



# The Centennial Forest Update

Spring 2004

*A Quarterly Update of Activities on NAU's Outdoor Research and Education Lab*

## From the Director

Summer is quickly approaching and unfortunately it looks to be another year of drought. With the increasing threat of pine bark beetles an exciting summer awaits us on the Centennial Forest. The Centennial Forest staff is working diligently to make progress on various operational forest health thinning projects. It seems a big challenge when we can at best treat a few hundred acres, when thousands are in need of attention.

While we face challenges, we have exciting and positive news to keep us motivated. In 2004 we will start a large scale experimental test of how thinning influences pine bark beetle susceptibility of our ponderosa pine. Our goal is to strengthen our understanding of what happens when a forest is thinned that changes the trees' ability to resist beetle attack. We want to refine the specific thinning recommendations so they are highly applicable to the conditions on the Centennial Forest. Also, we are excited about the Jr. Forestry Academy which we will launch this summer. I anticipate this program will be a huge success based on the enthusiasm of the Director – Cheryl Miller.

I want to end with a big “Thanks” to John Bailey who stepped in as Acting Director during 2003 while I was on sabbatical leave. John was a great addition to the team and we are confident he will continue to bring humor and professionalism to the Centennial Forest. – Michael R. Wagner – Director, NAU Centennial Forest.

## Fisher-Rock Restoration Project Update

Last summer and fall, 200 acres were thinned in the Fisher restoration area. Ponderosa pines in

every size class were retained to represent a “more” pre-settlement condition. All Gambel oaks were left uncut to provide for wildlife habitat. Slash piles left in the area will be burned by the Arizona State Land Department next winter, and roads in the area have been improved to mitigate resource degradation.

High Desert Investment Company of Flagstaff has contracted with Centennial Forest to help restore another 200 acres of land in the Rock restoration area, beginning this spring. Both the Rock and Fisher treatments are part of the School of Forestry's Stand Treatment Impacts on Forest Health and the Ecological Restoration Institute's Mogollon Rim study. For more information about the Fisher-Rock Project please contact Cheryl.Miller@nau.edu.



A tractor loads logs onto a hauler during the Fisher restoration treatment this past summer.

## Jr. Forester Academy

The summer of 2004 on the Centennial Forest promises to be a rewarding experience for local Flagstaff middle school students. The Centennial Forest will host their first Jr. Forester Academy summer day camp with the goal of connecting kids

to the forest and the natural world that surrounds them. The themes of the camp will include forest health, land management, restoration, wildfire risk and prevention, sustainable wood harvesting, wildlife habitat, scientific research, land stewardship, Native American history, ecological sustainability, and community service. Campers will learn important lessons through an integrated, hands-on curriculum that allows kids to explore and learn about the environment while also reinforcing their math, reading, writing, and language skills. Kids will also learn about future career opportunities managing and caring for our nation's natural resources while personally participating in community service activities to improve the health of Northern Arizona's forests.

Northern Arizona University students and staff will participate in the Academy to teach and mentor Jr. Foresters. Craig Bowman, NAU Forestry Club president, is working with Home Depot of Flagstaff in getting a donation of lumber to build four picnic tables for the camp. Students will build the picnic tables and sell them to the Centennial Forest to raise funds for the Forestry Club. College of Business Administration students at NAU are creating a business plan for the Environmental Camp and Jr. Forester Academy in conjunction with the APS Professional Leadership Center program. In February, NAU Construction Management students in CM 123 (Basic Construction and Methods) built tent platforms for the summer camp. The Centennial Forest provided the lumber for the platforms which were built on the Coconino Community College (CCC) campus as part of a unique partnership between the CCC Construction Technology Program and the NAU Construction Management Program.

Project partners will include the US Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the University of Arizona Extension Office, the Arboretum at Flagstaff, Coconino County, the US Forest Service and the Arizona State Land Department.

If you would like more information or are interested in signing your kids up for Summer

2004 please contact Cheryl Miller at Cheryl.Miller@nau.edu or 928-523-6727.

### **Progress on the Field Campus**

The Smith Group was hired late last year by the Centennial Forest and the Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research to develop a field campus master plan. Two concepts were designed that include a building layout, trail design and road design that will help create what we believe will be a world class field facility. For more information on the Master Plan contact JJ.Smith@nau.edu



Staff from the Centennial Forest, Merriam-Powell and the Arboretum at Flagstaff are working hard with the Master Planning team to design the Centennial Forest Field Campus. Starting from far left and continuing clockwise around the table is CF Research Specialist JJ Smith, Arboretum at Flagstaff Director Nancy Morin, NAU Capitol Assets Project Manager Terry Brezina, CF Forester Cheryl Miller, then-CF Acting Director Dr. John Bailey, Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research (MPCER) Associate Director Neil Cobb, MPCER Project Director, Amy Whipple and architects from the Smith Group.

### **Forest Certification**

This spring students in Dr. Michael Wagner's Forestry in Developing Countries class conducted a class project to evaluate the feasibility of attaining forest management certification from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). The Centennial Forest Technical Committee will expand on the findings from the class. This student initiated effort may ultimately lead to the first certified university forest in the western United States. For more information on the Centennial Forest certification process please contact JJ.Smith@nau.edu

