

## **Disaster management: New ideas for new times**

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Climate change. Within 20 years, temperate forests will be hit hard by rising temperatures. What are the implications for Extension foresters and our clientele?

Population growth. The Pacific Northwest's growth rate since 1990 has been twice the North American rate, faster than India's, and almost equal to Egypt's. If the birth and in-migration rates continue, population in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and southern British Columbia will double to 32 million in 2040. Residents consume, on average, their body weight in natural resources each day, and increasing population is wiping out the efficiency gains created by industry and research labs. What likely impacts will this population increase have on forest resources? What can we do to prepare for it?

Peak oil. Worldwide oil production has peaked. While petroleum products will continue to be available at least until 2050, they will become increasingly scarce and expensive. How will this scarcity affect Extension foresters and our clientele? What can we do to prepare for it? What alternatives are there?

Invasive species. They're here – and they're staying. Blackberry, gorse and cheatgrass. Cereal weevils, knotweeds, knapweeds, and zebra mussels. How can we turn these liabilities into assets? What products might be made out of them?

The majority of Extension work involves responding to the needs of our clientele. Often, the demands are immediate and the need obvious. However, our clientele are not focusing on the above-mentioned potential disasters in progress, perhaps because the concepts are too overwhelming or daunting. Therefore, extensionists should take the lead in understanding their scope and implications, and then guide our clientele in making giant leaps in new directions, as well as incremental baby steps to mitigate the consequences.