



# Forestry

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EXTENSION

## WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry E-Newsletter

**July 2016**

**Volume 9, No. 2**

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### **Forester's Notes**

It has taken me a while to get this year's second newsletter out. You may recall from the last newsletter that I was out sick for a couple months. All of that is fully resolved now, but it put things way behind this year. We had such a full spring schedule of classes and events that, combined with being short-staffed for a couple months, that I have had to focus fully on program delivery with no time to write about it, until now. I think we're up to full speed again now, so things should start to normalize.

Speaking of a full schedule of classes and events, we have that going again this summer. We've already had two twilight tours (Whatcom and Skagit Counties). Our next twilight tour is tomorrow night on Vashon, followed by Snohomish County (Marysville area) next Tuesday the 2nd. We'll wrap up on Shaw Island later in August, and then the forest owner field days start. Read below for all the details.

While I was out sick for those months earlier this year, I spent a lot of time in the healthcare system. I had good experiences and some really bad ones. Some of the doctors and nurses were very dismissive of my situation. “Everyone is sick right now—you’ll get over it,” I was told repeatedly (I wasn’t getting over it—it was turning into pneumonia, but that’s another story). For these health experts, they see a number of cases like mine on any given day. It’s an everyday thing for them. But it wasn’t an everyday thing for me. I had not dealt with something like this before and was apprehensive and a bit confused, especially when different doctors told me different things. A little empathy would have gone a long way.

This got me thinking about my own job and how I relate to people. Dealing with things like root disease and drought is an everyday thing for me, but it’s not an everyday thing for most of the people who contact me worried about their dying trees. I realized that I have been a little flippant myself when addressing people’s concerns, saying things like “Everyone has root rot,” “It’s normal and natural,” “It’s just the weather,” and “There’s nothing you can do.” My thinking was that this would reassure landowners that they weren’t alone in their troubles, they had not done anything wrong with their trees, and that it was not something new and sinister.

The problem was that these “reassuring” responses lacked empathy. Trees dying is a pretty big deal for a landowner. In many cases these are mature trees that have stood for many decades and have at least partially defined the property. The sudden loss can completely change the look, feel, and character of your property. It disrupts what is comfortable and familiar, as well as your vision and hope for the future of your property. It can pose hazards to your home, and removal can be a significant expense.

These thoughts have caused me to change how I respond to people. People come to Extension for sound technical advice, and most of the time this is easy enough to give. Empathy is important too, though, so I am making an effort to realize that forestry problems are not everyday experiences for most landowners, and it can represent a significant loss that brings apprehension and even grief.

I have further been thinking about how interact with people in response to an article I read recently about how those who consider themselves experts are more likely to over-claim their expertise. In the study, participants were asked to rank their knowledge of a subject and then look at a series of terms related to that subject. Then they were asked how well they understood each of those terms. The catch was that some of those terms were made up. Those who considered themselves experts were much more likely to profess knowledge of the bogus terms. One of the conclusions of the study was that people stop learning when they consider themselves experts in a study.

I suppose I consider myself an expert in forestry by nature of my education and experience. This does not mean there isn’t much more for me to learn, though. I know I am guilty of claiming more than I actually know. I can think of several times when I confidently gave an answer only to find out later that I was totally wrong. Or I nod in agreement with someone when I really have no idea what they’re talking about. Sometimes I just misspeak, too. Case in point—in my notes in the last newsletter I characterized a 2-0 seedling as a higher-quality option, when I should have said 1-1 (or even plug-1). I

was so busy making a point that I dropped the ball on technical accuracy. I am glad someone stepped up and pointed out my error.

My conclusion from all this is to not just inject more empathy into my job, but more humility as well, which means not being afraid to say “I don’t know.” What I don’t know is greater than what I do know, which is less than what I think I know. The good news is that we all have the capability to learn and keep learning (even me!). Much of what I learn comes from all of you. You’re the ones with the firsthand knowledge of on-the-ground forestry. I practice it vicariously through you. Next time we talk, instead of me pontificating as an expert, I hope it will be more of a conversation and exchange of ideas where we learn from each other and solve problems together.

Kevin W. Zobrist  
Associate Professor, Extension Forestry  
Serving the North Puget Sound Area

P.S. – If your property is in Snohomish County, please see my workshop host request near the end of the newsletter.

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## Summer 2016 Twilight Tours

Summer Twilight Tours are back! Our long summer evenings are perfect for enjoying “twilight tours” at forest properties around the area. These free out-in-the-woods events are a chance to share ideas, see what others are doing, and look at real examples of challenges and solutions. We have three remaining tours starting tomorrow:



### **Wednesday July 27 – Vashon**

Tour begins at 6:30 p.m. We’ll look at the results of thinning an “escaped” Christmas tree plantation and a young red alder stand; and underplanting for wildlife, edibles, and aesthetics. We’ll also talk about a cost share program that helped with planting on this site.

### **Tuesday August 2nd – Marysville**

Tour begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Nysether property. Focus on commercial thinning and riparian management. See the results four years after a commercial thinning project. Look at areas that have been thinned vs. unthinned to see a dramatic comparison. Also see the results of fully taking advantage of the allowable harvest (in this case thinning) in a riparian buffer, which can improve both habitat and profitability, and see what the resulting three-zone buffer looks like.

### **Wednesday August 24th – Shaw Island**

Tour begins at 5:45 p.m. at the Religious Sisters of Mercy (RSM) property. The focus will be on forest health, including treatment of root rot areas, and thinning strategies to increase health and vigor. We'll also look at how to deal with some common invasive species, examine some old homestead sites, and look at some specimens of Puget Sound juniper, a recently-discovered rare species endemic to the San Juan Islands.

All tours conclude with a potluck dessert, so please bring something sweet to share. RSVP is appreciated (so we can get a head count and notify participants of any changes or cancellations), but not required—you can just show up even if you haven't RSVP'd. Location, other details, and RSVP online at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/twilight/>

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## **Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day**

### **Saturday August 27th – Snoqualmie, WA**



Interested in a class on safe use of a chainsaws for felling and bucking? Want to learn what how insects, diseases, and adverse weather are pestering our trees (and what you can do about it)? Trying to decide if you want to purchase a portable sawmill or other piece of equipment? How about workshops on thinning, wildlife, soils, and mushroom growing? We'll be offering all of these classes and more at the 2016 Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day in Snoqualmie on August 27th. This is the only time of year we offer most of these classes, so this is your opportunity!

Forestry specialists from around the region will be offering 15 different classes, workshops, demonstrations, tours, and resources on a variety of topics throughout the day for forest owners of all skill levels (from “newbie” to seasoned veteran). There will also be vendor exhibits from forestry agencies, organizations, and equipment dealers that will allow participants to network with professionals and other forest owners. Whether you have just a couple wooded acres a large forest tract, if you have trees on your property, this field day is for you.

Details and registration are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/fieldday/>. Registration includes lunch, and there is a discount for pre-registering.

Also note that for those of you on the Olympic Peninsula, there will also be a field day in Sequim on 8/20 (see <http://forestry.wsu.edu> for details).

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## San Juan Islands Forest Owners Field Day

**Saturday September 17th – Lopez Island, WA**

This is a smaller, local version of our regional field day. The San Juan Islands Field Day will feature a suite of outdoor workshops specifically for people with wooded property in the San Juan Islands. Mainlanders are invited to attend, too, as there will be a lot of information that is also relevant to mainland properties. Topics include: Forest health (and why so many trees are dying this year), proper tree spacing, how to plant trees for survival, how to grow edible mushrooms, how to control invasive weeds, improving wildlife habitat, how to properly "limb-up," trees, protecting your home from fire, native tree and plant ID, and horse logging and portable sawmill demonstrations

Details and registration are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/sanjuan/>. Registration includes lunch, and there is a discount for pre-registering.

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## Fall Coached Planning

Is your forest a recognized Stewardship Forest? Do you have the sign and the matching hats? Do you want to know why people say this is the best class they've ever taken? Would you like to walk through your woods with a service forester and learn about everything that is going on in your forest? Now is your chance—fall Coached Planning classes are coming up in September.



Coached Planning is our flagship program. This comprehensive, university-based forestry class 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.

### Topics covered include:

- How do you know if your trees are healthy? What should you do if they aren't?
- What types of trees do you have? Does your forest look like a "mess"?
- Are characteristics of your property attracting or repelling the wildlife you enjoy? What can you do if wildlife cause damage?
- When should you worry about trees being hazards?
- How do you know if your trees need to be thinned, and how do you go about it?

- 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?
- What is the risk of wildfire on your property?

**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.

**Deming Coached Planning:** Thursday evenings starting September 15th. For details and registration, visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cpwhatcom/>.

**Preston Coached Planning:** Tuesday evenings starting September 20th. For details and registration, visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/cppreston/>.

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## **New Staff**

We are pleased to introduce Ian Fawley, our new forestry program coordinator. Ian took over for Lauren Grand when she accepted a faculty position down in Oregon. Ian comes to us from Oregon State Parks (it's only fair that if Oregon takes one ours, we take one of theirs...). He will be responsible for coordinating forestry education events in the north Puget Sound counties (Kelsey will continue to cover King County and support Ian for the north counties). Ian has a background in forestry GIS, and environmental/outdoor education program management. Ian has a BS in Geography: GIS/Cartography/Remote Sensing from Ball State University and a M.Ed. in Environmental Education from Western Washington University.

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## **Snohomish County Workshop Host Needed**

We are looking for a Snohomish County landowner willing to host a workshop on invasive weed removal this fall. Weeds of interest include holly, ivy, blackberries, herb Robert, tansy ragwort, knotweed, Scotch Broom, etc. If you have most or all of these weeds on your property and would like to have a bunch of people get rid of some of your weeds as they practice removal, please contact me ASAP at [kevin.zobrist@wsu.edu](mailto:kevin.zobrist@wsu.edu) or 425-357-6017. There needs to be space to park at least 20 cars.

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## Consulting Forester and Silvicultural Contractor Directory

One key take-home message from many of our classes is the need to hire a qualified professional to manage a timber sale, do a planting, control vegetation, thin, etc. There are two types of professionals you might need, consulting foresters and silvicultural contractors. A consulting forester provides professional forest management services to landowners. These services may include management plan writing, timber sale administration, permitting, timber marketing, inventory and appraisal, property mapping, management advice, coordination of contractor services, and other tasks. A silvicultural contractor provides the labor and equipment to perform forest management tasks such as site preparation, tree planting, vegetation control, pre-commercial thinning, slash disposal, etc. Some companies provide both forestry consulting and silvicultural contracting services.

A common question has been how to find the professional who is right for you. Up until now we did not have a good directory of these professionals. We had some old and very limited directories of consulting foresters (many of whom have retired), and nothing on silvicultural contractors. A searchable online directory has been in the works for a couple years and now is finally finished and available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/consultingdirectory/>.

The directory is statewide in scope, up-to-date, and currently has 85 companies listed. You can search the directory by county served and type of service provided. Information is given on each company's qualifications, professional affiliations, licenses, insurance, etc. This is not a logger directory (which is something we are considering for a future project). Also, not all consultants and contractors are listed. Getting into the directory is an opt-in process, so companies are not automatically entered. Some companies specifically requested to opt-out or did not respond to invitations to participate. Other companies we may not have had a chance to connect with yet. If a company wishes to be added to the directory, they just need to contact us and we will provide a questionnaire to fill out.

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## Other Educational Opportunities

Disclaimer: these non-WSU events and are listed for informational purposes with no implied endorsement by WSU.

- July 30th – NNRG workshop “Hands-On Forestry in San Juan Woodlands” in Friday Harbor – Topics include agroforestry, biomass utilization, small-diameter wood utilization, wildfire risk, wildlife habitat, and more. Visit <http://nnrg.org/workshop-san-juans-diy/> for details and registration.
- July 30th – Washington Woodland Coop “Firewood Bundling Training” in Rockport. Landowners in eastern Skagit and Whatcom counties, learn how to make a WWC style bundle

and afterwards you will be cleared to create bundles that WWC will sell for you. For more information about the training and the coop, visit <http://www.washingtonwoodland.coop/#home>

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## Tidbits

- WA DNR Small Forest Landowner Office has a new staff member. Josh Meek will be providing technical assistance on Forest Practices related questions to small forest landowners in western Washington. Josh has a B.S. degree in Education and a M.S. degree in Forestry from the University of Montana, and has several years of forestry experience working with both State and Federal governments. For the past two and a half years Josh has been in the South Puget Sound region, where he worked in both State Lands and Forest Practices. This newly created position will provide on-site technical assistance to small forest landowners with understanding the Forest Practices Rules, and navigating the Forest Practices application process. He can assist with unit layout, RMZ delineation, harvest systems, road layout, alternate plans, 20-acre exempt harvest activities, long-term applications, low impact harvest activities and any general Forest Practices related questions. Additionally, Josh will work on outreach to landowners and assist with forestry education around the west side of the state. If interested in utilizing these services, please contact Josh at [joshua.meek@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:joshua.meek@dnr.wa.gov), his office number: (360) 902-1849, or his cell phone number: (360) 819-7143.
- The latest Forest Stewardship Notes newsletter is available at <https://foreststewardshipnotes.wordpress.com/>
- The 2015 2015 Forest Health Highlight Report is posted on DNR website at [http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp\\_fh\\_2015\\_forest\\_health\\_highlights.pdf](http://file.dnr.wa.gov/publications/rp_fh_2015_forest_health_highlights.pdf)
- There is a mystery problem affecting bigleaf maples. Symptoms include unusually small leaves that look like they're suffering from leaf scorch. Some mortality has been reported. Several theories have been tested, but the cause has still not been identified. Pathologists in Oregon and Washington are continuing to investigate. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

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

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Reasonable accommodations for the events described above will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact us at the address above at least two weeks prior to the event.