

# f for Your information



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*Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710*

## **NFC Changes Tax Withholdings for 1997**

The National Finance Center has issued Bulletin 96-27, Salary Payments in Tax Year 1997, to address the impact of 27 pay periods—rather than 26—for tax year 1997. Effective pay period 5 (March 2-15), Federal, State, and other local tax calculations will be based on 27 pay periods instead of the usual 26. This will result in a slight increase in tax withholdings—and a slightly smaller paycheck—for most employees. NFC will not adjust any prior tax withholdings that have been made for this tax year. Employees who wish to adjust their withholdings to cover the previous six pay periods can submit the applicable Federal, State, or local tax form for processing to offset the difference.

## **Riverside Hosts Fire Research Meeting**

The PSW Forest Fire Laboratory, Riverside, hosted a fire research coordination meeting February 26-27 to share current findings on fire-related research; improve communication and collaboration among scientists and among clients and scientists; identify fire research needs; gain support for fire research activities; and reduce overlap in fire research programs.

Approximately 30 people attended the 2-day meeting, representing the PSW locations of Arcata, Albany, Davis, Redding, and Riverside; the University of California at Berkeley, Davis, and Riverside; Pomona College; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; Pennsylvania State University; Occidental College; San Diego State University; Bureau of Land Management; and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## **April Is Health Month**

April is designated as Health Month at PSW. Each year, volunteers from each of the Station's units organize and lead one or more of their favorite healthy activities. These activities are intended to improve, promote, and encourage healthy lifestyle changes for all employees. Daily activities such as walks, bike rides, runs, volleyball, health challenges and assessments, videos, hikes, low-fat luncheons, and nutritional seminars have been planned in the past. Several units have also invited guest speakers to discuss important health and fitness issues.

Each location should select a Health Month Coordinator to help organize activities. All employees are encouraged to suggest various health-related activities to their Health Month coordinator. All employees will be granted 4 hours of administrative leave for participation in these organized activities. This leave can be used in a single day, or spread out over the entire month.

The units' safety budget at each location can be used to pay  
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## **Research in Review: Blacks Mountain**

At Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest in northern California, an interdisciplinary team of scientists, led by Kathy Harcksen, is studying the effects of forest and range management on the diversity of plant and animal communities, including genetic and biological diversity; the ecosystem processes that are sensitive to disturbance/stress, including the effects of restoration efforts; and the consequences of disturbance on biological productivity.

The overall research goal is to better understand how forest structural complexity affects the health and vigor of eastside pine forest ecosystems, to quantify their resilience to natural and human-induced disturbances, and to determine how such ecosystems can be managed for sustained resource values.

A rigorous, randomized, split-plot, factorial design has been developed. Twelve 250-acre study plots have been established and permanently monumented with a data reference system on a 100-meter grid.

Outside cooperators include Michigan Technological University, Oregon State University, Humboldt State University, and the University of California at Davis. PSW participants include: Bob Powers, George Ferrell, Martin Ritchie, Jim Laacke, Phil Weatherspoon, and Nathan Skinner, all with the Management of Mediterranean Ecosystems Research Team, Redding; Pat Shea and Mike Haverty, Chemical Ecology/Forest Pests Research Unit, Albany; Bill Laudenslayer, Sierra Montane Ecosystems Research Unit, Fresno; Steve Sackett and Sally Haase, Prescribed Fire Research Unit, Riverside; and Sylvia Mori, Statistics and Computer Services Group, Albany. University participants include Steve Zack, wildlife biology, and John Menke, range science. Region 5 participants include Safiya Samman, genetics.

Intensive preliminary sampling has established baseline data on soil properties and processes, forest structures, floristic diversity, small mammal and avian diversity and behavior, bark beetle dynamics, and historical fire patterns. All data have been referenced to the 100-meter grid, which will facilitate spatial and temporal analysis, as well as integration of information at various scales.

Treatments have been defined, silvicultural prescriptions have been written, and marking guidelines developed. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Lassen National Forest to implement the treatments. The NEPA process has been completed and the Decision Notice signed. Treatments are being implemented through the use of the Timber Sale Contract, Sale Area Improvement Plan, and Grazing Allotment Plan. The timber

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*(Health Month continued)*

for incidental Health Month costs. Also, be aware that there are restrictions and limitations concerning the use of appropriated funds to pay for such activities. If you have questions about what can and cannot be purchased, contact Chuck Richmond at (510) 559-6375. Chuck will act as overall Station Coordinator.

### **New to PSW**

**Marc Wiitala** may be new to the Fire Management/Economics Research Unit, Riverside, as its operations research analyst, but he is highly knowledgeable and experienced in modeling development in support of wildland fire programs. Marc's work will focus on leadership and research in strategic wildland fire planning; he will be the technical expert focus for research, development, and application (RD&A) on this subject. And although he is assigned to Riverside, Marc will be working out of Boise, Idaho.

Marc began his professional economics career in the mid-1970s with the USDA Economic Research Service in the area of water resource planning. He joined the Montana State Department of Community Affairs in 1978 to work in the arenas of local government finance, energy development, and economic growth modeling. Later he took a job with the Montana State Legislative Fiscal Analyst Office in revenue forecasting.

Oakland, California, was Marc's birthplace, but he spent most of his youth on a farm in northeastern South Dakota. Marc attended college in Aberdeen, South Dakota, receiving a B.S. degree in economics from Northern State College in 1969. In 1972, he received an M.S. degree in economics from South Dakota State University, and in 1979 a Ph.D. degree in economics and agricultural economics from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Marc enjoys running competitively at the master's level in events ranging from 800 meters to ultramarathons. These running activities occupy most of his leisure time, although he does find time for bicycling.

### **Foreign Travel**

Armando González-Cabán, Fire Management/Economics Research Unit, Riverside, participated as a professor in the II Master Degree Program in Conservation and Management of the Natural Environment, Natural Spaces and Sustainable Development, at the Universidad Internacional de Andalucia in Huelva, Spain, February 14-21. Armando presented a 6-hour short course on "Economic Planning in Natural Resources Management," with emphasis on forestry management, and will serve as thesis director for three of the students there. Then, from February 25 through March 3, Armando attended the 1997 International Symposium on Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management in the Americas, in Belize City, Belize. He chaired a session on measurement of nonmarket values in resource management, and also presented a paper, "Measuring the Economic Benefits of Free Flowing Tropical Rivers: Results of a Survey of Puerto Rican Households and Visitors."

### **Job Vacancy**

Ecologist, GS-0408-07/09, Honolulu

### **Closes**

4-17-97

*(Blacks Mountain continued)*

sale has been prepared, appraised, and sold for a total volume of 33 million board feet, and the timber sale purchaser has begun harvesting trees. Treatments are being implemented.

### **Meetings/Conferences/Seminars**

Three presentations by PSW scientists were made at the 12th Annual Symposium of the United States Regional Association and the International Association for Landscape Ecology, held March 16-19 in Durham, N.C.:

\* Bill Laudenslayer, "Changes in pattern and abundance of standing dead trees in eastside pine forests of California, 1988-1996."

\* Carl Skinner, "Sensitivity of Klamath forests to long-term changes in climate and disturbance regimes."

\* Carl Skinner and Phil Weatherspoon, "Blacks Mountain interdisciplinary research project."

### **Forthcoming Conference**

\* Interdisciplinary Uneven-Aged Silviculture Workshop and Field Tour, September 15-26, 1997, Corvallis, Ore. Contact William H. Emmingham, (541) 737-6078.

### **Personnelly Speaking**

#### **Retirement**

\* Jim Jenkinson, Plant Physiologist, Institute of Forest Genetics, Albany, on March 1: 34 years of service.

### **Executive Calendar**

### **March 31-April 4**

Space.....M-F: Albany  
Aune.....M:Albany; Tu-W: Redding; Th: Hayfork; F: Davis  
Bell (Backup)....M: Albany; Tu-W: Davis; Th-F: Albany  
DeMuth.....M-F: Albany  
Ewel.....M-F: Honolulu  
Mason (Acting)..M: Albany; Tu: Redding; W-Th: Albany; F: Davis

### **April 7-11**

Space.....M-F: WO  
Aune.....M-F: Redding  
Bell (Backup)....M: San Luis Obispo; Tu-W: Albany; Th-F: AL  
DeMuth.....M-F: Albany  
Ewel.....M-F: Honolulu  
Mason (Acting)..M-F: Albany