

WSU Extension Puget Sound Forest Stewardship E-Newsletter

April 2013
Volume 6, No. 3

In this issue:

- [Forester's Notes](#)
- [Ties to the Land](#)
- [Project Learning Tree Training](#)
- [North Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day](#)
- [Forest Stewardship Coached Planning](#)
- [Small-Scale Commercial Mushroom Cultivation](#)
- [Partner Events](#)
- [Market Update](#)
- [Tidbits](#)
- [Subscription and Contact Info](#)

Forester's Notes

These last few weeks remind us that there is so much strife in the world. Forestry has had its own share of unrest over the past 50 years, and there are still many unreconciled issues. But forests and forestry can also evoke shared values that transcend geographic, political, and social divisions. This past fall I was privileged to experience this firsthand with two opportunities to spend time with my counterparts from other parts of the world.

The first opportunity was an international conference for foresters who work with small forest owners. I met other Extension and outreach foresters like me both from elsewhere in the United States and across the globe. I spent time with folks from Germany, Denmark, Japan, Latvia, Estonia, Nepal, Indonesia, Sweden, Finland, and elsewhere. We represented diverse forest types, social norms, and market systems (like the Baltic states where managing forests in a free market system is still brand new).

What astonished me, though, as I spent time with my international colleagues, was realizing that forest owners largely have the same values and face the same issues around the world. You have so much in common with forest owners across the nation as well as in Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Asia, and elsewhere! Issues and concerns around forest health, habitat

loss, fire, invasive species, etc. are universal. Similarly, I have much in common with my counterparts as all of us try to assist all of you with those issues. The conference was a rich time of sharing all sorts of ideas and strategies for how to best engage and educate a broadly dispersed population and help more forest owners get the most out of their property. I came home with pages full of notes about new ideas and initiatives. Some of those ideas I am already putting into practice, with others pending. Hopefully through this exchange of ideas we all will benefit from the collective wisdom and experience of the international forestry community.

The second opportunity I had was when a group of Extension agents from Afghanistan came to visit Washington. It was a group of about a dozen or so people, both men and women, who were in charge of developing Extension programs in different regions of the country. The challenges they face are hard to imagine. Many had no form of transportation to reach landowners. They lacked resources like books, and even if they did have them, many of their clientele cannot read. Computer technology and online education are not options for them. One person even recounted being kidnapped by the Taliban while doing a site visit and the tribal elders had to intercede to free him. And yet they continue to press in with dedication, courage, and a passion for education and helping people, and they came to the U.S. to get ideas.

Many in the group were particularly interested in forestry, which is why they came to my office on their tour of the state. I had a structured presentation all ready, but we never got to it. They immediately had questions and we started a very spirited discussion—I don't know how the translator kept up with us. They asked how I help landowners navigate overlapping regulations, how I keep people from overharvesting on steep slopes and other sensitive areas, how I reconcile different social philosophies of how forests should be managed, and how I engage a diverse and broadly dispersed population. We were so different, them and me—we looked different, dressed different, and talked different. Their customs were also much different, but we were happy to take a break and provide rooms so that the men and women could separate for their afternoon prayer time. But our forest stewardship issues were exactly the same, and we immediately connected.

They wanted to go outside and see some of our native trees. We looked at some red alder, and I pulled a seedling out of the ground to show them the orange nodules on the roots. They had never seen red alder before, but they immediately pointed to the root nodules and said "nitrogen fixation," as they were familiar with those nodules from legumes that grow in their part of the world. To cap off our visit, I pulled out the increment borer, and we took turns coring a large Douglas-fir. We all huddled in close counted the rings together, as this is a favorite activity of foresters anywhere in the world. I have a special picture of this (you can see it at <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151013579901377>)

At the conclusion of our visit, the leader of their group said something that I thought was tremendously profound. He said: "We are all connected by forests. What you do with your forests here in America impact us in Afghanistan, and what we do with our forests impacts you." I now have a much better appreciation for forestry as a universal language.

Kevin W. Zobrist
Regional Extension Specialist, Forest Stewardship
Serving the North Puget Sound Area

Ties to the Land

Your land will outlive you. Who will care for it when you're gone? Will it be a family legacy or a family squabble? Will it be kept intact and protected, or will it be divided up and sold off in pieces? Will it become a source of conflict between surviving family members? What is the long-term future that you want for your property? Is passing your property equally to each heir the same as passing it equitably to each heir? We explore these questions and others in our succession planning workshop that uses the award-winning Ties to the Land curriculum.

The purpose of this workshop is not to provide legal or tax advice. For that you should work with your family attorney and/or financial advisor to develop a specific strategy to meet your family's needs. Rather, succession planning is the *human* side of estate planning, and the critical first steps before sitting down with a professional. Things we talk about include:

- Identifying long-term goals for the property (which often differ between family members)
- Gauging family members' interest and emotional connections to the property (or lack thereof)
- Identifying heirs that have the capacity/competency to manage the property into the future
- Strategies for addressing challenging family dynamics (families aren't perfect!)
- Overall strategies for more open and productive communication in your family around the uncomfortable topics of death and inheritance, including how to have a successful family meeting

Our next Ties to the Land Workshop will be on Tuesday May 21st 5:00 - 9:30 PM at the Rome Grange on the Mt. Baker Highway just outside Bellingham. This is the last one we'll be doing for a while in this part of the state, so this is a good opportunity to attend this program. Cost is \$40 for up to two people and includes a workbook and dinner. You can get \$10 off of that if you register before May 1st. Additional workbooks and dinners can also be purchased if you want to bring additional family members (which is encouraged). For additional details and registration information, call 425-357-6023 or visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/ttl.htm>.

Project Learning Tree

We have another Project Learning Tree Outdoor Classroom Training scheduled for teachers and educators. This next one will be on Saturday May 18th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Arlington Boys and Girls Club. The workshop will use the acclaimed Project Learning Tree curriculum to give participants access to hundreds of simple activities for integrating environmental education in a classroom, club, or after school program. These activities address the four Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) for science, with an emphasis on experiential learning and getting kids outside to learn about science and nature. **If you know a teacher in the area, please pass this along.**

The training costs \$35 before May 1st, and \$50 thereafter, and includes the Project Learning Tree Environmental Education Activity Guide, lunch, and **6 clock hours**. For additional details and registration information, visit http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/PLT_Training.htm or call Mary Ann Rozance at 425-357-6023.

North Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day

The summer field day that will be the closest to most of you will be the one we are doing just outside of Sumas up in Whatcom County—an easy drive from Seattle and all points northward. The field day will be Saturday July 27th from 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. This field day will feature a whole suite of our most popular forest stewardship workshops. The state's top forestry specialists will be offering hands-on field sessions throughout the day on a variety of topics that will help you to better understand, protect, enhance, and enjoy your forest. Our host is the Westergreen Family, and they have an amazing property that you won't want to miss.

Sessions lined up so far include:

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

Registration for the field day is open! Details and registration information are available at 425-357-6023 or at <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/FieldDay.htm>.

Note: there will be two additional field days this summer: one in Tonasket on June 22nd and one in Forks on August 24th. For details visit <http://forestry.wsu.edu> or contact Andy Perleberg at 509-667-6540.

Forest Stewardship Coached Planning

Our flagship course will teach you everything you need to know about stewarding your forest. Topics include ecology, soils, forest health, wildlife, silviculture, invasive species, regulations, special forest products, and others. The most common feedback I get from even experienced landowners who take this course is “I didn’t know what I didn’t know.” People who take this class frequently find that things they thought were beneficial to their trees and wildlife are actually harmful, and things they thought were harmful are actually beneficial.

The class includes eight classroom sessions, a Saturday field trip, a large notebook full of materials, and a one-on-one consultation at your property with a professional forester. Many people use this class to qualify for current use taxation, with participants reporting an average savings of \$1,600 per year (as always, individual results will vary depending on the size of the property). Participants frequently tell me that this is one of the best classes they have taken and one of the best bargains they have received.

Want to see firsthand why this is our most popular class? You’ll have two opportunities 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.

Registration for both classes is open. 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)

Small-Scale Commercial Mushroom Cultivation

My colleagues at Thurston County Extension are offering this workshop down in Olympia from 12 – 5 p.m. on Saturday May 4th. Washington State University Extension specialist Jim Freed and Christian Kaelin, founder of Provisions Mushroom Farm, will teach this hands-on mushroom cultivation workshop geared toward small-scale production of edible and medicinal mushrooms for commercial and personal use. This course will focus on both forest land management for outdoor production, as well as controlled environment production management strategies. The workshop is organized by WSU Thurston County Extension in collaboration with the Thurston Conservation District.

You will learn the following:

- How to diversify your farm/forest-land income through sustainable mushroom production;

- How to select different gourmet and medicinal mushroom species that are appropriate for our production systems and markets;
- How to pasteurize and prepare different growing substrates, including logs, straw, and sawdust;
- Substrate inoculation, as well as incubation and production techniques;
- The basics of sterile working conditions;
- New and emerging marketing opportunities, and opportunities to collaborate;

You will also tour a successful, working mushroom farm employing a variety of production and marketing methods.

Registration and prepayment is required to hold your spot as seats and supplies are limited. Cost for the workshop is \$45 per person and includes mushroom cultivation training supplies, farm tour, and light snacks. For details and registration information, call Erik Hagan at 360-867-2151 or visit <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/375426>.

Partner Events

Note: partner events are not WSU events. Partner events are listed for informational purposes only and do not imply any endorsement by WSU.

Small Scale Logging Workshops – Join Northwest Certified Forestry June 24th-26th in Oakville, WA for a unique hands-on training program for small woodland owners who are interested in conducting their own timber harvests. Detailed instruction will be provided on harvest planning, precision tree felling techniques, and low-impact log yarding strategies and equipment. Precision Tree Felling will be covered on June 24th and 25th, and a yarding course will be offered on June 26th. For details and registration information, call 360-316-9317 or visit <http://nnrg.org/news-events/events>.

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.

Hardwood prices were down in March. Douglas-fir also went down, but was still respectable. Prices for white woods (e.g. hemlock) and cedar went way up, though.

For an updated price graph, please visit <http://snohomish.wsu.edu/forestry/documents/LogPrices.pdf>

Tidbits:

- The spring edition of Forest Stewardship Notes is now available: http://foreststewardshipnotes.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/forest_stewardship_notes_spring_2013.pdf
- It's been a year since our first shiitake mushroom log video, where we inoculated some logs (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOWCS5qbTOY>).

We now have the second video ready, which covers the steps to initiate fruiting: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMB9En_QGtK

(And as with the first video, we do have a blooper reel for those of you who are easily amused: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7xzdL-oLBM>. As I like to say, making Extension videos is like making sausage—you don't necessarily want to know what goes into it...)

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The WSU Extension Puget Sound Forest Stewardship 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.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. Persons with a disability requiring special accommodations while participating in the WSU Extension programs described above should request accommodation at least 21 days in advance.