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Greetings,

The national Tree Farm office is pursuing an interesting idea of helping state Tree Farm Committees to become carbon aggregators. What is this?

It goes back to the debate about global warming and what to do about it. The theory that the earth is warming due to emissions of greenhouse gases by man is gaining ground with governments' world wide. There is much talk about how to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Regulations are coming. California has already passed rules to regulate greenhouse gases. Here in New Mexico the State Environment Dept has a task force working on developing regulations.

One of the main greenhouse gases being discussed is CO₂. This gets us back to Tree Farm. Forests are recognized as carbon sinks or storage areas. Trees take up CO₂ in the atmosphere and "store" it as wood fiber. One aspect of all the regulatory schemes being discussed is called "cap and trade". Emissions of CO₂ would be capped at a certain level for power plants and other industries that emit CO₂. If they are unable to meet this cap they can buy carbon credits. This is already being done in Europe. You can sell credits if you store carbon. So if you maintain a forest you are storing carbon and can sell credits. This is where the carbon aggregator comes in. The aggregator "bundles" credits from individual landowners and then sells the credits in the market.

This may all sound like a gimmick but it is coming. Nationally the Tree Farm System is recognized as having the third largest source of tradable carbon in the US so there will no doubt be much interest in tapping into Tree Farms as carbon credits. It may be another tool to ensure that our forests are managed. We will keep you informed of any progress.

