

REGAINING LOST GROUND

ECOLOGICAL

RESTORATION

WINTER 2004

NEWS

## ERI to Receive \$2 Million from Forest Service

The Ecological Restoration Institute will receive \$2 million from the Forest Service in 2004—that word from Senator Jon Kyl during his visit to Flagstaff as Northern Arizona University's commencement speaker in December.

"The work of the ERI is important if we are to reduce the threat of unnatural, catastrophic fire today and restore forests for generations of Arizonans to come," he said. "Our responsibility to future generations must be at the forefront of our work. We must never let this important work be held hostage to partisan bickering."

Kyl told graduates that the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

"One of the people doing just that, here at this university, is NAU Professor of Forestry Wally Covington. His nationally known ecological restoration work is going to help us preserve our forests, save animal habitat, save property and save lives," said Kyl.

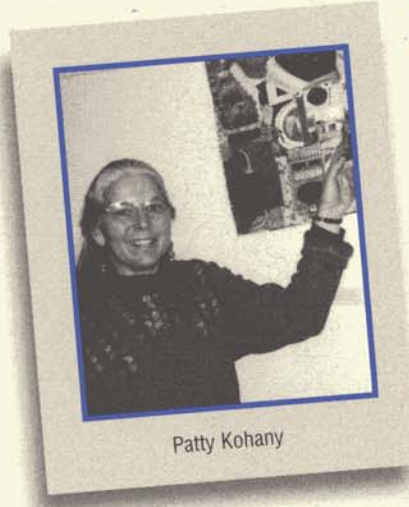
Upon receiving a gift of seedlings from the ERI, Kyl cited a Greek proverb, "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."



Senator Jon Kyl was honored in a tree planting ceremony for his efforts that have attracted more than \$15 million to help resolve the problem of forest health. Shown here from left to right are Kyl, ERI Director Wally Covington and School of Forestry Interim Dean Dave Patton.



## Sewing the Seeds of Sustainable Living



Patty Kohany


**K**im Howell-Costion taps Native American wisdom to plant corn, Barbara Kerr harnesses the sun's energy to cook meals from her gardens and Tim Udall is known worldwide as a modern day Johnny Appleseed. For all three, sustainable living in White Mountain communities is a challenge and *the* way of life.

ERI research assistant and graduate student Patty Kohany has unearthed the secrets of these successful farmers, secrets that help growers defy arid and harsh conditions in the high desert of the Southwest. The wisdom she's obtained has been transcribed into narratives about sustainable practices of land and water use on the Colorado Plateau. However, it has also been captured in quilts.

After visiting with the innovators and treasure keepers of communities such as St. Johns, Snowflake and Concho, Kohany said she was filled with ideas and images. "I was so inspired by the way they were living, the choices they were making and the sustainable way they were doing things. I knew I wanted to tell their story in a more visual way."

With the same devotion and care that Udall buds fruit trees, Kohany sewed the seeds of creativity. Her colorful quilt blocks now hang in room #035 of the School of Forestry building to honor the successful practices of farmers in the region, farmers who save seeds, conserve water, extend the growing season with greenhouses and use devices called hoopouses to protect plants.

Bright images of fruits and vegetables, tools and techniques, the land and the people themselves document the struggle and joy of sustainable living and fill the rectangular fabric collages roughly the size of placemats.

Kohany has discovered the thread that ties this tough crop of farmers together is perseverance. Her research project to document these sustainable practices has been funded through a Ford Foundation grant obtained by NAU's Center for Sustainable Environments Director Gary Nabhan. She expects this experience will aid her in future work with community building. Her quilt blocks will remain on display until March. 



A rare Washoe pine – one of the rarest pines in North America – has been saved from a construction zone on north campus, transplanted to the grounds in front of the Southwest Forest Science Complex and dedicated to Senator Jon Kyl for his leadership in forest health issues.

## Collaborative Forestry Founders Strive to Knock Down Barriers

As the weathered beams of the wooden porch moaned and creaked with an occasional breeze, individuals who have dedicated years to restoring forest ecosystems and the process of collaborative community projects gathered in October outside a rustic homestead from points scattered across the West.


In the shadow of northern Arizona's San Francisco Peaks, the discussions ignited in the aspen-lined Hart Prairie centered around the challenges each faced in his efforts to bring forest health projects to the ground.

Ann Moote, coordinator for the Ecological Restoration Institute and gathering facilitator, said the two issues the group identified as the key barriers to collaborative forest restoration success are the lack of agreement on appropriate expectations of collaborative forestry and Forest Service culture.

The group expressed frustrations over widespread appeals that are said to be halting or delaying forest restoration projects. There was also the perception that Forest Service employees are reluctant to use contracting authorities to their full potential.

Discussions resulted in recommendations that will be shared with members of Congress, the Forest Service and the Western Governors Association. Participants say they hope their input will influence new legislation and agency policy. The document, *Barriers to Collaborative Forestry*, can be found at [www.eri.nau.edu](http://www.eri.nau.edu).

Tom Thompson, assistant deputy to the chief of the Forest Service, committed to the group that he would direct forest supervisors and district rangers to make changes immediately in the effort to restore health to the forests of the West.

"We'd like to see new ideas tried out in service contracts," said Bill Coates, past president of the Supervisors Association of California and founding member of the Quincy Library Group. "We'd also like to see government employees encouraged to take risks and rewarded for collaborating so that more innovation is possible." 

## Notes from the Field



*Mike Stoddard*

**K**nowing very little of her ecology or composition, we embarked on a journey to discover her potential rich beauties. The past few days have been filled with moody thunderstorms, bringing in needed moisture, and lightning bolts that strike fear in any man. The moisture should allow us to see a richness of diversity, awaking an understory that has been dormant due to extreme xeric conditions.

What is in store we have little preconceptions. One thing that is known is the remoteness of Mt. Emma should provide a depth of solitude and a landscape relatively untouched by the heavy hand of man. This should prove to be a rare day indeed.

The fair morning is calm and the mountain very inviting. At the base of the mountain, the dominant vegetation seems to be juniper with pinyon sparsely intermixed. The understory has an assortment of species mainly composed of grasses and shrubs. A few varieties of nectaring forbs such as skyrockets, penstemons, groundsels, buckwheats and array of cacti produce a collage of colors that seems to be attracting a large selection of butterflies.

Rodents such as rabbit and mice along with lizards of all sorts scamper across the ground. The biodiversity of the area exceeds anything I have seen within Mt. Trumbull's pinyon juniper communities.

As we ascend Mt. Emma, the general structure of the woodland seems to change. Junipers are no longer present and pinyon pines are the only conifer in sight. Relatively no pinyon mortality is apparent. The understory is robust and diverse in the form of shrubs with grasses and forbs sparsely intermixed.

The soil texture also seems to change as we climb further up from a basalt rock formation with sandy loam soils intermixed to a porous, coarse cinder material. A transition of woodland structure has definitely taken place.

Did these changes occur due to the changes in soil texture and the environmental stress created by these changing soil conditions or is it simply a competition effect? I savor this opportunity and hope someday I will be fortunate enough to return to answer some of these mysteries, but for now I will simply be engulfed by her beauties for this is truly a relic site, relatively untouched by man. 🌲

*Mike Stoddard is a research technician with the Ecological Restoration Institute.*

---

### **ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION NEWS** Regaining Lost Ground

is a newsletter from NAU's Ecological Restoration Institute. The intent of this publication is to share information, discoveries and successes in the work being done to restore the southwestern forests.



## Alumni Corner


**Lisa Dunlop** (Forestry '02) is pursuing a master's degree in landscape architecture at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and continues to work on a temporary basis as a forester for Los Alamos National Laboratories.

**Krystal Gibbs** (Business '02) is studying for her M.B.A., works as a personal banker for Wells Fargo Bank and says she loves living in Denver so she can ski.

**Stephanie Powers** (Botany '03) has repotted to Knoxville, Tenn., where she teaches environmental sustainability to kids through the Americorps program. She finds her job very rewarding and tells us that "coloring is actually part of my job description. For those of you who haven't practiced this art in many years, please pick up a crayon and just go to town!"

**Eve Gilbert** (Forestry '03) is happily settled back in her home state, works at a law firm in Redmond, Wash., and is applying to law school.

**Aaron Wilkerson** (Forestry '03) was sighted recently on the NAU campus in his BLM uniform attending regional meetings on behalf of his employer. Wilkerson, his wife, Ericka, and daughter, Kaylie, are enjoying life in the Arizona Strip where he works as a forester.

Have alumni news to share? Please send your news to ERI Student Services Coordinator Robin Long at [robin.long@nau.edu](mailto:robin.long@nau.edu) or call (928) 523-7187. 



Aaron Wilkerson

## Artist's Eye in a Forestry Guy

While working as an undergraduate research assistant for the Ecological Restoration Institute, Scott Sink has been able to put his interest in forestry, as well as his artistic talent, to use as an illustrator and photographer.

The forestry major has created original acrylic paintings for a children's book, *Ponderosa Pete*, written by former ERI instructional specialist Julie Blake. The artwork and text are being reviewed by publishing companies.


Meantime, Sink, with ERI senior research specialist David Huffman, has created a *Photographic Guide to Pinyon and Juniper Tree Maturity Classes* to help researchers identify different age classes among pinyon pine and juniper trees.



Scott Sink

"I was attracted to this research project because it would be useful to science and land managers and include my artistic abilities," said Sink.

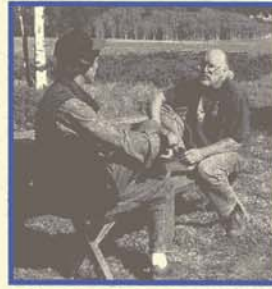
"With pinyon and especially juniper trees, you can't always tell their age by their diameter," said Huffman. "This photo guide will help researchers better determine which are the presettlement trees through a combination of additional characteristics such as crown size, tree height, and how the bark appears."

A *Photographic Guide to Pinyon and Juniper Tree Maturity Classes* is available for \$16. To order, contact the ERI at (928) 523-7182. 




# Great Expectations For Implementations

Jack Shipley, a board member with the Applegate Partnership in Oregon, visited with Indigenous Community Enterprises Program Director Brett KenCairn in Hart Prairie last fall about the difficulties he's witnessed in implementing forest health projects.



*Brett KenCairn and Jack Shipley*

After a week-long retreat with land managers and individuals involved in collaborative forestry endeavors, he said it was revealing just how different the interpretation of collaborations are perceived by communities compared to the Forest Service. "I'm not sure we have those issues resolved, but we've started the conversation."

Shipley surmised that the agency may believe it won't be appealed if it's working with non-agency individuals and groups. Meantime, others may expect project implementation to happen quickly because of the time invested in bringing groups with varying backgrounds and concerns into the planning process. 

NAU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution Creative Communications/2M/A53286/02-04

Non-profit  
organization  
U.S. postage  
PAID  
Northern  
Arizona  
University

Northern Arizona University



Ecological Restoration Institute  
PO Box 15017  
Flagstaff AZ 86011-5017

2ER1 35AJ