

Designers and Forest: Beetle Kill, Aspen Die-Off Summer 2013, Utah, USA

THIS SUMMER DESIGNERS & FOREST will initiate a conversation surrounding problems currently facing the Western United States forest and specifically the forests of Utah.

While forests exist as ecosystems we see them reaching out well beyond the boundaries of their canopies into the communities they sustain. Their timber provides warmth, heating as it is burned or forming the roofs and walls of our houses. Their roots purify water and regulate its flow into streams and deep canyons. Their shade provides shelter for animals. Their groves provide solitude and access to inspiration. We see healthy forest as an essential component for community. We at Designers and Forests seek interested contributors to expand the knowledge and understanding of the ways that communities interact with forests.

Who we are: Designers and Forests is a group of invested and interested individuals from around the world and is growing. The forests of the world are connected through climate, international trade, and governmental policies. Through similar traditions of forestry, agriculture, and craft. We feel that our experiences working with and handling forests should also be connected. The founding members of the group are composed of individuals from the United States, (New York, Utah) and Sweden. We are educators, designers, foresters, scientists, storytellers, community organizers, and students.

www.designersandforest.us

What is the goal for the collaboration: We begin in the Forests of Utah. The pine, spruce, and aspen of the region are stressed and endangered as a consequence of the changing conditions of the Intermountain West. In the affliction of this region, we see a test case. We seek to familiarize ourselves with its problems and to collaborate to propose possible solutions. We seek to create a scalable model that can help create healthier forests and communities in Utah through its application. The foundation of this project will be laid during the summer of 2013 as collaborators participate in workshops and meet key members of the communities affected by beetle kill and aspen die-off. This research and exploration will lead to proposed solutions that will then be implemented as pilot projects. The nature of these solutions are unknown. We want the materials, the ecosystem, the communities, and the collaborators to shape them, not any preconceived notions on our part.

Who we seek: The project is seeking interested individuals from various backgrounds who wish to join our conversation about forest and community health. We are educators, graphic designers, furniture designers, foresters, and community activists. We seek **collaborators, designers, and artisans** who are interested in exploring new materials or old materials in new ways. We seek **scientists** and **foresters** who can inform and educate about pest, weaknesses, and forest health. We seek **community members** who are looking for alternative means to traditional economies. We seek **storytellers** who can share the narratives that bind us to places and teach us lessons from the past.

When it will happen: During the summer of 2013 we will assemble as a small group in the forest and rural communities of Utah to begin the conversation. This event will take place July 29–August 10, 2013 and will include workshops, seminars, and site visits. During these two weeks individuals will meet to define the parameters of the project. Expertise and knowledge will be shared. A solid plan for continued collaboration will be fleshed out.

Interested individuals are encouraged to contact the project organizers directly by email: info@designersandforest.us

