



VALUING NATURE'S CAPITAL

Forest Service Carbon & Ecosystem Services Update

12.12.08

No one can do everything. Everyone can do something. If getting a Christmas tree is part of your holiday celebrations, visit a local tree farm that grows trees without the use of pesticides. To find what might be available in your area, google “naturally grown Christmas tree” or “organic Christmas tree” and your state, city, or county. Selecting a locally and/or naturally grown tree reduces GHG emissions related to transport and/or prevents pesticides from entering the ecosystem, waterways, and your home.

Thanks to Lew McCreery, Sarah Levy, and Becca Madsen for contributing articles to this week’s edition...

News:

News from UN Climate Talks in Poznan, Poland:

Al Gore rouses UN Climate Talks to More Action

Former Vice President Al Gore urged weary climate delegates to agree a new climate treaty next year and drew loud cheers on the last day of difficult two-week U.N. climate talks on Friday.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE4BB4S020081212?feedType=RSS&feedName=environmentNews>

Deal Struck on Forests in Climate Talks

Negotiators broke an impasse Wednesday on including forest conservation in a new climate change agreement, guaranteeing a voice for native peoples who live in forests and rewarding India and China for replanting depleted lands.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5gkA7s5VtPh6s2x_CP7nHwdqko0gD94VV2U80

Hill Aides Dodge Questions about Schedule for Cap-and-Trade Bill

For people following climate policy debates in Washington, the multibillion-dollar question is when Congress will pass cap-and-trade legislation for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. So far, no one has provided an answer. At the U.N. climate talks here, aides to six top congressional Democrats who will be working on this issue in 2009 sidestepped several direct inquiries during a panel discussion hosted by the International Emissions Trading Association. Full text at end of newsletter.

Available on Greenwire (subscription required): <http://www.eenews.net/Greenwire/rss/2008/12/09/4>

Obama Invokes Gore’s Climate Legacy

US President-elect Barack Obama has again underlined commitments to act on climate change after meeting with Al Gore. Obama and his incoming vice president, Joe Biden, met for 45 minutes with the Nobel Prize winning climate campaigner at Presidential Transition’s headquarters in Chicago.

<http://www.carbonpositive.net/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=1336>

California Moves on Global Warming

California, the leading U.S. state on climate change, set detailed goals on Thursday to cut greenhouse gases and address global warming but faced criticism the plan's economic assumptions were hopelessly optimistic.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE4BA70G20081212?feedType=RSS&feedName=environmentNews>

Ground-breaking UN Atlas Seeks to Tackle Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss

A U.N. atlas pinpointed on Friday parts of forests from the Amazon to Madagascar where better protection could give the twin benefits of slowing global warming and preserving rare wildlife. The atlas, issued at December 1-12 U.N. climate talks in Poznan, Poland, identified hotspots with a high diversity of animals and plants in forests that were also big stores of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, in trees and soils.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29206&Cr=climate&Cr1=>
<http://www.forestrycenter.org/headlines.cfm?refID=104801>

Carbon Detectives Are Tracking Gases in Colorado

Dr. Andrews, an atmospheric scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Boulder, climbs the tower periodically to make sure the narrow tubes running from the tower to analyzers nearby are properly taking continuous samples of carbon dioxide, methane and a cocktail of other greenhouse gases.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/02/science/earth/02carb.html?ref=earth>

In New Era, Timber's Struggles Stir Broad Concern and Support

A scramble is under way here in [Montana](#) to save the historically important, culturally resonant timber industry — once a pillar of the state's identity, now under siege as demand for housing and wood products has plummeted in the national economic downturn.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/09/us/09timber.html?scp=1&sq=montana%20logging&st=cse>

On a related note:

How Green Can a Christmas Tree Be?

Locally grown, pesticide-free food is gaining sway these days because it is fresh, healthy and supports area farmers. But how many of us give the same kind of thought to the Christmas trees we bring home? Can you decorate your Fraser fir without getting pesticide residue in your lungs and on your skin?

<http://www.forestrycenter.org/headlines.cfm?refID=104802>

As More Eat, A Bid to Cut Emissions

he cows and pigs dotting these flat green plains in the southern Netherlands create a bucolic landscape. But looked at through the lens of greenhouse gas accounting, they are living smokestacks, spewing methane emissions into the air...

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/04/science/earth/04meat.html?_r=1&ref=earth

Attempt at Clarity Muddles Wetland Waters

The US EPA and Army Corps of Engineers managed to forge rare agreement among developers, environmentalists, and wetland bankers. Unfortunately, that agreement comes in the form of near-universal disparagement of revised wetland guidance intended to clarify the Supreme Court's splintered decision regarding which United States waterways the Clean Water Act protects.

http://ecosystemmarketplace.com/pages/article.news.php?component_id=6354&component_version_id=9488&language_id=12

Asian Beetles Spell Death for Maples So Dear

WORCESTER, Mass. — People who live in this city's Greendale neighborhood love the maples that shade their streets in summer and turn beautiful colors in fall. But most of the maples in Greendale are now painted with red dots, indicating that they will be chopped down as early as next month because of an infestation of Asian long-horned beetles that is plaguing thousands of Worcester's trees.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/28/us/28trees.html?ref=earth>

Thoreau is Rediscovered as a Climatologist

[Henry David Thoreau](#) endorsed civil disobedience, opposed slavery and lived for two years in a hut in the woods here, an experience he described in "Walden." Now he turns out to have another line in his résumé: climate researcher.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/28/science/earth/28wald.html>

In this week's edition of the PointCarbon Newsletter:

- Obama Sets Energy, Environment Team
- RGGI Prices and Market Commentary
- Congressional Aides Lower Expectations for US Climate Bill
- US Cap and Trade Bill could resemble California's: Senator
- California Adopts Climate Plan
- US Carbon Tax Gains Momentum
- Big Emitters must be part of post-Kyoto: Canadian Minister
- and more...

http://www.pointcarbon.com/polopoly_fs/1.1021161!CMNA20081212.pdf

Op-Eds:

Obama's 'Secretary of Food'?

As Barack Obama ponders whom to pick as agriculture secretary, he should reframe the question. What he needs is actually a bold reformer in a position renamed "secretary of food."

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/11/opinion/11kristof.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&ref=opinion&adxnnlx=1229092254-tndBes3fyvx5MA5edMKDvg

Press Releases:

Announcing a national database of State Woody Biomass Utilization Policies

A number of policy initiatives have been implemented in recent years to address particular challenges with using woody biomass. The policies identified in this database provide a comprehensive guide to biomass legislation for each state in the country as of 2008. The full report is available on the University of Minnesota's Forest Resources website <http://www.forestry.umn.edu/> as Staff Paper Series No. 199. Go to the publications link and then Departmental Staff Paper reports. The direct link is:

<http://www.forestry.umn.edu/publications/staffpapers/Staffpaper199.pdf>

Environmental and Energy Study Institute Releases Video and Presentations of Dec 9's National Carbon Tax Briefing

On December 9, the Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI), Carbon Tax Center, Climate Crisis Coalition, Friends Committee on National Legislation and Friends of the Earth held a briefing to discuss a national carbon tax as a policy option for addressing climate change. The briefing focused on the environmental, economic, economic-efficiency, logistical and political benefits of a national carbon tax, particularly one that is phased-in and revenue-neutral.

http://www.eesi.org/120908_tax

Webcasts:

Pew Center on Global Climate Change Provides a Briefing from UN talks in Poznan: Climate Action Under a New US Administration

<http://www.pewclimate.org/node/6294>

Blogs:

Are Chemists, Engineers on Green Jobs List?

For weeks, there's been a growing chorus — from the [incoming Obama team](#) to [community-welfare](#) campaigners and [environmental bloggers](#) — pushing for building the economic revival around "green jobs." So far the focus seems to be mainly on rebuilding physical infrastructure...

<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/12/09/are-chemists-engineers-on-green-jobs-list/?ref=science>

Multimedia:

The Warming of Walden – Climate Change Around Walden Pond

http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/10/27/science/102808-Walden_index.html

Journal Articles:

Webster, Mort. "Uncertainty and the IPCC. An editorial comment." *Climatic Change*. 2008.

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/r9r58817263kg018/>

Baer, P.; Risbey, J. Uncertainty and assessment of the issues posed by urgent climate change. An editorial comment. *Climatic Change*. 2008.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10584-008-9529-3>

Full Text of Selected Articles:

CLIMATE: Hill aides dodge questions about schedule

Darren Samuelsohn, *Greenwire* senior reporter

POZNAN, Poland -- For people following climate policy debates in Washington, the multibillion-dollar question is when Congress will pass cap-and-trade legislation for curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

So far, no one has provided an answer.

At the U.N. climate talks here, aides to six top congressional Democrats who will be working on this issue in 2009 sidestepped several direct inquiries during a panel discussion hosted by the International Emissions Trading Association.

In their opening remarks, the House and Senate staffers promised that their bosses would keep global warming policy atop the Capitol Hill agenda for 2009. They talked about several committees simultaneously working on the issue next year, as well as the food fight over how to distribute emission credits and perhaps start spending hundreds of billions of dollars in new government revenue.

And they outlined the difficulties in finding Republicans to work with, especially in the House, where GOP leaders still raise doubts about the link between man-made emissions and climate change.

But they also explained that top lawmakers have yet to make any public statements on the legislative schedule -- so it is unlikely that they will get out ahead, either.

Pressed to give the foreign diplomats any signal on whether the United States would enact cap-and-trade legislation by a critical 2009 deadline for international talks on a new agreement to succeed the Kyoto Protocol, the aides ultimately did try to lower expectations for what can be accomplished before next December's U.N. climate talks in Copenhagen, Denmark.

"I know it's a question of great interest," replied Lara Levison, the top energy and environmental policy adviser to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.). "I'm not entirely sure. It may be a little oversimplified, in that to my mind, what's most important is significant progress that will lay out some parameters for what we can do in the United States to have to bring to Copenhagen. I don't know that we want to entirely lock the whole thing down before we go to Copenhagen."

She cautioned that she was entering into the land of speculation, because Pelosi has not commented in public on the question.

Still, Levison concluded, "Just to keep in mind, given the way Congress works, if we pass a bill and it's done, that's the result of a lot of negotiating, a lot of decisions, a lot of commitments, a lot of positions that are locked in. I just urge you to think about if you want the United States to do that before Copenhagen or not. Again, this is not any kind of position I'm taking. I'm asking you to ponder that."

Alexandra Teitz, senior environmental counsel to Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the incoming chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, was not ready to outline the agenda for her boss when he takes over in

January. But she explained that a final law does not need to be the be-all and end-all for the larger international process.

"There are lots of steps along the way to give a very strong signal of where the U.S. is headed and signals of progress," Teitz said.

Likewise, Peter Rafle, communications director for Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), would only go so far as to predict a heavy dose of climate change action in 2009 -- just no schedule.

"There's enormous interest in getting started and making significant progress on this crucial issue, which is the challenge of our generation," Rafle said.

The Hill staff were asked to predict the likelihood, on a scale of 0 to 10, of finishing cap-and-trade legislation by Copenhagen -- with a 10 being an absolute yes on final passage. Jo-Ellen Darcy, a top aide to Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.), was the only one to take the bait and offer a number.

"The question is not so much is 'Do we have to?' but 'If we're going to?'" said Darcy. "None of us know if we're going to, but I'd give us at least a 5, because we're going to try."

Democratic aides to Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico and Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan stuck to the same script in saying that cap-and-trade could stop short of final passage while giving Obama a strong signal on what type of international agreement he could negotiate.

"The most important thing is a collaborative effort between the president and both of the bodies of Congress to figure out what we can do and what's helpful for those bodies," said Bingaman's staffer, Jonathan Black.

"I don't think the president necessarily has to have an exact bill in his pocket when he goes to Copenhagen," added Chris Adamo from Stabenow's office. "I think any number of degrees of progress will help him, will help all of us, to negotiate an ultimate deal. It's relative, and I think progress in general is the most important thing."

Obama's eyes and ears

About 40 Capitol Hill staffers -- Democrats and Republicans -- have made the trip to Poland to engage in the U.N. climate talks. Obama last month said he would be leaning on the Hill representatives to report back to him on the status of the talks. The president-elect also was scheduled to meet today in Chicago with former Vice President Al Gore, who will then head across the Atlantic to speak at the climate negotiations during the final hours of the annual conference Friday.

Obama has called for cap-and-trade legislation that would return U.S. emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 -- roughly a 16 percent drop from today's baseline. He also supports a complete auction of emission credits -- an approach opposed by a large number of moderate and conservative Democrats who represent districts and states with large segments of industrial manufacturing and coal supplies.

The aides said they would be looking to Obama for leadership on the climate issue.

Democratic leaders also must contend with GOP opposition. Yesterday in Poland, Wisconsin Rep. James Sensenbrenner predicted that because of the economic implications of cap-and-trade legislation, Democrats would lose their House and Senate majorities in the 2010 election if they pursue votes on a bill.

The Hill staffers did not address Sensenbrenner's remarks directly. But Pelosi's Levinson said House lawmakers would be working within their own diverse ranks and also reaching out for GOP support. "We'll certainly be making every effort to reach across the aisle," she said. "We believe that as more and more sectors of the U.S. society become convinced that we'll take legislative action, there'll be greater pressure on House Republican leadership to participate in a constructive way on climate and energy legislation."

Offering perhaps the starkest reminder of the heated debate ahead, Darcy of the Senate Finance Committee explained that the cap-and-trade bill raises a number of difficult questions for lawmakers who first must vote next year on several hundred billion dollars in new spending for an economic stimulus. She said those funds would not be covered under "pay as you go" budget rules requiring offsets from within existing fiscal plans.

With a global warming bill, Darcy said, Congress will need to decide what to do with the new revenue stream -- which the Congressional Budget Office estimated at \$900 billion over a decade for the Senate bill that was debated earlier this spring on the floor. The money could go toward everything from energy research and development to health care, she said.

"Are we going to find ourselves next May or June with trillions of dollars in debt and then say OK, we're going to have this new revenue stream that's going to come from a cap-and-trade program and what are we going to do with that money?" Darcy said.

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