moved on to the Senate.

Parts of this bill promote commercial deployment of clean, local energy alternatives to fossil fuels, and require utilities to supply an increasing percentage of their demand from renewable sources.

In the past, both legislative bodies have passed renewable energy bills that became law. These efforts have included woody biomass as a renewable energy feedstock. However, due to concerns about the ‘sustainability’ of biomass, there have been many efforts to limit the type of woody biomass that would count as ‘renewable.’

Members of Congress with forests in their districts were concerned with the restrictive definition included in the Waxman-Markey version of H.R. 2454. The draft bill excluded federal lands and most private lands from producing biomass for energy counting towards a national renewable energy standard (RES).

Many members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee expressed concern during the Committee’s consideration of the Waxman-Markey bill and as a result the definition was expanded to include most private land and some public land. “Old growth” forests on both private and public land were excluded from this definition and new plantations on private land were prohibited. For public lands, the definition excluded biomass from ‘mature’ forest stands.

When brought before the House floor for full consideration by the House of Representatives, more debate resulted in a more open and inclusive definition of biomass from private land and a less restrictive definition on public land. Specifically on public lands, the word ‘mature’ was removed and ‘late successional’ added in its place - prohibiting removal of biomass from late-successional stands unless the trees are “dead, badly infested or severely damaged.”

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee has already passed an energy bill which includes a renewable energy standard and yet another definition of biomass. The Senate is currently considering the different definitions and will likely rewrite the definition over the coming months.

In a joint letter to U.S. senators from many interested parties, it is stated that: “America’s private and public forests are uniquely suited to help meet our nation’s renewable energy and climate needs. Renewable forest biomass from these lands could provide as much as one-third of the energy needed to meet an RES and could make significant contributions to the production of next generation transportation fuels. Sound management of our forests to provide biomass energy will also improve the overall carbon footprint of domestic energy supplies while contributing to the long-term forest health and vitality – improving wildlife habitat, protecting water quality and reducing catastrophic wildfires that emit millions of tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases each year.”

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NEW WILDLIFE TAX VALUATION BILL

from Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

For more information:

- <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlodocs/81R/billtext/pdf/SB00801I.pdf>

SB 801, extension of wildlife management tax valuation to timberland, by Sen. Glenn Hegar, was passed by the 81st Texas Legislature and recently signed by the governor. The bill will go into effect on January 1, 2010.

The bill extends wildlife management valuation to qualified timberland. Prior to the Act, only qualified open-space agricultural land could be converted to wildlife management. Timberland owners interested in converting from timberland to wildlife management had to convert to qualified 1-d-1 open-space agricultural land first. Once the land received the 1-d-1 open space agricultural land appraisal, the land could be changed to wildlife management use.

Under the new Act, however, qualified timberland can now be converted to wildlife management use directly. The land will be appraised at the same category as if the land was still in timberland.

For wildlife management valuation, the timberland must meet the following:

1. The timberland was appraised at timber use valuation before the conversion;
2. The landowner must choose and implement at least three of seven following management practices to “propagate a sustaining breeding, mi-

grating, or wintering population of indigenous wild animals for human use, including food, medicine, or recreation.”

- a. habitat control;
- b. erosion control;
- c. predator control;
- d. providing supplemental supplies of water;
- e. providing supplemental supplies of food;
- f. providing shelters; and
- g. making of census counts to determine population.

To file for the wildlife management valuation, landowners must:

1. Complete Form 1-d-1 Open-Space Agricultural Appraisal and select the wildlife management option. The application form is available at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/50-129.pdf>.
2. Attach a wildlife management plan on a form developed by Texas Parks and Wildlife. The management plan is available at: http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdforms/media/pwd_885_w7000_open_space_agric_valuation_wildlife_mgmt_plan.pdf.
3. Submit all the information to the chief appraiser.

BEN MILAM CYPRESS

According to legend, a Mexican sniper under the command of General Martin Prefecto de Cos shot Benjamin Milam from this towering baldcypress tree on the San Antonio River on December 7, 1835.

Colonel Milam had escaped from imprisonment in Mexico early in October 1835 and joined General Edward Bursleson's volunteers as a private in their fight to oust General Cos from San Antonio. The Texans tried unsuccessfully to dislodge the Mexicans. Seeing that the men were be-

coming disillusioned and were deserting at an alarming rate, Milam rose to the occasion and called for volunteers to follow him and take the town. About 300 responded and an advance began which six days later ended in victory.

During the difficult house-to-house fighting, Milam entered the backyard between the Veramendi Palace and the river. As he crossed the high-walled courtyard, he was hit in the head by a rifleball and killed instantly.

from the Texas Forest Service website—Famous Trees of Texas

For more information:

- <http://famoustree-softexas.tamu.edu/TreeHistory.aspx?TreeName=BenMilamCypress>

NEW FARM BILL PROGRAM

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) state conservationist for Texas, Don Gohmert, announced a sign-up beginning on August 10, 2009, for the new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to assist agricultural and forestry producers. CSP is a new program authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill.

“Farmers and ranchers actively engaged in conservation land stewardship have the opportunity to earn conservation rewards through CSP,” Gohmert said. “This program gives conservation-minded producers the ability to apply and build on their current stewardship efforts.”

CSP is a five-year program which offers continuous sign-up, but all eligible applicants who **sign up between Aug. 10 and Sept. 30, 2009**, will be ranked as a group in October and November. A second ranking of subsequent applications will likely take place again in January or February of 2010.

CSP replaced a program authorized in the

2002 Farm Bill, the Conservation Security Program, which was only offered on a watershed-specific basis. The new CSP is now available to landowners statewide.

Gohmert noted only top stewards will be awarded contracts for CSP and receive funding.

“CSP is for the best of the best stewards,” Gohmert said. “We have many land stewards in Texas that are worthy of this recognition, and I encourage them to apply.”

Lands eligible for CSP include cropland, grassland, pastureland, and **private nonindustrial forestland**, a new land use for the program. Agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe is expressly eligible as well.

The CSP application process begins with a self-screening checklist. Interested producers can obtain additional information from the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp or contact their local USDA-NRCS field office.

from NRCS website, news release dated 8-10-09

For more information:

- http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/news/releases/new_csp.html
- http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp/

LEGACY INSTEAD OF LANDFILL

For a hundred years, mighty live oaks have lined the streets of Galveston, Texas - signs of hope and new life repeatedly re-emerging after devastation. Submerged in a salty storm surge brought ashore last fall by Hurricane Ike, many of the once-majestic trees now are bare. But Quentin Snediker is hoping the lost hardwoods will breathe new life into a 167-year-old whaling ship.

“We recognize this is a tremendous loss for the community,” said Snediker, preservation shipyard director at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, where the Charles W. Morgan - the last surviving wooden whaling ship - is being restored. “Our intent is to honor these trees. They had a cultural impact on the region. Incorporating them

into the fabric of this ship is a way of honoring the community.”

The bottom framing and planking on the Morgan, now a floating museum, are being replaced as part of a three-year restoration effort. And the Galveston live oaks - about 100-years-old, with trunks up to 24-inches around and 14-feet tall and branches that form gentle, sweeping curves - are ideal replacements.

“I think for me it’s the old pass it forward; keep it going. Don’t just landfill it; keep it doing something useful somewhere. . . . I truly can’t think of a better use for some of our wood,” said island resident Donna Leibbert, a member of the Galveston Island Tree Conservancy.

from TFS website

For more information:

- <http://texasforestservice.tamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=8768>
- <http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story.mpl/front/6510492.html>
- http://www.mysticseaport.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewPage&page_id=1

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CONFERENCE ON INVASIVES

2009 TEXAS INVASIVE PLANT AND PEST CONFERENCE

November 13-15, 2009

Trinity University in San Antonio

The Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council will host the third statewide conference on invasive species. It will be a professional level meeting designed to serve scientists, land managers, state and federal agencies, local governments, and other professionals interested or involved in invasive species issues in Texas. Environmental organizations, university researchers, landscape architects, and companies servicing restoration and weed removal projects could also benefit from attending this conference.

The conference will feature:

- Plenary sessions featuring nationally recognized speakers
- Concurrent sessions addressing prevention, early detection, management, information sharing and research
- Trade exhibits and poster sessions
- An extra 1/2 day for field trips and workshops

Go to <http://texasinvasives.org/> for more information.



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