



# Forestry

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## WSU North Puget Sound Extension Forestry E-Newsletter

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### In this issue:

(click links to jump to article)

- [Forester's Notes](#)
- [Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day](#)
- [Invasive Weed Control Field Practicum](#)
- [Fall 2016 Pizza Seminars](#)
- [Ties to the Land](#)
- [San Juan Forest Owners Field Day](#)
- [Fall Coached Planning](#)
- [Focus on: Bigleaf Maple Decline](#)
- [Subscription and Contact Info](#)

### Forester's Notes

This month's newsletter is mostly focused on events, as I have a bunch of new events coming up to tell you about. The Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day is just two days away in Snoqualmie (you can pre-register until 5 PM tonight to get a discount or pay at the gate Saturday morning). Fall pizza seminars are back starting in just a couple weeks and will be in the north end this year and will include reprises of last year's forest owner legal issues and forest safety and security seminars, plus one on managing your trees in a changing climate. Ties to the Land is back for the first time since 2013, and we have a brand new program—an all-day, hands-on field practicum on all aspects of invasive species control. And, of course, our fall Coached Planning classes which will be in King and Whatcom counties this year.

In the meantime, I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to have an environmental ethic and how my own environmental ethic, and even my whole conception of the nature of such an ethic, has changed over time. I used to think of an environmental ethic as a set of moral imperatives. Such imperatives usually include words like "always" and "never." Trees/plants/animals are always good,

and more is always better. Nature always takes care of itself. Always address and treat areas of disease and insect activity. Always use certified wood. Always thin. Always cut just a few trees at a time. Never cut any trees. Never use herbicides. Never kill animals. It's always best to [fill in the blank]. It's never good to [fill in the blank].

My environmental thinking has changed over time as a result of education, travel, and engaging with people who represent a wide variety of ideas, experience, and ways of looking at things. I have learned that the world is a lot more complicated than that. Exceptions abound, nuances permeate, and unintended consequences can make well-intentioned actions counterproductive toward the goal. Even softening from always to usually or never to rarely can miss the bigger picture. Every action or inaction has consequences that can be good or bad. Not everyone agrees on what constitutes good or bad, and we all have incomplete information and understanding. Controversy ensues, which often leads to further entrenching into moral imperatives.

One example of this is harvesting timber. A lot of folks are opposed to cutting trees. Mature tree cover is really important for a lot of different reasons. But what would happen if we stopped using wood, shifting to more nonrenewable and carbon-intensive alternatives? Maybe we could say that harvesting is fine, just not clear-cutting. But then, how we would we provide the post-disturbance conditions that early-successional plants and animals rely on to survive? Can we do that and still maintain water quality et al.?

Another example is herbicide use to control invasive species. Is it ever safe? Are alternatives always effective? If it can't be controlled through other means, which is worse—introducing poisons into the environment or letting the invasive species run rampant? I was really challenged on this when I did a study tour in Chile a couple years ago. They have a very similar climate to us, and I was surprised that they have some of the exact same invasive species that we do. I saw an entire landscape that had been completely taken over by invasives for as far as the eye could see. The ecosystem, at least in my perception, was more or less ruined. Would aggressive chemical control have had a better net environmental result? Would aggressive chemical use at the beginning prevented much greater/broader chemical use after the problem became widespread? And if it is widespread, do we give up and let it be, or try to push back? It may not be clear what the "lesser evil" is (or even if there is necessarily an evil).

A third example is wildlife population reduction. Many people would be aghast at the idea of wildlife managers going out and killing off deer, elk, moose, etc. Yet, this is happening or at least being considered in various parts of the country. The reason is that natural predator/prey relationships have been altered by reducing or eliminating top-level predators from the landscape. The cascading impacts include an unnatural buildup (and changed behavior) of prey species that decimate vegetation and cause a host of other problems. Do we intervene and serve as the predators to control the population?

There are many other examples out thereof situations where benefits and risks may not be fully clear or at least not fully understood. Helicopter spraying for gypsy moths, planting non-native species that may perform better in a warmer climate, salvage logging after fires, and logging to prevent fires are a few that come to mind.

All of these issues have a common thread, which is that a human-altered landscape has created a variety of conditions that would not have otherwise existed in nature, such as overstocked forests and wildlife populations, invasive species (plants, animals, diseases, and impacts), and rapid changes in climate. I like to call this nature trying to survive in an unnatural world. One could argue, though, that humans are part of the environment and thus raise existential questions about what it means to be natural. I don't want to get too far down the proverbial rabbit hole!

I want to be clear that I am not advocating a position or trying to sway anyone toward a particular course of action on any of these issues. My point is rather to highlight their complex nature that the balance of benefit and risk from any action or inaction may not be obvious, and even when consequences are well-understood, there are philosophical differences as to what even constitutes a benefit or risk.

How then do we shape our environmental ethic? The sentiment that I encounter over and over from landowners, regardless of their walk of life or management objectives, is a desire to do what's right for the land. I think the best way to plot that course is through continual learning. My goal, which reflects the broader goal of Extension, is to provide learning opportunities for you and build our collective knowledge base to empower you to make decisions that are as best informed as possible. To that end, we have a great lineup of programs coming up, some of which will deal with some of the issues I've described above. I hope you'll take the opportunity to join us and always keep questioning, exploring, thinking, and learning.

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

[\[return to top\]](#)

# Puget Sound Forest Owners Field Day

Saturday August 27th – Snoqualmie, WA



This Saturday your favorite forestry specialists from around the region will be offering 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, with plenty of time for you to network with professionals and other forest owners. Whether you have just a couple wooded acres a large forest tract, you’ll have a great time and get information you can use. **Pre-registration ends at 5 PM today (8/25)**, but you can always register at the gate on Saturday morning. Registration includes a picnic lunch.

Here's our field day session lineup:

- Animal Damage Control
- Buying a Portable Sawmill or Other Equipment
- Chainsaw Felling, Bucking, and Chain Sharpening
- Eastern WA Forest Owner Session
- Fire Prevention and Pruning
- Forest Health
- Intro to Forest Ownership with Forest Dan
- Invasive Species
- Measuring Trees
- Mushroom Cultivation
- Native Trees and Plants
- Property Tour
- Soils
- Thinning and Forest Ecosystems
- Tree Planting and Seedling Care
- Wildlife Habitat

Session descriptions, the schedule, location details and registration are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/fieldday/>.

This program is made possible in part by funding from the King Conservation District, Society of American Foresters, and Washington Tree Farm Program.

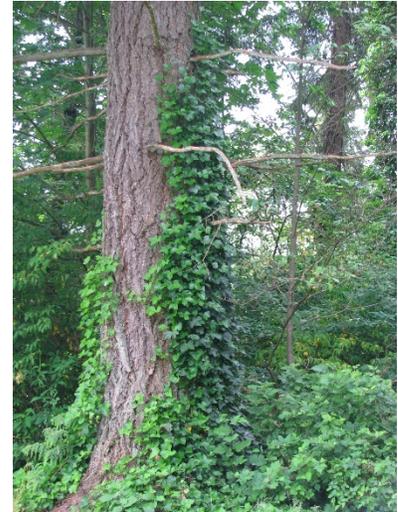
Agencies and organizations contributing in-kind support include Washington State University, Washington Department of Natural Resources, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and USDA Forest Service.

[\[return to top\]](#)

## Invasive Weed Control Field Practicum

**Saturday September 10th – Arlington, WA**

Is ivy pulling down your trees? Are blackberries taking over everything? Do you have stubborn holly in your understory? Are dreaded species like knotweed and tansy ragwort popping up on your property? Invasive weeds not only kill and inhibit the growth of your trees, they cause significant ecological harm by taking over ecosystems, crowding out native species, degrading wildlife habitat, and increasing erosion. Controlling these noxious invaders is a challenging but essential task for landowners.



In this hands-on field practicum, you will learn to identify and control some of the most common invasive weeds that plague forest landowners, including:

- Bull and Canada thistles
- Butterfly bush
- English holly
- English ivy
- Himalayan and evergreen blackberries
- Knotweed
- Reed canary grass
- Scotch broom
- Tansy ragwort

You will practice multiple control techniques, including hand-pulling, root digging, using a weed wrench, sheet mulching, foliar herbicides, cut stump treatments, and stem injection. You will learn about how to use herbicides safely and effectively, including what products to use for specific weeds and where to get those products, how to read a label, proper safety equipment, avoiding environmental damage, and pesticide laws. You will practice (using water and dyes) tank mixing, calibrating a sprayer for the proper application rate, and clean-up. This field practicum will feature instructors from WSU, WSDA, Snohomish County, City of Everett, and Co-op Supply, Inc.

Details and registration are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/weeds/>. **Register before August 30th and get a \$10 discount.**

[\[return to top\]](#)

## **Fall 2016 Pizza Seminars**

Fall Pizza Seminars are back! Wondering how to manage your forest long-term in a changing climate? Would you like to explore ways to minimize trespass and illicit activities on your land? If so, check out what we have on tap for you! Last year's seminars were all in the south end, so this year we're doing them in the north end. All three seminars will be 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Skagit County Extension Office in Burlington. Please note - because space is limited and each seminar includes dinner, **pre-registration is required.**

1. Your Trees and Climate Change – Tuesday September 13th
2. Forest Owner Legal Issues – Wednesday October 12th
3. Forest Safety and Security – Wednesday October 19th

### **Your Trees and Climate Change**

What does climate change mean for your trees? Are the past three years of record heat and drought a trend or an aberration? How do you manage for climate resilience in your forest? Should you be planting different species like redwood or sequoia? What is the actual evidence regarding climate change, how do you separate this from hype? Award-winning USFS scientist, IPCC member, and Skagit County small woodland owner Dave Peterson will explore these questions and explore how forest owners can manage for healthy, resilient forests whatever the future may hold.

### **Forest Owner Legal Issues**

Forest owners face unique legal issues, especially when it comes to protection from liability. What if someone gets hurt on your property? Does it make a difference if they are an invited guest vs. trespasser? What if one of your trees falls across the property line and causes injury or damage to a neighbor? What sort of liability insurance should a landowner carry? What if there's a hazard tree on your neighbor's property that threatens your house—what can you do? Other issues include property boundaries and how they need to be marked to be able to prosecute for trespassing, how to handle disputes, adverse possession, easements and right-of-ways, getting access to your property if you are landlocked, etc. Spend an evening with land use/real estate/environmental law attorney Leslie Clark from Philips Burgess Law exploring these issues and getting your questions answered.

### **Forest Safety and Security**

Maintaining the safety and security of your forest property is important for protecting and enjoying it. Trespassing, dumping, vandalism, timber theft, off-road vehicles, drugs, etc. can cause huge headaches and expenses, as well as threaten the safety of you and your family. Spend the evening with USFS Law Enforcement Officer Colin Mahoney and his K-9 partner for a discussion of strategies to make it more difficult for the bad guys to cause problems on your land.

Details and registration information for all three seminars are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/pizzaseminar/>

[\[return to top\]](#)

## Ties to the Land

**September 14th and 28th – Burlington, WA**

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? This two-part succession planning workshop explores these questions and others using the award-winning Ties to the Land curriculum.

Succession planning has been called the "human side of estate planning," and it is more comprehensive than just estate planning. The focus is on communication and big-picture planning within families. Farm-owning and woodland-owning families often do not talk explicitly about whether the land should remain intact, continue to be managed for farm or forestry use, and/or stay in the family. Other key issues include who in the family has the capability/interest to continue managing the property, family dynamics (including conflicts), who is already invested in the property, equal vs. equitable inheritance, etc.

Part 2 of the workshop will feature a Q&A panel discussion with three attorneys experienced with estate planning:

- Megan Otis Masonholder, J.D., and Kate Szurek, J.D., LL.M., Skagit Law Group
- Carol Schmidt, Attorney, Law Office of Carol L. Schmidt, PLLC

Details and registration are available at <http://forestry.wsu.edu/nps/events/ttl/>. **Register before September 3rd and get a \$10 discount.**

[\[return to top\]](#)

## 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.

[\[return to top\]](#)

## 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/>.

[\[return to top\]](#)

## Focus On: Bigleaf Maple Decline

**Guest Columnist: Amy Ramsey, WA DNR**

DNR's Forest Health staff continue to receive many calls and emails from concerned residents about the health of bigleaf maples. As in 2015, these contacts started in June and have been progressively increasing throughout the summer.

The question starts, "what is going on with the bigleaf maples?" followed closely by, "the trees look like they are dying," or "my tree died."

Forest Pathologists at DNR have been investigating crown, branch and entire tree dieback of bigleaf maples since 2011 and the truth is, we know a lot about what isn't causing the dieback, but don't have a good handle on what is causing the dieback. To complicate matters, new leaf symptoms have appeared this year, leaving us with even more head scratching.



Figure 1. Bigleaf maple dieback in the North Cascades, WA.

This year we received funding from APHIS (Animal Plant Health Inspection Service) in a cooperative grant between the WA DNR and the WSDA (Washington State Department of Agriculture) to process more samples to look for more agents that may be causing the dieback. There continues to be interest to look for *Xylella fastidiosa*, a plant pathogen bacterium that colonizes its host plant's water-conducting system, the xylem, causing water stress in the host, and this is one of the pathogens that will be tested for. We have tested for this pathogen in the past, without any conclusive results.

The most common symptoms we have tracked in previous years include crown, branch and entire tree dieback, clumps of shrunken leaves in the affected canopy and heavy seed crops. This year we

are tracking and sampling from trees that have these symptoms, as well as a new leaf symptom we are observing. We are seeing leaves with yellow edges, red to brown tips and leaf hoppers, that were found in isolated locations in previous years, but seem to be widespread this year. These are symptoms similar to bigleaf maple damage observed in California and Oregon and the damage has been attributed to *Xylella fastidiosa* in California. Leaf hoppers can vector microscopic organisms, like bacterium and viruses, but at this point, we are unsure of the species of the leaf hopper and whether it is contributing to any of the dieback or leaf symptoms we are seeing this year or in years past.



Figure 2. Chlorotic tipped and small leaves of bigleaf maple next to healthy, large green bigleaf maples leaves.



Figure 3. Leaf hopper caskins on the underside of symptomatic bigleaf maple leaves.

Throughout our work in previous years with cooperators like Washington State University, Oregon State University, WSDA, US Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Forestry, we have a pretty good idea about what isn't causing the dieback. We know that there are lots of *Pythium* ssp. out there, but the most common are not pathogenic to bigleaf maple in soil tests; there is a small amount

of pathogenic Phytophthora associated with declining trees, but not enough to be the causal agent across the landscape; Armillaria root disease and decay is contributing to some of the tree dieback, but not all of it; Verticillium is not widespread and was not found in any of the samples in Washington; stem cankers caused by Neonectria or Nectria are sometimes present, but not enough to be causing the widespread damage; Ganoderma, a causal agent of heartrot, is present in some cases, but also not causing widespread damage; there are lots of foliar fungi out there that can cause discoloration in leaves.

In addition to the sample collections we are currently doing, a University of Washington graduate student will be working on this issue over the next two years. Jake Betzen has been in the field with us during our sampling this year and his study will focus on: 1) surveying the spatial extent of bigleaf maple dieback and decline (BLMD) and record associated environmental, anthropogenic, and weather conditions that are associated with BLMD presence and absence; 2) using dendrochronological techniques to analyze and compare growth rates of healthy and symptomatic trees to further differentiate the potential roles of abiotic and biotic drivers of the decline; and 3) determining the spatial-temporal patterns associated with BLMD in western Washington.

A link to the report from the 2011 survey can be found here:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/fhm/posters/posters12/Omdahl\\_maple\\_poster.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/fhm/posters/posters12/Omdahl_maple_poster.pdf). If you have any questions or comments about this project, please contact Amy Ramsey, [amy.ramsey@dnr.wa.gov](mailto:amy.ramsey@dnr.wa.gov).

## Subscription and Contact Info:

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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.