

WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry E-Newsletter

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Forester's Notes

I am having a bit of an identity crisis. You may have noticed that the program name has evolved from Puget Sound Forest Stewardship to North Puget Sound Extension Forestry. This is not at all to suggest any deviation from or diminishing of our emphasis on good forest stewardship. Rather, it is to more broadly and simply present who we are and to more closely identify us with the university and the broader statewide Extension Forestry program. Also, with the addition of Whatcom County this year, there is even more geographic emphasis on the north Puget Sound counties.

The changes to the program name and also to the wording on our website are at least partially rooted in science. They reflect some research I have been reading about in regards to words and phrases that have the most meaning to the most landowners. I am learning the benefits of avoiding buzzwords and terms that have ambiguous meanings or are subject to vastly different interpretations. The benefit, I hope, will be a more clear and simple presentation of who we are, what we do, whom we serve, and what we are about. I hope

that this, in turn, will help more people find us, identify with us, and receive the benefits of forestry education and assistance. Like most extension forestry programs, only a fraction of those who own or live on wooded property are aware of the resources available to them. Being recognizable in the community is critical.

This has also gotten me thinking more deeply about what it is that we uniquely offer through Extension and why it is so important to have university Extension programs. There are a lot of forestry-related organizations out there, and each serves an important and legitimate role in the community. What sets Extension apart, though, from NGOs, non-profits, associations, and even either other agencies, is our academic mission as a land grant university to provide non-biased, research-based information. Our role is to objectively educate and inform. We are not regulatory, selling anything, soliciting donations, looking for members, enforcing rules, or advocating a particular position or type of land management. We are simply here to provide reliable, objective, and credible answers when you need them, and in doing so we connect you to the full resources of our state's major research universities as well as broader nationwide networks. This is the unique role of WSU and of Extension.

With this in mind, I am adding a new segment to the newsletter called Research Updates, where I can more deliberately share with you what I glean from the scientific literature regarding the latest thinking and study results that may apply to you and your land. Also in this newsletter is new Focus On article about current forest health issues. If you have noticed an abundance of dead/dying trees around the area this year, you can find out about that as well as some less lethal insect and disease activity currently happening in our forests.

Kevin W. Zobrist
Regional Extension Forestry and Biofuels Specialist
Serving the North Puget Sound Area

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North Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day

The summer field day is this Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.! The field day site is just outside of Sumas up in Whatcom County. It is two hours from Seattle, 90 minutes from Everett, one hour from Mount Vernon, and 40 minutes from Bellingham. This is all outdoors and hands-on, and the weather will be perfect. The great thing about the field day is that it is not just one workshop, but rather you will get to choose four different workshops to attend. Have you missed recent workshops on mushrooms, wildlife, or forest health? You can get all of this at the field day. The workshop topics you will get to choose from are:

- Forest health
- Wildlife habitat
- Thinning and pruning
- Site preparation, planting, and seedling care
- Wildfire prevention
- Counting and measuring trees
- Special forest products

- Shiitake mushroom culture

There will also be exhibitors and activities for children.

Pre-registration is not required—if you are the spontaneous, last-minute type, you can simply show up and register at the gate. To save time at the registration station, though, we encourage you to pre-register and you can do so online up until 5 PM Friday at <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/FieldDay.htm>.

When you come, remember to pack a picnic lunch as we won't be serving food other than coffee, water, and snacks. There will be restrooms on site, though. The location is the property of Tom and Bonnie Westergreen, at 4800 S Pass Rd, Sumas. From I-5, take exit 255 to Sunset Dr (SR 542). Continue east on SR 542 until you reach Lawrence Rd (SR 9). Go north on SR 9 for 1.1 miles and then turn right onto Siper Rd. Continue on Siper Rd for 1.8 miles then turn right onto Hopewell Rd. Stay on Hopewell Rd for 0.2 miles and then take the first left onto Goodwin Rd. Then go 2.5 miles and turn right onto S Pass Rd. Continue on S Pass Rd for 3.9 miles to 4800 S Pass Rd, on the left (watch for the field day/forestry event signs). The driveway becomes a forest road (well-maintained and suitable for passenger vehicles). Follow this for 1.3 miles to parking and registration.

Note: there will be a second field day in Forks on August 24th. For details visit <http://extension.wsu.edu/forestry/Documents/Forks%20FD%20lo.pdf> or contact Andy Perleberg at 509-667-6540.

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New WSU Extension Forestry Online Publications and Classes

- Publication: **Forest Soil Data for Your Forest Stewardship Plan**. Available free online at <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15573>.
- Publication: **Diversifying Forest Structure to Promote Wildlife Biodiversity in Western Washington Forests**. Now available free online (used to only be available for purchase) at <https://pubs.wsu.edu/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=15459>
- Online Class: Forest Soils (includes two modules). Available for \$1.00 from <http://extension.wsu.edu/forestry/FSU/Pages/oc9.aspx>
- Online Class: Forests and Water Resources in Western Washington. Available for \$1.00 from <http://extension.wsu.edu/forestry/FSU/Pages/om30.aspx>

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Forest Stewardship Coached Planning

This comprehensive university-based forestry class, which is our flagship program, will help you get the most out of the land you love. Whether you have just a few acres of woods or a large forest tract, if you have trees on your property, this class is for you.

We have two classes coming up this fall. For those of you in the greater Seattle area, we're doing a class in Preston (King County) on Tuesday nights starting September 24th. For you folks in the Skagit County, San Juan Islands, and Whidbey Island areas, we've got one in Oak Harbor on Thursday nights starting October 3rd.

Topics covered include:

- How do you know if your trees are healthy? What should you do if they aren't?
- Are characteristics of your property attracting or repelling the wildlife you enjoy? What can you do if wildlife cause damage?
- Are there certain trees you should always keep or remove? How do you remove trees without damaging your land?
- When selling logs, are you getting a fair deal or getting ripped off?
- How do you find or grow edible berries or mushrooms? How do you cut holiday greens without hurting the tree?
- Are invasive and noxious weeds taking over your underbrush? What are the risks and what can you do about it?
- What kind of soil do you have and how does that affect what grows?

Save money, too!

As part of this class we will "coach" you in the writing of your own simple forestry plan that may qualify you for property tax reductions or conservation cost-share grants.

What's included:

- Eight classroom sessions taught by forestry experts
- A Saturday field trip
- A large notebook full of reference materials and how-to guide
- A one-on-one consultation at your property with a professional forester.

Participants frequently tell me that this is one of the best classes they have ever taken. Not convinced? I'll make you this deal: if you register for and attend this class and by the third week you decide that it isn't for you, you can turn your materials in and drop out of the class for a full refund, no questions asked. **How often does a state agency give you a satisfaction guarantee?**

Register before September and save \$25. For details and registration information, call 425-357-6017 or visit:

- <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/CPPreston.htm> (Preston class)
- <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/CPWhidbey.htm> (Oak Harbor class)

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Chainsaw Training – Geared Toward Women

Ladies—this two-day intensive course, hosted by my Extension colleagues in Skagit County, is designed just for you (and guys, you are welcome to come, too!). August 31 - September 1 in Burlington.

Class description:

"This WSU Skagit County Extension chainsaw workshop will focus on parts of the saw and basic maintenance, safety gear, and basic cutting technique. Sunday's practicum will allow more practice time, including learning to safely fell a tree and principles of using a cross-cut saw. This course is tailored to beginning female chainsaw users but anyone 16 years of age or older is welcome to attend. Bring your own gear, or borrow ours. Instructors: Robert Groce, 40 year logging veteran and former coach of the WSU Logger Sports team. Caitlin Price Youngquist, WSU Logger Sports alumni and graduate research assistant at WSU NWREC in Mount Vernon."

To register, send a check (payable to WSU Skagit County Extension) to WSU Skagit County Extension, 11768 Westar Lane Suite A Burlington, WA 98233. Cost is \$150 before 8/23 and \$200 after. Space is limited.

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Non-WSU Events

Note: These forestry-related events are listed for informational purposes only and do not imply any vetting or endorsement by WSU.

Washington Tree Farm Program Education Seminar – October 5, 2013 at the Veterans Memorial Museum, 100 SW Veterans Way in Chehalis. At this seminar, three stocking levels – 258 (13' X 13"), 436 (10' x 10'), 538 (9' x 9') – will be discussed and compared. Growth characteristics, management opportunities, and cost analysis will be included in the presentations This seminar will help you determine which stocking level is most appropriate for your goals. Advanced registration by September 27 is required. Registration forms and further information can be obtained at www.watreefarm.org/2013RegForm.pdf or by calling Donna Loucks at 360-736-2147. Cost is \$70 for 1 person, or \$105 for a couple. Cost for students is \$50. Price includes coffee, snacks, and a hot lunch.

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Forestry in the News

The Daily Herald in Everett reports on a very unique and artistic solution employed in Edmonds for a tree that had grown into overhead lines:

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20130724/NEWS01/707249930>

The Daily Herald in Everett reports on the Kristoferson family on Camano Island (a 2013 nominee for tree farmer of the year) and their unique use of their forest for tourism to generate supplemental income:

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20130320/NEWS01/703209929/>

Capital Press reports on the value of native forest berries—featuring WSU’s own Jim Freed:

<http://www.capitalpress.com/content/SB-berry-diversity-032213-art>

The Daily Herald in Everett reports on a 13-year-old Mukilteo boy who has planted hundreds of trees: <http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20130706/NEWS01/707069950/>

The Daily Herald in Everett reports on efforts to control invasive weeds in Everett’s urban forests: <http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20130522/NEWS01/705229939/>

The Olympian reports on the drought-caused mortality of young Douglas-fir in the region:

<http://www.theolympian.com/2013/06/12/2582103/western-washington-drought-like.html>

The Seattle PI reports on a proposal in Congress to protect the Middle Fork-Snoqualmie River:

<http://blog.seattlepi.com/seattlepolitics/2013/06/11/whats-up-doc-alpine-lakes-bill-finally-gets-hearing/>

Treehugger.com reports on plans to build a wooden skyscraper in Stockholm using new cross-laminated timber technology: <http://www.treehugger.com/green-architecture/tall-wood-34-storey-skyscraper-proposed-stockholm.html>

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Market Update

Here is the latest news on log prices in Western Washington based on data provided by our friends at DNR in their monthly Timber Sale Query reports.

Log prices remain strong. While there is some individual variation, this is the best overall market we’ve seen in several years. Douglas-fir prices appear particularly robust, with even #3 grade sawlogs fetching close to \$600/Mbf. Alder, cedar, maple, and hemlock are all doing respectably.

For an updated price graph, please visit

<http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/documents/LogPrices.pdf>

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Research Update

Branch diameter and longevity – Lower initial planting density results in larger and more persistent branches. If pruning is not feasible, you can increase wood quality to some degree with higher density planting. (Newton et al. 2012)

Growth response in gaps (openings) in mature vs. old growth forests – Gray et al. (2012) found that growth responses to gaps in old growth stands were based on the size of the opening and position of the trees within the opening (e.g. trees on the north side of the opening responded more than those on the south because of relative shading). In contrast, in mature stands growth response was more uniform across opening sizes and tree positions within the openings. This suggests that above-ground resources (light) are more limiting in old growth stands, whereas below-ground resources (water) are more limiting in mature stands.

Herbicide effects on lichens – Herbicides applied in forests can impact other, non-target organisms such as lichens. Triclopyr reduced abundance of 40% of studied lichen species, and glyphosate reduced abundance of 56% (McMullin et al. 2012). [Kevin's note: Lichens are important for soil formation; nitrogen fixation; and food, nesting material, and hiding cover for wildlife].

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Focus On: Current Forest Health Issues

In this month's Focus On article, I'll talk about four different forest health-related topics.

Dead trees around the Puget Sound area.

Remember the record drought from last summer and fall? Our trees do, and the impacts have been appearing this spring and summer in the form of unusually high tree mortality throughout the area. Young Douglas-fir seem to have been particularly vulnerable. The consensus among experts is that this is a delayed reaction from the last year's drought. Most of the mortality is limited to areas of excessively-drained soils where water stress would have been the highest. Symptoms are brown/red crowns, usually from the top down. There may be beetle activity in the trees, but these are secondary agents taking advantage of already dead or dying trees and not the root cause of the trees' demise. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do for these trees. They were mortally injured months ago, and the "symptoms" we see this spring and summer are the dead trees drying out.

While Douglas-fir is indeed vulnerable to drought, it is adapted to drier sites and thus may be relatively less vulnerable than western hemlock or western redcedar. But because Douglas-fir is more likely than other species to be growing in drier areas (hemlock and cedar will avoid these areas), when an extreme drought occurs, Douglas-fir will tend to be occupying the

most vulnerable sites. Do these drought impacts mean you should start avoiding Douglas-fir? Probably not—I think it is still a good conifer choice in general, even for dry sites. It is important to remember that occasional high mortality events are part of the natural world. It is also important to remember that all trees are vulnerable to drought when they are young, especially at the seedling stage.

Grand fir is another species you might consider on dry sites. According to Silvics of North America, grand fir seedlings, if growing in exposed, full-sun areas, are relatively more tolerant of drought than other species because they quickly put down deep roots under these conditions. If they are growing in the shade, though, they won't have those critical deep roots. Another tree to consider if you are really having problems with a dry site is Oregon white oak. Ponderosa pine is another possibility for really dry sites. It is predominantly an Eastside species, but it is native to isolated areas of Western Washington that are particularly dry, such as the prairies around Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Exercise caution, though, when planting these less-common trees, especially if you are considering large numbers. As mentioned above, just because there was high Douglas-fir mortality in an area during an extreme event does not necessarily mean it is the wrong species for that site. Rather than looking at a species change, it may be more relevant to focus on best practices, such as making sure you plant seedlings from local seed sources, planting seedlings correctly (no J-rooting!), appropriate spacing, and eliminating competing vegetation, especially grasses (which really rob the trees of water).

Here is a really good article from the Oregon Department of Forestry on how water stress impacts Douglas-fir:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/privateforests/docs/fh/InteractionOfDrought.pdf>

Tent Caterpillars

You may have noticed this past spring that in some local areas this was a banner year for tent caterpillars. As alarming (and gross) as it can be, especially when there are massive infestations defoliating a large area, let me assure you that this is completely normal, fully anticipated, and there is nothing you need to (or really can) do about it. These outbreaks are cyclical, and we are in the middle of the outbreak part of the cycle. We may see activity for another year or so, and then predators, parasites, and viruses build up (for instance, the parasitic tachinid fly, whose larvae burrow into the caterpillars and eat them from the inside out!), and the population totally collapses until the next outbreak cycle. Most trees will fully recover, even those that get completely defoliated. They can put out another flush of leaves, or they have enough reserves to get through a couple years of defoliation. There are also ecological benefits to understory shrubs from temporary increased light and the fertilizing caterpillar droppings.

When people do try to spray insecticides, we call it “revenge spraying” because all it really does is make people feel better and feel like they’ve “done something.” If you are dealing with ornamental trees in your yard, one option is to wait until nightfall when all the caterpillars have returned to the tent, and cut off that branch, bag it up, and dispose of it. Do

NOT under any circumstances try to burn the tent off the tree. People try this every year, and every year there are dead trees, burned-down houses, and injured people as a result. In summary, it's a huge nuisance but the best thing to do is just wait it out. This, too, shall pass. In the meantime, in the spring when these guys are active, be careful of roads slick with caterpillar guts in the more hard-it areas.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Do you have little white cottony tufts on any of your western hemlock branches? This is an exotic, introduced insect pest called the hemlock woolly adelgid. As the name implies, it affects hemlock trees. It makes little "tents" that it lives in (for protection) and lay its eggs. These look like little tufts of wool (hence the name). It's a sucking insect similar to an aphid. Sometimes you can find hemlock twigs covered in these little white tufts. We are fortunate in that it doesn't affect our western hemlock very much. In the eastern U.S., though, it is causing serious damage to eastern hemlocks. Karen Ripley at the DNR wrote an excellent article about this: <http://sflonews.wordpress.com/2013/05/13/examine-your-western-hemlock-trees-for-woolly-adelgid/>. We also have a picture on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151383555656377>.

Hemlock woolly adelgid is specific to hemlock trees. There are other adelgids that cause similar symptoms on other species, such as the balsam woolly adelgid (another exotic, introduced pest) on true firs or the native Cooley spruce gall adelgid on Douglas-fir.

Schweinitzii root and butt rot (*Phaeolus schweinitzii*).

This is also called cow-pie fungus (based on the appearance of the fruiting body, which grows up from the ground) or brown-cubical butt rot. It's hard not to giggle with names like these, but this native pathogen can cause serious stem and/or root decay, particularly in Douglas-fir, resulting in potential hazard trees. A number of trees around my office have been removed due to this disease. The disease is less common than more well-known diseases such as laminated root rot and armillaria, and it may be more difficult to detect. The Forest Service has a nice bulletin on this where you can read more:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/outernet/r6/nr/fid/fids/fidl-177.pdf>. You can also see a picture of one of the "cow pies" around my office on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151439595976377>.

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Tidbits:

- The summer edition of Forest Stewardship Notes is now available: http://foreststewardshipnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/forest_stewardship_news-summer_2013.pdf
- For those of you interested in bats, the Washington State Bat Conservation Plan is available from WDFW. It includes a lot of good background information on the

biology, ecology, and natural history of the 15 bat species found in Washington.
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01504/>.

- Here's an interesting video from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory about the seasonal carbon dioxide cycle as trees become active in the spring and then go dormant in the fall: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Gmkb3txXwQ>

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The WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry program is made possible in part by Snohomish County Surface Water Management, the Snohomish Conservation District, King County, Skagit County, Island County, and Whatcom County.

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