Fire & Ice
By Bill Arsenault

The Douglas Forest Protective Association, which protects private, BLM, State and County lands in the Douglas District from wildfires, employs a wide variety of folks during the year. Among these are approximately 14 full time employees, 15 part time Forest Officers and many seasonal workers peaking to approximately 35 in fire season. The part-time Forest Officers are highly trained and experienced wildland fire fighters, both in strategizing initial attack and in leading crews safely in dangerous situations. The issue for DFPA is to keep these folks available for fire season when DFPA can only pay them for 6 to 10 months a year. DFPA would lose much of this investment if we lost these folks to full time jobs.

What has worked well over the years is what is called the Cooperative Work Program. DFPA contracts with various entities to employ these folks during the off season on a part time basis and pays them their regular salary while they are employed. As an example DFPA contracts with several forest products companies for winter work such as quality control during seedling planting. One of the major sources of work has been with ODOT doing winter road maintenance such as driving snow plows (ergo “Ice”).

Last year the Attorney General’s Office decided that the State could no long do this direct contracting with DFPA since it is a private corporation and ODOT would have to advertise for bids to do the work. This decision also affected Coos and Walker Range Districts since they are the other two private corporations contracting with the State to fight wildland fires in Oregon.

At this point Jake Gibbs of Loan Rock Timber and a DFPA Board member swung into action. With the help of Charlie Stone of ODF writing much of the original language, Rep. Sol Esquivel carried HB 4072 through the House Ag and Natural Resources Committee and then House itself. Senator Prozanski also spoke in support of the Bill on the Senate Floor and he also told the Senate about DFPA’s 100 year history and the camera system technology we have been using. Initially Rep. Bruce Hanna was contacted about the issue. He understood and gave a commitment to do the best he could to get it fixed. He worked behind the scenes and had help from his staff (especially Ian Tolleson). Once concerns from the public employee union were ironed out, with no less than

(Continued on page 2)
Having trouble finding seedlings?

If you did not order your seedlings early last year you are probably finding there are no seedlings to be found. Slow economy, fewer nurseries, past weather conditions, and decent log markets last year are some of the main reasons for the lack of seedlings.

There are a couple of things you can do to prevent this from happening to you again. One is order your seedlings now for planting next year. The other thing you can do is to contract grow your seedlings through a nursery. Some of them will take a contract as low as 5000 seedlings while others require 10,000 seedling orders. The biggest advantage to contract growing is you can save a fair amount of money, as much as 10 cents a-piece. The disadvantage is you need to talk to the nursery in October or November two years ahead of when you intend to plant the trees (one year a-head for plugs), so they can start their growing process. This makes it tough because most everybody tries to play the log market.

If you would like a list of nurseries to contact, please give me a call at 541-440-3412 ext. 116.

Marty Amos, Woodland Assistance Forester
A Resource to Manage Fuel Loads

DFPA’s industrial fire forester, Steve Silva, said the goal was to thin and utilize forest biomass from 2,900 acres between 2009 and the end of 2012. With Federal stimulus dollars, the program so far has thinned and trimmed about 2,400 acres. Silva administers the two county-wide projects funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

In one project, ARRA funds are used to employ DFPA firefighting crews on-site during the off-season to produce chips utilized by several co-gen plants in the county. In another effort, an industrial wood products firm chips biomass and hauls the chips to its own mill; ARRA funds reimburse that company.

Silva noted the cost of producing chips far exceeds the market value of chips themselves. But his cost-benefit analysis also includes other values—healthy forests, avoided firefighting costs, and the value of unburned standing timber. He also noted one local industrial forest is now using a larger, mobile chipper that, on a per ton basis, produces chips less expensively.

Silva’s background for administering these ARRA contracts includes certification training at Chemeketa Community College in fire suppression, seasonal work with DFPA, and full-time responsibility as a forest officer with DFPA. He’s worked with DFPA for eight years and assumed his present position last fall.

Silva’s career focuses on fuels management—helping land owners learn the “whys” and “hows” of managing “clean forest lands.” Fire forester Steve Silva distributes a pamphlet entitled “Biomass and Family Forest Landowners.” He said he likes to visit with small woodland owners about fuels management.

Steve Silva can be contacted at 541.672.6507/113; silva@odf.state.or.us
Northern Spotted Owl Survey for Abandonment Protocol Situation
By Mike Dewey

Background
In early 2010, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provided a new Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) survey protocol. No protocol was provided for abandoning NSO activity centers, however, an implementation period for the new protocol of the 2010 calendar year was authorized, during which states were able to utilize existing abandonment guidance to accomplish NSO activity center abandonments. In general, for NSO activity centers located in Douglas County, a period of five years of no NSO detections qualified an activity center for abandonment. Landowners that were interested in having a NSO activity center abandoned were obliged to submit requests for such to ODF during 2010; a procedural review of available data for sites was made by ODF and sites that met ODF’s then existing abandonment guidance were designated as abandoned; in the ODF Douglas District, 67 NSO activity centers were submitted for abandonment review, 32 were found to meet the then applicable abandonment guidance and were abandoned.

Current Status
As of January 1, 2011, the new survey protocol implementation period is over, and previous abandonment guidance may no longer be used to accomplish NSO activity center abandonment. No USFWS abandonment guidance has yet been provided so states have no federally sanctioned basis with which to justify not protecting the most recently used NSO nesting site within an NSO activity center (an activity center may contain several “alternate” nesting sites that a pair of NSOs may use for nesting in any given year), irrespective of how long it has been since that last utilized nesting site was used. As such, in accordance with the Forest Practices Act which provides protection to nesting sites of (male and female) pairs of NSOs, ODF must require that landowners provide temporal and structural protection of the most recently active nesting (the “protected”) site for any NSO activity center that is located, generally, within a ¼ mile of a planned forestry operation. Temporal protection generally means not operating during the “critical use period” of March 1 through September 30 of each year; structural protection generally means designating a 70 acre “core area” of suitable NSO habitat around the nesting site and operating no closer than a ¼ mile from the nesting site.

Local Information
It’s important to understand that it is possible to verify that the protected site is not being used by NSOs for nesting during the critical use period; generally this requires hiring a biological consultant to perform surveying of the activity center and that results of that survey
effort indicate that either 1) nesting activity is taking place at another “alternate” site of the activity center, or 2) no nesting activity is taking place that year within the activity center. Generally, these determinations cannot be made until approximately mid-June. In Douglas County, we are lucky in that the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Station branch of the United States Forest Service (USFS) has been engaged for many years in the “Tyee Demographic Study” of NSO population. As such, for activity centers located within the central northern portion of the county (an area approximately bounded by Lookinglass, Drain and Scottsburg), this information is available from PNW through your ODF Stewardship Forester. Because owls that have historically nested within the Tyee demography area may leave the study area and nest in locations outside of it in any given year, the Roseburg office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) cooperates with PNW by providing similarly thorough surveying throughout much of the rest of Douglas County. Therefore, for nearly any location in the county, current nesting season NSO site utilization status is generally available from your ODF Stewardship Forester. This is not the case in most other counties in Oregon; again, we’re lucky.

Other Information
While we wait to receive a new NSO survey protocol from the USFWS, abandonment review requests may be made directly to the USFWS. Again, we’re lucky here in Douglas County in that there is a USFWS office in Roseburg; the address is: 2900 NW Stewart Parkway 97471. As opposed to the procedural review of activity centers submitted to ODF during the 2010 calendar year, abandonment review requests made to the USFWS are non-procedural and focused on site specific factors such as the influence of Barred Owls on the survey detection record for the site. Limited information indicates that USFWS decisions regarding site abandonment are being delivered to landowners in an approximately 3 to 6 month time-frame.

There has been some discussion at the ODF Salem staff level of providing field staff with “interim” abandonment guidance that could be used until USFWS provides their abandonment protocol. ‘Likely abandoned’ is realistically the most meaning that a non-Endangered Species Act (ESA) informed use of the word “abandoned” can have in this context. As such, the reality is that upon receiving the new USFWS abandonment protocol, it could be determined that NSO activity centers that an ODF designated interim abandonment protocol had indicated were likely abandoned are, in fact, not abandoned; federal law suites take of an endangered species under the ESA would be a permissible outcome. Because of this jeopardy and because of the abundance of other high priority tasks that ODF’s reduced personnel are currently engaged with [such as the Legislative mandated Budget Note #2 Efficiency Improvement effort and the joint ODF/DEQ Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments/Total Maximum Daily Loads (CZARA/TMDL) effort to reduce sediment delivery to Waters of the State from forest roads and landslides], it is unlikely that an ODF specified interim NSO survey protocol will be produced.
Stand Management Options
There are some management alternatives to compliance with the FPA’s NSO protection rules. They are: 1) Stewardship Plan with a Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA), and, 2) Stewardship Plan enrolled in National Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP). The two programs are similar in their application and in that they both require a Stewardship Plan, typically produced by a professional forestry consultant; they differ primarily in that in the case of the former, stand management activity may be done as long as it doesn’t reduce baseline conditions; in the case of the latter, the stand is partially or fully purchased from the landowner by the NRCS and management is limited to activities that improve the stand with respect to NSO habitat. The following text summarizes options:

Stewardship Plan with a Safe Harbor Agreement
- Stewardship Plan establishes a baseline condition for NSO habitat; landowners may use the property in any legal manner that does not move the habitat below baseline conditions
- Landowners receive regulatory assurances and incidental take authority for impacts to any NSO and/or their habitat
- At the end of the agreement period, participants may return the enrolled property to the baseline conditions that existed prior to enrollment

Stewardship Plan in NRCS’s Healthy Forest Reserve Program
- Stewardship Plan must be expected to result in NSO habitat improvement
- Landowners receive regulatory assurances and incidental take authority for impacts to any NSO and/or their habitat
- Enrollment periods are for 10 years, 30 years or permanently; payments to landowners are 50%, 75% and 100% respectively for value of the land/timber and cost of Stewardship Plan specified conservation practices

Cost-share funding from ODF is available (until exhausted) to reimburse landowners up to 75% of the cost of Stewardship Plans that are produced for purposes of enrollment in a Safe Harbor Agreement. Also noteworthy is that funding for NRCS’s HFRP in Oregon is currently exhausted and there is no current timeline that indicates when additional funding will become available; therefore, for current purposes, it isn’t an option. Hopefully, in future years it will be.

For more detailed information, contact Mike Dewey, ODF Douglas District Stewardship Forester at 541-440-3412 ext. 117.
2011 Tree Farm of the Year Tour
Bill and Joan Arsenault

A group of about 35 gathered at Bill and Joan’s tree farm on September 10 to celebrate the accomplishments of Bill and Joan on their 270 acre tree farm on Paradise Creek (near Elkton). Highlights of the tour included a hay ride (hay bales in the back of pickup trucks) to view intensively managed Douglas-fir stands ranging from 3 year old reproduction to 70 year old natural stands. The group also visited in-stream and riparian enhancement work along Paradise Creek. On a side note, Bill and Dan Newton discovered that hay bales can provide suitable habitat for yellow jackets. Disturbing this habitat (when moving the bales from haystack to the bucket on Bill’s tractor) resulted in Bill and Dan competing with the angry insects in the 50 yard dash. The yellow jackets may have won, but Bill and Dan demonstrated a dazzling ability to combine sprinting, swatting, and pirouetting with grace and finesse!

Not to be dissuaded by more than a dozen stings, Bill proceeded to share the story of their tree farm, from purchase to the present. Bill and Joan moved from California to their ranch in 1976. Bill’s experience as an electrical engineer in the aerospace industry had served him well, but he quickly realized that their 270 acres of high site Douglas-fir were a new ball game. Bill took advantage of OSU extension, ODF Service Foresters, forestry consultants and the Douglas Small Woodlands Association to learn everything he could about woodland management. The result: a beautiful, working, highly productive, Douglas-fir forest that exemplifies state of the art knowledge in silviculture and stream enhancement.

In addition, to forestry, Bill and Joan manage 55 acres as a cattle ranch. Their home is nestled in a pastoral setting, surrounded by a mosaic of Douglas-fir forests.

To harvest or not to harvest, that is the question. One of the stops during the tour was a grove of large and beautiful older Douglas-fir trees. Bill discussed some of the trade-offs of managing the stand to create big trees. They like having part of their ownership growing big and beautiful trees, but are also worried about the regulatory threat of attracting spotted owls that would preclude harvest within the foreseeable future. State Forest Practices prohibit harvesting a 70 acre of core habitat around nests. A discussion ensued as to whether the core area could be harvested if the owl(s) vacated the core area. This is a discussion that has not been fully resolved yet as USFWS has not made a final ruling on deactivating core areas under a new policy being considered. Our board has asked ODF to share the latest policy on abandoning owl sites after the owls depart.

As many of you know, Bill is the Douglas Small Woodland Association’s president for many years. He has provided energetic and thoughtful leadership, as well as a highly respected voice in Salem for two decades. For many of us at the tour, this was a great way to spend some time with a guy who has done a lot for small woodland owners. Kudos to Bill and Joan!

Thanks to Margaret Fabrizius (Farm Credit Services) for providing morning refreshments.
DSWA Evening Workshop
Be sure to put this date on your calendar! Douglas Small Woodlands Associations has scheduled an evening workshop:

**Thursday, May 10th**
5:30 to 9:00 pm
Douglas County Fairgrounds
Cascade Room in the Community Building
$5/person for Pizza and Rootbeer Floats!

Our guest speaker will be Pat Mooney. Pat is the owner of Oregon Herb and Craft Products located in Creswell. Pat will talk to us about secondary forest products you may have on your property or you have a desire to learn more about.

During the workshop Pat will show you some of the common plants that are harvested and sold regularly. Some of these include Oregon grape, Usnea Lichen, Cascara Bark, Camas Bulbs and Bay Myrtle.

Because each property has different trees, soils, streams and age classes, Pat will discuss how to identify as many plants and opportunities as possible. As a property owner or harvester, you must know what you have, how much there is and how to ethically harvest while keeping sustainability in mind.

We will be looking at what harvest opportunities there are in riparian areas as well as under planting thinned conifer stands with Golden Seal, Indigo, Echinacea and Ginseng.

Secondary manufacturing is always a buzz word for Oregon products. In secondary manufacturing, it can mean turning your Black Berry patch into wine, jam or medicinal herbs. Pat will discuss many other interesting aspects that you may want to consider as a hobby or as a secondary income. He will discuss all phases of the business, whether it is at the harvest level, a manufacturer, wholesaler and/or retailer.
Tree Farm Activities for April -July
By Marty Amos
Douglas County Woodland Assistance Forester

Check your seedlings: Walk through newly planted seedlings to look for problems. At this time of year, seedlings should not show any signs of stress. Buds should be swollen or newly broken with lush, bright green foliage emerging.

Check the effectiveness of your weed control measures: Nearly every vegetation management scenario has more than one option. Spring and early summer is the time to evaluate the effectiveness of this year’s project and think about improvements that you may want to make in the future.

Apply for financial assistance programs if applicable: Even though cost share programs so beneficial in the past have been drastically reduced, you might get assistance. Call Marty Amos or Bill Moore for more information.

Begin harvest operations: Don’t plan to do all your harvest in mid or late summer. Fire season can wreak havoc with dry season logging! Submit your notification of operations to ODF early.

Plan summer/fall site preparation: Submit notifications on time. Arrange for contractors if necessary. Douglas County and ODF coordinate mutual mid-summer and fall aerial spray projects. Call Marty Amos or Bill Moore for more information (440-3412).

Spray poison oak: If no trees are present, use a 5% solution of Accord (Roundup) in late May-June while leaves are full and green. If tree seedlings are present, wait until their new buds have hardened, usually in late July or early August. Treat poison oak before leaves turn red using Accord Concentrate. Douglas County has backpack sprayers you may borrow for your personal use. Contact: Marty Amos for more information.
DSWA meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 in the DFPA Meeting Room.

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<tr>
<td>5/11/2012</td>
<td>DSWA Evening Workshop, Douglas County Fairgrounds Cascade Room. 5:30pm. Best Dinner Deal in Town... Pizza and Rootbeer Floats @ $5/person!!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Watch for announcements on our July Summer Tour. TBD</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Douglas County Fair! Visit us in Forest Products Tent.</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Tree Farmer of the Year Tour. TBA</td>
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