

Climatically sensitive huon pine tree-ring chronology from western Tasmania is used by 8 authors to draw inferences about Austral summer temperature change since A.D. 900 and reported on pages 1266-8 in **Science**, Vol. 253. Since 1965, huon pine growth was found to have been unusually rapid for trees that are in many cases over 700 years old. This growth increase correlates well with recent anomalous warming in Tasmania on the basis of instrumental records and supports claims that a climatic change, perhaps influenced by greenhouse gases, is in progress.



An informal survey to determine what information is now available on the extent, character, and management of old-growth forests on NPS lands has resulted in a 54-page report (Great Lakes CPSU Report 91-1) published in October 1991 by the Great Lakes CPSU at U/WI-Madison. Responses to a 1988 questionnaire from all 58 NPS units containing this community type found more than 4,867,800 acres, located in 32 states and the District of Columbia and in all 10 NPS regions.

Species listed for old-growth stands are available for vascular plants in 53 percent of the units and for birds in 35 percent. Many units (35%) had no information on which species are strongly associated with old-growth. Most frequently reported disturbances were logging, wildfire, windthrow events, and fire suppression. More than half (54%) of the units reported no management plan specific to old-growth forests. Research efforts in these forests included current research projects (60% of the NPS units), long-term data sets (63%), and permanent plots (35%).



Two related articles, attesting to the continuing worldwide interest in declining amphibian populations, appeared in the Aug. 23, 1991 **Science**. One, by David Wake of U/CA's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, maintains that scientific study of amphibians holds promise for a deeper understanding of the resilience as well as the limits of environments. Noting that modern amphibians have been on this planet for well over 100 million years, and thus could fairly be classed as "survivors," Wake suggests that "amphibians may serve usefully as bioindicators, organisms that convey information on the state of health of environments. How we read the message, and what to do about it, are timely challenges to scientists and to the public.

The companion article by Joseph H.K. Pechmann et al, deals with the problem of separating human impacts from natural fluctuations and concludes that distinguishing between natural population fluctuations and declines with anthropogenic causes may require long-term studies.



According to the Florida DNR's quarterly, **Resource Management Notes**, wetland losses for states in the South Atlantic area are: West Virginia (-24%), Virginia (-42%), North Carolina (-49%), South Carolina (-27%), Georgia (-23%), and Florida (-46%). Approximately

28.7 million acres of wetlands are in these six states, which represent 27% of the total wetlands in the conterminous U.S. Overall, we have lost around 40% of the wetlands in the south Atlantic area. The source is the Society of Wetlands Scientists, South Atlantic Chapter Newsletter, June 1991.

A Department of the Interior pamphlet entitled *Wetland Activities* describes wetlands, why they are important, the President's goal for wetlands, and Interior agencies' wetlands programs (Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Geological Survey, Bureau of Mines, Office of Surface Mining, Minerals Management Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs).

For copies of the pamphlet and additional information, write WETLANDS, Mail Stop 6217 Main Interior Bldg., U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

A thorough (and thoroughly accessible) look at the links between land and water is provided in "An Ecosystem Perspective of Riparian Zones" in *BioScience*, Sept. 1991, pp 540-551. Two stream ecologists (Stan Gregory of Oregon State U and Ken Cummins of U/Pittsburgh), a geologist (Fred Swanson with the

USFS Research lab in Corvallis, OR) and a plant ecologist (Art McKee of OSU) propose a conceptual model of riparian zones that integrates the physical processes that shape valley-floor landscapes, the succession of terrestrial plant communities on these geomorphic surfaces, the formation of habitat, and the production of nutritional resources for aquatic ecosystems. Charts, graphs, and tables extend this concept through time and space and provide understanding of the wide array of ecological processes and communities associated with the land-water interface.

Helping Nature Heal: An Introduction to Environmental Restoration is the title of A Whole Earth Catalog/Ten Speed Press publication (Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707, \$14.95) edited by Richard Nilsen and featuring theory of environmental restoration, how it is practiced the USA and around the world, and what is needed to jump start it anywhere. Barry Lopez's Foreword is a call to arms, bringing to mind an Information Crossfile piece that got "bumped" several issues ago. It quoted Frank Press, president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, who told an international meeting of the Group of Seven industrial nations in Paris in mid-1987: "What we are doing to the Earth's atmosphere, to the blue planet on which we live, is not merely ominous. It may already be beyond correction."