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FORUM

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Letters

BIOMASS BOOST

American Forests: I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the summer issue of *American Forests*, especially the article on thermal biomass. Everything Gerry Gray and I have learned about community forestry over the years is helping us to address the challenged and opportunities of renewable energy in a way that may actually give sustainable forestry a long-needed boost.

You guys do a great job with *American Forests*, and it reflects an enormous amount of good work the organization is doing around the country. You all have a lot to be proud of.

*V. Alaric Sample, President,
Pinchot Institute for Conservation*

WILDFIRE PHILOSOPHY

American Forests: Thank you for the copies of your magazine that contained the article on wildfire by Rocky Barker. A slight addition – the fuels reduction/firewise project that I managed on Secesh Meadow in 2005 and 2006 was supported by a grant from the Idaho Department of Lands and Idaho County. We used private contractors or compensated the home and property owners if they elected to do the work themselves.

I mention this as a way of encouraging your readers to look to such opportunities when considering firewise activities. Certainly it is far more cost-effective to be proactive and carry out a fuels reduction activity that will allow the home to defend itself, rather than to spend a lot of Federal dollars and risk the lives of young firefighters defending the structure.

I commend Mr. Barker and the contributors for highlighting the point that as long as the Forest Service continues to rescue, there will be little change in the public's attitude toward not taking responsibility for where they build or

how they maintain their homes and cabins. I managed two additional grants this spring, one on the meadow and another in nearby Warren, Idaho. Most of the money was moved to other projects, as there was little interest from the homeowners to become involved in firewise activity. As one of my neighbors said, "If there is a fire up here, someone will come around and take care of it." It has always been that way. But should it?

*Fire Chief Chris Bent,
Idaho*

A CEDAR IN NAME ONLY

American Forests: To call the Lawson Cypress a "Port Orford Cedar" is both obnoxious and disturbing, especially coming from a magazine dedicated to American forests. The name "Port Orford Cedar" came from logging companies, whose only interest in that name was using it to sell lumber. The tree is not a cedar.

*Howard R. Cooley,
Via email*

Mr. Cooley: Yes, the Port Orford Cedar, or *Chamaecyparis Lawsoniana*, is not a true cedar, but is in fact a cypress. Or, more properly, a false cypress. The term cedar is a common general term for all soft aromatic wood, and many trees that we call cedar aren't actually cedars at all. The term Port Orford Cedar comes from the limited area that is the native range of this species, which was extensively timbered and subjected to catastrophic wildfires for much of its history. Ornamental horticulturists prefer to call this tree a Lawson Cypress, so named by Scottish taxonomist Andrew Murray after Lawson and Sons Nursery of Edinburgh, which first propagated the tree. American Forests will continue to refer to this species as the Port Orford

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Cedar, its established name, as do most of America's wild plant experts, including Dr. Alan Whittemore, research scientist and plant taxonomist at the US National Arboretum.

*Deborah Gangloff, PhD.
Executive Director*

IN MEMORY

Deborah Gangloff: Greetings from Mount Desert Island, Acadia National Park and Bar Harbor, Maine. When I purchased my two historic Johnny Appleseed trees, I had also purchased two VHS copies of the wonderful "Silent Witnesses" program, which had aired on public television. Of those two copies, I gave one away to a dear friend, the director of the Lake Placid Beautification Committee and Garden Club. The other copy sadly "gave up the ghost" after many, many viewings.

I would absolutely love to see the re-released (in DVD format) copy, and be able to purchase a DVD to replace my now un-viewable VHS. As you know, Jim

Whitmore (who attended Amherst Central High School in Buffalo, NY at the same time as my mother) sadly passed away this past February. I last saw and visited with Jim and his beautiful wife Noreen in August 2008, when making my yearly summer visit to Peterborough, NH, where Jim often returned each year to perform with the Peterborough Players. During one of those visits, we chatted about many things, including "Silent Witnesses," which remains one of my favorites with Jim as the program's host and narrator.

I would also like to express my appreciation for your Historic Trees program, in which I have participated for some time. Thank you for making these wonderful historic trees and their living legacies available to us to share and enjoy as loving tributes to those who have come before us.

*With warmest best wishes,
American Forests Member,
Bar Harbor, ME*

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Deborah Gangloff, Publisher*