

# HEADLINES

## forest conservation program



News from Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Forest Conservation Program [www.manometmaine.org](http://www.manometmaine.org)

June 2007

### FCP breaks record for proposal writing

Between February and April, 2007, the Forest Conservation Program staff wrote and submitted 15 funding proposals. This pace breaks the record for the 15 years the Forest Program has existed.

Subject areas included: using forests to offset CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, saving old trees with the carbon market, developing a simple scorecard for assessing recreation impacts on the environment, creating a framework for managing exotic and invasive species, and implementing a social process to help rural communities evaluate future biomass (wood-based) energy opportunities in the Northern Forests, among others.

We are just now beginning to hear from these effort. Our proposed work on forest carbon offsets, and recreational impacts on

the environment, will be moving forward this summer.

### Manomet joins U.S. delegation to Russia

In late April John Hagan (Forest Conservation Program Director) and Jeff Parrish (VP of Conservation Science) joined a small New England delegation to Russia led by Bill King, of the Cambridge-based New Horizons Project (NHP). NHP brings Russian students to study in the Boston area.

The purpose of the trip was to explore prospects for collaboration between Russia, the U.S., and Canada, since these countries share many of the same forest challenges, and contain 75% of the earth's temperate forest.

We made many contacts in Moscow and St. Petersburg, but most of our time was



In New England we often find old stone walls running through our forests, reminding us that the forest was once a field. In northwest Russia, trenches and foxholes in the forest are reminders of a much different history.

spent in the Tomsk Oblast (state) in central Siberia. About 40% of Tomsk's forest is virgin, but Russia is aggressively developing all its natural resources in the region, including timber, oil, gas, and minerals.

As an initial result of our delegation, an international conference is being considered for 2008 to foster new projects and sharing of ideas among the nations.

### Manomet hosts forest and climate change workshop in June

The Forest Conservation Program is convening a 1-day workshop on June 27 at the Augusta Civic Center in Augusta, Maine. The purpose of the workshop is to explore opportunities to use New England forests to sequester CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon), the major greenhouse gas contributing to global warming.



A 270-year-old larch plantation outside of St. Petersburg, Russia. The plantation was established by Peter the Great in about 1735. Somehow, the plantation was never cut. The plantation is now protected as a national park in Russia.

Forests in the U.S. re-absorb about 10% of all U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year. Therefore, it is easy to see that keeping our forests as forest is an important component of fighting climate change.

An emerging carbon offset market (i.e., paying for projects that prevent CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, or that sequester carbon) may help ensure that we keep forest cover in the U.S.

Ten northeastern states have committed to reducing greenhouse gases (the so-called ReGGIe initiative). So far, RGGI will not allow existing forests to be used to offset emissions. Our workshop is designed to explore and discuss potential forest offset projects that involve our vast New England working forests. We hope to inform RGGI policy leaders of the potential to use existing forests to fight global warming.

To see the agenda, or to register for the conference, visit [www.manometmaine.org](http://www.manometmaine.org).

## FCP wins grants to work with recreational users in the Northern Forest

Public access to forest land for recreational activities has become one of the major public concerns in the Northern Forest. This concern has been brought about for two reasons.

First, a vast change in forest ownership



Recreational impact on the Northern Forest is increasing. More and more user groups want access to private forest to hike, hunt, snowmobile, and use ATVs.

has taken place in the last decade (see Manomet's report at its web site: [www.manometmaine.org](http://www.manometmaine.org)). There is concern that many of the new owners will not recognize the traditional "open access" policy that has existed literally forever in Maine.

Second, a number of recent conservation land acquisitions will exclude traditional activities, such as hunting, and more contemporary uses such as all-terrain-vehicle (ATV) recreation. The public is concerned about a dwindling access to privately owned forestland.

Using Manomet's science skills we will be developing a way to objectively measure recreational trail impacts on the environment. The impact scorecard will provide a means for any recreational group to document (and mitigate) its impact on the environment. We have enlisted the support of diverse groups to help us develop and implement this tool, including ATV clubs, snowmobile clubs, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and Baxter State Park.

Manomet's commitment to working with diverse forest stakeholders, and using science to bring diverse interests to the table, enabled us to win \$137,000 in grants from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (state) and the Northeastern States Research Cooperative (federal).

## Forest stream research takes a new twist in 2007

Commercial forest landowners must leave buffer strips along both sides of streams in an effort to prevent erosion in the streams and to protect water temperature. Buffers are typically 75' wide. Manomet has studied the effectiveness of buffer strips since 1998.

Forest managers typically claim that these buffers are also providing late-successional forest, i.e., trees 100-200 years old. Since late-successional forest is being rapidly lost from upland areas, if this claim is true, riparian buffer zones may be important for more than just projecting water quality; they may also provide other ecological benefits.

However, managers had no data to support their claim. This summer, Manomet is studying riparian buffer strips throughout northern Maine to determine if this claim is true. If riparian buffers are not providing for late-successional forest, then it will be clear we need other conservation strategies to prevent the widespread loss of old forest



Do forest buffers along streams also support old-growth forest? A Manomet study is answering this question in 2007.

from large areas of the Maine landscape. Many species depend on old trees.

## Will the Northern Forest convert from paper to ethanol?

Global competition in the paper industry is putting a strain on the paper industry in northern New England. Pulp is now being shipped from South America to the Canada Maritimes for paper making, despite the abundance of forest in the region.

In a decade or two, the paper industry could wane in New England, depending on production in China and South America. What will become of the region's forest?

A likely scenario is that our New England forests will be used for energy. Wood can yield much more ethanol than corn or switch grass. The Department of Energy is spending millions of dollars to perfect methods of converting cellulose to ethanol.

Despite the technology investment, there has been little work on the social and environmental implications of converting the Northern Forest to an energy source.

This past April, Manomet submitted a \$733,000 proposal to the DOE to help rural communities understand the social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of converting to a bio-energy future.

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For more information about any of these projects, please contact John Hagan at [jmhagan@prexar.com](mailto:jmhagan@prexar.com) or call 207-721-9040. This newsletter is available online at [www.manometmaine.org](http://www.manometmaine.org)